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Andrews University
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Frank H. Moultrup.
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REDEMPTION:

OR THE

TEACHINGS OF CHRIST,

THE

ANOINTED ONE.

BY MRS. E. G. WHITE.

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NOTE TO THE READER.

THIS little book is presented to the public as an assistance in studying the divine teachings of Christ as contained in the Bible. The writer, having spent many years in the study of those sacred lessons, aided by the special enlightenment of the Spirit of God, is peculiarly qualified to set forth their great truths, and their practical application to the simple duties of life.

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THE

TEACHINGS OF CHRIST.

JESUS AT NAZARETH.

SOON after the temptation of Christ in the wilderness, and the victories he there gained over Satan, he presented himself in his true character at Nazareth, where he was known as an unpretending mechanic. He entered the synagogue upon the Sabbath. As was customary, the elder read from the prophets, and exhorted the people to continue to hope for the Coming One, who would bring in a glorious reign, and subdue all oppression. He sought to animate the faith and courage of the Jews, by rehearsing the evidences of Messiah's soon coming, dwelling especially upon the kingly power and glorious majesty that would attend his advent. He kept before his hearers the idea that the reign of Christ would be upon an earthly throne in Jerusalem, and his kingdom would be a temporal one. He taught them that Messiah would appear at the head of armies, to conquer the heathen and deliver Israel from the oppression of their enemies.

At the close of the service, Jesus rose with calm dignity, and requested them to bring him the book of the prophet Esaias. "And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it

was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth."

The scripture which Jesus read was understood by all to refer to the coming Messiah and his work. And when the Saviour explained the words he had read, and pointed out the sacred office of the Messiah,—a reliever of the oppressed, a liberator of the captives, a healer of the afflicted, restoring sight to the blind, and revealing to the world the light of truth,—the people were thrilled with the wisdom and power of his words and responded to them with fervent amens and praises to the Lord. Jesus had not been educated in the school of the prophets, yet the most learned Rabbis could not speak with more confidence and authority than did this young Galilean.

His impressive manner, the mighty import of his words, and the divine light that emanated from his countenance, thrilled the people with a power they had never experienced before, as Jesus stood before them, a living expositor of the prophet's words concerning himself. But when he announced: "This day is this scripture

fulfilled in your ears," the minds of his hearers were brought back to consider what were this man's claims to the Messiahship—the highest position that man could occupy.

The interest of the congregation had been thoroughly awakened, and their hearts had been stirred with joy; but Satan was at hand to suggest doubts and unbelief, and they remembered who it was that addressed them as the blind, and the captives in bondage who needed special aid. Many of those present were acquainted with the humble life of Jesus, as the son of a carpenter, working at his trade with his father Joseph. He had made no claims to distinction or greatness, and his home was among the poor and lowly.

In marked contrast with this humble man was the expected Messiah of the Jews. They believed that he would come with honor and glory, and set up, by power of arms, the throne of David. And they murmured: This cannot be the One who is to redeem Israel. Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? And they refused to believe him unless he gave them some marked sign. They opened their hearts to unbelief, and prejudice took possession of them, and blinded their judgment, so that they made no account of the evidence already given when their hearts had thrilled with the knowledge that it was their Redeemer who addressed them.

But Jesus now showed them a sign of his divine character by revealing the secrets of their minds. "And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself; whatsoever we have heard done in Ca-

pernaum, do also here in thy country. And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country. But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; but unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian."

Jesus read the inmost thoughts of those who were before him, and met their questioning with this relation of events in the lives of the prophets. Those men whom God had chosen for a special and important work were not allowed to labor for a hard-hearted and unbelieving people. But those who had hearts to feel, and faith to believe, were specially favored with evidences of God's power displayed through his prophets.

By the apostasy of Israel in Elijah's day, Jesus illustrated the true state of the people whom he was addressing. The unbelief and self-exaltation of the ancient Jewish nation caused God to pass over the many widows in Israel, and the poor and afflicted there, to find an asylum for his servant among a heathen people, and to place him in the care of a heathen woman; but she who was thus especially favored had lived in strict accordance with the light she possessed. God also passed over the many lepers of Israel, because their unbelief and abuse of precious privileges placed them in a position where he could not manifest his power in their behalf. On the other hand, a heathen nobleman, who had lived faithful to his

convictions of right, and fully up to his highest privileges, but who felt his great need of help, and whose heart opened to receive the lessons of Christ, was, in the sight of God, more worthy of his special favors, and was cleansed from his leprosy, as well as enlightened in regard to divine truth.

Here Jesus taught an important lesson that should be received by all who profess his name to the end of time. It was this: That even the heathen, who live according to the best light they have, doing right so far as they are able to distinguish right from wrong, are regarded with greater favor by God than those who, having great light, make high pretensions to godliness, but whose daily lives contradict their profession. Thus Jesus stood before the Jews, calmly revealing their secret thoughts, and pressing home upon them the bitter truth of their unrighteousness. Every word cut like a knife as their corrupt lives and wicked unbelief were laid before them. They now scorned the faith and reverence with which Jesus had at first inspired them, and they refused to acknowledge that this man, who had sprung from poverty and lowliness, was other than a common man. They would own no king who came unattended by riches and honor, and who stood not at the head of imposing legions.

Their unbelief bred malice. Satan controlled their minds, and they cried out against the Saviour with wrath and hatred. The assembly broke up, and the wicked people laid hands upon Jesus, thrusting him from the synagogue, and out of their city, and would have killed him if they had been able to do so. All seemed eager for his destruction. They hurried him to

the brow of a steep precipice, intending to cast him headlong from it. Shouts and maledictions filled the air. Some were casting stones and dirt at him; but suddenly he disappeared out of their midst, they knew not how, or when. Angels of God attended Jesus in the midst of that infuriated mob, and preserved his life. The heavenly messengers were by his side in the synagogue, while he was speaking; and they accompanied him when pressed and urged on by the unbelieving, infuriated Jews. These angels blinded the eyes of that maddened throng, and conducted Jesus to a place of safety.

NICODEMUS COMES TO CHRIST.

The great authority Jesus had assumed in the temple, in condemning the practices of the Jewish dignitaries, was freely commented upon by Pharisees, priests, and elders. His appearance, and the tones of his voice, together with the irresistible power he had exercised over the multitude, were such as to lead many of them to believe that he was indeed the Messiah whom they had so long expected and desired to see.

A portion of the Jews had ever been fearful of opposing one who seemed to possess any remarkable power or seemed to be influenced by God's Spirit. Many messages had been given to Israel by the mouths of prophets. Yet some of these holy men had been slain through the instigation of the leaders in Israel, because they had denounced the sins of those in authority. The captivity of the Jews to a heathen nation, was their punishment for refusing to be reproved of their iniquities, slighting the warnings of God,

and folding their sins still closer to their hearts.

The Jews, in the days of Christ, lamented their humiliation to the Romans, and condemned the acts of their fathers in stoning the prophets who were sent to correct them. Yet their priests and elders cherished the spirit in their hearts which would lead them to commit the same crimes.

The dignitaries of the temple consulted together in regard to the conduct of Jesus, and what course was best for them to pursue. One of their number, Nicodemus, advised moderation both in their feelings and acts. He argued that, if Jesus was really invested with authority from God, it would be perilous to reject his warnings, and the manifestations of his power. He could not look upon him as an impostor, nor join the rest of the Pharisees in their derision of him. He himself had seen and heard Jesus, and his mind was much disturbed in consequence. He anxiously perused the scrolls containing the prophecies relating to the coming of the Messiah. He sought earnestly for clear light upon the subject, and the more he searched the stronger was his conviction that this man was the one described by the prophets. If he was indeed the Christ, then this was an eventful epoch in the history of the world and especially of the Jewish nation.

During the entire day after Christ had cleansed the desecrated courts of the temple, he was healing the sick and relieving the afflicted. Nicodemus had seen with what pitying compassion he had received and ministered unto the poor and the oppressed. With the demeanor of a loving father toward his suffering children, he had

wrought cures and removed sorrow. No suppliant was sent unrelieved from his presence. Mothers were made glad by the restoration of their babes to health, and voices of thanksgiving had taken the place of weeping and moans of pain. All day, Jesus had instructed the restless, curious people, reasoning with the scribes, and silencing the caviling of the haughty rulers by the wisdom of his words. Nicodemus, after seeing and hearing these wonderful things, and after searching the prophecies that pointed to Jesus as the looked-for Messiah, dared not disbelieve that he was sent of God.

When night came on, Jesus, pale with the weariness of his long-continued labors, sought for retirement and repose in the Mount of Olives. Here Nicodemus found him and desired a conference. This man was rich and honored of the Jews. He was famous throughout Jerusalem for his wealth, his learning and benevolence, and especially for his liberal offerings to the temple to carry out its sacred services. He was also one of the prominent members of the national council. Yet when he came into the presence of Jesus, a strange agitation and timidity assailed him, which he essayed to conceal beneath an air of composure and dignity.

He endeavored to appear as if it were an act of condescension on the part of a learned ruler, to seek, uninvited, an audience with a young stranger at that unseasonable hour of night. He began with a conciliating address, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." But instead of acknowledging this complimentary salutation, Jesus bent his

calm and searching eye upon the speaker, as if reading his very soul; then, with a sweet and solemn voice, he spoke and revealed the true condition of Nicodemus. "Verily, verily I say unto you, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

The Pharisee was surprised out of his self-possession by these words, the meaning of which he partially comprehended; for he had heard John the Baptist preach repentance and baptism, and also the coming of One who should baptize with the Holy Ghost. Nicodemus had long felt that there was a want of spirituality among the Jews; that bigotry, pride, and worldly ambition guided their actions in a great measure. He had hoped for a better state of things when the Messiah should come. But he was looking for a Saviour who would set up a temporal throne in Jerusalem, and who would gather the Jewish nation under his standard, bringing the Roman power into subjection by force of arms.

This learned dignitary was a strict Pharisee. He had prided himself upon his own good works and exalted piety. He considered his daily life perfect in the sight of God, and was startled to hear Jesus speak of a kingdom too pure for him to see in his present state. His mind misgave him, yet he felt irritated by the close application of the words to his own case, and he answered as if he had understood them in the most literal sense, "How can a man be born when he is old?"

Jesus, with solemn emphasis, repeated, "Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born of the water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." The words of Jesus could

no longer be misunderstood. His listener well knew that he referred to water baptism and the grace of God. The power of the Holy Spirit transforms the entire man. This change constitutes the new birth.

Many of the Jews had acknowledged John as a prophet sent of God, and had received baptism at his hands unto repentance; meanwhile he had plainly taught them that his work and mission was to prepare the way for Christ, who was the greater light, and would complete the work which he had begun. Nicodemus had meditated upon these things, and he now felt convinced that he was in the presence of that One foretold by John.

Said Jesus, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Jesus here seeks to impress upon Nicodemus the positive necessity of the influence of the Spirit of God upon the human heart to purify it preparatory to the development of a righteous and symmetrical character. "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." This fountain of the heart being purified, the stream thereof becomes pure.

This new birth looks mysterious to Nicodemus. He asks, "How can these things be?" Jesus, bidding him marvel not, uses the wind as an illustration of his meaning. It is heard among the branches of the trees, and rustling the leaves and flowers, yet it is invisible to the eye, and

from whence it comes and whither it goeth, no man knoweth. So is the experience of every one who is born of the Spirit. The mind is an invisible agent of God to produce tangible results. Its influence is powerful, and governs the actions of men. If purified from all evil, it is the motive power of good. The regenerating Spirit of God, taking possession of the mind, transforms the life; wicked thoughts are put away, evil deeds are renounced, love, peace, and humility take the place of anger, envy, and strife. That power which no human eye can see, has created a new being in the image of God.

The necessity of the new birth was not so strongly impressed upon Nicodemus as the manner of its accomplishment. Jesus reproves him, asking if he, a master and teacher in Israel, an expounder of the prophecies, can be ignorant of these things. Has he read those sacred writings in vain, that he has failed to understand from them that the heart must be cleansed from its natural defilement by the Spirit of God before it can be fit for the kingdom of Heaven? Christ made no reference here to the resurrection of the body from the grave, when a nation shall be born in a day, but he was speaking in regard to the inward work of grace upon the unregenerate heart.

He had just been engaged in cleansing the temple, by driving from its sacred courts those who had degraded it to a place of traffic and extortion. Not one who had fled that day from the presence of Jesus was fitted by the grace of God to be connected with the sacred services of the temple. True, there were some honorable men among the Pharisees, who deeply regretted the evils that were corrupting the Jewish nation

and desecrating its religious rites. They also saw that traditions and useless forms had taken the place of true holiness, but they were powerless to prevent these growing evils.

Jesus had commenced his work by striking directly at the selfish, avaricious spirit of the Jews, showing that while professing to be the children of Abraham they refused to follow his example. They were zealous for an external appearance of righteousness while they neglected internal holiness. They were sticklers for the letter of the law, while they grossly transgressed its spirit every day. The law forbade hatred and theft, yet Christ declared that the Jews had made his Father's house a den of thieves. The great necessity of the people was a new moral birth, a removal of the sins that polluted them, a renewal of true knowledge and genuine holiness.

This purifying of the temple illustrates the work that must be accomplished in every one who would secure eternal life. Patiently Jesus unfolded the plan of salvation to Nicodemus, showing him how the Holy Spirit brings light and transforming power to every soul that is born of the Spirit. Like the wind, which is invisible—yet the effects of which are plainly seen and felt—is the baptism of the Spirit of God upon the heart, revealing itself in every action of him who experiences its saving power.

He explained how Christ, the burden-bearer, lifts the burden from the oppressed soul, and bids it rejoice in deliverance from bondage. Joy takes the place of sadness, and the countenance reflects the light of Heaven. Yet no one sees the hand that lifts the burden, nor beholds the light de-

scend from the courts of God. The blessing comes when the soul, by faith, surrenders itself to the Lord. This mystery exceeds human knowledge, yet he who thus passes from death to life realizes that it is a divine truth.

The conversion of the soul through faith in Christ was but dimly comprehended by Nicodemus, who had been accustomed to consider cold formality and rigid services as true religion. The great Teacher explained that his mission upon earth was not to set up a temporal kingdom, emulating the pomp and display of the world, but to establish the reign of peace and love, to bring men to the Father through the mediatorial agency of his Son.

Nicodemus was bewildered. Said Jesus, "If I have told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" If Nicodemus could not receive his teachings illustrating the work of grace upon the human heart, as represented by the figure of the wind, how could he comprehend the character of his glorious heavenly kingdom should he explain it to him? Not discerning the nature of Christ's work on earth, he could not understand his work in Heaven. Jesus referred Nicodemus to the prophecies of David and Ezekiel:—

"And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh; that they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God." "And they shall come thither, and they shall take away all the detestable things thereof and all the abominations thereof from thence."

"Therefore, I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord God. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit." "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free Spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee." "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh."

The learned Nicodemus had read these pointed prophecies with a clouded mind, but now he began to comprehend their true meaning, and to understand that even a man as just and honorable as himself must experience a new birth through Jesus Christ, as the only condition upon which he could be saved, and secure an entrance into the kingdom of God. Jesus spoke positively that unless a man is born again he cannot discern the kingdom which Christ came upon earth to set up. Rigid precision in obeying the law would entitle no man to enter the kingdom of Heaven.

There must be a new birth, a new mind through the operation of the Spirit of God, which purifies the life and ennobles the character. This connection with God fits man for the glorious kingdom of Heaven. No human invention can ever find a remedy for the sinning soul. Only by repentance and humiliation, a submission to the divine requirements, can the work of grace be performed. Iniquity is so offensive in the sight of God, whom the sinner has so long insulted and wronged, that a repentance commensurate with the character of the sins committed often produces an agony of spirit hard to bear.

Nothing less than a practical acceptance and application of divine truth opens the kingdom of God to man. Only a pure and lowly heart, obedient and loving, firm in the faith and service of the Most High, can enter there. Jesus also declares that as "Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." The serpent in the wilderness was lifted upon a pole before the people, that all who had been stung unto death by the fiery serpent might look upon this brazen serpent, a symbol of Christ, and be instantly healed. But they must look in faith, or it would be of no avail. Just so must men look upon the Son of Man as their Saviour unto eternal life. Man had separated himself from God by sin. Christ brought his divinity to earth, veiled by humanity, in order to rescue man from his lost condition. Human nature is vile, and man's character must be changed before it can harmonize with the pure and holy in God's immortal kingdom. This transformation is the new birth.

If man by faith takes hold of the divine love of God, he becomes a new creature through Christ Jesus. The world is overcome, human nature is

subdued, and Satan is vanquished. In this important sermon to Nicodemus, Jesus unfolded before this noble Pharisee the whole plan of salvation, and his mission to the world. In none of his subsequent discourses did the Saviour explain so thoroughly, step by step, the work necessary to be done in the human heart, if it would inherit the kingdom of Heaven. He traced man's salvation directly to the love of the Father, which led him to give his Son unto death that man might be saved.

Jesus was acquainted with the soil into which he cast the seeds of truth. For three years there was little apparent fruit. Nicodemus was never an enemy to Jesus, but he did not publicly acknowledge him. He was weighing matters with an exactitude that accorded with his nature. He watched the life-work of Jesus with intense interest. He pondered over his teachings and beheld his mighty works. The raising of Lazarus from the dead was an evidence of his Messiahship that could not be disputed in the mind of the learned Jew.

Once, when the Sanhedrim council was planning the most effectual way of bringing about the condemnation and death of Jesus, his authoritative voice was heard in protest, "Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?" This brought a sharp rebuff from the chief priest, "Art thou also of Galilee? Search and look, for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." Yet the council dispersed, for they could not obtain a unanimous assent to the condemnation of Jesus.

The Jews suspected both Joseph and Nicodemus of being in sympathy with the Teacher of

Galilee, and these men were not summoned when the council met that decided the fate of Jesus. The words spoken at night to a single man in the lonely mountain were not lost. When Nicodemus saw Jesus upon the cross, hanging like a malefactor between heaven and earth, yet praying for his murderers; when he witnessed the commotion of nature, in that awful hour when the sun was hidden and the earth reeled in space, when the rocks were split in sunder and the vail of the temple rent in twain; then he remembered the solemn teaching in the mountain: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up."

The scales fell from his eyes, and faith took the place of doubt and uncertainty. Beams of light streamed from the secret interview in the mountain and illuminated the cross of the Saviour. In that time of discouragement and danger, when the hearts of the disciples were failing them through doubt and fear, Joseph of Arimathea, a secret disciple of Jesus, came forward and obtained the Lord's body from Pilate, and Nicodemus, who at the first came to Jesus by night, brought a hundred pounds' weight of myrrh and aloes. These two men with their own hands performed the last sacred rites, and laid the body of the Saviour in a new sepulcher where never man lay before. These lofty rulers of the Jews mingled their tears together over the sacred form of the dead.

Now, when the disciples were scattered and discouraged, Nicodemus came boldly to the front. He was rich, and he employed his wealth to sustain the infant church of Christ, that the Jews thought would be blotted out with the death of

Jesus. He who had been so cautious and questioning, now, in the time of peril, was firm as the granite rock, encouraging the flagging faith of the followers of Christ, and furnishing means to carry on the cause. He was defrauded, persecuted, and stigmatized by those who had paid him reverence in other days. He became poor in this world's goods, yet he faltered not in the faith that had its beginning in that secret night conference with the young Galilean.

Nicodemus related to John the story of that interview, and his inspired pen recorded it for the instruction of millions. The vital truths there taught are as important to-day as they were that solemn night in the shadowy mountain, when the mighty Jewish ruler came to learn the way of life from the lowly carpenter of Nazareth.

"When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John (though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples), he left Judea, and departed again into Galilee."

The prejudice of the Jews was aroused because the disciples of Jesus did not use the exact words of John in the rite of baptism. John baptized unto repentance, but the disciples of Jesus, on profession of the faith, baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The teachings of John were in perfect harmony with those of Jesus, yet his disciples became jealous for fear his influence was diminishing. A dispute arose between them and the disciples of Jesus in regard to the form of words proper to use at baptism, and finally as to the right of the latter to baptize at all.

John's disciples came to him with their grievances, saying, "Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him." John possessed the common infirmities of human nature. In this matter he was subjected to a severe trial. His influence as the prophet of God had been greater than any other man's, until the ministry of Christ commenced; but the fame of this new teacher was drawing the attention of all people, and in consequence, the popularity of John was waning. His disciples brought to him the true statement of the case, Jesus baptizeth, and all men come to him.

John stood in a dangerous position; had he justified the jealousy of his disciples by a word of sympathy or encouragement in their murmurings, a serious division would have been created. But the noble and unselfish spirit of the prophet shone forth in the answer he gave to his followers:—

"A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from Heaven. Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice; this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease."

Had John manifested disappointment or grief at being superseded by Jesus; had he allowed his sympathies to be aroused in his own favor, when he perceived that his power over the people was waning; had he for a moment lost sight of his mission in this hour of temptation, the result would have been disastrous to the establish-

ment of the Christian church. The seeds of dissension would have been sown, anarchy would have sprung up, and the cause of God would have languished for want of proper workers.

But John, irrespective of personal interest, stood up in defense of Jesus, testifying to his superiority as the Promised One of Israel, whose way he had come to prepare. He identified himself fully with the cause of Christ, and declared that his greatest joy was in its success. Then, rising above all worldly considerations, he gave this remarkable testimony—almost the counterpart of that which Jesus had given to Nicodemus in their secret interview:—

"He that cometh from above is above all; he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth; he that cometh from Heaven is above all. And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony. He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true. For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God; for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

What a sermon was this to the Pharisees, clearing the way for the ministry of Christ. The same spirit that actuated Jesus, controlled the mind of John the Baptist. Their testimony corresponded; their lives were given to the same reformatory work. The prophet points to the Saviour as the Sun of Righteousness rising with splendor, and soon to eclipse his own light, then

growing pale and dim in the glory of a greater light. John, by his unselfish joy in the successful ministry of Jesus, presents to the world the truest type of nobility ever exhibited by mortal man. It carries a lesson of submission and self-sacrifice to those whom God has placed in responsible positions. It teaches them never to appropriate to themselves undue honor, nor let the spirit of rivalry disgrace the cause of God. The true Christian should vindicate the right at the expense of all personal considerations.

The news that had been carried to John concerning the success of Jesus, was also borne to Jerusalem, and there created against him jealousy, envy, and hatred. Jesus knew the hard hearts and darkened minds of the Pharisees, and that they would spare no pains to create a division between his own disciples and those of John that would greatly injure the work, so he quietly ceased to baptize and withdrew to Galilee. He knew that the storm was gathering which was soon to sweep away the noblest prophet God had ever given to the world. He wished to avoid all division of feeling in the great work before him, and, for the time, removed from that region for the purpose of allaying all excitement detrimental to the cause of God.

Here is a lesson to the followers of Christ, that they should take every proper precaution to avoid disagreement; for in every division of interest, resulting in disputation and unhappy differences in the church, souls are lost that might have been saved in the kingdom of Heaven. In the occurrence of a religious crisis, leading men who profess to be God's instruments should follow the example of the great Master and that of

the noble prophet John. They should stand firm and united in defense of the truth, while they carefully labor to avoid all injurious dissensions.

THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA.

As Jesus pursued his way to Galilee, his course lay through Samaria. He embraced every opportunity to teach as he traveled on foot from place to place. The Saviour was weary, and he sat on Jacob's well to rest, while his disciples went in search of food with which to refresh themselves and their Master. As he sat there alone, a woman of Samaria drew near as if unconscious of his presence; but his eye was upon her, and after she had drawn the water he asked her to give him a drink.

The Samaritan woman was surprised at this request from a Jew, and answered, "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." Jesus answered, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." He here referred to the divine grace which he alone could bestow, and which is as living water, purifying, refreshing, and invigorating the soul.

But the woman's understanding did not comprehend the meaning of Christ; she supposed that he was speaking of the well before them, and answered, "Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep; from whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than

our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself?" She saw before her only a weary, thirsty traveler, wayworn and dusty; and her mind instinctively compared this humble stranger with the great and worthy Jacob.

Jesus did not immediately satisfy the woman in regard to himself, but with solemn earnestness said, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

The woman looked upon him with wondering attention; he had succeeded in arousing her interest and inspiring respect for himself. She now perceived that it was not the water of Jacob's well to which Jesus alluded, for of this she used continually, drinking, and thirsting again. With remarkable faith she asked him to give her the water of which he spoke, that she might not thirst nor come to draw from the well.

Jesus did not intend to convey the idea that simply one draught of the water of life would satisfy the receiver, but that whoever is united with Christ, has within his soul a living fountain from which to draw strength and grace sufficient for all emergencies. Words and deeds of righteousness flow from it and refresh the hearts of others, as well as the soul from which it springs. Jesus Christ, the never-failing source of this fountain, cheers the life and brightens the path of all who come to him for aid. Love to God, the satisfying hope of Heaven, springs up in good works unto eternal life.

Jesus now abruptly changed the subject of

conversation, and bade her call her husband. The woman answered frankly that she had no husband. Jesus had now approached the desired point where he could convince her that he had the power to read her life history, although previously unacquainted with her. He addressed her thus: "Thou hast well said, I have no husband; for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband; in that saidst thou truly."

Jesus had a double object in view; he wished to arouse her conscience as to the sin of her manner of life, as well as to prove to her that a sight wiser than human eyes had read the secrets of her life. But the woman, although not fully realizing the guilt of her manner of living, was greatly astonished that this stranger should possess such knowledge. With profound reverence she said, "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet." Her personal feelings were now lost in anxiety concerning religious matters. She proceeded, "Our fathers worshiped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship."

Just in sight was Mount Gerizim, its temple demolished, and only the altar remaining. The place of worship had been a subject of contention between the Jews and Samaritans. The latter people had once belonged to Israel, but had become divided from them because of their transgressions in neglecting to obey the statutes of God. The Lord suffered them to be overcome by an idolatrous nation, whose religion had gradually contaminated their own. Still preserving their reverence for the true God, they represented him by images of wood and stone, before which they bowed in worship.

When the temple was rebuilt at Jerusalem, the Samaritans wished to join the Jews in its erection. This privilege was refused them, and, in consequence, a bitter animosity sprang up between the two people, which resulted in the Samaritans building a rival temple on Mount Gerizim, where they worshiped according to the ceremonies that God gave unto Moses, but mingled with their worship the taint of idolatry. But disasters attended the Samaritans, their temple was destroyed by the enemy, and they seemed to be under a curse.

They were forced to believe that God was punishing them for their apostasy. They determined to reform, and solicited teachers from the Jews to instruct them in the true religion. Through this teaching, their views of God and his requirements became clearer, and their religious service resembled more nearly that of the Jews. But to a certain degree they still clung to their idolatry, and there was a lack of harmony between them and the Jews. The Samaritans would not respect the temple of worship at Jerusalem, and refused to admit that it was the true place of worship.

Jesus answered the woman by saying that the time was at hand when they should neither worship the Father in that mountain nor in Jerusalem. Said he, "Ye worship ye know not what; we know what we worship; for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit;

and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

This was a plain statement that the Jews were more nearly correct in the principles of their religion than any other nation. Jesus also alluded to the faith of the Samaritans being amalgamated with the worship of graven images. True, they held that these idols were only to remind them of the living God, the Ruler of the universe; but, nevertheless, the people were led to reverence these inanimate figures.

Jesus, who was the foundation of the old dispensation, identified himself with the Jews, sanctioning their views of God and his government. He opened great and important truths before this woman. He declared to her that the time had arrived when the true worshipers need not seek a holy mountain nor sacred temple, but were to worship the Father in spirit and in truth. Religion was not to be confined to external forms and ceremonies, but was to be throned in the heart, purifying the life and actuating to good works.

The words of truth that fell from the lips of the divine Teacher stirred the heart of his listener. Never had she heard such sentiments, either from the priests of her own people or the Jews. The impressive teachings of this stranger carried her mind back to the prophecies concerning the promised Christ; for the Samaritans as well as the Jews looked for his coming. "I know that Messias cometh," said she; "when he is come, he will tell us all things." Jesus answered, "I that speak unto thee am he."

Blessed woman of Samaria! She had felt during the conference as if in the presence of divin-

ity; now she gladly acknowledged her Lord. She required of him no miracle, as did the Jews, to prove his divine character. She accepted his assertion, feeling perfect confidence in his words, and not questioning the holy influence that emanated from him.

The disciples, returning from their errand, were surprised to find their Master conversing with a Samaritan woman; yet they did not inquire her errand, nor ask Jesus why he talked with her. The woman left her water-pot, forgetting her errand to the well, and went her way into the city, saying to all whom she met, and the men of the city, "Come, see a man who told me all things that ever I did. Is not this the Christ?"

This woman, though so sinful, was still in a more favorable condition to become an heir of Christ's kingdom than those of the Jews who made exalted professions of piety, yet trusted their salvation to the observance of outward forms and ceremonies. They felt that they needed no Saviour and no teacher. But this poor woman hungered and thirsted after righteousness. She was eager for instruction, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and ready to accept the Saviour when he was revealed. Jesus, who explained not his character to the proud and skeptical Pharisees and rulers, declared himself to this humble person who was ready to believe on him.

As yet he had not taken the refreshing draught that he desired, nor tasted the food that his disciples had brought him. The salvation of perishing souls so absorbed his attention that his physical wants were forgotten. But his followers anxiously entreated him to eat. Still contem-

plating the great object of his mission, he answered them, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." His disciples were surprised, and began to wonder among themselves who could have brought him food in their absence. But Jesus explained, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish his work."

It was not temporal food alone that sustained him in his arduous life; but the accomplishment of the work which he left the royal courts of Heaven to perform, strengthened him for his labors, and lifted him above the necessities of humanity. To minister to a soul hungering and thirsting for the truth was more satisfying to the Son of Man than eating or drinking. He pitied sinners; his heart went out in sympathy for the poor Samaritans, who felt their ignorance and wretchedness, and were eagerly looking for the advent of Messiah, who would enlighten them and teach them the true religion.

The Jews felt secure in their self-righteousness, they desired no enlightenment; but they looked for a Saviour who would release them from the bondage of the Roman yoke, and exalt them above their oppressors. They could not receive one who reproved their sins and condemned their selfish, hypocritical lives. They looked for a Messiah who would reign with worldly power and glory, confound and defeat the Romans, and exalt the Jews to a nation of princes.

Jesus saw a field of labor among the Samaritans. Before him lay the fields of grain, their tender green lit by the golden sunlight. Viewing the beautiful scene, he employed it as a symbol, "Say not ye there are yet four months, and then

cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest." He here referred to the gospel field, to the work of Christianity among the poor, despised Samaritans. His hand reached out to gather them into the garner; they were ready for the harvest.

The Saviour was above all prejudice of nation or people; he was willing to extend the blessings and privileges of the Jews to all who would accept the light which he came to the world to bring. It caused him great joy to behold even one soul reaching out to him from the night of spiritual blindness. That which Jesus had withheld from the Jews and enjoined upon his disciples to keep secret, was distinctly opened before the inquiring woman of Samaria; for He who knew all things perceived that she would make a right use of her knowledge and be the means of leading others to the true faith.

It was not merely the fact that Jesus told her concerning the secrets of her life which inspired the confidence of this woman in him, but it was also his look and his solemn words that reached her soul and convinced her that he was a superior being. At the same time she felt that he was her friend, pitying and loving her. This is the character of the world's Redeemer; while he condemned her life of sin, he directed her to his divine grace as the sure and perfect remedy. The pitying love of the Saviour is not confined to sect or party.

As the woman of Samaria hastened back to her friends, publishing as she went the wonderful news, many left the highway and the town to go and ascertain if she indeed spoke the truth. Numbers of the citizens left their employments

and hastened to Jacob's well to see and hear this remarkable man. They surrounded Jesus and listened attentively to his instruction. They plied him with questions, and eagerly received his explanation of matters that had perplexed their understandings. They were like a people in great darkness tracing up a sudden ray that had pierced their gloom and which they were eager to follow to its source, that they might bask in the light and warmth of day.

The Samaritans were attracted and interested by the teachings of Jesus. But they were not satisfied with this short conference; they were anxious to hear more and to have their fellow-citizens also listen to this wonderful teacher. They begged him to tarry with them and instruct them. For two days he remained in Samaria teaching the people. Many believed on him and accepted his words. Jesus was a Jew, yet he mingled freely with these Samaritans, setting at naught the custom and bigotry of his nation. He had already commenced to break down the partition wall between Jew and Gentile, and preach salvation to the world.

These Samaritan listeners were in darkness and superstition; but they were not contented with their condition, and the words of Jesus relieved them of many doubts and uncertainties that had harassed their minds. Many who had come from curiosity to see and hear this remarkable person were convicted of the truth of his teachings, and acknowledged him as their Saviour. Eagerly they listened to the words he spoke in reference to the kingdom of God. In their new joy they said unto the woman, "Now we believe, not because of thy saying; for we

have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."

Christ, at the very beginning of his ministry, openly rebuked the superficial morality and ostentatious piety of the Jews. He did not conform his life and his work to their customs and regulations. He was not influenced by their unreasonable prejudices against the Gentiles. He, on the contrary, sternly rebuked their conceit and selfish seclusion. The Pharisees rejected Christ. They ignored his miracles and the truthful simplicity of his character. They refused to recognize his pure and elevated spirituality and all evidences of his divinity. They scornfully demanded of him a sign that they might know that he was indeed the Son of God.

But the Samaritans asked no sign, and Jesus performed no miracles among them; yet they received his teachings, were convicted of their great need of a Saviour, and accepted him as their Redeemer. They were therefore in a much more favorable position before God than the Jewish nation, with its pride and vanity, blind bigotry, narrow prejudice, and bitter hatred of every other people on the earth. Jesus, in face of all these prejudices, accepted the hospitality of this despised people, slept under their roofs, ate with them at their tables—partaking of the food prepared and served by their hands—taught in their streets, and treated them with the greatest kindness and courtesy.

In the temple at Jerusalem there was a partition wall separating the outer court from the inner one. Gentiles were permitted to enter the outer court, but it was only lawful for the Jews to penetrate to the inner inclosure. Had a

Samaritan passed this sacred boundary, the temple would have been desecrated, and his life would have paid the penalty of its pollution. But Jesus, who was virtually the foundation and originator of the temple—the services and ceremonies of which were but a type of his great sacrifice, pointing to him as the Son of God—encircled the Gentiles with his human arm of sympathy and association, while, with his divine arm of grace and power, he brought to them the salvation which the Jews refused to accept.

Jesus had spent several months in Judea, giving the rulers of Israel a fair opportunity of proving his character as the Saviour of the world. He had performed many mighty works in their midst; but he was still treated by them with suspicion and jealousy. In passing through Samaria on his way to Galilee, his reception among the Samaritans, and the eagerness with which they listened to his teachings, were in marked contrast with the incredulity of the Jews, who had misinterpreted the prophecies of Daniel, Zechariah, and Ezekiel, confusing the first advent of Christ with his second majestic and glorious appearing.

Their blindness was in consequence of their lofty pride and arrogance, looking only for worldly station and emolument. They urged their interpretation of the prophecies upon the Samaritans, who believed that Messiah was to come not only as a Redeemer of the Jews, but of the world. This caused great bitterness toward them from the Jews, who contended that Christ would come to exalt Israel and to bring into subjection all other nations. This perversion of the prophecies led the Samaritans to discard all the sacred writ-

ings but those of Moses. But their minds were open to enlightenment, and they received the Saviour's instruction joyfully and accepted him as the promised Messiah.

CHOOSING THE DISCIPLES.

The disciples had not yet fully joined themselves to Jesus to be co-laborers with him. They had witnessed many of his miracles, and their minds had been enlightened by the discourses they had heard from his lips; but they had not entirely left their employment as fishermen. Their hearts were filled with grief by the death of John, and they were troubled with conflicting thoughts. If the life of John had been permitted to end so ingloriously, what would be the fate of their Master, when the scribes and Pharisees were so bitter against him? Amid their doubt and fear, it was a relief for them to return once more to their fishing, and, for a brief space, find in their old employment a diversion from their anxiety.

Jesus frequently dismissed them to visit their homes and rest; but he gently though firmly resisted all their entreaties that he should himself rest. At night he found the seasons of prayer for which he could not claim time during the day. While the world he had come to save was wrapped in slumber, the Redeemer, in the sanctuary of the mountains, would intercede for man with the Father. Often he spent entire nights in prayer and meditation, going back in the morning to his active work.

It was morning on the Sea of Galilee, and the fishermen were in their boats, weary with

a long night of fruitless toil. But, with the dawn, Simon discovered the form of Jesus walking upon the beach. He directed the attention of his disciples to their beloved Teacher, and they all pulled for the shore. It seemed impossible for the Saviour to obtain any retirement. Already the crowd had gathered thickly about him as he walked on the shore. The sick and afflicted were brought for him to relieve. At length the people had pressed so closely about him that they scarcely left him comfortable standing-room. It was just at this time that the fishermen were nearing the shore. Jesus requested Peter to take him in his boat, and, immediately, upon entering it, directed the disciple to pull out a little from the land. Then, being removed a short distance from the people, he was in a better position to be seen and heard by them, and from the boat upon the lake he preached in regard to the mysteries of the kingdom of God. His language was simple and earnest, appealing to the minds of the people with convincing power.

The discourse ended, Jesus turned to Peter and bade him launch out into the deep, and let down his net for a draught. But Peter was thoroughly disheartened; not only was he sorrowful because of the death of John the Baptist, and his mind tortured with unbelief in consequence of that event, but he was discouraged in regard to his temporal prospects. He had been unsuccessful in his fishing, and the past night had been spent in unavailing labor. It was therefore in a desponding tone that he replied to the command of Jesus: "Master, we have toiled all night, and have taken nothing; nevertheless, at thy word I will let down the net."

He called his brother to his aid, and together they let down the net into the deep water, as Jesus had directed. When they came to draw in the net they were unable to do so because of the great quantity of fish it contained, and they were obliged to summon James and John to their aid before they could draw in the net and unload it. When this was done the boat was so heavily laden that there was danger of its sinking.

Peter had seen Jesus perform wonderful miracles, but none made so strong an impression upon his mind as this miraculous draught of fish, after a night of disappointment. The unbelief and discouragement that had been oppressing the disciples through the long, weary night, now gave way to awe and amazement. Peter was thrilled with a sense of the divine power of his Master. He felt ashamed of his sinful unbelief. He knew that he was in the presence of the Son of God, and felt unworthy to be in such companionship. He impulsively flung himself at the feet of Jesus, crying, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" But even as he spoke, he was clinging to the feet of Jesus, and would not have been willing for the Saviour to take him at his word, even if he had attempted to do so.

But Jesus understood the conflicting emotions of the impetuous disciple, and said to him, "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men." Similar words were afterward addressed to the three other fishermen, when they were all upon the shore. As they were busily employed in mending their nets, which had been broken by the great weight of the fish they had taken, Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make

you fishers of men." Immediately after this they left their nets and boats and followed the Saviour. These humble fishermen recognized the divine authority of Jesus, and forthwith gave up their regular occupation and left their worldly possessions in obedience to the command of their Lord.

These four disciples were more closely associated with Jesus in his earthly life than any of the others. Christ, the light of the world, was abundantly able to qualify these unlearned fishermen of Galilee for the high commission he had chosen for them. The words spoken to these lowly men were of mighty signification; they were to influence the world through all time. It seemed a simple thing for Jesus to call those poor, discouraged men to follow him; but it was an event productive of tremendous results; it was to shake the world. The quickening power of God, enlightening the minds of those illiterate fishermen, was to enable them to spread the doctrines of Christ far and wide, and others were to take up the task, until it would reach all lands, and be taught in all ages, winning many to salvation. Thus would the poor fishermen of Galilee be, indeed, "fishers of men."

Jesus did not oppose education. The highest culture, if sanctified by the love and fear of God, receives his approbation. An objection is sometimes brought against education because Jesus chose ignorant fishermen for his disciples. But these men were subject to his refining influence for three years, and the Saviour was the most perfect educator the world has ever known. The Prince of Life did not choose the learned lawyers, the scribes and elders, for his disciples, because

they would not follow him. Therefore he chose the humble peasants for his helpers. The rich and educated among the Jews were exalted by their own worldly wisdom and self-righteousness, and felt all-sufficient in themselves, realizing no special need of a Redeemer. Their characters were fixed, and they would not receive the teachings of Christ. But the humble fishermen were rejoiced to be connected with the Saviour, and become co-laborers with him.

As Jesus passed on his way to Jerusalem, he saw Matthew engaged in his business of tax-gathering. He was a Jew, but when he became a publican his brethren despised him. The Jewish people were continually irritated on account of the Roman yoke. That a despised and heathen nation should collect tribute of them was a constant reminder that their power and glory as an independent nation had departed. Their indignation knew no bounds when one of their own people so far forgot the honor of his exalted race as to accept the office of tax-gatherer.

Those who thus assisted to sustain the Roman authority were considered apostate. The Jews regarded it as degrading to associate in any way with a publican. They considered the office identical with oppression and extortion. But the mind of Jesus was not molded after the prejudices of the Pharisees. He looked below the surface and read the heart. His divine eye saw in Matthew one whom he could use for the establishment of his church. This man had listened to the teachings of Christ, and had been attracted to him. His heart was full of reverence for the Saviour, but the thought had never entered the mind of Matthew that this great Teacher would

condescend to notice him, much less choose him as a disciple. Therefore his astonishment was great when Jesus addressed him with the words, "Follow me."

Without a doubtful murmur, or question as to his consequent pecuniary loss, Matthew rose up and followed his Master, and united his interest with the few disciples of Jesus. The despised publican felt that the Saviour had bestowed upon him an honor which he did not deserve. He gave no thought to the lucrative business he had exchanged for poverty and fatigue. It was enough that he would be in the presence of Christ, that he could learn wisdom and goodness from his lips, behold his marvelous works, and be a co-laborer with him in his arduous toil.

Matthew was wealthy, but he was willing to sacrifice all for his Master. He had many friends and acquaintances whom he was anxious should become followers of Jesus, and he was desirous that they should have an opportunity to meet him. He felt certain that they would be charmed with his pure and simple doctrine, taught without ostentation or display.

He accordingly made a feast at his own house and called together his friends and relatives, among whom were a number of publicans. Jesus was invited as a guest, in whose honor the feast was prepared. He, with his disciples, accepted the courteous invitation, and graced the banquet with his presence. The envious scribes and Pharisees, who were ever watching and following the movements of Jesus, did not lose this opportunity of seeking to condemn the cause of Christ.

They were highly indignant that one who

called himself a Jew should mingle with publicans. Though they refused to acknowledge him the Messiah, and would accept none of his teachings, yet they could not shut their eyes to the fact that he had great influence over the people; this being the case they were chagrined that he should, by his example, ignore their prejudices and traditions. When Jesus called Matthew to follow him their anger knew no bounds that he should thus honor a hated publican. They openly attacked the disciples on the subject, and accused them of eating with publicans and sinners.

"And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?" It was with bitter contempt that they asked this question. Jesus did not wait for his disciples to answer this scornful charge, but himself replied, "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice; for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." He here explained his course by taking the case of a physician, whose work is not among the well, but among those who are diseased. He who came to save the sin-sick soul must go among those who most need his forgiving mercy and pitying love.

Those poor publicans and sinners, although stained with guilt, felt their need of repentance and pardon. It was the mission of Heaven to relieve just such want as theirs. Although these persons apparently disregarded religious rites and

observances, yet in heart and life they were better fitted to become sincere Christians than the Pharisees and priests who scorned them. Many of them were possessed of noble integrity, and would not wrong their conscience by rejecting a doctrine which their reason declared to be true.

Jesus had come to heal the wounds of sin among his own nation, but they refused his proffered aid; they trampled upon his teachings and made light of his mighty works. The Lord turned, therefore, to those who would hear his words. Matthew and his associates obeyed the summons of the Master and followed him. The despised publican became one of the most devoted evangelists. His unselfish heart was drawn out for souls that needed the light. He did not repulse sinners by magnifying his own piety, and contrasting it with their sinfulness; but linked them to himself through kindly sympathy, as he presented to them the precious gospel of Christ. His labors were attended with marked success. Many of those who sat at that feast, and listened to the divine instruction of Jesus, became instruments of enlightenment to the people.

The pointed words addressed by Jesus to the Pharisees on the occasion of this feast silenced them, but did not remove their prejudice nor soften their hearts. They went away and complained to the disciples of John concerning the practices of Jesus and his followers. They dilated upon the dangerous influence that he exerted over the people, setting at naught their ancient traditions, and preaching a doctrine of mercy and love to the world. They sought to arouse dissatisfaction in the minds of John's disciples by contrasting their austere piety and rigorous fasting with the example of Jesus in feasting with publicans and sinners.

The feelings of John's disciples were stirred, and they complained to the disciples of Jesus concerning the course of their Master, which was so contrary to the teachings of John. If John was sent of God, and taught according to his Spirit, how could the practices of Jesus be right? The followers of the Saviour, being unable to answer these questions, brought the matter to their Master. "And they said unto him, Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink? And he said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days."

Jesus had come to the world, bringing the light of Heaven. He came as the Redeemer of mankind, to limit the power of Satan and set the captive free. At his birth the heavenly messengers had borne the glad tidings of great joy to the humble shepherds upon the plains of Bethlehem, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men!"

The greatest gift of Heaven had been given to the world. Joy to the poor, for Christ has come to make them heirs of his kingdom! Joy to the rich, for he will teach them how to apply their earthly treasure that it may secure for them eternal riches in Heaven! Joy to the ignorant, for he has come to give them wisdom unto salvation! Joy to the learned, for he will open to their

understanding deeper mysteries than they have ever before fathomed!

Said the Saviour, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see these things which ye see, and have not seen them, and to hear these things which ye hear, and have not heard them." The mission of Christ opened to the minds of men truths that had been hidden from the foundation of the world.

Every human enterprise sinks into insignificance when compared with the advent of Christ upon the earth. What occasion for joy had the disciples who were permitted to walk and talk with the Majesty of Heaven! Happy were they who had the Prince of Peace in their very midst, bestowing upon them daily new mercies and blessings. Why should they mourn and fast? It was more fitting for them to mourn who rejected the Saviour and closed their eyes and ears to his divine teachings, who turned from the peace and joy of infinite love and truth. The treasure of Heaven was entrusted to them for a time, and they, heedless of the gift, chose bondage and darkness rather than freedom and light through Christ.

In the synagogue at Nazareth Jesus had announced himself the Redeemer of mankind. Said he, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised; to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

How could the children of the bridechamber fast when the bridegroom was yet with them? But when he should go back to Heaven, leaving his disciples to meet alone the unbelief and darkness of the world, then it would be fitting for the church to fast and mourn, until her absent Lord should return the second time.

The jealous Pharisees misinterpreted all the actions of our Lord. The very deeds that should have melted their hearts and won their admiration, only served as an excuse to charge him with immorality. These self-righteous men had so often been rebuked by Jesus for their iniquity, and exposed in their evil purposes and wicked natures, that they did not dare to bring their complaints to him, but carry them where they will be most likely to create prejudice and unbelief. Had the disciples of Jesus listened to these insinuations, they would have ceased from following their Master. But they heeded not the base charges of impiety and evil associations against him by those who were themselves filled with malice and hatred.

The Saviour ate with sinners, he spoke to them the words of life, and many accepted him as their Redeemer. The feast of Christ was holy; but the fasting Pharisees will have their portion with the hypocrites and unbelievers, when Christ shall come in his glory, and those whom they scorned will be gathered into his kingdom.

THE SABBATH.

Nothing so distinguished the Jews from surrounding nations, and designated them as true worshipers of the Creator, as the institution of

the Sabbath. Its observance was a continual visible token of their connection with God, and separation from other people. All ordinary labor for a livelihood or for worldly profit was forbidden upon the seventh day. According to the fourth commandment the Sabbath was dedicated to rest and religious worship. All secular employment was to be suspended; but works of mercy and benevolence were in accordance with the purpose of the Lord. They were not to be limited by time nor place. To relieve the afflicted, to comfort the sorrowing is a labor of love that does honor to God's holy day.

The work of the priests in connection with the sacrificial offerings was increased upon the Sabbath, yet in their holy work in the service of God they did not violate the fourth commandment of the decalogue. As Israel separated from God, the true object of the Sabbath institution became less distinct in their minds. They grew careless of its observance, and unmindful of its ordinances. The prophets testified to them of God's displeasure in the violation of his Sabbath. Nehemiah says: "In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine-presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath-day, and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals."

And Jeremiah commands them: "Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the Sabbath day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem; neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the Sabbath day, neither do ye any

work, but hallow ye the Sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers."

But they heeded not the admonitions of the inspired prophets, and departed more and more from the religion of their fathers. At length calamities, persecution, and bondage came upon them in consequence of their disregard of God's requirements.

Alarmed at these visitations of divine punishment, they returned to the strict observance of all the outward forms enjoined by the sacred law. Not satisfied with this, they made burdensome additions to those ceremonies. Their pride and bigotry led them to the narrowest interpretation of the requirements of God. As time passed they gradually hedged themselves in with the traditions and customs of their ancestors, till they regarded them with all the sanctity of the original law. This confidence in themselves and their own regulations, with its attendant prejudice against all other nations, caused them to resist the Spirit of God, and separated them still farther from his favor.

Their exactions and restrictions were so wearisome that Jesus declared: "They bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders." Their false standard of duty, their superficial tests of piety and godliness, obscured the real and positive requirements of God. Heart service was neglected in the rigid performance of outward ceremonies. The Jews had so perverted the divine commandments, by heaping tradition upon tradition, that, in the days of Christ, they were ready to accuse him of breaking the Sabbath, because of his acts of mercy upon that day.

The grain was ready for the sickle when Jesus and his disciples passed through the corn fields on the Sabbath. The disciples were hungry, for their Master had extended his work of teaching and healing to a late hour, and they had been without food for a long time. They accordingly began to pluck the ears of corn and to eat, rubbing them in their hands, in accordance with the law of Moses, which provides that: "When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbor, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hand; but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbor's standing corn."

But spies were continually upon the track of Jesus, watching for some occasion to accuse and condemn him. When they saw this act of the disciples, they immediately complained to him, saying, "Behold thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the Sabbath day." In this they expressed their own narrow views of the law. But Jesus defended his followers thus: "Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was a hungered, he, and they that were with him? how he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the shewbread, which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him? And he said unto them, The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath."

If excessive hunger excused David for violating even the holiness of the sanctuary, and made his act guiltless, how much more excusable was the simple act of the disciples in plucking the grain and eating it upon the Sabbath day. Jesus would teach his disciples and his enemies that the service of God was first of all; and, if fatigue and hunger attended the work, it was right to satisfy the wants of humanity, even upon the Sabbath day. That holy institution was not given to interfere with the needs of our being, bringing pain, and discomfort, instead of blessings. "The Sabbath was made for man," to give him rest and peace, and remind him of the work of his Creator, not to be a grievous burden.

The work done in the temple upon the Sabbath was in harmony with the law; yet the same labor, if employed in ordinary business, would be a violation of it. The act of plucking and eating the grain to sustain the bodily strength, to be used in the service of God, was right and lawful. Jesus then crowned his argument by declaring himself the "Lord of the Sabbath,"—One above all question and above all law. This Infinite Judge acquits the disciples from blame, appealing to the very statutes they are accused of violating.

But Jesus did not let the matter drop without administering a rebuke to his enemies. He declared that in their blindness they had mistaken the object of the Sabbath. Said he: "But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless." He then contrasted their many heartless rites with the truthful integrity, and tender love that should characterize the true worshipers of God: "For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings. But they like men have transgressed the covenant; there have they dealt treacherously against me."

Jesus was reared among this people, so marked with bigotry and prejudice; and he therefore knew that in healing upon the Sabbath day, he would be regarded as a transgressor of the law. He was aware that the Pharisees would seize upon such acts with great indignation, and thereby seek to influence the people against him. He knew that they would use these works of mercy as strong arguments to affect the minds of the masses, who had all their lives been bound by the Jewish restrictions and exactions. Nevertheless he was not prevented by this knowledge from breaking down the senseless wall of superstition that barricaded the Sabbath, and teaching men that charity and benevolence were lawful upon all days.

He entered the synagogue, and saw there a man who had a withered hand. The Pharisees watched him, eager to see what he would do with regard to this case—whether or not he would heal the man upon the Sabbath day. Their sole object was to find cause for accusation against him. Jesus looked upon the man with the withered hand, and commanded him to stand forth. He then asked, "Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace. And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out; and his hand was restored whole as the other."

He justified this work of healing the paralytic, as in perfect keeping with the principles of the fourth commandment. But they questioned him: "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath days?" Jesus made them the clear and forcible answer, "What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days."

The spies upon our Saviour's words dared not, in the presence of the multitude answer this question for fear of involving themselves in difficulties. They knew that while they would leave men to suffer and die rather than to violate their traditions by relieving them upon the Lord's day, a brute which had fallen into danger would be at once relieved, because of the loss that would accrue to the owner if he was neglected. Thus the dumb animal was exalted above man, made in the image of God.

Jesus wished to correct the false teachings of the Jews in regard to the Sabbath and also to impress his disciples with the fact that deeds of mercy were lawful on that day. In the matter of healing the withered hand he broke down the custom of the Jews, and left the fourth commandment standing as God had given it to the world. By this act he exalted the Sabbath, sweeping away the senseless restrictions that encumbered it. His act of mercy did honor to the day, while those who complained of him, were, by their many useless rites and ceremonies, themselves dishonoring the Sabbath.

There are ministers to-day who teach that the Son of God broke the Sabbath and justified his disciples in doing the same. They take the same ground as did the caviling Jews, although osten-

sibly for another purpose, since they hold that Christ abolished the Sabbath.

Jesus in turning upon the Pharisees with the question whether it was lawful to do good upon the Sabbath day or evil, to save life or to kill, confronted them with their own wicked purposes. They were following upon his track to find occasion for falsely accusing him; they were hunting his life with bitter hatred and malice, while he was saving life and bringing happiness to many hearts. Was it better to slay upon the Sabbath, as they were planning to do, than to heal the afflicted as he had done? Was it more righteous to have murder in the heart upon God's holy day, than love to all men which finds expression in deeds of charity and mercy?

SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

The Redeemer of the world sought to make his lessons so simple that all could understand who heard them. It was not his choice to teach within walls or temples. True, he often did so in order to reach a class whom he would not be likely to meet while speaking in the open air, but Jesus preferred the fields, the groves, and the lake-sides for his temples. There were also his favorite resorts for meditation and prayer.

He had special reasons for choosing these natural sanctuaries in which to give instruction to the people. The landscape lay before him, rich in scenes and objects familiar alike to the lofty and the humble. From these he drew illustrations that simplified his teachings, and impressed them firmly upon the minds of his hearers. The birds caroling in the leafy branches, the glowing

flowers of the valley, the spotless lily resting on the bosom of the lake, the lofty trees, the fruitful lands, the waving grain, the barren soil, the tree that bore no fruit, the mighty hills, the bubbling brooks, the setting sun that tinted and gilded the heavens, all served as means of instruction, or as emblems by which he taught the beauties of divine truth. He connected the visible works of the Creator with the words of life which he spoke, and thus led the mind from the contemplation of Nature unto Nature's God.

The malice of the Jews was so great in consequence of the miracle of Jesus in healing the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath day, that he with his disciples withdrew to a more favorable field of labor. They went to the seaside of Galilee, and great multitudes followed him, for this new miracle wrought upon the Sabbath day was noised abroad through all that region. As Jesus taught, many of the sick, and those possessed with demons, were brought to him, and he made them whole. His great heart of love was filled with divine pity for the poor sufferers, many of whom sought only to draw near enough to touch him, believing that in so doing they would be healed, and in this they were not disappointed, for the touch of faith brought healing power from the great Physician, and their distress and gloom were changed to joy and thanksgiving. He also cast out many demons, who, in leaving their victims, acknowledged Christ, saying, "Thou art the Son of God."

The people of Galilee were greatly aroused, and flocked to the presence of the Saviour. At length the crowd so increased that he scarcely had room to stand, and therefore entered a small ship,

which was near the shore, and there preached to the crowd that thronged upon the beach. So he labored uninterruptedly in teaching the people and in healing the sick. But when the day was far spent he stole away and hid himself in the solitude of the mountain, to commune with his Father in secret. Jesus spent the entire night in prayer, while his disciples slept at the foot of the mountain. About dawn he came and wakened them. The disciples were now about to receive an office of sacred responsibility, second only to that of Christ himself. They were to be set apart for the gospel work. They were to be linked with Jesus, to be with him, to share his joys and trials, to receive his teachings, and be faithful witnesses of his mighty works, that they might be able to impart the instruction thus gained to the world. They were to be qualified so that Jesus could at times send them forth alone to teach and work even as he taught and worked. Jesus wished his disciples to gain an experience in the gospel labor while he was on earth to comfort and direct them, so that they would be able to successfully continue the work after his death, and lay the foundation of the Christian church.

While Jesus was preparing his disciples for their ordination, and instructing them as to the duties of the great work that lay before them, Judas urged his presence among them. This man made great professions of devotion to Jesus, and proposed to become one of his disciples. Said he, "Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." Jesus did not warmly receive him, neither did he repulse him, but addressed him with these words of mournful pathos, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have

nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." Judas was selfish, and his main object in seeking a connection with Christ was to obtain temporal advantages through him; but Christ's reference to his own poverty, contrasting his condition with that of the foxes and the birds, was designed to cut off any hope Judas might cherish of securing earthly gain by becoming a follower of Christ. Judas was a man of acknowledged executive ability, and possessed of no small influence. For these reasons the disciples were anxious that he should form one of their number. They commended him in the highest terms to Jesus, as one who would greatly assist him in his work. They were therefore surprised that he received him so coolly; but the Saviour read the heart of Judas, and knew, even then, the part he was to act in his future betrayal and execution. Still, Jesus wished to connect this man with himself, that he might learn his divine mission, and gain moral strength to overcome the defects in his character, and experience an entire change of heart that would ensure his salvation. This it was possible for him to do, through the help of Christ.

Had Jesus repulsed Judas, the disciples, who regarded him with such favor, would have questioned, in their own minds, the wisdom of their Master. In receiving him, Jesus avoided this, and also placed the selfish and avaricious Judas in the most favorable position to develop qualities of mind and heart that would eventually gain for him a place in the kingdom of Heaven. But notwithstanding these precious opportunities Judas chose a course that covered him with everlasting infamy.

Gathering his disciples about him, Jesus bowed in their midst, and, laying his hands upon their heads, offered a prayer, dedicating them to his sacred work. Thus were the Lord's disciples ordained to the gospel ministry. This being accomplished, Jesus with his companions returned to the sea-side, where the multitudes were already gathering to hear him. Many of them were there for the purpose of being relieved of various maladies. Here he healed the sick and comforted the sorrowing, until the crowd increased so that there was not room for them upon the narrow beach. Jesus therefore moved up the mountain to a level space where the people could be accommodated. Here Jesus called his disciples near him, that the great truths he uttered might not fail to be indelibly impressed upon their minds, and that nothing might divert their attention from his words.

Though the disciples were close about him, and his words seemed specially addressed to them, yet they were also designed to reach the hearts and consciences of the mixed crowd there assembled. At every large gathering of this kind, the people still expected that Jesus would make some great display of power in regard to the new kingdom of which he had spoken. The believing Jews looked for him to free them from the yoke of bondage and reinstate them in their ancient glory. But in his sermon on the mount Christ disappointed their hopes of earthly glory. He opened his discourse by stating the principles that should govern his kingdom of divine grace, as contained in the several beatitudes.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven." The poor in spirit are

those who claim no personal merit, and boast of no virtue in themselves. Realizing their utter helplessness, and deeply convicted of sin, they put no faith in mere outward ceremonies, but cast themselves upon Jesus who is all-righteous and all-compassionate. The Christian can only rise through humility. The proud heart strives in vain to earn salvation by good works; for though one cannot be saved without good works, yet these alone will not suffice to win eternal life. After he has done all he can, Christ must impute to him his own righteousness.

In Christ, God has bestowed Heaven's best gift to redeem man, and, as the gift is full and infinite, so is saving grace boundless and all-sufficient. This saying of Christ struck at the very root of the self-righteousness of the Pharisees, who felt themselves already rich in spiritual knowledge, and did not realize their need to learn more. Such characters could have no part in the kingdom of Christ.

"Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted." In pronouncing a blessing upon those who mourn, Jesus did not design to teach that there is any virtue in living under a perpetual cloud, nor that selfish sorrow and repining has any merit of itself to remove a single stain of sin. The mourning spoken of by Christ is a godly sorrow for sin, that works repentance unto eternal life. Many grieve when their guilt is discovered, because the result of their evil course has brought them into disagreeable circumstances. It was thus that Esau mourned the sin of despising and selling his birth-right; but it was the unexpected consequences of that sin which caused his grief. So Pharaoh regretted his stub-

born defiance of God, when he cried for the plagues to be removed from him; but his heart was unchanged, and he was ready to repeat his crime when tempted. Such mourning is not unto repentance.

He who is truly convicted of sin feels his whole life to have been one continued scene of ingratitude. He feels that he has robbed his best friend of the time and strength which was bought for him at an infinite price. His whole soul is filled with unutterable sorrow that he has slighted and grieved his compassionate Saviour. Such mourning is precious, for it will yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness. The worldling, from his stand-point, may pronounce this sorrow a weakness; but it is the strength which binds the penitent to the Infinite One with links that cannot be broken. It reveals that the angels of God are bringing back to his soul the graces which were lost through hardness of heart and transgression. To confess and deplore one's errors evinces an excellence of character capable of discerning and correcting them. The tears of the penitent are only the clouds and the raindrops that precede the sunshine of holiness, the sorrow that heralds a joy that will be a living fountain in the soul. Men are sowing in God's great field with toil and tears, yet with patient expectation; and they will be blessed, for the heavens will open and the rain will fall, insuring a bountiful harvest. Then when the Reaper comes, he will return with joy bringing home his sheaves.

"Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth." The difficulties that the Christian encounters may be very much lessened by that

meekness of character which hides itself in Christ. Jesus invites all the weary and heavy laden to come unto him who is meek and lowly in heart, that they may find rest. If the Christian possesses the humility of his Master, he will rise above the slights, the rebuffs, and annoyances to which he is daily exposed, and they will cease to cast a gloom over his spirit. That meekness which Jesus blessed, operates amid the scenes of domestic life; it makes the home happy, it provokes no quarrels, gives back no angry answers, but soothes the irritated temper, and diffuses a gentleness which is felt by all within its charmed circle. It calms the inflammable spirit of retaliation, and mirrors forth the character of Christ.

Far better would it be for Christians to suffer under false accusations than to inflict upon themselves the torture of retaliation against their enemies. Hatred and revenge are instigated by Satan, and bring only remorse to him who cherishes them. Lowliness of heart is the strength that gives victory to the Christian. His reward is an inheritance of glory.

"Blessed are they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled." As the body feels the necessity for temporal food to supply the waste of the system, and preserve the physical strength, so the soul should long for that spiritual nourishment that increases the moral strength, and satisfies the cravings of the mind and heart. As the body is continually receiving the nutriment that sustains life and vigor, so should the soul constantly receive the heavenly food which gives nerve and muscle to spirituality. As the weary traveler eagerly seeks the spring in the desert, and, finding it, quenches his

burning thirst with its cool and sparkling water, so should the Christian thirst for and seek the pure water of life, of which Christ is the fountain. There the soul may be satisfied, there the fever born of worldly strife is allayed, and the spirit is forever refreshed. But a majority of those who listened to Jesus hungered only for worldly advantages and honor. Especially did the self-exaltation of the Pharisees prevent them from longing for any higher attainments than they had already reached, for in their own estimation they were at the very pinnacle of perfect righteousness. However, there were many who heard thankfully the lessons of Jesus, and from that time, shaped their lives according to his teachings.

"Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy." Here Jesus struck a blow at the arrogance and cruel intolerance of the Jews. Both priests and people were, as a rule, overbearing, quarreling with all who opposed them, severely critical and resentful of any reflection cast upon their own acts. Jesus said of the Pharisees, "Ye tithe mint, and rue, and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God." The Saviour desired to teach his followers a lesson of mercy that they should not be wanting in that tender compassion which pities and aids the suffering and erring, and avoids magnifying the faults of others.

"Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God." The Jews were so exacting in regard to ceremonial purity that their regulations were extremely burdensome. Their minds were so occupied with rules and restrictions, and the fear of outward defilement, that they lost sight

of the necessity for purity of motive and nobility of action. They did not perceive the stain that selfishness, injustice, and malice, leave upon the soul.

Jesus declared that the pure in heart should see God. They would recognize him in the person of his Son, who was sent to the world for the salvation of the human race. Their minds, being cleansed and occupied with pure thoughts, would more clearly discover the Creator in the works of his mighty hand, in the things of beauty and magnificence which comprise the universe. They would live as in the visible presence of the Almighty, in a world of his creation, during the time that he apportions them here. They would also see God in the future immortal state, as did Adam when he walked and talked with God in Eden. Even now the pure in heart see God "through a glass darkly, but then face to face."

"Blessed are the peace-makers; for they shall be called the children of God." Our Heavenly Father is a God of peace. When he created man he placed him in an abode of peace and security. All was unity and happiness in the garden of Eden. Those who are partakers of the divine nature will love peace and contentment; they will cultivate the virtues that insure those results. They will seek to allay wrath, to quiet resentment and fault finding, and all the evil passions that foster quarrels and dissensions. The more men unite with the world, and fall into its ways, the less they have of the true elements of peace in their hearts, and the more they are leavened with the bitterness of worldly strife, jealousy, and evil thoughts toward each other, which only needs certain circumstances to de-

velop them into active agents for evil. Those whose anger kindles at slight provocations, and those who watch the words and acts of others to secretly report them where they will stir up enmity, are the direct opposite of the peace-makers who are called the children of God.

The true Christian will in his intercourse with men suppress words that would tend to produce unnecessary anger and strife. All Heaven is at peace, and those who are closely connected with Christ will be in harmony with Heaven. Jesus declared: "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but in me ye shall have peace." Those who are in sympathy with the Saviour will not be restless and dissatisfied. They will partake of the nature of Christ, and their lives will emulate his example.

The multitudes were amazed at this doctrine, so at variance with the precepts and example of the scribes and Pharisees. The people had imbibed the idea from them that happiness consisted in the possession of the things of this world, and that fame and the honor of men were much to be coveted. It was very pleasing to be called "Rabbi," and to be extolled as very wise and religious, having their virtues paraded before the public. This was considered the crown of happiness. But Jesus, in the presence of that vast throng, declared that earthly gain and honor was all the reward such persons would ever receive. Jesus spoke with certainty, and a convincing power attended his words. The people were silenced, and a feeling of fear crept over them. They looked at each other doubtfully. Who of them would be saved if this man's teachings were true? Many were deeply convicted that this remarkable teacher was actuated by the Spirit of God, and that the sentiments he uttered were divine.

These lessons of instruction were particularly calculated to benefit the disciples, whose lives would be governed by the principles therein taught. It was to be their work to impart the divine knowledge they derived from Jesus, to the world. It was their task to spread the gospel far and wide among the people of all lands, and it was very important that all the lessons of Jesus should be plain to their minds, stamped upon their memories, and incorporated in their lives. Every truth was to be stored away in their minds and hearts for future use.

After Jesus had explained to the people what constituted true happiness, and how it could be obtained, he more definitely pointed out the duty of his disciples, as teachers chosen of God to lead others into the path of righteousness and eternal life. He knew that they would often suffer from disappointment and discouragement, that they would meet with decided opposition, that they would be insulted, and their testimony rejected. His penetrating eye looked down the coming years of their ministry, and saw the sorrow and abuse that would attend their efforts to lead men to salvation. Well he knew that the humble men who listened so attentively to his words were to bear, in the fulfillment of their mission, calumny, torture, imprisonment and death, and he continues:—

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner

of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in Heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." Jesus here shows them that at the very time when they are experiencing great suffering in his cause, they have reason to be glad, and recognize that their afflictions are profitable to them, having an influence to wean their affections from the world and concentrate them upon Heaven. He taught them that their losses and disappointments would result in actual gain, that the severe trials of their faith and patience should be cheerfully accepted, rather than dreaded and avoided. These afflictions were God's agents to refine and fit them for their peculiar work, and would add to the precious reward that awaited them in Heaven. He charged them, when persecuted by men, not to lose confidence, nor become depressed and mourn over their hard lot, but to remember that righteous men of the past had likewise suffered for their obedience. Anxious to fulfill their duty to the world, fixing their desire upon the approbation of God, they were calmly and faithfully to discharge every duty, irrespective of the fear or favor of man.

Those things which seem to the Christian most grievous to be borne often prove his greatest blessing. Reproach and falsehood have ever followed those who were faithful in the discharge of duty. A righteous character, though blackened in reputation by slander and falsehood, will preserve the purity of its virtue and excellence. Trampled in the mire, or exalted to heaven, the Christian's life should be the same, and the proud consciousness of innocence is its own reward.

The persecution of enemies tests the foundation upon which the reputation really rests. Sooner or later it is revealed to the world whether or not the evil reports were true, or were the poisoned shafts of malice and revenge. Constancy in serving God is the only safe manner of settling such questions. Jesus would have his people use great care to give the enemies of his cause no ground to condemn their holy faith. No wrong action should cast a stigma upon its purity. When all arguments fail, the slanderers frequently open their galling fire upon the besieged servants of God; but their lying tongues eventually bring curses upon themselves. God will finally vindicate the right, honor the guiltless, and hide them in the secret of his pavilion from the strife of tongues.

God's servants have always suffered reprcach; but the great work moves on, amid persecution, imprisonments, stripes, and death. The character of the persecution changes with the times, but the principle—the spirit that underlies it—is the same that stoned and beat and slew the chosen of the Lord centuries ago.

There was never one who walked a man among men more cruelly slandered than the Son of God. He was met at every point with bitter reproaches. They hated him without a cause. The Pharisees even hired men to repeat from city to city the falsehoods which they themselves fabricated to destroy the influence of Jesus. Yet he stood calmly before them declaring that reproach was a part of the Christian's legacy, counseling his followers how to meet the arrows of malice, bidding them not to faint under persecutions, but, "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad;" "for so perse-

cuted they the prophets which were before you." Jesus continued to impress upon the minds of his disciples the responsibility of their relation to the world. Said he:—

"Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men." The people could see the white salt, glistening in the pathway, where it had been cast out because it had lost its savor and was therefore useless. Jesus used salt as an illustration of the Christian's life and teachings upon the world. Were it not for the few righteous who inhabit the earth, the wrath of God would not be delayed a moment from punishing the wicked. But the prayers and good works of the people of God preserve the world; they are the savor of life. But if Christians are only so in name, if they have not virtuous characters and godly lives, they are like the salt that has lost its savor. Their influence upon the world is bad; they are worse than unbelievers.

Jesus took objects in the view of his listeners as emblems by which to teach his truth. The people had come together to hear him while it was yet early morning. The glorious sun, climbing higher and higher in the blue sky, was chasing away the shadows that lurked in the valleys and among the narrow defiles of the mountains. The glory of the eastern heavens had not yet faded out. The sunlight flooded the land with its splendor, the placid surface of the lake reflected the golden light, and mirrored the rosy clouds of morning. Every bud and flower and leafy spray glistened with dew-drops. Nature smiled under the benediction of a new day, and the birds sang sweetly among the spreading trees. The Saviour looked upon the company before him, and then upon the rising sun, and said to his disciples, "Ye are the light of the world." The figure was peculiarly striking. As the sun lit up the landscape with his genial rays and scattered the shades of night, so the disciples were to diffuse the light of truth, and scatter the moral darkness that brooded over the world. In the brilliant light of morning the towns and villages situated upon the surrounding hills stood forth clearly and made an attractive feature of the scene. Jesus, pointing to them said, "A city that is set on a hill can not be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven." In these words Jesus taught his disciples that if they wished to direct others in the path of righteousness, their own example should be correct, and their acts reflect the light of truth.

Moral disease abounds, and darkness covers the earth; but the disciples of Christ are represented as lights shining amid the gloom of night. Those rays reveal the dangers that lie in the sinner's path, and point the true way to righteousness and safety. If those who profess to be Christ's followers, and to have the light of truth, are not careful to present that truth to others in a proper manner, those who are in the darkness of error will see no beauty in it. In carrying a lantern on a dark night, to light the way for one who is following, the bearer sometimes becomes careless,

and permits his person to interpose between the light and the one whom he is guiding, and the darkness of the way is rendered more intense to him from the temporary light that has been shed upon it. So with many who essay to present the truth of God to others; they hide the precious light with their own defective characters, which stand out darkly conspicuous in their deformity, and turn many from the truth. The characters of the professed followers of Christ should be so admirable, and their deeds so exemplary, that the world will be attracted toward a religion that bears such fruits of righteousness. They will thus be led to investigate and embrace its principles from the fact that the lives of its representatives shine forth with such holiness that they are the beacon lights of the world.

The Pharisees shut themselves away from the world, and thereby made it impossible for them to exert an influence over the people of the world; but Jesus names his disciples the "light the world." Their teachings and example are to scatter the clouds of error, and all nations and people are to feel their influence. The religion of the Bible is not to be confined between two covers nor within the walls of a church. It is not to be brought out only occasionally simply for our own benefit, and then carefully laid aside again, but it is to sanctify the daily life, to manifest itself in every business transaction and in all the social relations of life. Such a religion was in marked contrast with that of the Pharisees, which consisted only in the hollow observance of rules and ceremonies, and shed no ennobling influence over their lives.

Jesus was closely watched by spies, who were

ready to seize any unguarded word that might drop from his lips. The Saviour was well aware of the prejudice existing in the minds of many of his hearers. He said nothing to unsettle the faith of the Jews in the religion and institutions of Moses. The same voice that declared the moral and ceremonial law, which was the foundation of the whole Jewish system, also uttered the words of instruction on the mount. It was because of his great reverence for the law and the prophets that Jesus sought to break through the wall of superstitious exactions that hemmed in the Jews. He wished them not only to observe the law, but to develop the principles of that law and the teachings of the prophets.

Jesus severely criticised the false interpretations which the Jews had given to the law, yet he sufficiently guarded his disciples against the danger of yielding up the vital truths given to the Hebrews. Jesus came not to destroy their confidence in the instruction which he himself had given them through Moses in the wilderness. But, while he taught them due reverence for that law, he desired to lead them on to higher truths and a greater knowledge, that they might advance into clearer light.

As Jesus explained the duty of his disciples in the works of righteousness, the Pharisees saw that the doctrines taught condemned their course, and, in order to prejudice the people against the great Teacher, whispered to one another that the lessons of Jesus were in opposition to the law of Moses, in that he made no mention of that law. In this way they designed to arouse the indignation of the people against Christ. But Jesus, perceiving their intent, in the presence of the

vast multitude, and in a clear and distinct voice, declared, to the utter discomfiture of his enemies, these words:—

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily, I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." Here Jesus refutes the charge of the Pharisees. His mission to the world is to vindicate the claims of that sacred law which they charge him with breaking. If the law of God could have been changed or abolished, then Christ need not have come to a fallen world to suffer the consequence of man's transgression. Jesus came to explain the relation of the law of God to man, and to illustrate its precepts by his own example of obedience. He further declares that, "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of Heaven." Thus did the Saviour declare the validity of the moral law. Those who disobey the commandments of God, and teach others to do the same by their example and doctrine, are condemned by Christ. They are the children of the wicked one, who was the first rebel against the law of God. Having explicitly declared his reverence for his Father's law, Jesus in these words condemns the practices of the Pharisees, who were strict in their outward observance of that law while their hearts and lives were corrupt:—

"For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of Heaven." The righteousness

here taught was conformity of the heart and life to the revealed will of God. Jesus taught that the law of God should regulate the thoughts and purposes of the mind. True godliness elevates the thoughts and actions; *then* the external forms of religion accord with the Christian's internal purity; then those ceremonies required in the service of God are not meaningless rites, like those of the hypocritical Pharisees.

Many religious teachers of to-day are themselves breaking the commandments of God, and teaching others to do so. In place of those holy commandments, they boldly teach the customs and traditions of men, regardless of the direct testimony of Christ that such ones should be "least in the kingdom of Heaven." Jesus declared to the multitude assembled to hear him, to the Pharisees, who sought to accuse him of lightly regarding the law, and to the people of all time, that the precepts of Jehovah were immutable and eternal.

The report had been brought of murder and robbery in the wild region near Capernaum, and there was a general expression of indignation and horror in consequence among those who were assembled to hear Jesus. The divine Teacher took advantage of this circumstance to point an important lesson. Said he:—

"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the Judgment. But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the Judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be

in danger of hell fire." Here Jesus describes murder as first existing in the mind. That malice and revenge which would delight in deeds of violence is of itself murder. Jesus goes further still, and says, "Whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the Judgment." There is an anger that is not of this criminal nature. A certain kind of indignation is justifiable, under some circumstances, even in the followers of Christ. When they see God dishonored, his name reviled, and the precious cause of truth brought into disrepute by those who profess to revere it, when they see the innocent oppressed and persecuted, a righteous indignation stirs their soul; such anger, born of sensitive morals, is not a sin. Among the listeners are those who congratulate themselves upon their righteousness because they have committed no outward crime, while they are cherishing in their hearts feelings of the same nature as that which prompts the assassin to do his fearful deed. Yet these men make professions of piety, and conform to the outward requirements of religion. To such Jesus addresses these words:—

"Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." He thus shows that crimes originate in the mind, and those who permit hatred and revenge to find a place in their hearts have already set their feet in the path of the murderer, and their offerings are not acceptable to God. The only remedy is to root out all bitterness and animosity from the heart. But the Saviour even goes further than this, and declares that if another has aught against us, we should endeavor to relieve his mind, and, if possible, remove those feelings from it, before our offering can be acceptable with God. This lesson is of special importance to the church at this time. Many are zealous in religious services while unhappy differences exist between them and their brethren which it is in their power to remove, and which God requires them to remove before he will accept their services. Christ has so clearly pointed out the Christian's course in this matter that there should be no question in his mind as to his duty.

While Jesus is teaching, there are pleasure-boats upon the water, and it is evident to all that the idlers who occupy them are disreputable characters. The listening people expect Jesus to severely denounce this class, but are surprised when he declares: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery. But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." Those who have looked upon the guilty characters who lead lives of sensual dissipation as sinners above all others, are astonished to hear Jesus assert that those who cherish lascivious thoughts are as guilty at heart as the shameless violators of the seventh commandment. Jesus condemned the custom then existing of a man putting away his wife for trivial offenses. This practice led to great wretchedness and crime. Jesus strikes at the primary cause of the laxness with which the marriage relation was held, when he condemns the unholy passions which find the marriage institution a barrier to the gratification of their

lust. Christ would have the marriage relation hedged about with judicial restrictions, so that there could be no legal separation between husband and wife, save for the cause of adultery.

Many who had regarded the commandments as prohibiting actual crime but reaching no farther, now perceive that the law of God should be obeyed in spirit as well as in letter. In this manner Jesus takes up the commandments separately and explains the depth and breadth of their requirements, exposing the fatal mistake of the Jews in their merely outward obedience. Jesus gives a lesson upon oath-taking, saying, "Let your communication be Yea, yea; Nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." The third commandment condemns the profane swearer, but the spirit of the precept reaches farther still, and forbids that the name of God be introduced into the conversation in a careless or irreverent manner. Many, even of the professed followers of Christ, are in the habit of using lightly the name of God, and, even in their prayers and exhortations, do not use the Supreme name with a proper solemnity.

A detachment of the Roman troops was encamped near by, on the sea-shore, and Jesus is now interrupted by the loud blast of the trumpet which is the signal for the soldiers to assemble on the plain below. They form in the regular order, bowing in homage to the Roman standard which is uplifted before them. With bitterness the Jews look upon this scene which reminds them of their own degradation as a nation. Presently messengers are dispatched from the army, with orders to various distant posts. As they toil up the abrupt bank that borders the shore,

they are brought near to the listening crowd that surrounds Jesus, and they force some of the Jewish peasants to carry their burdens for them up the steep ascent. The peasants resist this act of oppression, and address their persecutors with violent language; but they are finally compelled to obey the soldiers, and perform the menial task required of them. This exhibition of Roman authority stirs the people with indignation, and they turn eagerly to hear what the great Teacher will say of this cruel act of oppression. With sadness, because of the sins which had brought the Jews into such bondage, Jesus looks upon the shameful scene. He also notes the hatred and revenge stamped upon the faces of the Jews, and knows how bitterly they long for power to crush their oppressors. Mournfully he says:—

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away."

The example of Jesus was a practical illustration of the lesson here taught; contumely and persecution never caused him to retaliate upon his enemies. But this was a hard saying for the revengeful Jews, and they murmured against it among themselves. Jesus now makes a still stronger declaration:—

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy.

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?"

The manifestation of hatred never breaks down the malice of our enemies. But love and kindness beget love and kindness in return. Although God faithfully rewards virtue and punishes guilt, yet he does not withhold his blessings from the wicked, although they daily dishonor his name. He allows the sunshine and the showers to fall upon the just and the unjust, bringing alike worldly prosperity to both. If a holy God exercises such forbearance and benevolence toward the rebellious and the idolatrous, how necessary it is that erring man should manifest a like spirit toward his fellow-men. Instead of cursing those who injure him, it is his duty to seek to win them from their evil ways by a kindness similar to that with which Christ treated them who persecuted him. Jesus taught his followers that they should exercise a Christian courtesy toward all who came within their influence, that they should not be forgetful in deeds of mercy, and that when solicited for favors, they should show a benevolence superior to that of the worldling. The children of God should represent the spirit that rules in Heaven. Their

principles of action should not be of the same character with the narrow, selfish spirit of the world. Perfection alone can meet the standard of Heaven. As God himself is perfect in his exalted sphere, so should his children be perfect in the humble sphere they occupy. Thus only can they be fit for the companionship of sinless beings in the kingdom of Heaven. Christ addresses to his followers these words that establish the standard of Christian character: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect."

PARABLE OF THE SOWER.

Jesus had spent the entire night in prayer, and he came down to the beach in the early morning to look for his disciples who were fishing near the shore. He could not long remain undisturbed by the people. As soon as it was known that Christ was by the sea-side, the multitude flocked to him. Their numbers increased so that he was pressed upon all sides. As he stood teaching them, the crowd became so dense that he stepped into a boat, and pulling out a little from the shore, gave the people a better opportunity to see and hear him, as he continued his discourse.

He frequently adopted this plan to escape from the eager throng that crowded upon each other to get into his presence. In this way he could speak the things that he desired them to hear without interruption. The Saviour, seated in the rude boat of a fisherman, taught the words of life to the listening people upon the beach. He was patient with those who were laboring under

temptation, tender and kind to the sorrowing and disheartened. His words found a response in many hearts, and light from his divine instruction poured in upon many darkened minds.

What a scene was this for angels to contemplate! Their glorious Commander, sitting in a fisherman's boat, swayed to and fro by the restless water, and preaching salvation to the listening crowd that are pressing down to the water's edge! He who was the honored of Heaven teaches his grand doctrine of deliverance in the open air to the common crowd. Yet he could have no more magnificent scene for his labors. The lake, the mountains, the spreading fields, the sunlight flooding the earth, all furnish subjects by which his lessons can be impressed upon the human mind.

In plain sight are the sowers and the reapers, side by side, the one casting the seed, and the other harvesting the early grain. The fruitful valleys, and the hill-sides are clothed in beauty. The barren rocks are seen upon the beach, and the birds make the air vocal with their music. The sea-fowls skim upon the surface of the water. Jesus takes this opportunity to draw lessons from nature that will sink into the minds of his listeners. He employs the scenery about him to illustrate his doctrine, so that in the future, whenever these objects are presented to their eyes, their thoughts will revert to the lessons of truth drawn from them by Jesus. They will be daily reminders of the precious instruction which they had received from him.

Sitting thus, and looking upon the animated scene before him, Jesus uttered the parable that has been handed down to us through the ages, as

pure and beautiful to-day in its unadorned simplicity as when it was given that morning on the Sea of Galilee more than eighteen hundred years ago:—

"Hearken; behold, there went out a sower to sow. And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the wayside, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up. And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth; but when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased, and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred. And he said unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

This striking illustration of the spreading abroad of the gospel of the Son of God engaged the earnest attention of the people. The speaker carried with him the minds of his hearers. Their souls were stirred, and many a heart throbbed with the animation of a new purpose. They were charmed with a doctrine so ennobling in its principles, yet so easily understood. The high spiritual attainments which Jesus taught seemed then very desirable. But how soon the impressions there received were to pass away from many minds, when they again mingled with the world. The sins that had seemed so heinous under the holy light of the Master's presence, would be clasped again to their erring hearts. Unfavorable surroundings, and worldly cares and tempta-

tions would cause them to relapse again into indifference.

But others who listened commenced from that moment a holier life, carrying out daily the principles of Christ's teachings. The subject matter of his discourse, illustrated by the scene before them, would never be effaced from their minds. The varied ground, some producing only thistles and noxious weeds, the ledges of rock covered with a surface of earth, the sowers with their seed, all being before their eyes, fastened his words in their minds as nothing else could have done.

The existing state of things led Jesus to give the parable of the sower. The people who followed Christ had been disappointed that he did not set up a new kingdom. Long had they looked for a Messiah who would exalt and glorify them as a nation, and now that their expectations were not realized, they refused to receive him as their Redeemer. Even his chosen disciples were becoming impatient that he did not assume temporal authority, and his relatives were disappointed in him and rejected him. They had addressed him in these words: "Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy disciples may see the works that thou doest. For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, show thyself to the world."

His followers were mortified that the learned and wealthy were not the most willing to accept Jesus as their Saviour. They felt the stigma that attached to their Master, because it was the poor, the afflicted, and the humbler class generally who became his disciples. Why, they asked

themselves, did not the scribes and Pharisees, the teachers in the schools of the prophets, acknowledge that he was the long-looked-for Messiah? It was to meet this doubt and discontent that Jesus spoke this parable. When the multitude had departed, the twelve with the other believers gathered about him, and asked him to explain it to them. "And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables; that seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them. And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables?" In these words he explained that his illustrations were to awaken thought in the minds of his hearers. If they desired a fuller explanation of his words they could ask it of him, as the disciples had done, and receive it.

The Pharisees understood the parable, but affected not to perceive its meaning. They closed their eyes lest they should see and their ears lest they should hear; therefore their hearts could not be reached. They were to suffer retribution for their willful ignorance and self-imposed blindness. One reason why he taught so much in parables was that the spies of the Jews were ever watching to find cause for complaint against him. Jesus designed to expose their hypocrisy and evil deeds without laying himself liable to the danger of being arrested and imprisoned by them, and thus cut off from the work which he came to do among the people.

He could speak cutting truths in parables,

reveal the iniquity that it was necessary to expose, without any fear of their laws. They could make the application, for they could not fail to recognize his meaning, yet they were powerless to condemn him for using a simple illustration in his discourse.

The words of Jesus implied a reproof to his disciples, because of their dullness to comprehend his meaning; for in the parable of the sower, he had illustrated the doctrine he had come to the world to teach. If they could not discern things so easily to be understood, how could they fathom greater truths that he would declare to them in parables? He also said that he would reveal greater mysteries concerning the kingdom of God unto them who followed him so closely and obeyed him than unto those who were outside of his companionship. They must open their minds to instruction and be ready to believe.

Those who had hardened their hearts to love pomp and ceremony did not wish to understand his teachings nor desire the work of God's grace within their hearts. This class would remain in ignorance of their own choosing. Those who connected with Heaven, and received Christ, who is the source of light and truth, would understand his words and gain practical knowledge concerning the kingdom of God. But those who, for any reason, neglected their present opportunities of acquaintance with the truth, and did not rightly use their powers of comprehension, but refused to be convinced by what their eyes saw and their ears heard, would be left in darkness; seeing, they would not perceive, and hearing, they would not understand. The truths

of God involved too much self-denial and personal purity to attract their carnal minds, and they closed their hearts with bigotry and unbelief.

The great Teacher blessed his disciples because they both saw and heard with eyes and ears that believed. Said he, "Many prophets and righteous men have desired to see these things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear the things which ye hear, and have not heard them." Jesus then explained to his disciples the different classes represented in the parable he had given them.

Christ, the Sower, scatters the seed. There are the worldly ones, whose hearts are like the hard-beaten highway, insensible to the teachings of divine wisdom. They love not the requirements of God, and follow their natural impulses. Many are convinced as they listen to the important lessons of Christ. They believe his words, and resolve to lead holy lives, but when Satan comes with his evil suggestions, they are overcome before the good seed has fairly sprung into life.

Had the soil of the heart been broken up by deep repentance for sin, they would have seen how wicked was their selfish love of the world, their pride and avarice, and would have put them away. The seeds of truth would have struck deep into the fallow ground prepared for them in the heart, and would have sprung up and borne fruit. But evil habits had so long held sway over their lives that their good resolutions had vanished before the voice of the tempter. "And these are they by the wayside, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Sa-

tan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts."

There are those who receive the precious truth with joy; they are exceedingly zealous, and express amazement that all cannot see the things that are so plain to them. They urge others to embrace the doctrine that they find so satisfying. They hastily condemn the hesitating and those who carefully weigh the evidences of the truth and consider it in all its bearings. They call such ones cold and unbelieving. But in the time of trial these enthusiastic persons falter and fail. They did not accept the cross as a part of their religious life, and they turn from it with dampened ardor, and refuse to take it up.

If life moves smoothly with this class, if their way is never crossed, if all things are in harmony with their inclinations, they appear to be consistent Christians. But they faint beneath the fiery test of temptation; they cannot endure reproach for the truth's sake. The good seed that had sprung into so flourishing a plant, withers and dies because it has no root to sustain it in the time of drought. The very thing which should have caused the fibers to strike down deeper and send up more vigorous growth, parches and kills the whole plant. Just so the hot summer sun, that strengthens and ripens the hardy grain, withers and destroys that which, though fresh and green, has no depth of root, because the tender fibers cannot pierce the hard and stony ground.

These persons could cultivate and enrich the soil of their hearts, if they would, so that the truth would take deeper hold; but this involves too much patience and self-denial. It costs them

too much effort to make a radical change in their lives. They are easily offended by reproof, and ready to say with the disciples who left Jesus, "This is a hard saying; who can hear it?" "And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; and have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time; afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended."

Jesus represents the seed as falling into neglected borders and patches covered with rank weeds which choke the precious plants that spring up among them; they grow sickly and perish. Many hearts respond to the voice of truth, but they do not properly receive and cherish it. They give it a place in the soil of the natural heart, without preparing the ground and rooting out the poisonous weeds that flourish there, and watching every hour in order to destroy them should they again appear. The cares of life, the fascination of riches, the longing for forbidden things, crowd out the love of righteousness before the good seed can bear fruit. Pride, passion, self-love, and love of the world, with envy and malice, are no companions for the truth of God. As it is necessary thoroughly to cultivate the soil that has once been overgrown with weeds, so it is necessary for the Christian to be diligent in exterminating the faults that threaten his eternal ruin. Patient, earnest effort in the name and strength of Jesus, can alone remove the evil tendencies of the natural heart. But those who have allowed their faith to be overcome by the growth of Satan's influences, fall into a worse

state than that which they occupied before they heard the words of life. "And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful."

Few hearts are like the good soil, well cultivated, and receive the seeds of truth and bring forth abundant fruit to the glory of God. But Jesus finds some earnest Christians, rich in good works and sincere in their endeavors. "And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirty-fold, some sixty, and some an hundred."

Thus Christ represents the characters of those whom he came to teach, in a brief and comprehensive parable. The worldly-minded, the evil-disposed, the hard-hearted, are all exhibited to the minds of his hearers. He thus answers the question that we often hear to-day: Why was the work of Christ productive of such meager results, during his personal ministry upon earth? Miracles of goodness and mercy marked his life; but while he healed the afflicted, and cast out the demons that persecuted men, he left to themselves the work of correcting the evils of their natures. He instructed them how to unite their human efforts with his divine power, and triumph through his strength over the sins that beset them.

This experience was necessary in order to give moral power to the Christian character and fit it for the courts of Heaven. Jesus employed no miraculous agency to compel men to believe in

him. They were left to choose or reject him, of their own free will. No direct power was to force them into obedience, and destroy the free moral agency that God has given to man. The parable of the sower plainly sets forth the tendencies of the human heart, and the different classes with which Christ had to deal, and also explains the reasons that his ministry was not more successful in its immediate effects.

The parables of Jesus were designed to arouse a spirit of inquiry which would result in a clearer exposition of the truth. As he was thus instructing his disciples in the meaning of his words, the people again gathered about to listen, and his teachings were received and cherished in the minds of many who heard them. These discourses of Jesus were not merely to a class of inferior minds; but there were intelligent and cultivated persons present who were capable of the closest criticism. Scribes, Pharisees, doctors, rulers, lawyers, and the representatives of all nations, were there to hear; yet there were none to gainsay his words in all that vast assembly.

CHRIST IN THE SYNAGOGUE.

This interview of Jesus with his disciples, in which they had received much precious instruction, was interrupted by those who had been searching for him. As the people began to flock about him, bringing their sick and afflicted, he repaired to the synagogue. While he was teaching there, many others of those who had left him on the other side of the lake came to the synagogue, and were surprised to see Jesus and his disciples there before them, knowing that there was

no boat by which he could pass to the other side. They began to inquire how and when he had crossed the sea. They were astonished when the disciples related to them the events of the preceding night. The fury of the storm and the many hours of fruitless rowing against the fury of adverse winds, the appearance of Christ walking upon the water, the fears thus aroused, his reassuring words, the adventure of Peter and its result, with the sudden stilling of the tempest and landing of the boat, were all faithfully recounted to the wondering crowd, amid frequent interruptions and exclamations of amazement.

But their attention was now directed to the lessons of Jesus, so full of solemn interest. Many were deeply affected; but the minds of some were entirely engrossed with curiosity regarding the wonderful relation they had heard. As soon as the discourse was ended, they gathered around the Saviour, questioning him, hoping to receive from his own lips a fuller account of his mighty work of the previous night. But Jesus did not gratify their idle curiosity. He was also beset by the Pharisees, to show them a sign from Heaven that he was the Son of God. They asked an evidence of his miraculous power, such as had been given on the other side of the sea. They importuned him to repeat his wonderful works before them.

Jesus declared to them that they did not seek him from any worthy motive; that they did not desire to learn how to please God in their daily lives; but they asked him to work miracles, sometimes in a spirit of unbelief, and sometimes because they hoped to be benefited by temporal favors which he might thus bestow upon them.

He bade them not to labor for the meat which perishes, but to seek for spiritual food, that wisdom which endures unto everlasting life. This the Son of God alone could give, for he has the seal of the Father. With solemn earnestness he sought to impress upon them that temporal favors are of little consequence compared with the heavenly grace offered by the Son of God.

"Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom he hath sent. They said therefore unto him, What sign showest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat." It was Christ himself who conducted the Hebrews in their travels through the wilderness. It was he who had daily fed them manna from heaven; yet they blindly referred him to this miracle, wrought for their fathers, in a spirit of caviling unbelief. Jesus declared to them that as God had given them manna to preserve their lives, so he had sent to them this gift of his Son, that through him they might eat of the bread of life and become immortal.

"Then said Jesus unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from Heaven. For the bread of God is He which cometh down from Heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread." Jesus used bread as a figure to illustrate the vitalizing power of his Spirit. The one sustains physical

life, while the other satisfies the heart, and strengthens the moral powers. Said he, "I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not." Those who experience the spiritual union with Christ never hunger for higher enjoyment. All uncertainty is gone; the weary soul finds continual refreshment in the Saviour. The feverish thirst for wealth and honor is gone. He is in them a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

Jesus assured the Jews that they had seen him and his works yet believed not. He did not refer to their seeing him with their natural eyes; but he meant that their understanding had been convinced, while their proud and stubborn hearts refused to acknowledge him as the Messiah. The Saviour had been doing in their midst works that no man had ever done. The living evidences of his divine power had been before them day after day; yet their hard and caviling hearts asked for still another sign of his divinity before they would believe. Had this been given them they would still have remained as unbelieving as before. If they were not already convinced of his Messiahship by what they had seen and heard, it was useless to show them more marvelous works. The dignity of God's holy Son was not to be compromised to gratify a questioning crowd.

Said Jesus, "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their

heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." Unbelief will ever find cause to doubt and reason away the most positive proof. The Jews stood constantly upon guard, lest they should be forced by overwhelming evidence to yield their prejudice and unbelief. Though their understanding was convinced, they refused to surrender their pride and self-righteousness, admitting that they, who had boasted of their wisdom over all the rest of the world, themselves needed a teacher.

The Jews had assembled to celebrate the passover. In eating the flesh of the lamb, they were to remember that it represented the Lamb of God, and their protection when the first-born of their enemies were slain in Egypt. The blood that the Hebrews were commanded to have upon their door-posts, and which was a sign of safety to them, also represented the blood of Christ, which was to be shed for the sins of the world. The Saviour has power to finally raise from the dead all those who, by faith, eat of his flesh and drink of his blood. This spiritual food gives to the believers a well-founded hope of the resurrection to immortal life in the kingdom of God.

These precious truths Jesus declared to the incredulous multitude, saying, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from Heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of Him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him,

may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

He spoke of his future sacrifice in these words: "And the bread which I will give you, is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." He offered his salvation to all who would accept him, clothed in humanity, as their Redeemer, having access to the Father, and being invested by him with divine authority.

But the Jews were displeased that Jesus should claim to be the bread of life come down from Heaven. "And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it, then, that he saith, I came down from Heaven?" They so clung to their bigotry and pride that it now seemed impossible for them to believe evidence that was plain as the noonday sun. Their jealousy was aroused that this man of humble birth was able to work wonders that they could not explain away, and teach truths that could not be contradicted. So they endeavored to awaken the prejudice and unbelief of the people by referring scornfully to the lowly origin of Jesus, and by reason of his mysterious birth, insinuating that he was of doubtful parentage. They contemptuously alluded to his life as a Galilean laborer, and to his family as being poor and lowly. They declared that the lofty claims of this uneducated carpenter should be at once repudiated.

But Jesus heard their murmurings and reproved them. He again, in more forcible language, declared his connection with the Father, and the necessity for the heart to be enlightened by the Spirit of God before it can feel the need of a Saviour. "No man can come to me, except

the Father which hath sent me draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man, therefore, that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." He here refers to the prophecy of Isaiah: "And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children."

This was not a new doctrine which Jesus taught. It was the fulfillment of prophecy, which, as expounders of the word, the priests and elders should have thoroughly understood. In declaring that none come to him unless the Father draws them, the Saviour wished them to understand that God would never appear in person to teach them concerning the way of life. Humanity could not endure the vision of his glory for a moment; only through the Son could they come to him. In seeing and hearing the Son, they saw and heard the Father. He is Mediator between God and his disobedient children. The Jews claimed God as their teacher, but Christ declared such profession vain, for, said he, "Every man, therefore, that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me."

Jesus did not attempt to answer the questions raised regarding his birth any more than he had answered those concerning his crossing the sea. He did not desire to magnify himself, nor the miracles that marked his life. The prejudice of the Pharisees lay deeper than their questions would indicate, and had taken root in the bitter perversity of their sinful hearts. His sayings and doings had not created such feelings, but only called them into action, because his pure and elevated doctrine was not in harmony with

their selfish hearts. Said he, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life." There were conflicting views and much uncertainty in regard to the resurrection of the dead. Aside from the dissension between the Sadducees and Pharisees, the Jews were in great darkness concerning the future life and the resurrection of the body. Jesus pitied them in their benighted condition, and bade them accept him, who was their only hope, the great Life-giver, even the "bread of life."

They had referred him to the manna which their fathers ate in the wilderness, as if the furnishing of that food was a greater miracle than Jesus had wrought; but he now declared unto them that the temporal food then given from Heaven was but a meager gift compared with the blessing of eternal life which he now offered them. The food eaten then sustained the strength, but did not prevent the approach of death, nor insure immortal life. The bread that the Son of God offered to man was death-destroying, giving in the end immortal life to the body. Said he, "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from Heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from Heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

Our Lord here points forward to his approaching death, the only true propitiation for the sins of humanity. The Jews were about to celebrate with great display the feast of the passover.

The lamb to be eaten there, was a symbol of Christ's body; yet the very person that it represented stood in their midst, presenting himself as their Saviour, whose blood would preserve them from the wrath of a sin-hating God, and they refuse his offers of mercy.

The miracle Jesus had performed in feeding the multitude, furnished him a forcible figure by which to illustrate his work upon earth. He declared that, as temporal bread imparts health and strength to the body, so will faith in Christ, and obedience to his teachings, give spiritual vigor to the soul, and life everlasting. But the Jews, determined to misinterpret his words, now engaged in angry contention, asking, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" They affected to understand his words in the same literal sense as did Nicodemus, when he asked, "How can a man be born when he is old?" They comprehended the meaning of Jesus, but were not willing to acknowledge it. They thought it a favorable opportunity to prejudice the people against him, by presenting his words to them in the most unfavorable light. "Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from Heaven; not as your fathers did eat manna, and are

dead; he that eateth of this bread shall live forever."

The Jews appeared to be horrified at these sayings of Christ. Their law strictly forbade them to taste blood, and they construed his language into a sacrilegious speech, and contended and disputed over his words among themselves. Jesus gave his disciples, and the people, lessons which they could not at the time fully comprehend, because of their moral darkness. Many things which his followers did not fully understand when he uttered them, were made plain by subsequent events. His words were a stay to their hearts when he walked no more with them.

Even the disciples murmured at these last words of Jesus. They said, "This is a hard saying; who can hear it?" The Saviour heard their complaints and answered them: "Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." Thus he instructed them that it was not his human flesh that would give life eternal, but faith in his words and in the efficacy of the sacrifice he was to make for the world. His teaching and example, his life and death, were the heavenly food that was to give them spiritual life and vigor. He reproved them because they had murmured when he said that he had come down from Heaven. If they were not able to receive this truth, how would it be when he ascended before their eyes to that Heaven from whence he came?

Jesus knew that many followed him who hoped to receive temporal favors thereby. They

looked for him to work some miracle that would benefit them; but especially did they hope that he would eventually free them from the Roman yoke. He also knew that there was one near who would betray him. He told them that there were some among them who believed not. "And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father."

He wished them to understand that their hearts must be open to the Spirit of God before they could be drawn to him by faith. They must be willing to have their errors reproved, to eschew evil, and lead holy lives. The unbelief existing among the priests and rulers influenced the people to be hesitating and doubtful. Jesus had given them sufficient proof of his divinity; but their incredulous minds were ever seeking to explain away his wonderful works. They reasoned that the disciples might have been under a delusion when they saw him walking upon the water.

True, they could not but admit that he had performed many miraculous cures, and plentifully fed a vast multitude from five loaves and two small fishes; but their dissatisfied hearts queried, if he could do these wonders, why might he not give health, strength, and riches to all his people, free them from their oppressors, and exalt them to power and honor? Then they would believe on him and glorify his name. Thus they allowed themselves to be bound by unbelief and discontent. Their gross minds refused to comprehend the meaning of his words, "I am the bread which came down from Heaven." His

doctrine was too pure and exalted to attract their carnal hearts.

This discourse of Jesus cooled the enthusiasm of the people. If, by becoming his disciples, they must live righteous lives, deny self, and suffer humiliation, they had no desire to rally under his banner. Alas for Israel! They knew not the time of their visitation! They refused their Saviour, because they longed for a conqueror who would give them temporal power. They wanted the meat which perishes, and not that which endures unto everlasting life. Their ambition was for earthly riches and glory, and they had no relish for the words of Christ that taught personal purity, and a thorough reformation of life.

Many of the words and dealings of Jesus appear mysterious to finite minds; but all his purposes were clear to his divine understanding. His whole plan was mapped before him, perfect in all its details. Every act was calculated to produce its individual results. The history of the world from its creation to the end of time was fully known to Christ. Were the mind of man capable of understanding his dealings, every act of his earthly life would stand forth important, complete, and in harmony with his divine mission.

The murmuring of his followers grieved the heart of the Saviour. In openly rebuking their unbelief before the multitude, he had increased their disaffection, and many of them went back and walked no more with Jesus. He looked after these erring ones with eyes of pitying tenderness. They were greatly displeased, and, wishing to wound Jesus and gratify the malice

of the Pharisees, they turned their backs upon him and left him with disdain. In doing this they made the fatal mistake of rejecting God's counsel to them. It was such developments as these that made the Saviour a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. The consciousness that his kindness and compassion were unappreciated, his love unrequited, his mercy slighted, his salvation rejected, filled his divine soul with a grief that was inexpressible. Could these ungrateful disciples have discerned how God viewed their behavior to his dear Son, they would hardly have walked away so proudly and defiantly. They were choosing darkness rather than light, because they were too vain and self-righteous to receive a merited rebuke, and too worldly to accept a life of humility in order to secure salvation. In the face of all his wonderful works they turned away from Him, who, by the beauty of his doctrine and his mercy and benevolence, had called thousands to his side; who had relieved suffering humanity, so that entire cities and villages were freed from disease, and there was no work for a physician among them.

When we view the generosity of Christ to the poor and suffering, his patience with the rude and ignorant, his self-denial and sacrifice, we are lost in admiration and reverence. What a gift has God lavished upon man, alienated from him by sin and disobedience! Well may the heart break and the tears flow in contemplation of such inexpressible love! Christ abased himself to humanity that he might reach man sunken into the depths of woe and degradation, and lift him into a nobler life, give him moral strength to resist the power of Satan and overcome sin in his name.

Sad was the recompense he met for his marvelous condescension.

The words of Jesus were scorned because he declared that outward professions and observances of forms would not avail; the work must reach the heart and bring forth fruit meet for repentance. The words that he addressed to his disciples are also spoken to the followers of Christ today. The same necessity exists for a clean heart and a pure life. Yet how many reject the warning of God, spoken by his servants, and the close, practical truths pressed home to their hearts, because their lives are not in accordance with the will of God, because they perceive that an entire reformation is necessary, and are unwilling to take up the self-denying work, and are therefore angry because their sins have been discovered. They go away offended, even as the disciples left Jesus, murmuring, "This is a hard saying; who can hear it?"

Those who profess godliness, yet do not heed the admonitions of the Lord, nor regulate their lives in harmony with his holy will, fasten themselves more and more firmly by chains of darkness. Many who now profess to believe the truth of Christ, endure the test no better than those who turned away from following him. Many, while professing the faith, are so separated from Christ by hearts of unbelief, that they reject the words and works of God shown through his servants. If the divine revelation does not harmonize with their views, they feel at liberty to turn from its teachings. If it rebukes their sins they are offended. Praise and flattery would be grateful to their ears, but the truth is disagreeable, they cannot hear it. When the crowds

follow, and the multitudes are fed, and the cries of triumph go up, their voices are loud in praise; but when the searching of God's Spirit reveals to them their sin and bids them leave it, they turn their backs upon the truth, and "walk no more with Jesus."

God does not propose to be called to account for his ways and works. It is for his glory to conceal his purposes now; but by and by they will be revealed in their true importance. But he has not concealed his great love, which lies at the foundation of all his dealings with his children. He has revealed his love in the gift of his Son, and in the many providences by which he manifests himself. He who lives near to Jesus may understand much of the mystery of godliness, and comprehend the love that administers merited reproof. Humanity, alienated from God, can only be reconciled to him by partaking spiritually of the flesh and blood of his dear Son.

The Saviour did not attempt to prevent the disaffected disciples from leaving him, but, turning to the twelve chosen ones, said sorrowfully, "Will ye also go away?" Peter promptly replied by asking in turn "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life, and we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." How full of meaning are these words, "To whom shall we go?" The teachers of Israel were slaves to cold formality. The Pharisees and Sadducees were in constant contention concerning the doctrine of the resurrection and other points of difference. To leave Jesus was to fall among sticklers for rites and ceremonies, and ambitious men who sought their own glory. The disciples had felt more peace

Center for Adventist Research
Andrews University
Berrien Springs, Michigan

and joy since they had accepted Christ than in all their previous lives. They had looked back with horror upon their former course of carelessness and iniquity. How could they, whose eyes had been opened to discern the malice and bigotry of the Jews, go back to them who had scorned and persecuted the Friend of sinners? Long had their faith sustained them in looking for the Messiah, and now that he had come, they could not turn from his presence to those who were hunting his life and had persecuted them for obeying him.

"To whom shall we go?" Not from the doctrine of Christ, his lessons of love and charity, to the darkness of unbelief, the wickedness of the world. While many were turning from the Saviour who had witnessed his miraculous works, who had seen him heal the sick and comfort the distressed, who had been electrified by the heavenly majesty of his bearing, Peter expresses the faith of the disciples, "Thou art that Christ." Never will they deny that he is the world's Redeemer, the Son of God. The very thought of losing this anchor of their souls thrilled their hearts with anguish. To be again destitute of a Saviour, subject to fear and superstition, would be to be adrift upon a dark and stormy sea.

Some may question the wisdom of Jesus in introducing a subject so easily misunderstood as that which had turned so many from him on this occasion. But he had a purpose in view. He saw that a most trying ordeal awaited his disciples in his betrayal, his agony in Gethsemane, and his crucifixion. He knew who among his followers were unbelieving and who were of weak faith. Had no test been given them, Jesus would have had many among his followers who were

weak in character, and undecided. When the great trial came, and their Lord was betrayed and condemned in the Judgment Hall; when he was humiliated, and the multitude, who had hailed him as their king, hissed at him and reviled him; when the cruel, jeering crowd cried, "Crucify him!"—then these faint-hearted ones would have sunk beneath their fear and disappointment.

The apostasy of these professed followers of Christ at such a time, would have been more than the twelve could have endured in addition to their great grief and the terrible ruin of their fondest hopes. The example of those who turned from him, might, in that hour of horror, have carried all the rest with them. But Jesus brought about this crisis while he was still present to comfort and strengthen his chosen, and prepare them for what was to follow. When the hooting rabble scorned Him who was doomed to the cross, the disciples were not overwhelmed with surprise at this insult to their Master, for they had seen the fickleness of those who had once followed him. When those who had professed to love the Master turned from him in the time of his trouble, the disciples remembered that the same thing had occurred before, for less reason. They had tested the inconstant favor of the world, and hung not their faith upon the opinions of others. Jesus wisely prepared the minds of his faithful few for the great trial of his betrayal and death.

Peter had great faith in Jesus. From the first he had believed that he was the Messiah. He had seen and heard John, who was the forerunner of Christ, proclaim him to be the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. He had been closely connected with Jesus, had wit-

nessed his miracles, listened to his teachings, and was convinced that he was the Son of God. Many who had been convicted by the preaching of John, and had accepted Christ, began to doubt as to the mission of John, when he was imprisoned and put to death. They also doubted if Jesus was really the Messiah, whom they had looked for so long.

But the faith of Peter never flagged; he followed his Master with unwavering devotion. When those of the disciples who had ardently expected Jesus to make a great display of power, and take his place on David's throne, left him because they perceived that he had no such intention, Peter and his companions faltered not in their allegiance. The vacillating course of those who praised yesterday, and condemned to-day, did not affect the faith of the true follower of the Saviour. Peter declares, "Thou art the Son of the living God." He waited not for kingly honors to crown his Lord, but accepted him in his humiliation. Peter, in his confession of Christ, expressed the faith of the disciples. But notwithstanding this, Jesus knew that neither his believing followers nor any of the Jews had any idea of associating humiliation, suffering and death, with their Messiah. Compassionate Redeemer, who, in the full knowledge of the doom that awaited him, tenderly smoothed the way for his disciples, prepared them for their crowning trial, and strengthened them for the final test!

MARY'S OFFERING.

Six days before the passover, Jesus stopped at the house of Lazarus in Bethany. He was on his way from Jericho to attend the feast of the passover at Jerusalem, and chose this retreat for rest and refreshment. Crowds of people passed on to the city, bearing the tidings that Jesus was on his way to the feast, and that he would rest over the Sabbath at Bethany. This information was received with great enthusiasm by the people; for the news had spread everywhere of the wonderful works wrought by Jesus, the last and most astonishing of which was the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead. Many flocked to Bethany, some from curiosity to see one who had been raised from the dead, and others because their hearts were in sympathy with Jesus, and they longed to look upon his face and hear his blessed words.

They returned with reports that increased the excitement of the multitude. All were anxious to see and hear Jesus, whose fame as a prophet had spread over all the land. There was a general buzz of inquiry as to who the wonderful Teacher was, from whence he had come, if Lazarus who had been raised from the dead would accompany him to Jerusalem, and if it was likely that the great prophet would be crowned king at the feast. The attention of the people was entirely engrossed in the subject of Jesus and his wondrous works. The priests and rulers saw that they were losing their hold upon the minds of the people, and their rage against Jesus was increased; they could hardly wait for him to

come and give them the desired opportunity of gratifying their revenge and removing him forever from their way. As the time passed, they became excited and restless, fearing that after all Jesus might not come to Jerusalem. They were fearful that he had read their purposes against him, and would therefore remain away. They remembered how often he had divined their thoughts, exposed their hidden motives, and baffled their murderous designs. They could illy conceal their anxiety, and questioned among themselves, "What think ye, that he will not come to the feast?"

A hasty council of the priests and Pharisees was called to determine how to proceed with regard to Jesus, in view of the excitement and enthusiasm of the people on his account. They decided that it would be dangerous to seize upon him openly on any pretext, for since the raising of Lazarus the sympathies of the people were greatly in favor of Jesus. So they determined to use craft and take him secretly, avoiding all uproar or interference, carry on the mockery of a trial as quietly as possible, and trust to the fickle tide of public opinion to set in their favor when it was known that Jesus was condemned to death.

But another consideration came up: If they should execute Jesus, and Lazarus should remain as a witness of his miraculous power to raise from the dead, the very fact that a man existed who had been four days in the grave, and whose body had begun to decay, yet had been called to life and health by a word from Jesus, would sooner or later create a reaction and bring disaster upon themselves for sacrificing the life of Him who could perform such a miracle for the benefit of

humanity. They therefore decided that Lazarus must also die. They felt that if the people were to lose confidence in their rulers, the national power would be destroyed.

To such lengths do envy and bitter prejudice lead their slaves. In rejecting Christ, the Pharisees placed themselves where darkness and superstition closed around them, until, continually increasing in hatred and unbelief, they were ready to imbrue their hands in blood to accomplish their unholy ends, and would even take the life of one whom Infinite power had rescued from the grave. They placed themselves where no power, human or divine, could reach them; they sinned against the Holy Spirit, and God had no reserve power to meet their case. Their rebellion against Christ was settled and determined; he was a stumbling-block and a rock of offense to them; they would not have this man Jesus to reign over them. While all this plotting was going on at Jerusalem, Jesus was quietly resting from his labors at the house of Lazarus. Simon of Bethany, whom Jesus had healed of leprosy, wishing to show his Master special honor, made a supper and invited him and his friends as guests. The Saviour sat at the table, with Simon, whom he had cured of a loathsome disease, on one side, and Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead, on the other. Martha served at the table, but Mary was earnestly listening to every word that fell from the lips of Jesus. She saw that he was sad; she knew that immediately after raising her brother from the dead, he was obliged to seclude himself in order to escape the persecution of the leading Jews. As she looked upon her brother in the strength of perfect health,

her heart went out in gratitude to Jesus who had restored him to her from the grave.

Jesus in his mercy had pardoned the sins of Mary, which had been many and grievous, and her heart was full of love for her Saviour. She had often heard him speak of his approaching death, and she was grieved that he should meet so cruel a fate. At great personal sacrifice she had purchased an alabaster box of precious ointment with which to anoint the body of Jesus at his death. But she now heard many express an opinion that he would be elevated to kingly authority when he went to Jerusalem, and she was only too ready to believe that it would be so. She rejoiced that her Saviour would no longer be despised and rejected, and obliged to flee for his life. In her love and gratitude she wished to be the first to do him honor, and, seeking to avoid observation, anointed his head and feet with the precious ointment, and then wiped his feet with her long, flowing hair.

Her movements had been unobserved by the others, but the odor filled the house with its fragrance and published her act to all present. Some of the disciples manifested displeasure at this act, and Judas boldly expressed his disapprobation at such a wasteful extravagance. Simon the host, who was a Pharisee, was influenced by the words of Judas, and his heart filled with unbelief. He also thought that Jesus should hold no communication with Mary because of her past life. Judas, the prime instigator of this disaffection among those who sat at the table, was a stranger to the deep devotion and homage which actuated Mary to her deed of love. He had been appointed treasurer of the united funds

of the disciples, and had dishonestly appropriated to himself the means which were designed for the service of God.

He had indulged a spirit of avarice until it had overpowered every good trait in his character. This act of Mary was in such marked contrast with his selfishness that he was ashamed of his avarice, and sought to attribute his objection to her gift, to a worthier motive. Turning to the disciples he asked, "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?" Thus he sought to hide his covetousness under apparent sympathy for the poor, when, in reality, he cared nothing for them.

He longed to have the avails of the expensive ointment in his own hands to apply to his own selfish purposes. By his professed sympathy for the poor he deceived his fellow-disciples, and by his artful insinuations caused them to look distrustfully upon the devotion of Mary. Whispered hints of prodigality passed round the table: "To what purpose is this waste? for this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor." Mary was abashed as the eyes of the disciples were bent sternly and reproachfully upon her. She felt that her deed of devotion must have been wrong, and tremblingly expected Jesus to condemn it also.

But the Saviour had observed all that had transpired, and knew the motives of all who were there assembled. He read the object of Mary in her costly offering. Though she had been very sinful, her repentance was sincere, and Jesus, while reproving her guilt, had pitied her weakness and forgiven her. Mary's heart was filled with gratitude at the compassion of Jesus. Seven

times she had heard his stern rebuke to the demons which then controlled her heart and mind, and she had listened to his strong cries to his Father in her behalf. She knew how offensive everything impure was to the unsullied mind of Christ, and she overcame her sin in the strength of her Saviour. She was transformed, a partaker of the divine nature.

Mary had offered her gift in the grateful homage of her heart, and Jesus explained her motive and vindicated her deed. "Let her alone," he said. "Why," he asked, "trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me." He justified her work to all present as evincing her gratitude to him for lifting her from a life of shame to one of purity, and teaching her to believe in him. Said he, "Against the day of my burying hath she kept this." The ointment so sacredly kept to anoint the dead body of her Lord she had poured upon his head in the belief that he was about to be lifted to a throne in Jerusalem.

Jesus might have pointed out Judas to the disciples as the cause of such severe judgment being passed on Mary. He might have revealed to them the hypocrisy of his character; he might have made known his utter want of feeling for the poor, and his embezzlement of money appropriated to their relief. He could have raised their indignation against him for his oppression of the widow, the orphan, and the hireling; but he refrained from exposing the true character of Judas. He reproached him not, and thus avoided giving him an excuse for his future perfidy.

But he rebuked the disciples, saying, "Ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good; but me ye have

not always. She hath done what she could. She is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying. Verily, I say unto you, wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." Jesus, looking into the future, spoke with certainty concerning his gospel: That it was to be preached throughout the whole world. Kingdoms would rise and fall; the names of monarchs and conquerors would be forgotten; but the memory of this woman's deed would be immortalized upon the pages of sacred history.

Had the disciples rightly appreciated the exalted character of their Master, they would have considered no sacrifice too costly to offer to the Son of God. The wise men of the East understood more definitely his true position, and the honor due him, than his own followers, who had received his instruction and beheld his mighty miracles. They brought precious gifts to the Saviour, and bent in homage before him, while he was but a babe, and cradled in a manger.

The look which Jesus cast upon the selfish Judas convinced him that the Master penetrated his hypocrisy and read his base, contemptible character. He was stirred with resentment. His heart burned with envy that Jesus should be the recipient of an offering suitable to the monarchs of earth. He went directly from that supper to the chief priests, and agreed to betray him into their hands. The priests were greatly rejoiced at this, and "they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver, and from that time he sought opportunity to betray him."

In the case of Judas we see the fearful result of covetousness and unholy anger. He begrudged the offering made to Jesus, and although not personally rebuked, he was irritated to combine revenge with his avarice, and sell his Lord for a few pieces of silver. Mary showed how highly she prized the Saviour when she accounted the most precious gift none too costly for him; but Judas valued Jesus at the price for which he sold him; his niggardly soul balanced the life of the Son of God against a paltry sum of money. The same cold, calculating spirit is manifested by many who profess Christ to-day. Their offerings to his cause are grudgingly bestowed or withheld altogether under various plausible excuses. A pretense of wide philanthropy, unlimited by church or creed, is not unfrequently one of them, and they plead, like Judas, It is better to give it to the poor. But the true Christian shows his faith by investing in the cause of truth; he is known by his works, for "faith without works is dead."

Jesus read Simon's heart, and knew how he had been influenced by the insinuations of Judas, and that he had questioned in his mind, saying, "This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him; for she is a sinner." When Judas had left the house, Jesus turned to his host and said, "Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee." Simon replied, "Master, say on." Then Jesus proceeded to speak a parable, which illustrated the contrast between the gratitude of his host, who had been healed of the leprosy, and that of Mary, whose sins had been pardoned. Said he, "There was a certain creditor which

had two debtors; the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most?"

Simon did not discern the application which Jesus designed to make, but he answered him, "I suppose that he to whom he forgave most." Jesus replied, "Thou hast rightly judged." This answer condemned Simon. He had been a great sinner, and also a loathsome leper, avoided by all. He had come to Jesus piteously imploring his help, and He who never turned a deaf ear to human woe, had cleansed him from sin and from the terrible disease that was upon him. Simon was humbled, but he had been a proud Pharisee, and he did not look upon himself as being so great a sinner as he really was, and he had now become self-sufficient and lifted up in his own estimation. He had exalted himself as far superior to the poor woman who anointed the feet of her Lord. In entertaining Jesus at his house, he thought he was paying him marked respect; but the Saviour was lowered in his estimation when he permitted the devotion of Mary, who had been so great a sinner. He overlooked the miracle which Jesus had wrought upon him in saving him from a living death, and coldly reasoned with himself if Jesus could be the Messiah, and yet stoop to receive the gift of this woman. He thought that if he were the Christ, he would know that a sinner had approached him and repel her. He did not realize that he himself had been a greater sinner than she, and that Christ had forgiven him as well as Mary. He was ready to doubt the divine character of his Master

because he imagined that he detected in him a want of discernment.

On the other hand, Mary was thoroughly penitent and humbled because of her sins. In her gratitude for his pardoning mercy she was ready to sacrifice all for Jesus, and no doubt as to his divine power troubled her mind for a moment. It was not the comparative degrees of obligation which should be felt by the two persons, which Jesus designed to illustrate by this parable, for both were unable to cancel their debt of gratitude; but he took Simon on his own ground, as feeling himself more righteous than the woman, and showed him that though the sins which had been forgiven him were great, he had not repaid his Benefactor with that respect and love which casts out all unbelief. His sense of obligation to his Saviour was small, while Mary, prizing the gift of mercy bestowed upon her, was filled with gratitude and love.

Jesus drew the contrast sharply between the two. Said he: "Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet; but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss; but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint; but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment."

The proud Pharisee had considered that he had sufficiently honored Jesus by inviting him to his house; and in his self-consequence had neglected to show him the proper regard due to so exalted a guest, and to one who had wrought upon him a miracle of mercy. Jesus encouraged

acts of heart-felt courtesy, and the woman, whose gratitude and love was expressed in her act of attention, was highly commended by the Saviour: "Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little."

Simon's eyes were opened to his neglect and unbelief. He was touched by the kindness of Jesus in not openly rebuking him before all the guests. He perceived that Jesus did not wish to exhibit his guilt and his want of gratitude to others, but desired to convince his mind by a true statement of his case, and to subdue his heart by pitying kindness. Stern denunciation would have closed the heart of Simon against repentance; but patient admonition convinced him of his error and won his heart. He saw the magnitude of the debt which he owed his Lord, and became a humble, self-sacrificing man.

When we realize the full debt of obligation to our Saviour, we are united to him by closer bonds, and our love will be expressed in all our acts. Jesus will remember every good work done by his children. The self-sacrificing and benevolent will live in his memory and be rewarded. No act of devotion to his cause will be forgotten by him. There is no sacrifice too costly to be offered on the altar of our faith.

RIDING INTO JERUSALEM.

On the first day of the week, Jesus resumed his journey to Jerusalem to join in the feast of the passover. Multitudes who had flocked to Bethany to see him, accompanied him, eager to witness his entry into Jerusalem. All nature

seemed to rejoice; the trees were clothed in verdure, and blossoms which shed their delicate fragrance upon the air. Many people were on their way to the city to keep the feast of the passover. These companies were continually joining the multitude attending Jesus. He sent two of his disciples to bring "a colt, the foal of an ass," that he might ride into Jerusalem. It was but a short distance, and as he had always chosen to travel on foot, his disciples were puzzled to know why he should prefer to ride. But hope brightened in their hearts with the joyous thought that Jesus was about to enter the capital and proclaim himself King of the Jews, and assert his royal power. While on their errand, the disciples communicated their glowing anticipations to the friends of Jesus, and the excitement spread far and near, raising the expectations of the people to the highest pitch.

Jesus selected for his use a colt upon which never man had sat. The disciples in glad enthusiasm spread their garments upon the colt and placed their Master upon him. No sooner was he seated than a loud shout of triumph rent the air, and the multitude hailed him as Messiah, their King. Jesus now accepted the homage which he had never before permitted, and his disciples received this as a proof that their glad hopes were to be realized by seeing him acknowledged at Jerusalem as the King of Israel. All were happy and excited; the people vied with each other in paying him homage. They could not display outward pomp and splendor, but they gave him the worship of happy hearts. They were unable to present him with costly gifts, but they spread their outer garments as a carpet in his path, and

they also strewed the leafy branches of the olive and palm in the way. They could lead the triumphal procession with no royal standards, but they cut down the spreading palm boughs, Nature's emblem of victory, and waved them aloft, while their loud acclamations and hosannas rent the air.

As they proceeded, the multitude was continually increased by those who had heard of the coming of Jesus and hastened to join the procession. Spectators were constantly mingling with the throng and asking, Who is this? What does all this commotion signify? They had all heard of Jesus and were expecting him to go to Jerusalem, but they knew that he had heretofore refused to receive kingly honors, and they were greatly astonished to learn that this was he. They wondered what could have wrought this change in him who had declared that his kingdom was not of this world.

While they are wondering and questioning, the eager crowd silence their queries with a shout of triumph that is repeated again and again, and is echoed from the surrounding hills and valleys. And now the joyful procession is joined by crowds from Jerusalem, that have heard of the grand demonstration, and hasten to meet the Saviour and conduct him to Jerusalem. From the great gathering of the Hebrews to attend the passover, thousands go forth to welcome Jesus to the city. They greet him with the waving of palm branches and a burst of sacred song. The priests at the temple sound the trumpet for evening service, but there are few to respond, and the rulers say to each other in alarm, "The world has gone after him."

The Saviour during his earthly life had hitherto refused to receive kingly honor, and had resolutely discouraged all attempts to elevate him to an earthly throne; but this occasion was intended by Jesus to call public attention to him as the world's Redeemer. He was nearing the period when his life was to be offered a ransom for guilty man. Although he was soon to be betrayed and to be hanged upon the cross like a malefactor, yet he would enter Jerusalem, the scene of his approaching sacrifice, attended by demonstrations of joy and the honor belonging to royalty, to faintly prefigure the glory of his future coming to the world as Zion's King.

It was the purpose of Jesus to draw attention to the crowning sacrifice that was to end his mission to a fallen world. They were assembling at Jerusalem to celebrate the passover, while he, the antitypical Lamb, by a voluntary act set himself apart as an oblation. Jesus understood that it was needful in all future ages that the church should make his death for the sins of the world a subject of deep thought and study. Every fact connected with it should be verified beyond a doubt. It was necessary, then, that the eyes of all people should be directed to him, that the demonstrations which preceded his great sacrifice should be such as to call the attention of all to the sacrifice itself. After such an exhibition as that attending his entry into Jerusalem, all eyes would follow his rapid progress to the final end.

The startling events connected with this triumphal ride were calculated to be the talk of every tongue, and bring Jesus before every mind. After his crucifixion these events would be connected with his trial and death; prophecies would be searched and would reveal the fact that this was indeed the Messiah; and converts to the faith of Jesus would be multiplied in all lands. In this one triumphant scene of his earthly life, the Saviour might have appeared escorted by heavenly angels and heralded by the trumps of God; but he remained true to the life of humiliation he had accepted, bearing the burden of humanity till his life was given for the life of the world.

This day, which seemed to the disciples the crowning day of their lives, would have been shadowed with gloomy clouds had they known that this scene of rejoicing was but a prelude to the suffering and death of their Master. Although he had repeatedly told them of his certain sacrifice, yet in the glad triumph of the present they forgot his sorrowful words, and looked forward to his prosperous reign on the throne of David. New accessions were being made continually to the procession, and, with few exceptions, all who joined it caught the glad inspiration of the hour, and helped to swell the hosannas that echoed and re-echoed from hill to hill and from valley to valley. The shouts went up continually, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" It was as if all that vast multitude were seeking to excel one another in responding to the call from a prophetic past.

Many Pharisees witnessed the scene, and, burning with envy and malice, sought to turn the popular current. They exercised all the authority which they could command to repress the en-

thusiasm of the people; but all their appeals and threatenings were in vain. Fearful that this multitude, in the strength of their numbers, would lift Jesus to the position of king, they, as a last resort, pressed through the crowd and accosted him with reproving and threatening words: "Master, rebuke thy disciples." They declared that such noisy and excited demonstrations were unlawful and would not be permitted by the authorities. But the reply of Jesus silenced their haughty commands: "I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out."

God himself had, in his special providence, arranged the order of the events then transpiring, and if men had failed to carry out the divine plan, He would have given a voice to the inanimate stones and they would have hailed his Son with acclamations of praise. This scene had been revealed in prophetic vision to the holy seers of old, and man was powerless to turn aside the purposes of Jehovah. As the silenced Pharisees drew back, the words of Zechariah were taken up by hundreds of voices: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem. Behold, thy King cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass."

The Pharisees were forced to desist from their efforts to calm the enthusiasm of the people. All their expostulations only served to increase their ardor. The world had never before seen such a triumphal procession. It was not like that of the earth's famous conquerors. No train of mourning captives, as trophies of kingly valor,

made a feature of that imposing pageant. But about the Saviour were the glorious trophies of his labors of love for sinful man. There were the captives whom he had rescued from Satan's cruel power, praising God for their deliverance. The blind to whom he had restored sight pressed on, leading the way. The dumb, whose tongues he had loosed, shouted the loudest hosannas. The cripples whom he had healed bounded freely on, the most active in breaking the palm-branches and in waving them before the Saviour. Widows and orphans were among the multitude exalting the name of Jesus for his works of mercy to them. The lepers who had been cleansed by a word from him, and rescued from a living death, spread their untainted garments in his path and hailed him as the King of Glory. Those who had been awakened by his magic voice from the sleep of death were in that throng. Lazarus, whose body had seen corruption in the grave, now restored to the full strength of glorious manhood, guided the humble beast upon which his Liberator rode.

When the procession arrived at the summit of the hill and was about to descend into the city, Jesus halted, and all the multitude with him. Jerusalem in all its glory lay before them, bathed in the light of the declining sun. The temple attracted all eyes. In stately grandeur it towered above all else, seeming to point toward Heaven as if directing the people upward to the only true and living God. This temple in its splendid majesty had long been the pride and glory of the Jewish nation. The Romans also prided themselves in it as an unequaled monument of magnificence. Their king had united

with the Jews in embellishing it, and together they had spared no pains nor expense to furnish it with the most costly and beautiful decorations both without and within.

A portion of the wall of the building had withstood the siege of armies, and, in its perfect masonry, appeared like one solid stone dug entire from the quarry. While the westering sun was tinting and gilding the heavens, its resplendent glory lit up the pure white marble of the temple and sparkled on its gold-capped pillars. From the crest of the hill where Jesus and his followers stood, it had the appearance of a massive structure of snow studded with flashing jewels. At the entrance to the temple was a vine composed of gold and silver, with green leaves and massive clusters of grapes, all executed at an enormous expense by the most skillful artists. This design represented Israel in the character of a prosperous vine. The gold, silver, and living green were all combined with such rare taste and exquisite workmanship, that, as it twined gracefully about the white and glistening pillars, clinging with shining tendrils to their golden ornaments, it was a wonderful thing of beauty, catching the splendor of the setting sun, and shining as if with a glory borrowed from Heaven.

Jesus gazes upon the enchanting scene before him, and the vast multitude hush their shouts, spell-bound by this sudden vision of beauty. All eyes turn instinctively upon the Saviour, expecting to see in his countenance the admiration which they themselves feel. But instead of this they behold a cloud of sorrow gathering upon his countenance. They are surprised and disappointed to see the eyes of the Saviour fill

with tears, and his body rock to and fro like a tree before the tempest, while a wail of anguish bursts from his quivering lips as if from the depths of a broken heart. What a sight was this for angels to behold! Their loved Commander in an agony of tears! What a sight was this for that glad throng who had accompanied him with shouts of triumph and waving of palm-branches to that summit overlooking the glorious city where they fondly hoped he would reign! Their acclamations were now silenced, while many tears flowed in sympathy with the grief they could not comprehend.

Jesus had wept at the grave of Lazarus, but it was in a God-like grief in harmony with the occasion. But this sudden sorrow is like a note of wailing in a grand triumphal chorus. In the midst of a scene of rejoicing, where all were paying him homage, Israel's King was in tears; not silent tears of gladness, but tears and groans of insuppressible agony. The multitude are struck with a sudden gloom while they look upon this grief which is incomprehensible to them. The tears of Jesus were not in anticipation of physical suffering as he contemplated his crucifixion, though just before him was the garden of Gethsemane where he knew that soon the horror of a great darkness would overshadow him. The sheep gate was also in sight through which for centuries the beasts for sacrificial offerings had been conducted. This gate was soon to open for him, the great Antitype toward whose sacrifice for the sins of the world all these offerings had pointed. Near by was Calvary, the scene of his approaching agony.

Yet it is not because of these reminders of his

cruel death that the Redeemer weeps and groans in anguish of spirit. His is no selfish sorrow. The thought of physical pain does not intimidate that noble, self-sacrificing soul. It is the sight of Jerusalem that pierces the heart of Jesus with anguish,—Jerusalem that had rejected the Son of God and scorned his love, who refused to be convinced by his mighty miracles and is about to take his life. He sees what she is in her guilt of rejecting her Redeemer, and what she might have been had she accepted Him who alone could heal her wound. He had come to save her; how can he give up the child of his care!

He raised his hand,—that had so often blessed the sick and suffering,—and waving it toward the doomed city, in broken utterances of grief exclaimed: "If thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day the things which belong to thy peace—" Here the Saviour paused and left unsaid what might have been the condition of Jerusalem had she accepted the only help that God could give her,—the gift of his beloved Son. If Jerusalem had known what it was her privilege to know, and had acted according to the light bestowed upon her by God, she might have stood forth in the pride of prosperity, the queen of kingdoms, free in the strength of her God-given power. There would then have been no armed soldiers waiting at her gates, no Roman banners waving from her walls. The glorious destiny which might have blessed Jerusalem, had she accepted her Redeemer, rose before the Son of God. He saw that she might through him have been healed of her grievous malady, liberated from bondage, and established as the mighty metropolis of the earth. From her walls the dove

of peace would have gone forth to all nations. She would have been the world's diadem of glory.

But the bright picture of what Jerusalem might have been had she accepted the Son of God, fades from the Saviour's sight as he realizes what she is under the oppressive Roman yoke, bearing the frown of God, doomed to his retributive justice. He takes up the broken thread of his lamentations: "But now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."

Christ came to save Jerusalem with her children from the consequences of her former sins; but the unholy expectations of the Pharisees were not answered in the manner of his appearing. Pharisaical pride, hypocrisy, jealousy, and malice had prevented him from accomplishing his purpose. Jesus knew the terrible retribution which would be visited upon the doomed city. He sees Jerusalem encompassed with armies, the besieged inhabitants driven to starvation and death, mothers making a repast on the dead bodies of their own children, and both parents and children snatching the last morsel of food from one another, natural affection being destroyed through the gnawing pangs of hunger. He sees that the stubbornness of the Jews, as evinced in their rejection of his salvation, will also lead them to refuse their only remaining chance of safety, submission to the invading

armies. He sees the wretched inhabitants suffering torture on the rack, and crucifixion, the beautiful palaces destroyed, the temple where God had revealed his glory, in ruins, and of all its pure and spotless walls, decorated with lofty pillars and gilded devices, not one stone left upon another, while the city is plowed like a field. Well may the Saviour weep in agony in view of such a fearful picture!

Jerusalem had been the child of his care, and as a tender father mourns over a wayward son, so Jesus wept over Jerusalem. How can I give thee up! How can I see thee devoted to destruction and desolation! Must I let thee go to fill up the cup of thine iniquity! One soul is of such value that, in comparison with it, worlds sink into insignificance; but here was a whole nation to be lost. When the fast westering sun should pass from sight in the heavens, Jerusalem's day of grace would be at an end. While that vast procession was halting on the brow of Olivet, it was yet not too late for Jerusalem to repent and be saved. The Angel of Mercy was then folding her wings to step down from the golden throne and give place to Justice and swift-coming judgment. But Christ's great heart of love still pleads for Jerusalem, which had scorned all his mercies, despised his warnings, and was about to finish her iniquitous work by imbruing her hands in his blood. If Jerusalem would but repent, it is not yet too late. While the last rays of the setting sun are lingering on temple, tower, and flashing minaret, will not some good angel lead her to the Saviour's love, and avert the fearful doom that awaits her! Beautiful and unholy city, that had stoned the

prophets, that had rejected the Son of God, that was locking herself, by her impenitence, in fetters of bondage,—thy day of mercy is almost spent!

Here had lived a favored people; God made their temple his habitation; it was "beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth." The record of more than a thousand years of Christ's guardian care and tender love, such as a father bears his only child, was there. In that temple had the prophets uttered their solemn warnings. There had the burning censers waved, while incense, mingled with the prayers of the worshipers, had ascended to God. There the blood of beasts had flowed, typical of the blood of Christ. There Jehovah had manifested his glory above the mercy-seat. There the priests had officiated in flowing robes and jeweled breast-plates, and the pomp of symbol and ceremony had gone on for ages. But all this must have an end; for Jerusalem has sealed her own doom, and her destruction is at hand.

Contemplating the fate of the city he had loved, the soul of Jesus yearned over the child of his care. Unrequited love broke the heart of the Son of God. Little did the multitude know of the grief that weighed upon the spirit of Him whom they worshiped. They saw his tears and heard his groans, and for a brief space a mysterious awe interrupted their joyful demonstrations; but they could not understand the meaning of his lamentation over Jerusalem. Meanwhile, reports were brought to the rulers that Jesus was approaching the city attended by a great concourse of people. In trepidation they go out to meet him, hoping to disperse the crowd by means of their authority. As the procession is about to descend the

Mount of Olives, it is intercepted by the rulers. They inquire who and what is the cause of all this tumultuous rejoicing. As they, with much authority, repeat their question,—Who is this? the disciples, filled with a spirit of inspiration, are heard above all the noise of the crowd, repeating in eloquent strains the prophecies which answered this question. Adam will tell you, It is the seed of the woman that shall bruise the serpent's head. Ask Abraham, he will tell you, It is Melchisedek, King of Salem, King of Peace. Jacob will tell you, He is Shiloh of the tribe of Judah. Isaiah will tell you, Immanuel, Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Jeremiah will tell you, The Branch of David, the Lord, our righteousness. Daniel will tell you, He is the Messiah. Hosea will tell you, He is the Lord God of Hosts, the Lord is his memorial. John the Baptist will tell you, He is the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. The great Jehovah has proclaimed from his throne, This is my beloved Son. We, his disciples, declare, This is Jesus, the Messiah, the Prince of Life, the Redeemer of the world. And even the Prince of the powers of darkness acknowledges him, saying, "I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God."

REDEMPTION:

OR THE

SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST;

HIS

TRIAL AND CRUCIFIXION.

BY MRS. E. G. WHITE.

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NOTE TO THE READER.

THE sufferings of Christ, his trial, condemnation, crucifixion, and death, as depicted in this little book, cannot fail to waken the deepest interest in the Christian mind, and to open new channels of thought for all those who read it in a spirit of candor. The light here thrown upon the last teachings and acts of Christ, prior to his crucifixion, makes plain to the inquiring mind many sacred and important truths; and the special illuminations with which the author has been favored by Heaven, commend these pages to the careful perusal of the reader.

PUBLISHERS.

THE

SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST.

THE PASSOVER SUPPER.

THE scribes and priests now counseled together how they might take Jesus without raising a tumult among the people; for many of those who witnessed his mighty works believed him to be the prophet of the Most High, and would have been greatly incensed at any attempt upon his liberty. So the dignitaries decided that open violence would not be good policy, but that treachery must serve their purpose.

Judas, one of the twelve, proposed secretly to betray Jesus into their hands, by leading them to one of the Saviour's resorts for prayer and retirement. In this quiet place they could make sure of their prey, for there would be no multitude to oppose them. Judas, ever greedy for gain, made a contract with the priests and rulers to betray his Master into their hands for thirty pieces of silver. The Lord of life and glory was sold to ignominy and death by one of his disciples for a paltry sum of money.

The heart of Judas had not suddenly grown thus base and corrupt. His love of mammon, like any vice which is left unchecked, had daily grown stronger, until it overbalanced his love for the Saviour, and he had become an idolater.

We look with horror upon the treachery of Judas; but his case represents a large class who file in under the banner of Christ, yet are really his worst enemies. They use the name of Christian as a cloak to hide their evil deeds, and sell their integrity for money, and their Saviour for a little worldly advantage.

After Judas had closed the contract by which he agreed to betray his Master into the hands of those who thirsted for his life, he mingled with the other disciples as though innocent of wrong, and interested in the work of preparing for the passover. The betrayer thought that his base purposes were hidden from his Master, although every day furnished fresh evidence that the thoughts and intents of all hearts were open unto him.

Jesus met his disciples in the upper chamber, and they soon perceived that something weighed heavily upon his mind. At length, in a voice of touching sadness, he addressed them thus: "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer." He clearly foresaw the events which were to transpire in the near future. His heart was wrung with grief as he contemplated the ingratitude and cruelty of those he had come to save, and saw pictured before him the terrible fate that awaited them in consequence.

The interviews between Jesus and his disciples were usually seasons of calm joy, highly prized by all of them. The passover suppers had been scenes of special interest; but upon this occasion Jesus was troubled in spirit, and his disciples sympathized with his grief although they knew not its cause. This was virtually the last passover that was ever to be celebrated; for type was to meet antitype in the slaying of the Lamb of God for the sins of the world.

"And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer; for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves; for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you; this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you." At this last passover the Lord's supper was instituted.

Jesus, by his example, then gave his disciples a lesson of humility. Having girded himself like a servant, he washed the feet of his disciples, conversing with them the while in solemn tenderness. He, the spotless Son of God, stooped to wash the feet of his followers, as one of the last tokens of his love for them. When he had completed the task, he said unto them, "Know ye what I have done unto you? Ye call me Master and Lord; and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet; for I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done unto you."

A contention had arisen among the disciples of Jesus as to who should be most honored in his kingdom; for notwithstanding the express instruction they had so often received to the con-

trary, they had clung to the idea that Jesus would establish a temporal kingdom in Jerusalem; and the late demonstrations upon his entering the city, and the manner in which he had received them, revived this belief in their minds. Jesus had checked their aspirations for honor, and now strengthened the lesson by an act of humility and love, calculated to impress them with a sense of their obligations to one another, and that instead of quarreling for place, each should count the others better than himself.

As the disciples sat at the passover with their beloved Master, they observed that he still appeared greatly troubled and depressed. A cloud settled over them all, a premonition of some dreadful calamity, the character of which they did not understand. As they ate in silence, Jesus said, "Verily, I say unto you that one of you shall betray me." Amazement and consternation seized them at these words. They could not comprehend how any one of them could deal treacherously by their divine Teacher. For what cause could they betray him, and to whom? Whose heart could give birth to such a design! Surely not one of the favored twelve who had been privileged above all others to hear his teachings, and who had experienced his marvelous love, and for whom he had shown such great respect by bringing them into close communion with himself!

As they realized the full import of his words, and remembered how true his sayings were, a sudden fear and self-distrust seized them. They began to examine their own hearts to ascertain if one thought against the Master found lodgment there. With the most painful feelings, one

after another inquired, "Lord, is it I?" But Judas sat silent. John, in deep distress, inquired at last, Who is it, Lord? and Jesus answered, "He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. The Son of man goeth as it is written of him, but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed; it had been good for that man if he had not been born." The disciples had searched one another's faces closely as they asked, "Lord, is it I?" and now the silence of Judas drew all eyes to himself. Amid the confusion of questions and the expressions of astonishment, Judas had not heard the words of Jesus in answer to John's question. But now, to escape the searching scrutiny of the disciples, he asked as they had done, "Master, is it I?" Jesus replied with solemn accents, "Thou hast said." Confused and overcome by the unexpected discovery of his crime, Judas hastily rose to leave the room; but as he went out, Jesus said, "What thou doest, do quickly."

There was a touching forbearance manifested in the dealing of Jesus with Judas. It evinced an infinite mercy, giving him one more chance of repentance, by showing him that all his thoughts and purposes were fully known to the Son of God. He deigned to give one final, convincing proof of his divinity to Judas before the consummation of his treachery, that he might turn from his purpose before repentance was too late. But Judas, although surprised and alarmed, was not moved to repentance, but went forth and proceeded to carry out the work he had engaged to do.

The purpose of the Saviour in pronouncing the woe upon Judas was twofold: First, to give the

false disciple a last opportunity to save himself from the betrayer's doom; and, secondly, to give the disciples a crowning evidence of his Messiahship, in revealing the hidden purpose of Judas. Said Jesus: "I speak not of you all; I know whom I have chosen; but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me. Now I tell you before it come, that when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he."

The withdrawal of Judas was a relief to all present. The Saviour's face immediately lighted, and the oppressive shadow was lifted from the disciples, as they saw the peace of Heaven return to the pale, worn countenance of their Lord. Jesus had much to say to his beloved disciples that he did not wish to say in the presence of the multitude, who could not understand the sacred truths he was about to unfold. Even the disciples could not fully understand them till after the resurrection should have taken place.

Looking upon his faithful followers, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him." He then informed them of his approaching separation from them. The ardent Peter could not rest while the matter remained in uncertainty. He inquired, "Lord, whither goest thou?" Jesus answered, "Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterward." But Peter's interest was intensely roused, and he urged Jesus to explain his full meaning, saying, "Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake." Jesus answered sorrowfully, "Wilt

thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow till thou hast denied me thrice." Then, looking with pitying love upon his little flock, so soon to be left without a shepherd, he sought to draw their minds from the perplexity into which his statements had thrown them, and said tenderly, "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know."

With the deepest interest Jesus poured forth the burden of his soul in words of comfort, of counsel and prayer, which would ever remain imprinted on the minds and hearts of his disciples. These words from the lips of the Saviour, traced by the inspired John in chapters fifteen, sixteen, and seventeen, were repeated again and again by the disciples to stay their sinking hearts in their great disappointment and trial. Not until after the resurrection, however, were the words spoken upon this memorable occasion fully understood and appreciated.

Jesus with his disciples now left the upper chamber, and crossed the brook Kedron. Sorrow and anguish again pressed heavily upon his heart. With touching sadness he addressed his companions: "All ye shall be offended because of me this night; for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. But after that I am risen I will go before you into Galilee." Peter, again anxious to assure his

Master of his fidelity, said, "Although all shall be offended, yet will not I." Jesus, reproving his confidence as before, said, "Verily I say unto thee, that this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice." But Peter only "spake the more vehemently, If I should die with thee I will not deny thee in any wise. Likewise also said they all."

Jesus now repaired with his disciples to the garden of Gethsemane, at the foot of Mount Olivet, a retired place which he had often visited for seasons of communion with his Father. It was night; but the moon was shining bright, and revealed to him a flourishing grape-vine. Drawing the attention of the disciples to it, he said, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit."

The Jewish nation was a fruitless branch, and was therefore to be separated from the living vine, which was Christ Jesus. The Gentiles were to be engrafted upon the stalk, to become a living branch, partaker of the life that nourished the true vine. This branch was to be pruned that it might be fruitful. In view of his separation from his disciples, Jesus now exhorted them to connect themselves firmly to him by faith, that they might become a part of the living vine, and bear a rich harvest of fruit. "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me,

and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing."

When the sinner has repented of his sins, and is united with Christ, as the branch is engrafted in the vine, the nature of the man is changed, and he is a partaker of the divine nature. He treasures up the words of Christ, and they abide in him. The life-giving principle of the Saviour is communicated to the Christian. Just so the little scion, leafless and apparently lifeless, is engrafted into the living vine, and, fiber by fiber, vein by vein, drinks life and strength from it, till it becomes a flourishing branch of the parent stalk.

He still impressed upon them the importance of carrying forward the work which he had begun, and bearing fruit to the glory of God: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain; that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you." The disciples were the chosen depositaries of the truth of God. They were witnesses of the Father's acknowledgment of Jesus as the Son of God. They had beheld his miracles, heard his teachings, and it was theirs to give his message of salvation to the world, that through their evidence men might lay hold of Christ by living faith. Thus would the disciples bring forth fruit to the glory of God.

Jesus assured his disciples that he would in no case forsake them, but would be clothed with power, and would become their Advocate at the right hand of the Father, to present the petitions they might ask in the name of his Son. The disciples did not then fully comprehend the

words of their Master, but later in their religious experience they cherished the precious promise, and presented their prayers to the Father in the name of Jesus.

Jesus warned his disciples not to expect the commendation of the world. Said he, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." Those who are of the same spirit with the world receive its smiles and approbation; but the humble disciples of Jesus were to suffer scorn and persecution. Jesus declared that they should be brought before kings and rulers for his name's sake, and whosoever should destroy their lives would be so deceived by Satan as to think they were doing God service. Every indignity and cruelty that the ingenuity of man could devise would be visited upon the followers of Christ. But in all their trials they were to remember that their Master had endured like reproach and suffering. They were to remember his words: "The servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not Him that sent me."

Jesus carefully opened before his disciples the events which would follow his death, that when persecution should overtake them they might be prepared to endure it, and not be tempted to apostatize from their faith to avert suffering and dishonor. He impressed upon them the importance of their position as those who had witnessed the wonderful manifestations of God to his Son, who had beheld the miracles of Christ, and received his words of wisdom. Said he, "Ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning." The history of those disciples, and the evidence which they were to record, were to be the study of thinking minds through all ages.

Jesus plainly stated to the disciples that he had left the presence of his Father to come unto the world, and that he was now about to leave the world and return to his Father; but he refrained from crowding their minds and confusing their understanding. Said he, "I have many things to say unto you; but ye cannot bear them now." He knew they were not strong enough to hear all the wonderful truths relative to his humiliation and death. After his resurrection they would be better able to understand and appreciate them.

Jesus now had but a short time in which to comfort and instruct his little band of followers. His farewell counsel was rich in sympathy and truth. Exceeding precious to his disciples were those last moments passed with their beloved Master. Like a consecrated high priest he now poured forth the burden of his soul to his Father in a petition for his church such as the angels had never before heard. This prayer was deep and full, broad as the earth, and reaching high Heaven. With his human arm he encircled the children of Adam in a firm embrace; and with his strong divine arm he grasped the throne of the Infinite, thus uniting earth to Heaven, and finite man to the infinite God.

IN THE GARDEN.

THE Redeemer, in company with his disciples, slowly made his way to the garden of Gethsemane. The passover moon, broad and full, shone from a cloudless sky. The city of pilgrims' tents was hushed into silence.

Jesus had been earnestly conversing with and instructing his disciples; but as he neared Gethsemane he became strangely silent. His disciples were perplexed, and anxiously regarded his countenance, hoping there to read an explanation of the change that had come over their Master. They had frequently seen him depressed, but never before so utterly sad and silent. As he proceeded, this strange sadness increased; yet they dared not question him as to the cause. His form swayed as if he was about to fall. His disciples looked anxiously for his usual place of retirement, that their Master might rest.

Upon entering the garden he said to his companions, "Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder." Selecting Peter, James, and John to accompany him, he proceeded farther into the recesses of the garden. He had been accustomed to brace his spirit for trial and duty by fervent prayer in this retreat, and had frequently spent the entire night thus. On these occasions his disciples, after a little season of watching and prayer, would sleep undisturbed at a little distance from their Master until he awoke them in the morning to go forth and labor anew. So this act of Jesus called forth no remark from his companions.

Every step that the Saviour now took was with labored effort. He groaned aloud as though suffering under the pressure of a terrible burden; yet he refrained from startling his three chosen disciples by a full explanation of the agony which he was to suffer. Twice his companions prevented him from falling to the ground. Jesus felt that he must be still more alone, and he said to the favored three, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; tarry ye here, and watch with me." His disciples had never before heard him utter such mournful tones. His frame was convulsed with anguish, and his pale countenance expressed a sorrow past all description.

He went a short distance from his disciples—not so far but that they could both see and hear him—and fell prostrate with his face upon the cold ground. He was overpowered by a terrible fear that God was removing his presence from him. He felt himself being separated from his Father by a gulf of sin, so broad, so black and deep that his spirit shuddered before it. He clung convulsively to the cold, unfeeling ground as if to prevent himself from being drawn still farther from God. The chilling dews of night fell upon his prostrate form, but the Redeemer heeded it not. From his pale, convulsed lips wailed the bitter cry, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt."

It was not a dread of the physical suffering he was soon to endure that brought this agony upon the Son of God. He was enduring the penalty of man's transgression, and shuddering

beneath the Father's frown. He must not call his divinity to his aid, but as a man, he must bear the consequences of man's sin and the Creator's displeasure toward his disobedient subjects. As he felt his unity with the Father broken up, he feared that his human nature would be unable to endure the coming conflict with the prince of the power of darkness; and in that case the human race would be irrecoverably lost, Satan would be victor, and the earth would be his kingdom. The sins of the world weighed heavily upon the Saviour, and bowed him to the earth; and the Father's anger in consequence of that sin seemed crushing out his life.

In the conflict of Christ with Satan in the wilderness of temptation, the destiny of the human race was at stake. But Christ was conqueror, and the tempter left him for a season. He had now returned for the last fearful conflict. Satan had been preparing for this final trial during the three years of Christ's ministry. Everything was at stake with him. If he failed here, his hope of mastery was lost; the kingdoms of the earth would finally become Christ's, who would "bind the strong man" (Satan), and cast him out.

During this scene of the Saviour's anguish, the disciples were at first much troubled to see their Master, usually so calm and dignified, wrestling with a sorrow that exceeded all utterance; but they were tired, and finally dropped asleep, leaving him to agonize alone. At the end of an hour, Jesus, feeling the need of human sympathy, rose with painful effort and staggered to the place where he had left his companions.

But no sympathizing countenance greeted him after his long struggle; the disciples were fast asleep. Ah! if they had realized that this was their last night with their beloved Master while he lived a man upon earth, if they had known what the morrow would bring him, they would hardly have yielded to the power of slumber.

The voice of Jesus partially aroused them. They discerned his form bending over them, his expression and attitude indicating extreme exhaustion. They scarcely recognized in his changed countenance the usually serene face of their Master. Singling out Simon Peter, he addressed him: "Simon, sleepest thou? couldest not thou watch one hour?" Oh! Simon, where is now thy boasted devotion? Thou, who didst but lately declare thou couldst go with thy Lord to prison or to death, hast left him in the hour of his agony and temptation, and sought repose in sleep!

John, the loving disciple who had leaned on the breast of Jesus, was also sleeping. Surely, the love of John for his Master should have kept him awake. His earnest prayers should have mingled with those of his loved Saviour in the time of his supreme sorrow. The self-sacrificing Redeemer had passed entire nights in the cold mountains or in the groves, praying for his disciples, that their faith might not fail them in the hour of their temptation. Should Jesus now put to James and John the question he had once asked them: "Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" they would not have ventured to answer, "We are able."

The evidence of the weakness of his disciples excited the pity and sympathy of the Son of God. He questioned their strength to endure the test they must undergo in witnessing his betrayal and death. He did not sternly upbraid them for their weakness, but, in view of their coming trial, exhorted them: "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." Then, his spirit moving in sympathy with their frailty, he framed an excuse for their failure in duty toward him: "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Again the Son of God was seized with superhuman agony, and, fainting and exhausted, staggered back to the place of his former struggle. Again he was prostrated to the earth. His suffering was even greater than before. The cypress and palm trees were the silent witnesses of his anguish. From their leafy branches dropped heavy dew upon his stricken form, as if nature wept over its Author wrestling alone with the powers of darkness.

A few hours before, Jesus had stood like a mighty cedar, withstanding the storm of opposition that spent its fury upon him. Stubborn wills, and hearts filled with malice and subtlety strove in vain to confuse and overpower him. He stood forth in divine majesty as the Son of God. But now he was like a bruised reed beaten and bent by the angry storm. A short time before, he had poured out his soul to his disciples in noble utterances, claiming unity with the Father, and giving his elect church into his arms in the language of one who had divine authority. Now his voice uttered suppressed wails of anguish, and he clung to the cold ground as if for relief.

The words of the Saviour were borne to the ears of the drowsy disciples: "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." The anguish of God's dear Son forced drops of blood from his pores. Again he staggered to his feet, his human heart yearning for the sympathy of his companions, and repaired to where his disciples were sleeping. His presence roused them, and they looked upon his face with fear, for it was stained with blood, and expressed an agony of mind which was to them unaccountable.

He did not again address them, but, turning away, sought again his retreat and fell prostrate, overcome by the horror of a great darkness. The humanity of the Son of God trembled in that trying hour. The awful moment had arrived which was to decide the destiny of the world. The heavenly hosts waited the issue with intense interest. The fate of humanity trembled in the balance. The Son of God might even then refuse to drink the cup apportioned to guilty men. He might wipe the bloody sweat from his brow, and leave men to perish in their iniquity. Will the Son of the Infinite God drink the bitter potion of humiliation and agony? Will the innocent suffer the consequence of God's curse, to save the guilty? The words fall tremblingly from the pale lips of Jesus: "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done."

Three times has he uttered that prayer. Three times has humanity shrunk from the last crowning sacrifice. But now the history of the human

race comes up before the world's Redeemer. He sees that the transgressors of the law, if left to themselves, must perish under the Father's displeasure. He sees the power of sin, and the utter helplessness of man to save himself. The woes and lamentations of a doomed world arise before him. He beholds its impending fate, and his decision is made. He will save man at any cost to himself. He accepts his baptism of blood, that perishing millions through him may gain everlasting life. He left the courts of Heaven, where all was purity, happiness, and glory, to save the one lost sheep, the one world that had fallen by transgression, and he will not turn from the mission he has chosen. He will reach to the very depths of misery to rescue a lost and ruined race.

Having made the decision and reached the final crisis, he fell in a dying condition to the earth from which he had partially risen. Where now were his disciples, to place their hands tenderly beneath the head of their fainting Master, and bathe that brow, marred indeed more than the sons of men? The Saviour trod the wine-press alone, and of all the people there was none with him. And yet he was not alone. He had said, "I and my Father are one." God suffered with his Son. Man cannot comprehend the sacrifice made by the infinite God in giving up his Son to reproach, agony, and death. This is the evidence of the Father's boundless love to man.

The angels who did Christ's will in Heaven were anxious to comfort him; but it was beyond their power to alleviate his sorrow. They had never felt the sins of a ruined world, and they beheld with astonishment the object of

their adoration subject to a grief beyond all expression. Though the disciples had failed to sympathize with their Lord in the trying hour of his conflict, all Heaven was full of sympathy and waiting the result with painful interest. When it was finally determined, an angel was sent from the throne of God to minister unto the stricken Redeemer.

The disciples were suddenly aroused from their slumber by a bright light shining upon and around the Son of God. They started up in amazement, and beheld a heavenly being, clothed in garments of light, bending over their prostrate Master. With his right hand he lifted the head of the divine sufferer upon his bosom, and with his left hand he pointed toward Heaven. His voice was like the sweetest music, as he uttered soothing words presenting to the mind of Christ the grand results of the victory he had gained over the strong and wily foe. Christ was victor over Satan; and, as the result of his triumph, millions were to be victors with him in his glorified kingdom.

Well was it for the children of men that the angel's errand was not to notify the Saviour that his thrice-repeated prayer, Let this cup pass from me, had been granted. Then indeed might the disciples have slept on, locked in the slumber of hopeless despair. But the angel was sent from Heaven to support the Redeemer in drinking the cup that was presented him. The language of his prayer was now changed; in the spirit of submission he prayed: "If this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." A heavenly serenity now rested upon the Saviour's pale and blood-stained face.

The glorious vision of the angel dazzled the eyes of the disciples. They remembered the mount of transfiguration, the glory that encircled Jesus in the temple, and the voice of God issuing from the cloud. They saw the same glory here revealed, and had no farther fear for their Master, since God had taken him in charge and an angel was present to protect him from his foes. They were weary and heavy with sleep, and again they dropped into unconsciousness.

The Saviour of the world arose and sought his disciples, and, for the third time, found them fast asleep. He looked sorrowfully upon them. His words, however, aroused them: "Sleep on now, and take your rest; behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners."

Even while these words were upon his lips, the footsteps of the mob that was in search of him were heard. Judas took the lead and was closely followed by the high priest. Jesus turned to his disciples, as his enemies approached, and said, "Rise, let us be going; behold, he is at hand that doth betray me." The countenance of the Saviour wore an expression of calm dignity; no traces of his recent agony were visible as he stepped forth to meet his betrayer.

He stood in advance of his disciples, and inquired, "Whom seek ye?" They answered, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus replied, "I am he." As these words were uttered, the mob staggered back; and the priests, elders, soldiers, and even Judas, dropped powerless to the ground. This gave Jesus ample opportunity to escape from them if he had chosen to do so. But he stood

as one glorified amid that coarse and hardened band. When Jesus answered, "I am he," the angel who had lately ministered unto him moved between him and the murderous mob, who saw a divine light illuminating the Saviour's face, and a dove-like form overshadowing him. Their wicked hearts were filled with terror. They could not for a moment stand upon their feet in the presence of this divine glory, and they fell as dead men to the ground.

The angel withdrew; the light faded away; Jesus was left standing, calm and self-possessed, with the bright beams of the moon upon his pale face, and still surrounded by prostrate, helpless men, while the disciples were too much amazed to utter a word. When the angel departed, the Roman soldiers started to their feet, and, with the priests and Judas, gathered about Christ as though ashamed of their weakness, and fearful that he would yet escape from their hands. Again the question was asked by the Redeemer, "Whom seek ye?" Again they answered, "Jesus of Nazareth." The Saviour then said, "I have told you that I am he. If, therefore, ye seek me, let these go their way"—pointing to the disciples. In this hour of humiliation Christ's thoughts were not for himself, but for his beloved disciples. He wished to save them from any farther trial of their strength.

Judas, the betrayer, did not forget his part, but came close to Jesus, and took his hand as a familiar friend, and bestowed upon him the traitor's kiss. Jesus said to him, "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" His voice trembled with sorrow as he addressed the deluded Judas: "Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?"

This most touching appeal should have roused the conscience of the betrayer, and touched his stubborn heart; but honor, fidelity, and human tenderness had utterly forsaken him. He stood bold and defiant, showing no disposition to relent. He had given himself up to the control of Satan, and he had no power to resist him. Jesus did not reject the traitor's kiss. In this he gives us an example of forbearance, love, and pity, that is without a parallel.

Though the murderous throng were surprised and awed by what they had seen and felt, their assurance and hardihood returned as they saw the boldness of Judas in touching the person of Him whom they had so recently seen glorified. They now laid violent hands upon Jesus, and proceeded to bind those precious hands that had ever been employed in doing good.

When the disciples saw that band of strong men lying prostrate and helpless on the ground, they thought surely their Master would not suffer himself to be taken; for the same power that prostrated that hireling mob could cause them to remain in a state of helplessness until Jesus and his companions should pass unharmed beyond their reach. They were disappointed and indignant as they saw the cords brought forward to bind the hands of Him whom they loved. Peter in his vehement anger rashly cut off, with his sword, an ear of the servant of the high priest.

When Jesus saw what Peter had done, he released his hands, though held firmly by the Roman soldiers, and saying, "Suffer ye thus far," he touched the wounded ear, and it was instantly made whole. He then said to Peter, "Put up

again thy sword into his place; for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" Jesus then turned to the chief priest, and captains of the temple, who helped compose that murderous throng, "and said, are ye come out as against a thief with swords and with staves to take me? I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took me not; but the Scriptures must be fulfilled."

When the disciples saw that Jesus did not deliver himself from his enemies, but permitted himself to be taken and bound, they were offended that he should suffer this humiliation to himself and them. They had just witnessed an exhibition of his power in prostrating to the ground those who came to take him, and in healing the servant's ear, which Peter had cut off, and they knew that if he chose he could deliver himself from the murderous mob. They blamed him for not doing so, and mortified and terror-stricken by his unaccountable conduct they forsook him and fled. Christ had foreseen this desertion, and in the upper chamber had forewarned them of the course which they would take at this time, saying, "Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me."

Judas was himself surprised that Jesus should deliver himself into the hands of those who

sought to destroy him. He had frequently known the Saviour's enemies to lay plans to take him, but Jesus would quietly depart and defeat their murderous designs. Now the betrayer saw with astonishment that his Master suffered himself to be bound and led away. The false disciple flattered himself, however, that Jesus had only permitted himself to be taken that he might manifest his power by delivering himself from his enemies in a miraculous manner. He knew that nothing else could free him from that armed band. For three years the Jews had been secretly planning to take him, and now that they had accomplished this they would not let him escape death, if they could prevent it.

Jesus was hurried off by the hooting mob. He moved painfully, for his hands were tightly bound and he was closely guarded. He was first conducted to the house of Annas, the father-in-law of the high priest, the man whose counsel was sought and carried out by the Jewish people as the voice of God. Annas craved the fearful satisfaction of first seeing Jesus of Nazareth a bound captive. Having once been shown to Annas, he was hurried away; for the priests and rulers had decided that if they once had possession of his person, there should be no delays in his trial and condemnation. This was because they feared that the people, remembering his acts of charity and mercy among them, would rescue him out of their hands.

IN THE JUDGMENT HALL.

THE armed band, with their prisoner, threaded the dark and narrow streets, guided by torches and lanterns, for it was yet early morning and very dark. Amid insult and mockery, the Saviour was hurried to the palace of the officiating high priest, Caiaphas. Here he was coarsely accused by his persecutors, and sneeringly questioned by the priest, and reviled by the whole assembly. But while enduring this mockery of an examination, the Saviour's heart was pierced by a keener pang than it was in the power of his enemies to inflict. It was when he heard his beloved disciple deny him with cursing and swearing.

After deserting their Master in the garden, two of the disciples regained their presence of mind and ventured to follow, at a distance, the mob that had Jesus in charge. These disciples were Peter and John. The priest recognized John as a well-known disciple of Jesus, and admitted him to the hall where the Saviour was being questioned because he hoped that John, while witnessing the humiliation of his leader, would become affected with the same spirit that actuated his enemies, and scorn the idea of one who could be subjected to such indignities, being the Son of God. John, having secured himself an entrance, spoke in behalf of his companion, Peter, and gained the same favor for him.

The coldest hour of the night was that preceding the dawn, and a fire had been lighted in the hall. Around this a company were gathered; and Peter presumptuously took his place with

the rest by the fire, and stood warming himself. He did not wish to be recognized as one of the disciples of Jesus, and he thought by mingling carelessly with the people he would be taken for one of those who had brought Jesus to the hall.

But, as the light flashed upon Peter's countenance, the woman who kept the door cast a searching glance upon him; she had noticed that he came in with John, and conjectured that he was one of Christ's followers. She interrogated him in a taunting manner: "Art not thou also one of this man's disciples?" Peter was startled and confused; the eyes of the company instantly fastened upon him. He pretended not to understand her, but she was persistent, and said to those around her that this man was with Jesus. Peter, feeling compelled to answer, said angrily, "Woman, I know him not." This was the first denial, and immediately the cock crew. O Peter! So soon ashamed of thy Master! So soon to cowardly deny thy Lord! The Saviour is dishonored and deserted in his humiliation by one of his most zealous disciples.

In the first place, Peter had not designed that his real character should be known; and, in assuming an air of indifference, he placed himself on the enemy's ground, and became an easy subject to Satan's temptation. He appeared to be disinterested in the trial of his Master, while in reality his heart was wrung with sorrow as he heard the cruel taunts and saw the mockery and abuse he was suffering. In addition to this he was surprised and angry that Jesus should humiliate himself and his followers by passively submitting to such treatment. Under these conflicting emotions, it was difficult to preserve his character of indifference. His appearance was unnatural, as he endeavored to join with the persecutors of Jesus in their untimely jests, in order to cover his true feelings.

He was acting a lie, and while trying to talk unconcernedly he could not restrain expressions of indignation at the abuse heaped upon his Master. Accordingly attention was called to him the second time, and he was again charged with being a follower of Jesus. He now denied the accusation with an oath. The cock crew the second time; but Peter heard it not, for he was now thoroughly intent upon carrying out the character which he had assumed. One of the servants of the high priest, being a near kinsman to the man whose ear the disciple had cut off, asked him, "Did not I see thee in the garden with him?" "Surely thou art one of them; for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth thereto."

At this, Peter flew into a rage, and to fully deceive his questioners, and to justify his assumed character, he denied his Master with cursing and swearing. And immediately the cock crew the third time. Peter heard it then; and while the degrading oaths were fresh upon his lips, and the shrill crowing of the cock was yet ringing in his ears, the Saviour turned his face from the frowning judges, and looked full upon his poor disciple. At the same time Peter's eyes were involuntarily fixed upon his Master. He read in that gentle countenance deep pity and sorrow; but there was no anger there.

Peter was conscience-smitten; his memory was aroused; he recalled to mind his promise of a few short hours before, that he would go to

prison or to death for his Lord. He remembered his grief when the Saviour told him in the upper chamber that he would deny his Master thrice that same night. Peter had just declared that he knew not Jesus, but he now realized with bitter grief how well his Lord knew him, and how accurately he had read his heart, the falseness of which was unknown even to himself. He groaned in spirit as he realized that not only was his Master enduring the bitterest humiliation at the hands of his enemies, but he was suffering additional dishonor at the hands of one of his disciples, who had forsaken and refused to acknowledge him in the hour of his trial.

The look of Christ conveyed volumes to the repentant Peter. He read in that glance sorrow, love, and pardon. A tide of memories rushed over him. He remembered the Saviour's tender mercy, his kindness and long-suffering, the patience with which he dealt with his followers. He remembered the caution of Jesus to him: "Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." He reflected with horror upon his base ingratitude, his falsehood and perjury. He looked once more at his Master, and saw a sacrilegious hand raised to smite him in the face. Unable to longer endure the scene, he rushed, heart-broken, from the hall.

He pressed on in solitude and darkness, he knew and cared not whither. At last he found himself in the garden of Gethsemane, where a short time before he had slept while the Saviour wrestled with the powers of darkness. The suffering face of his Lord, stained with bloody

sweat and convulsed with anguish, rose before him. He remembered with bitter remorse that Jesus had wept and agonized in prayer alone, while those who should have sustained him in that trying hour were sleeping. He remembered his solemn charge: "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." The scene of a few short hours before came vividly to his mind. He witnessed again the tears and groans of Jesus. It was torture to his bleeding heart to know that he had added the heaviest burden to the Saviour's humiliation and grief. He fell prostrate upon the very spot where his Lord had sunk beneath his inexpressible weight of woe.

Peter's first mistake was in sleeping when Christ had bidden him to watch and pray. At the most critical moment, when the Son of God was in need of his sympathy and heartfelt prayers, he was incapable of giving them to him. The disciples lost much by sleeping; Jesus designed to fortify them for the severe test of faith to which they were to be subjected. If they had spent that mournful period in the garden in watching with the dear Saviour, and in prayer to God, Peter would not have been left to depend upon his own feeble strength; he would not have denied his Lord.

This important night-watch should have been spent by the disciples in noble mental struggles and prayers, which would have brought them strength to witness the terrible agony of the Son of God. It would have prepared them, as they should behold his sufferings upon the cross, to understand in some degree the nature of the overpowering anguish which he endured. They would then have been better able to recall the

words he had spoken to them in reference to his sufferings, death, and resurrection; and amid the gloom of that trying hour some rays of hope would have lighted up the darkness, and sustained their faith. Christ had told them before that these things would take place. He knew the power which the prince of darkness would use to paralyze the senses of his disciples when they should be watching and praying.

The disciple John, upon entering the judgment hall, did not try to conceal the fact that he was one of the followers of Jesus. He did not mingle with the rough company that were insulting and mocking his Master. He was not questioned, for he did not assume a false character and thus lay himself liable to suspicion. He sought a retired corner secure from observation of the mob, but as near Jesus as it was possible for him to be. In this place he could hear and see all that transpired at the trial of his Lord.

If Peter had been called to fight for his Master, he would have proved a bold and courageous soldier; but he became a coward when the finger of scorn was pointed at him. Many who do not hesitate to engage in active warfare for the Lord, are driven to deny their faith through the ridicule of their enemies. They place themselves in the way of temptation by associating with those whom they should avoid. They thus invite the enemy to tempt them, and are led to do and say that which they would never have been guilty of under other circumstances. The disciple of Christ, who, in our day, disguises his faith through dread of suffering or reproach, denies his Lord as virtually as did Peter in the judgment hall. There are always those who

boast of their freedom of thought and action, and laugh at the scruples of the conscientious who fear to do wrong. Yet if those righteous persons are persuaded to yield their faith, they are despised by the very ones who were Satan's agents to tempt them to their ruin.

Peter, however, as well as John, witnessed much of the mock trial of Jesus. It was necessary that there should be a pretense of legal trial; but great secresy was maintained lest the people should obtain information of what was being done, and come forward with their testimony in vindication of Jesus, bringing to light the mighty works which he had done. This would bring the indignation of the people upon the Sanhedrim; their acts would be condemned and brought to naught; and Jesus would be liberated and receive new honor at the hands of the people.

While the members of the Sanhedrim council were being called together, Annas and Caiaphas the priest questioned Jesus, with the purpose of provoking him to make some statement which they could use to his disadvantage. They brought two charges against him, by one or both of which they meant to effect his condemnation. One was that he was a disturber of the peace, the leader of a rebellion. If this charge could be verified he would be condemned by the Roman authorities. The other charge was that he was a blasphemer. This, if proved true, would secure his condemnation among the Jews.

The high priest questioned Jesus concerning his doctrine, and the disciples who believed in him. Jesus answered briefly: "I spake openly

to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them; behold, they know what I said."

Jesus was well aware that his questioner designed to draw some statement from him which should awaken the fears of the Roman authorities that he was seeking to establish a secret society with the purpose of finally setting up a new kingdom. He therefore plainly stated to Annas that he had no secrets in regard to his purpose or doctrines. Turning upon his interrogator he said with startling emphasis, "Why askest thou me?" Had not the priests and rulers set spies to watch his movements and report his every word? Had they not been present at every gathering of the people, and carried information of all his sayings and doings on these occasions to the priests? "Ask them that heard me, what I have said," replied Jesus; and his words were a rebuke to Annas, who had hunted him for months, striving to entrap him, and to bring him before a secret tribunal, in which the people could have no voice, that he might obtain by perjury what it was impossible to gain by fair means.

The words of Jesus were so close and pointed that the high priest felt that his very soul was being read by his prisoner. Though Annas was filled with hatred against Jesus at these words, he disguised it until a more fitting opportunity presented itself of giving vent to his malice and jealousy. But one of the servants of the high priest, assuming that his master was not treated

with due respect, struck Jesus in the face, saying, "Answerest thou the high priest so?" To this insulting question and blow, Jesus mildly returned, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?"

The Majesty of Heaven might have summoned to his aid legions of loyal angels to protect him against the malignity of his enemies; but it was his mission, in the character of humanity, meekly to endure taunts and stripes, leaving an example of patient forbearance to the children of men. Those into whose power Jesus had fallen had no respect for this sublime forbearance. The fact that he was a passive captive in their hands was the signal for them to wreak upon him the basest insults which their corrupt hearts could invent.

When the council was fully assembled in the judgment hall, Caiaphas took his position as presiding officer. This man had ever regarded Jesus as his rival. The combined simplicity and eloquence of the Saviour had attracted large crowds to listen to his teachings, which contained wisdom such as they had never heard from the lips of priests or scribes. The anxiety of the people to hear Jesus, and their readiness to accept his doctrines, had roused the bitter jealousy of the high priest.

Jesus stood calm and serene before the high priest, while the eyes of the multitude were upon him, and the wildest excitement prevailed around. For a moment Caiaphas looked upon the captive, struck with a sudden admiration for his dignified bearing. A conviction came over him that this man was akin to God. The next instant he banished the thought, scorning the suggestions of his own mind. Immediately, his voice was heard in

sneering, haughty tones, requesting Jesus to work before him one of those mighty miracles which had given him such fame among the people; but his words fell upon the ears of the Saviour as though he heard them not.

The people involuntarily compared the excited and malignant deportment of Annas and Caiaphas with the calm, majestic bearing of Jesus. A holy influence seemed to emanate from the Saviour and pervade the atmosphere surrounding him. The question arose even in the minds of the hardened multitude present, Is this man of God-like presence to be sentenced as a common criminal? Caiaphas, perceiving the influence that was obtaining, hastened the trial. He took his position on the throne of judgment, while Jesus stood at its foot. On either side were the judges and those specially interested in the trial. The Roman soldiers were ranged on the platform, below the throne.

The high priest arose in his gorgeous robe, with glittering tiara and costly breastplate, upon which, in former days, the light of God's glory had often flashed. In strong contrast with this display were the coarse habiliments of Jesus. And yet he who was clad in homely garb had reigned in the courts of Heaven, crowned, and with garments of brightness, attended by holy angels. Yet there he stood at the foot of an earthly throne to be tried for his life.

The priests and rulers had decided in counsel together that Jesus must be condemned, whether or not they could furnish evidence of his guilt. It was necessary to bring charges against him which would be regarded as criminal by the Roman power or they could legally effect nothing against him. His accusers could find plenty who would testify that he had denounced the priests and scribes; that he had called them hypocrites and murderers; but this would weigh nothing with the Romans, who were themselves disgusted with the pretension of the Pharisees. Such testimony would also weigh nothing with the Sadducees; for in their sharp contentions with the Pharisees, they had used to them language of the same import. His accusers were anxious to avoid raising the opposition of the Sadducees against the Pharisees; for if the two parties fell to contending among themselves, Jesus would be likely to escape from their hands.

They could secure abundant evidence that Jesus had disregarded their traditions, and spoken irreverently of many of their ordinances; but such evidence was of no value, as it would have no weight with either the Romans or Sadducees. They dared not accuse him of Sabbath-breaking for fear an examination would reveal what had been the character of his work upon that day. In that event his miracles wrought to heal the afflicted would be brought to light, and defeat the very object they wished to gain.

Christ had said, concerning the temple of his body, that he could destroy it, and raise it again in three days. These words were understood by his hearers to refer to the Jewish temple. Of all that Jesus had said, the priests could find nothing which they could use against him save this. The Romans had engaged in rebuilding and embellishing the temple. They took great pride in it as a work of science and art; and the priests counted upon their indignation when it was proven that Jesus, a humble man, had declared

himself able to build it in three days if it should be destroyed. On this ground, Romans and Jews, Pharisees and Sadducees, could meet; for all held the temple in great veneration.

In addition to this they had bribed false witnesses to testify that Jesus was guilty of inciting rebellion and seeking to establish a separate government. This they hoped would farther excite the apprehensions of the Romans and accomplish the desired object. But when these witnesses were called, their testimony was so vague and contradictory that it was worthless. Upon cross-questioning, they were led to falsify their own statements. It was becoming apparent to the people that the charges against Jesus could not be maintained. The life of the Saviour had been so faultless, and his doctrine so pure, that envy and malice could find little in either capable of being misrepresented.

Two witnesses were at last found whose evidence was not so contradictory as the others had been. One of them, a corrupt man who had sold his honor for a sum of money, spoke of Christ as on a level with himself. Said he, "This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days." In the figurative language of prophecy, Jesus had thus foretold his own death and resurrection, his conflict and victory; but his enemies had misconstrued his words to suit their own purposes. The words of Jesus were truth and verity; the evidence was false and malicious. If the words of Jesus had been reported exactly as he uttered them, there would have been nothing offensive in them. If he had been a mere man, as they assumed him to be, his declaration

would only have indicated an unreasonable, boastful spirit, but could not have been construed into blasphemy.

Caiaphas urged Jesus to answer to the charge made against him; but the Saviour, knowing that his sentence was already determined, answered him nothing. The evidence gained from the last two witnesses proved nothing against him worthy of death; and Jesus himself remained calm and silent. The priests and rulers began to fear that they would fail to gain their object after all. They were disappointed and perplexed that they had failed to gain anything from the false witnesses upon which to condemn their prisoner. Their only hope now was to make Jesus speak out and say something which would condemn him before the people.

The silence of Christ upon this occasion had already been described by Isaiah in prophetic vision: "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth."

The high priest now raised his right hand toward Heaven in a most imposing manner, and with a solemn voice addressed Jesus: "I adjure thee by the living God that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God." Thus appealed to by the highest acknowledged authority in the nation, and in the name of the Most High, Jesus, to show proper respect for the law, answered, "Thou hast said." Every ear was bent to listen, and every eye was fixed upon his face, as with calm voice and dignified manner, he made this reply. A heavenly light seemed to illuminate his pale countenance as he added, "Nevertheless

I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."

For a moment the divinity of Christ flashed through his guise of humanity; and the high priest quailed before the penetrating eyes of the Saviour. That look seemed to read his hidden thoughts, and burn into his heart; and never in after-life did he forget that searching glance of the persecuted Son of God. This voluntary confession of Jesus, claiming his Sonship with God, was made in the most public manner, and under the most solemn oath. In it he presented to the minds of those present a reversal of the scene then being enacted before them, when he, the Lord of life and glory, would be seated at the right hand of God, the supreme Judge of Heaven and earth, from whose decision there could be no appeal. He brought before them a view of that day, when, instead of being surrounded and abused by a riotous mob, headed by the priests and judges of the land, he would come in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory, escorted by legions of angels, to pronounce the sentence of his enemies.

Jesus knew what would be the result of this announcement; that it would secure his condemnation. The object of the designing priests was now gained. Jesus had declared himself to be the Christ. The high priest, in order to give those present the impression that he was jealous for the insulted majesty of Heaven, rent his garments, and, lifting his hands toward heaven as if in holy horror, said, in a voice calculated to rouse the excited people to violence, "He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye?" The answer of the judges was, "He is guilty of death."

The priests and judges, exulting in the advantage they had gained through the words of Jesus, but anxious to hide their malicious satisfaction, now pressed close to him, and, as if they could not believe that they had heard aright, simultaneously inquired, "Art thou the Christ? tell us." Jesus looked calmly at his hypocritical questioners, and answered, "If I tell you, ye will not believe. And if I ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go." Jesus could have traced down the prophecies, and given his accusers evidence that the very things were then taking place which had been predicted in regard to Messiah. He could have silenced them thus; but they would not then have believed. He could have pointed them to his mighty miracles; but they had set their hearts against the light of Heaven, and no power could change them.

There were some in that assembly who heeded the words of Jesus and noted his Godlike bearing as he stood serenely before the infuriated judges. The gospel seed found lodgment that day in hearts where it was eventually to spring up and yield an abundant harvest. The reverence and awe which his words inspired in the hearts of many who heard them were to increase and develop into perfect faith in Jesus as the world's Redeemer. Some of the witnesses of that scene were themselves afterward placed in a similar position to that of Jesus in the judgment hall; and were tried for their lives because they were the disciples of Christ.

When the condemnation of Jesus was pro-

nounced by the judges, a satanic fury took possession of the people. The roar of voices was like that of wild beasts. They made a rush toward Jesus, crying, He is guilty, put him to death! and had it not been for the Roman soldiers, Jesus would not have lived to be hanged upon the cross of Calvary. He would have been torn in pieces before his judges, had not Roman authority interfered, and by force of arms withheld the violence of the mob.

Although Jesus was bound, yet he was also guarded, and held by two men lest he should escape from the hands of his persecutors. The judges and rulers now entirely forgot the dignity of their office, and abused the Son of God with foul epithets, railing upon him in regard to his parentage, and declaring that his presumption in proclaiming himself the Messiah, notwithstanding his low birth, made him deserving of the most ignominious death. Most dissolute men engaged in this infamous abuse of the Saviour. An old garment was thrown over his head, and his jeering persecutors struck him in the face, crying, "Prophesy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?" Upon the garment being removed, one poor wretch spat in his face. But the Saviour directed no word or look of retaliation against the deluded souls around him, who had cast off all restraint because they perceived that the priests and rulers sanctioned their acts.

Jesus realized that the hosts of Heaven were witnessing his humiliation, and that the least angel, if summoned to his aid, could have instantly dispersed that insulting throng, and delivered him from their power. Jesus himself could have stricken down the excited multitude

like dead men, by a look or word of his divinity, or driven them frightened from his presence, as he had the defilers of the temple. But it was in the plan of redemption that he should suffer the scorn and abuse of wicked men, and he consented to all this when he became the Redeemer of man. The angels of God faithfully recorded every insulting look, word, and act directed against their beloved Commander; and the base men who scorned and spat upon the calm, pale face of Christ, were one day to look upon it in its glory, shining brighter than the sun. In that awful time they would pray to the rocks and the mountains: "Hide us from the face of Him who sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb."

Jesus was pushed hither and thither, and so insulted and abused that at last the Roman officers were ashamed and angry that a man against whom nothing had yet been proven should be subject to the brutal treatment of the worst class of persons. Accordingly they accused the Jewish authorities of assuming to exercise a power that did not belong to them, in trying a man for his life, and pronouncing his condemnation. They declared that in doing this they infringed upon the Roman power, and that it was even against the Jewish law to condemn any man to death on his own testimony. This intervention of Roman authority caused a lull in the rude excitement.

Just then a hoarse voice rang through the hall, which sent a thrill of terror through the hearts of all present: He is innocent. Spare him, O Caiaphas! He has done nothing worthy of death! The tall form of Judas was now

seen pressing his way through the startled crowd. His face was pale and haggard, and large drops of perspiration stood upon his forehead. He rushed to the throne of judgment, and threw down before the high priest the pieces of silver he had received as the price of his Lord's betrayal. He eagerly grasped the robe of Caiaphas, and implored him to release Jesus, declaring that he was innocent of all crime. Caiaphas angrily shook him off, but he was confused and knew not what to say. The perfidy of the priests was revealed before the people. It was evident to all that Judas had been bribed to deliver Jesus into the hands of those who sought his life.

Judas continued to beseech Caiaphas to do nothing against Jesus, declaring that he was indeed the Son of God, and cursing himself that he had betrayed innocent blood. But the high priest, having recovered his self-possession, answered with chilling scorn, "What is that to us? see thou to that." He then represented to the people that Judas was some poor maniac, one of the mad followers of Jesus, and charged them not to let any influence prevail to release the prisoner, who was a base deceiver.

Finding his prayers were in vain, Judas fell at the feet of Jesus, acknowledging him to be the Son of God, begging forgiveness for his sin, and imploring him to exercise his God-like power and deliver himself from his enemies. The Saviour did not reproach his betrayer either by look or word. He knew that he was suffering the bitterest remorse for his crime. He gazed compassionately upon Judas, and declared that for that hour he had come into the world.

A murmur of surprise ran through the assembly at the heavenly forbearance manifested by Jesus. Again a conviction swept over their minds that this man was more than mortal. But the question then arose, If he was indeed the Son of God, why did he not free himself from his bonds and rise triumphant above his accusers?

The love of money had perverted the nobler nature of Judas, making him a fit agent for Satan to use in the betrayal of Christ. When Judas had become annoyed at the implied rebuke of Jesus because of his covetous spirit upon the occasion of Mary anointing her Lord with costly ointment, he yielded to the tempter, and gave Satan easy access to his mind. But when he decided to sell his Master to the murderous priests and rulers, he had no thought that Jesus would permit himself to be taken. He thought the priests would be cheated of their bribe, and he, the betrayer, would secure the money to use for some purpose of his own, and Jesus would have a new opportunity to display his divine power in delivering himself from the wiles of his enemies.

From the time of his betrayal in the garden, Judas had not lost sight of the Saviour. He eagerly looked for him to surprise his enemies by appearing before them in the character of the Son of God, setting at naught all their plots and power. But when he saw him meekly submitting to their abuse, suffering himself to be tried and condemned to death, his heart smote him, and he realized the full extent of his own crime —he had sold his divine Master to shame and death. He remembered how kind and considerate Jesus had ever been to him, and his heart filled with remorse and anguish. He now de-

spised the covetousness which Jesus had reproved, and which had tempted him to sell the Saviour for a few pieces of silver.

Perceiving that his entreaties to spare the life of Jesus availed nothing with the high priest, he rushed from the hall in despair, crying, It is too late! It is too late! He felt unable to live to see Jesus crucified, and, in an agony of remorse, went out and hanged himself.

Afterward the money which Judas had cast down before the priest was used for the purchase of a public burial ground. "And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood. And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day."

If any testimony had been needed to prove the innocence of Jesus, it was given in the confession of Judas. Not only was it an evidence of the innocence of the Saviour, but the event was a direct fulfillment of prophecy. In prophetic vision Zechariah had looked down the ages and seen the trial of God's dear Son. The act of Judas is thus described: "And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter; a goodly price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord."

CONDEMNATION OF JESUS.

When Jesus was asked the question, Art thou the Son of God? he knew that to answer in the affirmative would make his death certain; a denial would leave a stain upon his humanity. There was a time to be silent, and a time to speak. He had not spoken until plainly interrogated. In his lessons to his disciples he had declared: "Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father who is in Heaven." When challenged, Jesus did not deny his relationship with God. In that solemn moment his character was at stake and must be vindicated. He left on that occasion an example for man to follow under similar circumstances. He would teach him not to apostatize from his faith to escape suffering or even death.

Had the Jews possessed the authority to do so, they would have executed Jesus at once upon the hasty condemnation of their judges; but such power had passed from them into the hands of the Romans, and it was necessary that the case be referred to the proper authorities of that government for final decision. The Jews were anxious to hasten the trial and execution of Jesus, because if it were not brought about at once there would be a delay of a week on account of the immediate celebration of the passover. In that case Jesus would be kept in bonds, and the intense excitement of the mob that was clamoring for his life, would have been allayed, and a natural reaction would have set in. The better part of the people would have become aroused in his be-

half, and in all probability his release would be accomplished. The priests and rulers felt that there was no time to lose.

The whole Sanhedrim, followed by the multitude, escorted Jesus to the judgment hall of Pilate, the Roman governor, to secure a confirmation of the sentence they had just pronounced. The Jewish priests and rulers could not themselves enter Pilate's hall for fear of ceremonial defilement, which would disqualify them for taking part in the paschal feast. In order to condemn the spotless Son of God, they were compelled to appeal for judgment to one whose threshold they dared not cross for fear of defilement. Blinded by prejudice and cruelty, they could not discern that their passover festival was of no value, since they had defiled their souls by the rejection of Christ. The great salvation that he brought was typified by the deliverance of the children of Israel, which event was commemorated by the feast of the passover. The innocent lamb slain in Egypt, the blood of which sprinkled upon the door-posts caused the destroying angel to pass over the homes of Israel, prefigured the sinless Lamb of God, whose merits can alone avert the judgment and condemnation of fallen man. The Saviour had been obedient to the Jewish law, and observed all its divinely appointed ordinances. He had just identified himself with the paschal lamb as its great antitype, by connecting the Lord's supper with the passover. What a bitter mockery then was the ceremony about to be observed by the priestly persecutors of Jesus!

Pilate beheld, in the accused, a man bearing the marks of violence, but with a serene and noble countenance and dignified bearing. Many cases

had been tried before the Roman governor, but never before had there stood in his presence a man like this. He discovered no trace of crime in his face; and something in the prisoner's appearance excited his sympathy and respect. He turned to the priests, who stood just without the door, and asked, "What accusation bring ye against this man?"

They were not prepared for this question. They had not designed to state the particulars of the alleged crime of Jesus. They had expected that Pilate would, without delay, confirm their decision against the Saviour. However they answered him that they had tried the prisoner according to their law and found him deserving of death. Said they, "If he were not a malefactor we would not have delivered him up unto thee." But Pilate was not satisfied with the explanation of the Jews, and reminded them of their inability to execute the law. He intimated that if their judgment only was necessary to procure his condemnation, it was useless to bring the prisoner to him. Said he, "Take ye him, and judge him according to your law."

The treacherous priests felt that they were outwitted; they saw that it would not do to specify the grounds for their condemnation of Jesus. The charge of blasphemy would be regarded by Pilate as the expression of religious bigotry and priestly jealousy; and the case would be at once dismissed. But if they could excite the apprehensions of the Roman governor that Jesus was a leader of sedition, their purpose would be accomplished. Tumults and insurrections were constantly arising among the Jews against the

Roman government, for many affirmed that it was against the Jewish law to pay tribute to a foreign power. The authorities had found it necessary to deal very rigorously with these revolts among the people, and were constantly on the watch for developments of that character, in order to suppress them at once. But Jesus had always been obedient to the reigning power. When the scheming priests sought to entrap him by sending spies to him with the question, "Is it lawful to render tribute to Cæsar?" he had directed their attention to the image and superscription of Cæsar upon the tribute money, and answered, "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's." Jesus himself had paid tribute, and had taught his disciples to do so.

In their extremity the priests called the false witnesses to their aid. "And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that he himself is Christ, a king."

Pilate was not deceived by this testimony. He now became confident that a deep plot had been laid to destroy an innocent man, who stood in the way of the Jewish dignitaries. He turned to the prisoner and "asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answered him and said, Thou sayest it." Jesus stood before Pilate, pale, bruised, and faint from loss of sleep and food. He had been hurried from place to place, and subjected to insult and violence; yet his bearing was noble, and his countenance was lighted as though a sunbeam were shining upon it.

When his answer was heard by Caiaphas, who stood at the threshold of the judgment hall, the high priest joined with others in calling Pilate to

witness that Jesus had admitted his crime by this answer, which was a virtual acknowledgment that he was seeking to establish a throne in Judah in opposition to the power of Cæsar. Priests, scribes, and rulers, all united in noisy denunciations of Jesus, and in importuning Pilate to pronounce sentence of death upon him. The lawless uproar of the infuriated priests and dignitaries of the temple confused the senses of the Roman governor. Finally, when some measure of quiet was secured, he again addressed Jesus, saying, "Answerest thou nothing? behold how many things they witness against thee. But Jesus yet answered nothing; so that Pilate marveled." The silence of the Saviour perplexed him. He saw in the prisoner no marks of a seditious character, and he had no confidence in the accusations of the priests. Hoping to gain the truth from him, and to escape from the clamor of the excited crowd, he requested Jesus to step with him into his house. When he had done so, and the two were alone, Pilate turned to Jesus, and in a respectful voice asked him, "Art thou the King of the Jews?"

Jesus did not directly answer this question. He knew that conviction was awakened in the heart of Pilate, and he wished to give him an opportunity to acknowledge how far his mind had been influenced in the right direction. He therefore answered, "Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?" The Saviour wished a statement from Pilate whether his question arose from the accusations just made by the Jews, or from his desire to receive light from Christ. Pilate longed for a more intelligent faith. The dignified bearing of Jesus, and his

calm self-possession when placed in a position where there would naturally be developed a spirit of hate and revenge, astonished Pilate and won his deep respect. The direct question just asked him by Jesus was immediately understood by him, which evidenced that his soul was stirred by conviction. But pride rose in the heart of the Roman judge and overpowered the Spirit of God. "Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me; what hast thou done?"

Pilate's golden opportunity had passed. Jesus, however, did not leave him without farther light. At his desire God sent an angel to Pilate's wife; and, in a dream, she was shown the pure life and holy character of the man who was about to be consigned to a cruel death. Jesus did not directly answer the question of Pilate as to what he had done; but he plainly stated to him his mission:—

"My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."

Jesus thus sought to convince Pilate that he was innocent of aspiring to kingly honors upon earth. Pilate had been confused by the disturbed and divided elements of the religious world, and his mind grasped eagerly at the words of Jesus declaring that he had come into

the world to bear witness to the truth. Pilate had heard many voices cry, Here is the truth! I have the truth! But this man, arraigned as a criminal, who claimed to have the truth, stirred his heart with a great longing to know what it was, and how it could be obtained. He inquired of Jesus, "What is truth?" But he did not wait for a reply; the tumult of the excited crowd was continually increasing; their impatient cries jarred upon his ears, and recalled him to his judicial position. He went out to the Jews, who stood beyond the door of the hall, and declared in an emphatic voice, "I find in him no fault at all."

Those words, traced by the pen of inspiration, will forever stand as a proof to the world of the base perfidy and falsehood of the Jews in their charges against Jesus. Even the heathen magistrate pronounced him innocent. As Pilate thus spoke, the rage and disappointment of the priests and elders knew no bounds. They had made great efforts to accomplish the death of Jesus, and now that there appeared to be a prospect of his release they seemed ready to tear him in pieces. They lost all reason and self-control, and gave vent to curses and maledictions against him, behaving more like demons than men. They were loud in their censures of Pilate, and threatened the vengeance of the Roman law against him if he refused to condemn one who, they affirmed, had set himself up against Cæsar.

During all this uproar, Jesus stood unmoved, uttering no word in answer to the abuse that was heaped upon him. He had spoken freely to Pilate when alone with him, that the light of his truth might illuminate the darkened under-

standing of the Roman governor; and now he could say nothing more to prevent him from committing the fearful act of condemning to death the Son of God. Pilate turned again to Jesus and inquired, "Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marveled greatly."

Angry voices were now heard, declaring that the seditious influence of Jesus was well known throughout all the country. Said they, "He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place." Pilate at this time had no thought of condemning Jesus, because he was certain that he was the victim of the envious and designing priests. As he afterward stated to Jesus, he had the power to condemn or to release him; but he dreaded the ill-will of the people; so when he heard that Jesus was a Galilean and was under the jurisdiction of Herod, he embraced the opportunity to spare himself from farther difficulty, and refused to decide the case, sending him to Herod, who was then in Jerusalem.

Jesus was faint and weary from loss of sleep and food, and the ill-treatment he had received; yet his suffering condition awakened no pity in the hearts of his persecutors. He was dragged away to the judgment hall of Herod amid the hooting and insults of the merciless mob. Besides escaping responsibility in regard to the trial of Jesus, Pilate thought this would be a good opportunity to heal an old quarrel between himself and Herod. He thought that this act on his part would be regarded by Herod as an acknowledgment of his superior authority, and

would thus bring about a reconciliation. In this he was not wrong, for the two magistrates made friends over the trial of the Saviour.

When Herod had first heard of Jesus and the mighty works wrought by him, he was terror-stricken, and said, "It is John whom I beheaded; he is risen from the dead;" "therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him." Herod had never before met Jesus, but he had long desired to see him, and witness his marvelous power. He was pleased that he was brought to him a prisoner, for he made no doubt that he could force him to work a miracle as a condition of saving his life. Herod's conscience was far less sensitive than when he had trembled with horror at the request of Herodias for the head of John the Baptist. For a time he had felt the keen stings of remorse for the terrible act he had committed to gratify the revenge of a cruel woman; but his moral perceptions had become more and more degraded by his licentious life, till his sins appeared but trifles in his eyes. The men who are capable of the worst crimes are those who have once been convicted by the Spirit of truth, and have turned away from the light into the darkness of iniquity. Herod had very nearly become a disciple of John; but at the very point of decision, he had fallen into the snare of Satan and put to death one whom he knew to be a true prophet.

As the Saviour was brought before Herod, the rabble surged and pressed about, crying out against the prisoner, some charging him with one crime and some with another. Herod commanded silence and directed that Jesus be unbound, for he wished to interrogate him. He

looked with curiosity, mingled with an impulse of pity, upon the pale, sad face of the Saviour, which was marked with deep wisdom and purity, but showed extreme weariness and suffering. Herod, as well as Pilate, knew from his acquaintance with the character of the Jews, that malice and envy had caused them to condemn this innocent man.

Herod urged Jesus to save his life by working a miracle that would give evidence of his divine power. But the Saviour had no such work to do. He had taken upon himself the nature of man, and was not to perform a miracle to gratify the curiosity of wicked men, nor to save himself one jot of the pain and humiliation that man would suffer under similar circumstances. Herod urged him to prove that he was not an impostor by demonstrating his power before the crowd. He summoned for the purpose maimed, crippled, and deformed persons, and, in an authoritative manner, commanded Jesus to heal these subjects in his presence, urging that if he had really worked such remarkable cures as were reported of him, he still had power to do like wonders, and could now turn it to his own profit by procuring his release.

But Jesus stood calmly before the haughty ruler as one who neither saw nor heard. Herod repeatedly urged his proposition upon Jesus, and reiterated the fact that he had the power to release or to condemn him. He even dared to boast of the punishment he had inflicted upon the prophet John for presuming to reprove him. To all this, Jesus made no answer either by word or look. Herod was irritated by the profound silence of the prisoner, which indicated an utter

indifference to the royal personage before whom he had been summoned. Open rebuke would have been more palatable to the vain and pompous ruler than to be thus silently ignored.

Had Jesus desired to do so, he could have spoken words which would have pierced the ears of the hardened king. He could have stricken him with fear and trembling by laying before him the full iniquity of his life, and the horror of his approaching doom. But Jesus had no light to give one who had gone directly contrary to the knowledge he had received from the greatest of prophets. The ears of Christ had ever been open to the earnest plea of even the worst sinners; but he had no ear for the commands of Herod. Those eyes, that had ever rested with pity and forgiveness upon the penitent sinner, however defiled and lowly, had no look to bestow upon Herod. Those lips, that had dropped precious words of instruction, and were ever ready to answer the questions of those who sought knowledge, and to speak comfort and pardon to the sinful and desponding, had no words for proud and cruel Herod. That heart, ever touched by the presence of human woe, was closed to the haughty king who felt no need of a Saviour.

The silence of Jesus could no longer be borne by Herod; his face grew dark with passion, and he angrily threatened Jesus; but the captive still remained unmoved. Herod then turned to the multitude and denounced him as an impostor. His accusers well knew that he was no impostor; they had seen too many evidences of his power to be thus misled. They knew that even the grave had opened at his command, and the dead had walked forth, clothed again with life. They had

been greatly terrified when Herod commanded him to work a miracle; for of all things they dreaded an exhibition of his divine power, which would prove a death-blow to their plans, and would perhaps cost them their lives. Therefore the priests and rulers began to cry out vehemently against him, accusing him of working miracles through the power given him of Beelzebub, the prince of devils.

Some cried out that he claimed to be the Son of God, the King of Israel. Herod, hearing this, said, in derision, A king, is he? Then crown him, and put upon him a royal robe, and worship your king. Then turning to Jesus he angrily declared that if he refused to speak, he should be delivered into the hands of the soldiers, who would have little respect for his claims or his person; if he was an impostor it would be no more than he deserved; but if he was the Son of God he could save himself by working a miracle. No sooner were these words uttered than the mob, at the instigation of the priests, made a rush toward Jesus. Had not the Roman soldiers forced them back, the Saviour would have been torn in pieces.

At the suggestion of Herod, a crown was now plaited from a vine bearing sharp thorns, and this was placed upon the sacred brow of Jesus; and an old tattered purple robe, once the garment of a king, was placed upon his noble form, while Herod and the Jewish priests encouraged the insults and cruelty of the mob. Jesus was then placed upon a large block, which was derisively called a throne, an old reed was placed in his hand as a scepter, and, amid satanic laughter, curses, and jeers, the rude throng bowed to him mockingly as to a king. Occasionally some murderous hand snatched the reed that had been placed in his hand, and struck him on the head with it, forcing the thorns into his temples, and causing the blood to flow down his face and beard.

Satan instigated the cruel abuse of the debased mob, led on by the priests and rulers, to provoke, if possible, retaliation from the world's Redeemer, or to drive him to deliver himself by a miracle from the hands of his persecutors, and thus break up the plan of salvation. One stain upon his human life, one failure of his humanity to bear the terrible test imposed upon it, would make the Lamb of God an imperfect offering, and the redemption of man would be a failure. But he who could command the heavenly hosts, and in an instant call to his aid legions of holy angels, one of whom could have immediately overpowered that cruel mob,—he who could have stricken down his tormentors by the flashing forth of his divine majesty,—submitted to the coarsest insult and outrage with dignified composure. As the acts of his torturers degraded them below humanity, into the likeness of Satan, so did the meekness and patience of Jesus exalt him above the level of humanity.

When Herod saw that Jesus submitted passively to all the indignity that was heaped upon him, preserving an unparalleled serenity through it all, he was moved by a sudden fear that after all this might not be a common man who stood before him. He was greatly perplexed when he looked upon the pure, pale face of the prisoner, and questioned if he might not be a god come down to earth. The very silence of Jesus spoke conviction to the heart of the king, such as no words could have done. Herod noticed that while

some bowed before Jesus in mockery, others, who came forward for the same purpose, looked into the sufferer's face and saw expressed there a look so like a king that they turned back, ashamed of their own audacity. Herod was ill at ease, and, hardened as he was, dared not ratify the condemnation of the Jews; and he therefore sent Jesus back to Pilate.

The Saviour, tottering with weariness, pale and wounded, wearing a robe of mockery and a crown of thorns, was mercilessly hurried back to the court of the Roman governor. Pilate was very much irritated; for he had congratulated himself on being rid of a fearful responsibility when he referred the accusers of Jesus to Herod. He now impatiently inquired of the Jews what they would have him do. He reminded them that he had already examined the prisoner and found no blame in him; that his accusers had failed to sustain a single charge against him; that he had sent Jesus to Herod, a tetrarch of Galilee, and one of their own nation, who also found nothing worthy of death against the prisoner. Said Pilate, "I will therefore chastise him and release him."

Here Pilate exposed his weakness. He had declared that Jesus was innocent of the crimes of which he was accused, yet he was willing to make a partial sacrifice of justice and principle in order to compromise with an unfeeling mob; he was willing to suffer an innocent man to be scourged, that their inhuman wrath might be appeased. But the fact that he proposed to make terms with them placed Pilate at a disadvantage with the ungovernable crowd, who now presumed upon his indecision, and clamored the more for the life of the prisoner. Pilate turned to the people, and

represented to them that the priests and elders had not substantiated in any degree the charges brought against Jesus. He hoped by this means to raise their sympathy for him, so they would be willing to release him. Meanwhile Jesus had fallen through exhaustion upon the marble pavement. Just then a messenger pressed through the crowd, and placed in Pilate's hand a letter from his wife, which ran thus:—

"Have thou nothing to do with that just man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him." Pilate's wife was not a Jew; but the angel of God had sent this warning to her, that, through her, Pilate might be prevented from committing the terrible crime of delivering up to death the divine Son of God.

Pilate turned pale when he read the message; but the priests and rulers had occupied the interval in farther inflaming the minds of the people, till they were wrought up to a state of insane fury. The governor was forced to action; he turned to the crowd and spoke with great earnestness: "Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" It was customary at this feast for the governor to release one prisoner, whomsoever the people desired to be set at liberty. Pilate seized this as an opportunity to save Jesus; and by giving them a choice between the innocent Saviour and the notable robber and murderer, Barabbas, he hoped to rouse them to a sense of justice. But great was his astonishment when the cry, "Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas!" was started by the priests, and taken up by the mob, resounding through the hall like the hoarse cry of demons.

Pilate was dumb with surprise and disappointment; but by appealing to the people, and yielding his own judgment, he had compromised his dignity, and lost control of the crowd. The priests saw that though he was convinced of the innocence of Jesus, he could be intimidated by them, and they determined to carry their point. So when Pilate inquired, "What shall I do then with Jesus, who is called Christ?" they with one accord cried out, "Let him be crucified!"

"And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified." Here Pilate again revealed his weakness, in submitting the sentence of Jesus to a lawless and infuriated mob. How true were the words of the prophet: "Judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off; for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter." The governor's cheek paled as he heard the terrible cry: "Crucify him!" He had not thought it would come to that—a man whom he had repeatedly pronounced innocent, to be consigned to the most dreaded of deaths. He now saw what a terrible thing he had done in placing the life of a just man in the balance against the decision of those, who, from envy and malice, had delivered him up to trial. Pilate had taken step after step in the violation of his conscience, and in excusing himself from judging with equity and fairness, as his position demanded he should do, until now he found himself almost helpless in the hands of the Jews.

Again he asked the question, "Why, what evil hath he done?" and again they cried out, "Crucify him!" Once more Pilate expostulated with them against putting to death one against whom they

could prove nothing. Again, to conciliate them, he proposed to chastise him and let him go. It was not enough that the Saviour of the world, faint with weariness and covered with wounds, must be subjected to the shameful humiliation of such a trial; but his sacred flesh must be bruised and mangled to gratify the satanic fury of the priests and rulers. Satan, with his hellish army had gained possession of them.

Pilate, in the vain hope of exciting their pity, that they might decide this was sufficient punishment, now caused Jesus to be scourged in the presence of the multitude. The pale sufferer, with a crown of thorns upon his head, and stripped to the waist, revealing the long, cruel stripes, from which the blood flowed freely, was then placed side by side with Barabbas. Although the face of Jesus was stained with blood, and bore marks of exhaustion and pain, yet his noble character could not be hidden, but stood out in marked contrast with that of the robber chief, whose every feature proclaimed him to be a debased and hardened desperado.

Pilate was filled with sympathy and amazement as he beheld the uncomplaining patience of Jesus. Gentleness and resignation were expressed in every feature; there was no cowardly weakness in his manner, but the strength and dignity of long-suffering. Pilate did not doubt that the sight of this man, who had borne insult and abuse in such a manner, when contrasted with the repulsive criminal by his side, would move the people to sympathy, and they would decide that Jesus had already suffered enough. But he did not understand the fanatical hatred of the priests for Christ, who, as the Light of the

world, had made apparent their darkness and error.

Pilate, pointing to the Saviour, in a voice of solemn entreaty said to priests, rulers, and people, "Behold the man." "I bring him forth to you that ye may know that I find no fault in him." But the priests had moved the mob to mad fury; and, instead of pitying Jesus in his suffering and forbearance, they cried, "Crucify him, crucify him!" and their hoarse voices were like the roaring of wild beasts. Pilate, losing all patience with their unreasoning cruelty, cried out despairingly, "Take ye him, and crucify him; for I find no fault in him."

The Roman governor, familiarized with cruel scenes, educated amid the din of battle, was moved with sympathy for the suffering prisoner, who, contemned and scourged, with bleeding brow and lacerated back, still had more the bearing of a king upon his throne than that of a condemned criminal. But the hearts of his own people were hardened against him. The priests declared, "We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God."

Pilate was startled by these words; he had no correct idea of Christ and his mission; but he had an indistinct faith in God and in beings superior to humanity. The thought that had once before passed through his mind now took more definite shape, and he questioned if it might not be a divine personage who stood before him, clad in the purple robe of mockery, and crowned with thorns, yet with such a noble bearing that the stanch Roman trembled with awe as he gazed upon him.

"When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid; and went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer." Jesus had already told Pilate that he was the Messiah, that his kingdom was not of this world; and he had no farther words for a man who so abused the high office of judge as to yield his principles and authority to the demands of a blood-thirsty rabble. Pilate was vexed at the silence of Jesus, and haughtily addressed him:—

"Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above; therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin." Jesus here laid the heaviest burden of guilt upon the Jewish judges, who had received unmistakable evidence of the divinity of Him whom they had condemned to death, both from the prophecies and his own teachings and miracles. What a scene was this to hand down to the world through all time! The pitying Saviour, in the midst of his intense suffering and grief, excuses as far as possible the act of Pilate, who might have released him from the power of his enemies.

Pilate was now more convinced than before of the superiority of the man before him, and tried again and again to save him. "But the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend; whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar." This was touching Pilate in a weak point. He had been looked upon with some suspicion by the government;

and he knew that a report of unfaithfulness on his part would be likely to cost him his position. He knew that if the Jews became his enemies he could hope for no mercy at their hands; for he had before him an example of the perseverance with which they sought to destroy one whom they hated without reason.

The implied threat in the declaration of the priests, regarding his allegiance to Cæsar, intimidated Pilate, so that he yielded to the demands of the mob, and delivered Jesus up to the crucifixion rather than risk losing his position. But the very thing he dreaded came upon him afterward in spite of his precautions. His honors were stripped from him; he was cast down from his high office; and, stung by remorse and wounded pride, he committed suicide not long after the crucifixion.

"When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person; see ye to it." Caiaphas answered defiantly, "His blood be on us, and on our children;" and his words were echoed by the priests and rulers, and taken up by the crowd in an inhuman roar of voices. "Then answered all the people and said, His blood be on us, and on our children."

At this exhibition of satanic madness, the light of conviction shone more clearly upon the mind of Pilate. He had never before witnessed such rash presumption and heartless cruelty. And in strong contrast with the ungovernable passion of his persecutors was the dignified repose of Jesus. In his own mind Pilate said, He

is a god, and thought he could discern a soft light shining about his head. Looking thus upon Christ he turned pale with fear and self-condemnation; then, confronting the people with a troubled countenance, he said, I am clear of his blood. Take ye him and crucify him; but mark ye, priests and rulers, I pronounce him a just man, and may He whom he claims as his Father judge you for this day's work, and not me. Then turning to Jesus he continued, Forgive me for this act; I am not able to save you.

Only a short time before, the governor had declared to his prisoner that he had power to release or to condemn him; but he now thought that he could not save him, and also his own position and honor; and he preferred to sacrifice an innocent life rather than his own worldly power. Had he acted promptly and firmly at the first, carrying out his convictions of right, his will would not have been overborne by the mob; they would not have presumed to dictate to him. His wavering and indecision proved his irredeemable ruin. How many, like Pilate, sacrifice principle and integrity, in order to shun disagreeable consequences. Conscience and duty point one way, and self-interest points another; and the current, setting strongly in the wrong direction, sweeps away into the thick darkness of guilt him who compromises with evil.

Satan's rage was great as he saw that all the cruelty which he had led the Jews to inflict upon Jesus had not forced the least murmur from his lips. Although he had taken upon himself the nature of man, he was sustained by a Godlike fortitude, and departed in no particular from the will of his Father.

Wonder, O Heavens! and be astonished, O earth! Behold the oppressor and the oppressed. A vast multitude inclose the Saviour of the world. Mocking and jeering are mingled with the coarse oaths of blasphemy. His lowly birth and his humble life are commented upon by unfeeling wretches. His claim to be the Son of God is ridiculed by the chief priests and elders, and the vulgar jest and insulting sneer are passed from lip to lip. Satan has full control of the minds of his servants. In order to do this effectually, he had commenced with the chief priests and the elders, and imbued them with a religious frenzy. This they had communicated to the rude and uncultivated mob, until there was a corrupt harmony in the feelings of all, from the hypocritical priests and elders down to the most debased. Christ, the precious Son of God, was led forth and delivered to the people to be crucified.

CALVARY.

THEY hurried Jesus away with loud shouts of triumph; but their noise ceased for a time when they passed a retired place, and saw at the foot of a lifeless tree the dead body of Judas, who had betrayed Christ. It was a most revolting spectacle; his weight had broken the cord by which he had hung himself to the tree, and, in falling, his body had become horribly mangled, and was then being devoured by dogs. The mutilated remains were ordered to be buried at once, and the crowd passed on; but there was less noisy mockery, and many a pale face revealed the fearful thoughts within. Retribution seemed already to be visiting those who were guilty of the blood of Jesus.

By this time the news of the condemnation of Jesus had spread through all Jerusalem, striking terror and anguish to thousands of hearts, but bringing a malicious joy to many who had been reproved by the teachings of the Saviour. The priests had been bound by a promise not to molest any of his disciples if Jesus were delivered up to them; so all classes of people flocked to the scene of outrage, and Jerusalem was left almost empty. Nicodemus, and Joseph of Arimathea, had not been summoned to the Sanhedrim council, and their voices had nothing to do with condemning Jesus. They were present at his crucifixion, but unable to change or modify his terrible sentence.

The disciples and believers from the region round about joined the throng that followed Jesus to Calvary. The mother of Jesus was also there, supported by John, the beloved disciple. Her heart was stricken with unutterable anguish; yet she, with the disciples, hoped that the painful scene would change, and Jesus would assert his power, and appear before his enemies as the Son of God. Then again her mother's heart would sink as she remembered words in which he had briefly referred to the things which were that day being enacted.

Jesus had scarcely passed the gate of Pilate's house when the cross which had been prepared for Barabbas was brought out and laid upon his bruised and bleeding shoulders. Crosses were also placed upon the companions of Barabbas, who were to suffer death at the same time with Jesus. The Saviour had borne his burden but a

few rods, when, from loss of blood and excessive weariness and pain, he fell fainting to the ground. As he lay beneath the heavy burden of the cross, how the heart of the mother of Christ longed to place a supporting hand beneath his wounded head, and bathe that brow that had once been pillowed upon her bosom. But, alas, that mournful privilege was denied her.

When Jesus revived, the cross was again placed upon his shoulders and he was forced forward. He staggered on for a few steps, bearing his heavy load, then fell as one lifeless to the ground. He was at first pronounced to be dead, but finally he again revived. The priests and rulers felt no compassion for their suffering victim; but they saw that it was impossible for him to carry the instrument of torture farther. They were puzzled to find any one who would humiliate himself to bear the cross to the place of execution. The Jews could not do it because of defilement, and their consequent inability to keep the coming passover festival.

While they were considering what to do, Simon, a Cyrenian, coming from an opposite direction, met the crowd, was seized at the instigation of the priests, and compelled to carry the cross of Christ. The sons of Simon were disciples of Jesus, but he himself had never been connected with him. This occasion was a profitable one for him. The cross he was forced to bear became the means of his conversion. His sympathies were deeply stirred in favor of Jesus; and the events of Calvary, and the words uttered by Jesus, caused him to acknowledge that he was the Son of God. Simon ever after felt grateful to God for the singular providence which placed

him in a position to receive evidence for himself that Jesus was the world's Redeemer.

When Jesus was thought to be dying beneath the burden of the cross, many women, who, though not believers in Christ, were touched with pity for his sufferings, broke forth into a mournful wailing. When Jesus revived, he looked upon them with tender compassion. He knew they were not lamenting him because he was a teacher sent from God, but from motives of common humanity. He looked upon the weeping women and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but for yourselves, and for your children."

Jesus did not despise their tears, but the sympathy which they expressed wakened a deeper chord of sympathy in his own heart for them. He forgot his own grief in contemplating the future fate of Jerusalem. Only a short time ago the people had cried out, "His blood be on us and on our children." How blindly had they invoked the doom they were soon to realize! Many of the very women who were weeping about Jesus were to perish with their children in the siege of Jerusalem.

Jesus referred not only to the destruction of Jerusalem, but to the end of the world. Said he, "Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" The innocent were represented by the green tree. If God suffered his wrath because of the sins of the world to fall upon the Redeemer, in that he was permitted to suffer death by crucifixion, what might be expected to come upon the impenitent and unbelieving, who had slighted the mercies of God,

purchased for them by the death of his Son? The mind of Jesus wandered from the destruction of Jerusalem to a wider judgment, when all the impenitent would suffer condemnation for their sins; when the Son of man should come, attended not by a murderous mob, but by the mighty hosts of God.

A great multitude followed the Saviour to Calvary, many mocking and deriding; but some were weeping and recounting his praise. Those whom he had healed of various infirmities, and those whom he had raised from the dead, declared his marvelous works with earnest voice, and demanded to know what Jesus had done that he should be treated as a malefactor. Only a few days before, they had attended him with joyful hosannas, and the waving of palm-branches, as he rode triumphantly to Jerusalem. But many who had then shouted his praise because it was popular to do so, now swelled the cry of "Crucify him! Crucify him!"

Upon the occasion of Christ riding into Jerusalem, the disciples had been raised to the highest pitch of expectation. They had pressed close about their Master, and had felt that they were highly honored to be connected with him. Now they followed him in his humiliation at a distance. They were filled with inexpressible grief, and disappointed hopes. How were the words of Jesus verified: "All ye will be offended because of me this night; for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad." Yet the disciples still had faint hope that their Master would manifest his power at the last moment, and deliver himself from his enemies.

Upon arriving at the place of execution, the condemned were bound to the instruments of torture. While the two thieves wrestled in the hands of those who stretched them upon the cross, Jesus made no resistance. The mother of Jesus looked on with agonizing suspense, hoping that he would work a miracle to save himself. Surely He who had given life to the dead would not suffer himself to be crucified. What torture must this woman have endured as she witnessed the shame and suffering of her son, yet was not able to minister to him in his distress! Bitter grief and disappointment filled her heart. Must she give up her faith that he was the true Messiah? Would the Son of God allow himself to be thus cruelly slain? She saw his hands stretched upon the cross—those dear hands that had ever dispensed blessings, and had been reached forth so many times to heal the suffering. And now the hammer and nails were brought, and as the spikes were driven through the tender flesh and fastened to the cross, the heart-stricken disciples bore away from the cruel scene the fainting form of the mother of Christ.

Jesus made no murmur of complaint; his face remained pale and serene, but great drops of sweat stood upon his brow. There was no pitying hand to wipe the death-dew from his face, nor words of sympathy and unchanging fidelity to stay his human heart. He was treading the wine-press all alone; and of all the people there was none with him. While the soldiers were doing their fearful work, and he was enduring the most acute agony, Jesus prayed for his enemies—"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." His mind was borne from his

own suffering to the crime of his persecutors, and the terrible but just retribution that would be theirs. He pitied them in their ignorance and guilt. No curses were called down upon the soldiers who were handling him so roughly, no vengeance was invoked upon the priests and rulers who were the cause of all his suffering, and were then gloating over the accomplishment of their purpose, but only a plea for their forgiveness—"for they know not what they do."

Had they known that they were putting to exquisite torture one who had come to save the sinful race from eternal ruin, they would have been seized with horror and remorse. But their ignorance did not remove their guilt; for it was their privilege to know and accept Jesus as their Saviour. They rejected all evidence, and not only sinned against Heaven in crucifying the King of Glory, but against the commonest feelings of humanity in putting to a torturous death an innocent man. Jesus was earning the right to become the Advocate for man in the Father's presence. That prayer of Christ for his enemies embraced the world, taking in every sinner who should live, until the end of time.

After Jesus was nailed to the cross, it was lifted by several powerful men, and thrust with great violence into the place prepared for it, causing the most excruciating agony to the Son of God. Pilate then wrote an inscription in three different languages and placed it upon the cross, above the head of Jesus. It ran thus: "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." This inscription, placed so conspicuously upon the cross, irritated the Jews. In Pilate's court they had cried, Crucify him! We have no king but Cæsar!

They declared that whoever claimed other than Cæsar for a king was a traitor. But they had overreached themselves in disclaiming any desire to have a king of their own nation. Pilate, in his inscription, wrote out the sentiments which they had expressed. It was a virtual declaration, and so understood by all, that the Jews acknowledged that on account of their allegiance to the Roman power, any man who aspired to be king of the Jews, however innocent in other respects, should be judged by them worthy of death. There was no other offense named in the inscription; it simply stated that Jesus was the king of the Jews.

The Jews saw this, and asked Pilate to change the inscription. Said the chief priests, "Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews." But Pilate, angry with himself because of his former weakness, and thoroughly despising the jealous and artful priests and rulers, coldly replied, "What I have written I have written."

And now a terrible scene was enacted. Priests, rulers, and scribes forgot the dignity of their sacred offices, and joined with the rabble in mocking and jeering the dying Son of God, saying, "If thou be the King of the Jews, save thyself." And some deridingly repeated among themselves: "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. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him; for he said, I am the Son of God." "And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroy-

est the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself, and come down from the cross."

These men, who professed to be the expounders of prophecy, were themselves repeating the very words which inspiration had foretold they would utter upon this occasion; yet, in their blindness, they did not perceive that they were fulfilling prophecy. The dignitaries of the temple, the hardened soldiers, the vile thief upon the cross, and the base and cruel among the multitude, all united in their abuse of Christ.

The thieves who were crucified with Jesus suffered like physical torture with him; but one was only hardened and rendered desperate and defiant by his pain. He took up the mocking of the priests, and railed upon Jesus, saying, "If thou be Christ, save thyself and us." The other malefactor was not a hardened criminal; his morals had been corrupted by association with the base, but his crimes were not so great as were those of many who stood beneath the cross reviling the Saviour.

In common with the rest of the Jews, he had believed that Messiah was soon to come. He had heard Jesus, and been convicted by his teachings; but through the influence of the priests and rulers he had turned away from him. He had sought to drown his convictions in the fascinations of pleasure. Corrupt associations had led him farther and farther into wickedness, until he was arrested for open crime and condemned to die upon the cross. During that day of trial he had been in company with Jesus in the judgment hall and on the way to Calvary. He had heard Pilate declare him to be a just man; he had marked his Godlike deportment

and his pitying forgiveness of his tormentors. In his heart he acknowledged Jesus to be the Son of God.

When he heard the sneering words of his companion in crime, he "rebuked him, saying, Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss." Then, as his heart went out to Christ, heavenly illumination flooded his mind. In Jesus, bruised, mocked, and hanging upon the cross, he saw his Redeemer, his only hope, and appealed to him in humble faith: "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom! And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee to-day,* shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

Jesus did not promise the penitent thief that he should go with him, upon the day of their crucifixion, to Paradise; for he himself did not ascend to his Father until three days afterward. See John 20:17. But he declared unto him, "I say unto thee *to-day*—" meaning to impress the fact upon his mind, that at *that time*, while enduring ignominy and persecution, he had the power to save sinners. He was man's Advocate with the Father, having the same power as when he healed the sick and raised the dead to life; it was his divine right to promise *that day* to the repentant, believing malefactor, "Thou shalt be with me in Paradise."

The criminal upon the cross, notwithstanding

*By placing the comma after the word *to-day*, instead of after the word *thee*, as in the common versions, the true meaning of the text is more apparent.

his physical suffering, felt in his soul the peace and comfort of acceptance with God. The Saviour, lifted upon the cross, enduring pain and mockery, rejected by the priests and elders, is sought by a guilty, dying soul with a faith discerning the world's Redeemer in Him who is crucified like a malefactor. For such an object did the Son of God leave Heaven, to save lost and perishing sinners. While the priests and rulers, in their self-righteous scorn, fail to see his divine character, he reveals himself to the penitent thief as the sinner's Friend and Saviour. He thus teaches that the vilest sinner may find pardon and salvation through the merits of the blood of Christ.

The Spirit of God illuminated the mind of this criminal, who took hold of Christ by faith, and, link after link, the chain of evidence that Jesus was the Messiah was joined together, until the suffering victim, in like condemnation with himself, stood forth before him as the Son of God. While the leading Jews deny him, and even the disciples doubt his divinity, the poor thief, upon the brink of eternity, at the close of his probation, calls Jesus his Lord! Many were ready to call him Lord when he wrought miracles, and also after he had risen from the grave; but none called him Lord as he hung dying upon the cross, save the penitent thief, who was saved at the eleventh hour.

This was a genuine conversion under peculiar circumstances, for a special and peculiar purpose. It testified to all beholders that Jesus was not an impostor, but sustained his character, and carried out his mission to the closing scene of his earthly life. Never in his entire ministry were words

more grateful to his ears than the utterance of faith from the lips of the dying thief, amid the blasphemy and taunts of the mob. But let no one neglect present opportunities and delay repentance, presuming on the eleventh-hour conversion of the thief, and trusting to a death-bed repentance. Every ray of light neglected leaves the sinner in greater darkness than before, till some fearful deception may take possession of his mind, and his case may become hopeless. Yet there are instances, like that of the poor thief, where enlightenment comes at the last moment, and is accepted with an intelligent faith. Such penitents find favor with Christ.

With amazement the angels beheld the infinite love of Jesus, who, suffering the most excruciating agony of mind and body, thought only of others, and encouraged the penitent soul to believe. While pouring out his life in death, he exercised a love for man stronger than death. In Christ's humiliation, he, as a prophet, had addressed the daughters of Jerusalem; as priest and Advocate, he had pleaded with the Father to forgive the sins of his destroyers; as a loving Saviour, he had forgiven the iniquity of the penitent thief who called upon him. Many who witnessed those scenes upon Calvary were afterward established by them in the faith of Christ.

The serpent lifted up in the wilderness represented the Son of man lifted upon the cross. Christ said to Nicodemus, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." In the wilderness all who looked upon the elevated brazen serpent lived, while those who

refused to look died. The two thieves upon the cross represent the two great classes of mankind. All have felt the poison of sin, represented by the sting of the fiery serpent in the wilderness. Those who look upon and believe in Jesus Christ, as the thief looked upon him when lifted upon the cross, shall live forever; but those who refuse to look upon him and believe in him, as the hardened thief refused to look upon and believe in the crucified Redeemer, shall die without hope.

The enemies of Jesus now awaited his death with impatient hope. That event they imagined would forever hush the rumors of his divine power, and the wonders of his miracles. They flattered themselves that they should then no longer tremble because of his influence. The unfeeling soldiers who had stretched the body of Jesus upon the cross, divided his clothing among themselves, contending over one garment, which was woven without seam. They finally decided the matter by casting lots for it. The pen of inspiration had accurately described this scene hundreds of years before it took place: "For dogs have compassed me; the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me; they pierced my hands and my feet." "They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots."

The eyes of Jesus wandered over the multitude that had collected together to witness his death, and he saw at the foot of the cross John supporting Mary, the mother of Christ. She had returned to the terrible scene, not being able to longer remain away from her son. The last lesson of Jesus was one of filial love. He looked upon the grief-stricken face of his mother, and

then upon John; said he, addressing the former: "Woman, behold thy son." Then, to the disciple: "Behold thy mother." John well understood the words of Jesus, and the sacred trust which was committed to him. He immediately removed the mother of Christ from the fearful scene of Calvary. From that hour he cared for her as would a dutiful son, taking her to his own home. O pitiful, loving Saviour! Amid all his physical pain, and mental anguish, he had a tender, thoughtful care for the mother who had borne him. He had no money to leave her, by which to insure her future comfort, but he was enshrined in the heart of John, and he gave his mother unto the beloved disciple as a sacred legacy. This trust was to prove a great blessing to John, a constant reminder of his beloved Master.

The perfect example of Christ's filial love shines forth with undimmed luster from the mist of ages. While enduring the keenest torture, he was not forgetful of his mother, but made all provision necessary for her future. The followers of Christ should feel that it is a part of their religion to respect and provide for their parents. No pretext of religious devotion can excuse a son or daughter from fulfilling the obligations due to a parent.

The mission of Christ's earthly life was now nearly accomplished. His tongue was parched, and he said, "I thirst." They saturated a sponge with vinegar and gall and offered it him to drink; and when he had tasted it, he refused it. And now the Lord of life and glory was dying, a ransom for the race. It was the sense of sin, bring-

ing the Father's wrath upon him as man's substitute, that made the cup he drank so bitter, and broke the heart of the Son of God. Death is not to be regarded as an angel of mercy. Nature recoils from the thought of dissolution, which is the consequence of sin.

But it was not the dread of death which caused the inexpressible agony of Jesus. To believe this would be to place him beneath the martyrs in courage and endurance; for many of those who have died for their faith, yielded to torture and death, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer for Christ's sake. Christ was the prince of sufferers; but it was not bodily anguish that filled him with horror and despair; it was a sense of the malignity of sin, a knowledge that man had become so familiar with sin that he did not realize its enormity, that it was so deeply rooted in the human heart as to be difficult to eradicate.

As man's substitute and surety, the iniquity of men was laid upon Christ; he was counted a transgressor that he might redeem them from the curse of the law. The guilt of every descendant of Adam of every age was pressing upon his heart; and the wrath of God, and the terrible manifestation of his displeasure because of iniquity, filled the soul of his Son with consternation. The withdrawal of the divine countenance from the Saviour, in this hour of supreme anguish, pierced his heart with a sorrow that can never be fully understood by man. Every pang endured by the Son of God upon the cross, the blood drops that flowed from his head, his hands, and feet, the convulsions of agony which racked his frame, and the unutterable anguish that filled his soul at the hiding of his Father's face from

him, speak to man, saying, It is for love of thee that the Son of God consents to have these heinous crimes laid upon him; for thee he spoils the domain of death, and opens the gates of Paradise and immortal life. He who stilled the angry waves by his word, and walked the foam-capped billows, who made devils tremble, and disease flee from his touch, who raised the dead to life and opened the eyes of the blind,—offers himself upon the cross as the last sacrifice for man. He, the sin-bearer, endures judicial punishment for iniquity, and becomes sin itself for man.

Satan, with his fierce temptations, wrung the heart of Jesus. Sin, so hateful to his sight, was heaped upon him till he groaned beneath its weight. No wonder that his humanity trembled in that fearful hour. Angels witnessed with amazement the despairing agony of the Son of God, so much greater than his physical pain that the latter was hardly felt by him. The hosts of Heaven veiled their faces from the fearful sight.

Inanimate nature expressed a sympathy with its insulted and dying Author. The sun refused to look upon the awful scene. Its full, bright rays were illuminating the earth at midday, when suddenly it seemed to be blotted out. Complete darkness enveloped the cross, and all the vicinity about, like a funeral pall. There was no eclipse or other natural cause for this darkness, which was deep as midnight without moon or stars. The dense blackness was an emblem of the soul-agony and horror that encompassed the Son of God. He had felt it in the garden of Gethsemane, when from his pores were forced drops of blood, and where he would have died had not an angel been sent from the courts of Heaven

to invigorate the divine sufferer, that he might tread his blood-stained path to Calvary.

The darkness lasted three full hours. No eye could pierce the gloom that enshrouded the cross, and none could penetrate the deeper gloom that flooded the suffering soul of Christ. A nameless terror took possession of all who were collected about the cross. The silence of the grave seemed to have fallen upon Calvary. The cursing and reviling ceased in the midst of half-uttered sentences. Men, women, and children prostrated themselves upon the earth in abject terror. Vivid lightnings, unaccompanied by thunder, occasionally flashed forth from the cloud, and revealed the cross and the crucified Redeemer.

Priests, rulers, scribes, executioners, and the mob, all thought their time of retribution had come. After a while, some whispered to others that Jesus would now come down from the cross. Some attempted to grope their way back to the city, beating their breasts and wailing in fear.

At the ninth hour the terrible darkness lifted from the people, but still wrapt the Saviour as in a mantle. The angry lightnings seemed to be hurled at him as he hung upon the cross. Then "Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, eloi, lama sabacthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" As the outer gloom settled about Christ, many voices exclaimed, The vengeance of God is upon him! The bolts of God's wrath are hurled upon him because he claimed to be the Son of God! When the Saviour's despairing cry rang out, many who had believed on him were filled with terror; hope left them; if God had forsaken Jesus, what was

to become of his followers, and the doctrine they had cherished?

The darkness now lifted itself from the oppressed spirit of Christ, and he revived to a sense of physical suffering, and said, "I thirst." Here was a last opportunity for his persecutors to sympathize with and relieve him; but when the gloom was removed, their terror abated, and the old dread returned that Jesus might even yet escape them, "and one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come to take him down."

In yielding up his precious life, Christ was not cheered by triumphant joy; all was oppressive gloom. There hung upon the cross the spotless Lamb of God, his flesh lacerated with stripes and wounds; those precious hands, that had ever been ready to relieve the oppressed and suffering, extended upon the cross, and fastened by the cruel nails; those patient feet, that had traversed weary leagues in the dispensing of blessings and in teaching the doctrine of salvation to the world, bruised and spiked to the cross; his royal head wounded by a crown of thorns; those pale and quivering lips, that had ever been ready to respond to the plea of suffering humanity, shaped to the mournful words, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

In silence the people watch for the end of this fearful scene. Again the sun shines forth; but the cross is enveloped in darkness. Priests and rulers look toward Jerusalem; and lo, the dense cloud has settled upon the city, and over Judah's plains, and the fierce lightnings of God's wrath are directed against the fated city. Suddenly

the gloom is lifted from the cross, and in clear trumpet tones, that seem to resound throughout creation, Jesus cries, "It is finished;" "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." A light encircled the cross, and the face of the Saviour shone with a glory like unto the sun. He then bowed his head upon his breast, and died.

All the spectators stood paralyzed, and with bated breath gazed upon the Saviour. Again darkness settled upon the face of the earth, and a hoarse rumbling like heavy thunder was heard. This was accompanied by a violent trembling of the earth. The multitude were shaken together in heaps, and the wildest confusion and consternation ensued. In the surrounding mountains, rocks burst asunder with loud crashing, and many of them came tumbling down the heights to the plains below. The sepulchers were broken open, and the dead were cast out of their tombs. Creation seemed to be shivering to atoms. Priests, rulers, soldiers, and executioners were mute with terror, and prostrate upon the ground.

The darkness was again lifted from Calvary, and hung like a pall over Jerusalem. At the moment in which Christ died, there were priests ministering in the temple before the vail which separated the holy from the most holy place. Suddenly they felt the earth tremble beneath them, and the vail of the temple, a strong, rich drapery that had been renewed yearly, was rent in twain from top to bottom by the same bloodless hand that wrote the words of doom upon the walls of Belshazzar's palace. The most holy place, that had been sacredly entered by human feet only once a year, was revealed to the common gaze.

God had ever before protected his temple in a wonderful manner; but now its sacred mysteries were exposed to curious eyes. No longer would the presence of God overshadow the earthly mercy-seat. No longer would the light of his glory flash forth upon, nor the cloud of his disapproval shadow, the precious stones in the breastplate of the high priest.

When Christ died upon the cross of Calvary, a new and living way was opened to both Jew and Gentile. The Saviour was henceforth to officiate as Priest and Advocate in the Heaven of heavens. From henceforth the blood of beasts offered for sin was valueless; for the Lamb of God had died for the sins of the world. The darkness upon the face of nature expressed her sympathy with Christ in his expiring agony. It evidenced to humanity that the Sun of Righteousness, the Light of the world, was withdrawing his beams from the once favored city of Jerusalem, and from the world. It was a miraculous testimony given of God, that the faith of after generations might be confirmed.

Jesus did not yield up his life till he had accomplished the work which he came to do; and he exclaimed with his parting breath, "It is finished!" Angels rejoiced as the words were uttered; for the great plan of redemption was being triumphantly carried out. There was joy in Heaven that the sons of Adam could now, through a life of obedience, be exalted finally to the presence of God. Satan was defeated, and knew that his kingdom was lost.

When the Christian fully comprehends the magnitude of the great sacrifice made by the Majesty of Heaven, then will the plan of salva-

tion be magnified before him, and to meditate upon Calvary will awaken the deepest and most sacred emotions of his heart. Contemplation of the Saviour's matchless love should absorb the mind, touch and melt the heart, refine and elevate the affections, and completely transform the whole character. The language of the apostle is, "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." And we may look toward Calvary and exclaim, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

With the death of Christ the hopes of his disciples seemed to perish. They looked upon his closed eyelids and drooping head, his hair matted with blood, his pierced hands and feet, and their anguish was indescribable. They had not believed until the last that he would die, and they could hardly credit their senses that he was really dead. The Majesty of Heaven had yielded up his life, forsaken of the believers, unattended by one act of relief or word of sympathy; for even the pitying angels had not been permitted to minister to their beloved Commander.

Evening drew on, and an unearthly stillness hung over Calvary. The crowd dispersed, and many returned to Jerusalem greatly changed in spirit from what they had been in the morning. Many of them had then collected at the crucifixion from curiosity, and not from hatred toward Christ. Still they accepted the fabricated reports of the priests concerning him, and looked upon him as a malefactor. At the execution they had imbibed the spirit of the leading Jews,

and, under an unnatural excitement, had united with the mob in mocking and railing against him.

But when the earth was draped with blackness, and they stood accused by their own consciences, reason again resumed her sway, and they felt guilty of doing a great wrong. No jest nor mocking laughter was heard in the midst of that fearful gloom; and when it was lifted, they solemnly made their way to their homes, awe-struck and conscience-smitten. They were convinced that the accusations of the priests were false, that Jesus was no pretender; and a few weeks later they were among the thousands who became thorough converts to Christ, when Peter preached upon the day of Pentecost, and the great mystery of the cross was explained with other mysteries in regard to Messiah.

The Roman officers in charge were standing about the cross when Jesus cried out, "It is finished," in a voice of startling power, and then instantly died with that cry of victory upon his lips. They had never before witnessed a death like that upon the cross. It was an unheard-of thing for one to die thus within six hours after crucifixion. Death by crucifixion was a slow and lingering process; nature became more and more exhausted until it was difficult to determine when life had become extinct. But for a man dying thus to summon such power of voice and clearness of utterance as Jesus had done, immediately before his death, was such an astonishing event that the Roman officers, experienced in such scenes, marveled greatly; and the centurion who commanded the detachment of soldiers on duty there, immediately declared, "Truly this was the Son of God." Thus three men, differing

widely from one another, openly declared their belief in Christ upon the very day of his death —he who commanded the Roman guard, he who bore the cross of his Saviour, and he who died upon the cross by his side.

The spectators, and the soldiers who guarded the cross, were convinced, so far as their minds were capable of grasping the idea, that Jesus was the Redeemer for whom Israel had so long looked. But the darkness that mantled the earth could not be more dense than that which enveloped the minds of the priests and rulers. They were unchanged by the events they had witnessed, and their hatred of Jesus had not abated with his death.

At his birth the angel star in the heavens had known Christ, and had conducted the seers to the manger where he lay. The heavenly hosts had known him, and sung his praise over the plains of Bethlehem. The sea had acknowledged his voice, and was obedient to his command. Disease and death had recognized his authority, and yielded their prey to his demand. The sun had known him, and hidden its face of light from the sight of his dying anguish. The rocks had known him, and shivered into fragments at his dying cry. Although inanimate nature recognized, and bore testimony of Christ, that he was the Son of God, yet the priests and rulers knew not the Saviour, rejected the evidence of his divinity, and steeled their hearts against his truths. They were not so susceptible as the granite rocks of the mountains.

The Jews were unwilling that the bodies of those who had been executed should remain that night upon the cross. They dreaded to have

the attention of the people directed any farther to the events attending the death of Jesus. They feared the results of that day's work upon the minds of the public. So, under pretext that they did not wish the sanctity of the Sabbath to be defiled by the bodies remaining upon the cross during that holy day, which was the one following the crucifixion, the leading Jews sent a request to Pilate that he would permit them to hasten the death of the victims, so that their bodies might be removed before the setting of the sun.

Pilate was as unwilling as they were that the spectacle of Jesus upon the cross should remain a moment longer than was necessary. The consent of the governor having been obtained, the legs of the two that were crucified with Jesus were broken to hasten their death; but Jesus was already dead, and they broke not his legs. The rude soldiers, who had witnessed the looks and words of Jesus upon his way to Calvary, and while dying upon the cross, were softened by what they had witnessed, and were restrained from marring him by breaking his limbs. Thus was prophecy fulfilled, which declared that a bone of him should not be broken; and the law of the passover, requiring the sacrifice to be perfect and whole, was also fulfilled in the offering of the Lamb of God. "They shall leave none of it unto the morning, nor break any bone of it; according to all the ordinances of the passover they shall keep it."

A soldier, at the suggestion of the priests who wished to make the death of Jesus sure, thrust his spear into the Saviour's side, inflicting a wound which would have caused instant death

if he had not already been dead. From the wide incision made by the spear there flowed two copious and distinct streams, one of blood, the other of water. This remarkable fact was noted by all the beholders, and John states the occurrence very definitely; he says: "One of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced."

After the resurrection, the priests and rulers caused the report to be circulated that Jesus did not die upon the cross, that he merely fainted and was afterward resuscitated. Another lying report affirmed that it was not a real body of flesh and bone but the likeness of a body that was laid in the tomb. But the testimony of John concerning the pierced side of the Saviour, and the blood and water that flowed from the wound, refutes these falsehoods that were brought into existence by the unscrupulous Jews.

AT THE SEPULCHER.

TREASON against the Roman government was the alleged crime for which Jesus was executed, and persons put to death for this offense were taken down by the common soldiers and consigned to a burial ground reserved exclusively for that class of criminals who had suffered the extreme penalty of the law.

John was at a loss to know what measures he should take in regard to the body of his beloved Master. He shuddered at the thought of its being handled by rough and unfeeling soldiers, and placed in a dishonored burial place. He knew he could obtain no favors from the Jewish authorities, and he could hope little from Pilate. But Joseph and Nicodemus came to the front in this emergency. Both of these men were members of the Sanhedrim, and acquainted with Pilate. Both were men of wealth and influence. They were determined that the body of Jesus should have an honorable burial.

Joseph went boldly to Pilate, and begged from him the body of Jesus for burial. His prayer was speedily granted by Pilate, who firmly believed Jesus to have been innocent. Pilate now for the first time heard from Joseph that Jesus was really dead. The knowledge had been purposely kept from him, although various conflicting reports had reached his ears concerning the strange events attending the crucifixion. Now he learned that the Saviour died at the very moment when the mysterious darkness that enshrouded the earth had passed away. Pilate was surprised that Jesus had died so soon; for those who were crucified frequently lingered days upon the cross. The account which Pilate now received of the death of Jesus caused him more firmly to believe that he was no ordinary man. The Roman governor was strangely agitated, and regretted most keenly the part he had taken in the condemnation of the Saviour.

The priests and rulers had charged Pilate and his officers to guard against any deception which the disciples of Jesus might attempt to

practice upon them in regard to the body of their Master. Pilate, therefore, before granting the request of Joseph, sent for the centurion who was in command of the soldiers at the cross, and heard for a certainty from his lips that Jesus was dead; and in compliance with Pilate's earnest request he recounted the fearful scenes of Calvary, corroborating the testimony of Joseph.

Pilate then gave an official order that the body of Jesus should be given to Joseph. While the disciple John was anxious and troubled about the sacred remains of his beloved Master, Joseph of Arimathea returned with the commission from the governor; and Nicodemus, anticipating the result of Joseph's interview with Pilate, came with a costly mixture of myrrh and aloes of about one hundred pounds' weight. The most honored in all Jerusalem could not have been shown more respect in death.

The women of Galilee had remained with the disciple John to see what disposition would be made of the body of Jesus, which was very precious to them, although their faith in him as the promised Messiah had perished with him. The disciples were plunged in sorrow; they were so overwhelmed by the events which had transpired that they were unable to recall the words of Jesus stating that just such things would take place concerning him. The women were astonished to see Joseph and Nicodemus, both honored and wealthy councilors, as anxious and interested as themselves for the proper disposal of the body of Jesus.

Neither of these men had openly attached himself to the Saviour while he was living, although both believed on him. They knew

that if they declared their faith they would be excluded from the Sanhedrim council, on account of the prejudice of the priests and elders toward Jesus. This would have cut them off from all power to aid or protect him by using their influence in the council. Several times they had shown the fallacy of the grounds of his condemnation, and protested against his arrest, and the council had broken up without accomplishing that for which it had been called together; for it was impossible to procure the condemnation of Jesus without the unanimous consent of the Sanhedrim. The object of the priests had finally been obtained by calling a secret council, to which Joseph and Nicodemus were not summoned.

The two councilors now came boldly forth to the aid of the disciples. The help of these rich and honored men was greatly needed at that time. They could do for the slain Saviour what it was impossible for the poorer disciples to do; and their influential positions protected them, in a great measure, from censure and remonstrance. While the acknowledged disciples of Christ were too thoroughly disheartened and intimidated to show themselves openly to be his followers, these men came boldly to the front and acted their noble part.

Gently and reverently they removed with their own hands the body of Jesus from the instrument of torture, their sympathetic tears falling fast as they looked upon his bruised and lacerated form, which they carefully bathed and cleansed from the stain of blood. Joseph owned a new tomb, hewn from stone, which he was reserving for himself; it was near Calvary, and he now

prepared this sepulcher for Jesus. The body, together with the spices brought by Nicodemus, was carefully wrapped in a linen sheet, and the three disciples bore their precious burden to the new sepulcher, wherein man had never before lain. There they straightened those mangled limbs, and folded the bruised hands upon the pulseless breast. The Galilean women drew near, to see that all had been done that could be done for the lifeless form of their beloved Teacher. Then they saw the heavy stone rolled against the entrance of the sepulcher, and the Son of God was left at rest. The women were last at the cross, and last at the tomb of Christ. While the evening shades were gathering, Mary Magdalene and the other Marys lingered about the sacred resting-place of their Lord, shedding tears of sorrow over the fate of Him whom they loved.

REDEMPTION:

OR THE

RESURRECTION OF CHRIST;

AND

HIS ASCENSION.

BY MRS. E. G. WHITE.

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NOTE TO THE READER.

This little book, recording the history of the resurrection and ascension of Christ, is presented to the reader in the belief that its perusal will aid him in studying the sacred Scriptures. This, with the preceding books of this series, contains many features of the life and mission of Christ, not presented in any other work.

PUBLISHERS.

THE

RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

AFTER THE CRUCIFIXION.

THE Jewish priests and rulers had now carried out their fiendish purpose of putting to death the Son of God; but their apprehensions were not quieted, nor was their jealousy of Christ dead. Mingled with the joy of gratified revenge, there was an ever-present fear that his dead body lying in Joseph's tomb would come forth to life. They had labored to believe that he was a deceiver; but it was in vain. They everywhere heard inquiries for Jesus of Nazareth from those who had not heard of his death, and had brought their sick and dying friends to the passover to be healed by the great Physician. The priests knew in their hearts that Jesus had been all-powerful; they had witnessed his miracle at the grave of Lazarus; they knew that he had there raised the dead to life, and they trembled for fear he would himself rise from the dead.

They had heard him declare that he had power to lay down his life and to take it up again; they remembered that he had said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up;" they put this and that together, and were afraid. When Judas had betrayed his Master to the priests, he had repeated to them

the declaration which Jesus had privately made to his disciples while on their way to the city. He had said, "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him; and the third day he shall rise again." They remembered many things which he had said, that they now recognized as plain prophecies of the events which had taken place. They did not desire to think of these things, but they could not shut them from their understanding. Like their father, the devil, they believed and trembled.

Now that the frenzy of excitement was passed, the image of Christ would intrude upon their minds, as he stood serene and uncomplaining before his enemies, suffering their taunts and abuse without a murmur. They remembered the prayer for forgiveness, offered in behalf of those who nailed him to the cross, his forgetfulness of his own suffering, and his merciful response to the prayer of the dying thief, the darkness which covered the earth, its sudden lifting, and his triumphant cry, "It is finished," which seemed to resound through the universe, his immediate death, the quaking of the earth and the shivering of the rocks, the opening of the graves and the rending of the vail of the temple. All these remarkable circumstances pressed upon their minds the overpowering evidence that Jesus was the Son of God.

They rested but little upon the Sabbath. Though they would not step over a Gentile's threshold for fear of defilement, yet they held a

council concerning the body of Christ. They knew that the disciples would not attempt to remove him until after the Sabbath; but they were anxious that all precautions should be taken at its close. Therefore "the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command, therefore, that the sepulcher be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead; so the last error shall be worse than the first." Pilate was as unwilling as were the Jews that Jesus should rise with power to punish the guilt of those who had destroyed him, and he placed a band of Roman soldiers at the command of the priests. Said he, "Ye have a watch; go your way, make it as sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulcher sure, sealing the stone and setting a watch."

The discipline of the Roman army was very severe. A sentinel found sleeping at his post was punishable with death. The Jews realized the advantage of having such a guard about the tomb of Jesus. They placed a seal upon the stone that closed the sepulcher, that it might not be disturbed without the fact being known, and took every precaution against the disciples practicing any deception in regard to the body of Jesus. But all their plans and precautions only served to make the triumph of the resurrection more complete, and to more fully establish its truth.

How must God and his holy angels have looked upon all those preparations to guard the body of

the world's Redeemer! How weak and foolish must those efforts have seemed! The words of the psalmist picture this scene: "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his Anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision." Roman guards and Roman arms were powerless to confine the Lord of life within the narrow inclosure of the sepulcher. Christ had declared that he had power to lay down his life and to take it up again. The hour of his victory was near.

God had ruled the events clustering around the birth of Christ. There was an appointed time for him to appear in the form of humanity. A long line of inspired prophecy pointed to the coming of Christ to our world, and minutely described the manner of his reception. Had the Saviour appeared at an earlier period in the world's history, the advantages gained to Christians would not have been so great, as their faith would not have been developed and strengthened by dwelling upon the prophecies which stretched into the far future, and recounted the events which were to transpire.

Because of the wicked departure of the Jews from God, he had allowed them to come under the power of a heathen nation. Only a certain limited power was granted the Jews; even the Sanhedrim was not allowed to pronounce final judgment upon any important case which involved the infliction of capital punishment. A people controlled, as were the Jews, by bigotry

and superstition, are most cruel and unrelenting. The wisdom of God was displayed in sending his Son to the world at a time when the Roman power held sway. Had the Jewish economy possessed full authority, we should not now have a history of the life and ministry of Christ among men. The jealous priests and rulers would have quickly made away with so formidable a rival. He would have been stoned to death on the false accusation of breaking the law of God. The Jews put no one to death by crucifixion; that was a Roman method of punishment; there would therefore have been no cross upon Calvary. Prophecy would not then have been fulfilled; for Christ was to be lifted up in the most public manner on the cross, as the serpent was lifted up in the wilderness.

Had the coming of Christ been deferred many years later, until the Jewish power had become still less, prophecy would have failed of its fulfillment; for it would not have been possible for the Jews, with their waning power, to have influenced the Roman authorities to sign the death-warrant of Jesus upon the lying charges presented, and there would have been no cross of Christ erected upon Calvary. Soon after the Saviour's execution the method of death by crucifixion was abolished. The scenes which took place at the death of Jesus, the inhuman conduct of the people, the supernatural darkness which veiled the earth, and the agony of nature displayed in the rending of the rocks and the flashing of the lightning, struck them with such remorse and terror, that the cross, as an instrument of death, soon fell into disuse. At the destruction of Jerusalem, when mob power again ob-

tained control, crucifixion was again revived for a time, and many crosses stood upon Calvary.

Christ coming at the time and in the manner which he did was a direct and complete fulfillment of prophecy. The evidence of this, given to the world through the testimony of the apostles and that of their cotemporaries, is among the strongest proofs of the Christian faith. We were not eye-witnesses of the miracles of Jesus, which attest his divinity; but we have the statements of his disciples who were eye-witnesses of them, and we see by faith through their eyes, and hear through their ears; and our faith with theirs grasps the evidence given.

The apostles accepted Jesus upon the testimony of prophets and righteous men, stretching over a period of many centuries. The Christian world have a full and complete chain of evidence running through both the Old and the New Testament; in the one pointing to a Saviour to come, and in the other fulfilling the conditions of that prophecy. All this is sufficient to establish the faith of those who are willing to believe. The design of God was to leave the race a fair opportunity to develop faith in the power of God, and of his Son, and in the work of the Holy Spirit.

The priests who ministered before the altar had gloomy presentiments as they looked upon the vail, rent by unseen hands from top to bottom, and which there had not been time to replace or to fully repair. The uncovering of the sacred mysteries of the most holy place brought to them a shuddering dread of coming calamity. Many of the officiating priests were deeply convicted of the true character of Jesus; their searching of the prophecies had not been in vain, and after he was raised from the dead they acknowledged him as the Son of God.

During that memorable passover the scenes of the crucifixion were the theme of thought, and the topic of conversation. Hundreds had brought with them to the passover their afflicted relatives and friends, expecting to see Jesus and prevail upon him to heal and save them. Great was their disappointment to find that he was not at the feast; and when they were told that he had been executed as a criminal, their indignation and grief knew no bounds.

The multitudes of sufferers who had come with the expectation of being healed by the Saviour sank under their disappointment. The streets and the temple courts were filled with mourning. The sick were dying for want of the healing touch of Jesus of Nazareth. Physicians were consulted in vain; there was no skill like that of Him who lay in state in Joseph's tomb. The afflicted, who had long looked forward to this time as their only hope of relief, asked in vain for the Healer they had sought.

The revenge which the priests thought would be so sweet had already become bitterness to them. They knew that they were meeting the severe censure of the people; they knew that the very persons whom they had influenced against Jesus were now horrified by their own shameful work. As they witnessed all these proofs of the divine influence of Jesus, they were more afraid of his dead body in the tomb than they had been of him when he was living and among them. The possibility of his coming forth from the sepulcher filled their guilty souls with

indescribable terror. They felt that Jesus might at any time stand before them, the accused to become the accuser, the condemned to in turn condemn, the slain to demand justice in the death of his murderers.

THE RESURRECTION.

EVERY preparation had been made at the sepulcher to prevent any surprise or fraud being perpetrated by the disciples. The night had worn slowly away, and the darkest hour before daybreak had come. The Roman guards were keeping their weary watch, the sentinels pacing to and fro before the sepulcher, while the remainder of the detachment of one hundred soldiers were reclining upon the ground in different positions, taking what rest they could. But angels were also guarding the sepulcher, one of whom could have stricken down the whole Roman army by the putting forth of his power.

One of the most exalted order of angels is sent from Heaven; his countenance is like the lightning, and his garments white as snow. He parts the darkness from his track, and the whole heavens are lit with his resplendent glory. The sleeping soldiers start simultaneously to their feet, and gaze with awe and wonder at the open, lighted heavens, and the vision of brightness which approaches. The earth trembles and heaves; soldiers, officers, and sentinels all fall as dead men prostrate upon the earth. The evil angels, who have triumphantly claimed the body of Christ, flee in terror from the place. One of the mighty, commanding angels who has, with his company, been keeping watch over the

tomb of his Master, joins the powerful angel who comes from Heaven; and together they advance directly to the sepulcher.

The angelic commander laid hold of the great stone which had required many strong men to place it in position, rolled it away, and took his seat upon it, while his companion entered the sepulcher and unwound the wrappings from the face and head of Jesus. Then the mighty angel, with a voice that caused the earth to quake, was heard: Jesus, thou Son of God, thy Father calls thee! Then he who had earned the power to conquer death and the grave came forth, with the tread of a conqueror, from the sepulcher, amid the reeling of the earth, the flashing of lightning, and the roaring of thunder. An earthquake marked the hour when Christ laid down his life; and another earthquake signaled the moment when he took it up again in triumph.

Jesus was the first-fruits of them that slept. When he came forth from the tomb he called a multitude from the dead, thus settling forever the long-disputed question of the resurrection. In raising this multitude of captives from the dead, he gives evidence that there will be a final resurrection of those who sleep in Jesus. The believers in Christ thus receive the very light they want in regard to the future life of the pious dead.

Satan was bitterly incensed that his angels had fled from the presence of the heavenly angels, and that Christ had conquered death, and shown by this act what his future power was to be. All the triumph that Satan had experienced in witnessing his own power over men, which had urged them on to insult and murder the Son

of God, fled before this exhibition of the divine power of Christ. He had dared to hope that Jesus would not take up his life again; but his courage failed him when the Saviour came forth, having paid the full ransom of man, and enabled him to overcome Satan in his own behalf in the name of Christ, the Conqueror. The arch-enemy now knew that he must eventually die, and that his kingdom would have an end.

In this scene of the resurrection of the Son of God is given a lively image of the glory that will be revealed at the general resurrection of the just at the second appearing of Christ in the clouds of heaven. Then the dead that are in their graves shall hear his voice and come forth to life; and not only the earth, but the heavens themselves, shall be shaken. A few graves were opened at the resurrection of Christ; but at his second coming all the precious dead, from righteous Abel to the last saint that dies, shall awake to glorious, immortal life.

If the soldiers at the sepulcher were so filled with terror at the appearance of one angel clothed with heavenly light and strength, that they fell as dead men to the ground, how will his enemies stand before the Son of God, when he comes in power and great glory, accompanied by ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands of angels from the courts of Heaven? Then the earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and be removed as a cottage. The elements shall be in flames, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll.

At the death of Jesus the soldiers had beheld the earth wrapped in profound darkness at midday; but at the resurrection they saw the brightness of the angels illuminate the night, and heard the inhabitants of Heaven singing with great joy and triumph: Thou hast vanquished Satan and the powers of darkness! Thou hast swallowed up death in victory! "And I heard a loud voice saying in Heaven, Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accused them before our God day and night."

The casting down of Satan as an accuser of the brethren in Heaven was accomplished by the great work of Christ in giving up his life. Notwithstanding Satan's persistent opposition, the plan of redemption was being carried out. Man was esteemed of sufficient value for Christ to sacrifice his life for him. Satan, knowing that the empire he had usurped would in the end be wrested from him, determined to spare no pains to destroy as many as possible of the creatures whom God had created in his image. He hated man because Christ had manifested for him such forgiving love and pity, and he now prepared to practice upon him every species of deception by which he might be lost; he pursued his course with more energy because of his own hopeless condition.

Christ came to earth to vindicate the claims of his Father's law, and his death shows the immutability of that law. But Satan thrusts upon man the fallacy, that the law of God was abolished by the death of Christ, and he thus leads many professed Christians to transgress the Father's commandments, while they assume devotion to his Son.

The Christian world is not sufficiently ac-

quainted with the history of Satan, and the terrible power that he wields. Many look upon him as a mere imaginary being. Meanwhile he has crept into the popular mind; he sways the people—he assumes the character of an angel of light—he marshals his trained forces like a skilled general—he has gained profound knowledge of human nature, and can be logical, philosophical, or hypocritically religious.

He now prepared to work upon the minds of the priests in regard to the event of the resurrection of Christ. He knew that, having already fallen into his trap, and committed the horrible crime of slaying the Son of God, they were entirely in his power, and their only course to escape the wrath of the people was to persist in denouncing Jesus as an impostor, and to accuse his disciples of stealing away his body that they might declare him to be risen from the dead.

After the exceeding glory of the angelic messenger had faded from the heavens and from the sepulcher, the Roman guards ventured to raise their heads and to look about them. They saw that the great stone at the door of the sepulcher was removed, and they arose in consternation to find the body of Jesus gone and the tomb empty. They turned from the sepulcher, overwhelmed by what they had seen and heard, and made their way with all haste to the city, relating to those whom they met the marvelous scenes they had witnessed. Some of the disciples, who had passed a sleepless night, heard the wonderful story with mingled hope and fear. Meanwhile a messenger was dispatched to the priests and rulers, announcing to them: Christ whom ye crucified is risen from the dead!

A servant was immediately sent with a private message summoning the Roman guard to the palace of the high priest. There they were closely questioned; they gave a full statement of what they had witnessed at the sepulcher: That an awful messenger had come from Heaven with face like the lightning for brightness, and with garments white as snow; that the earth shook and trembled, and they were stricken powerless; that the angel had laid hold of the immense stone at the door of the sepulcher, and had rolled it away as if it had been a pebble; that a form of great glory had emerged from the sepulcher; that a chorus of voices had made the heavens and earth vocal with songs of victory and joy; that when the light had faded out, and the music had ceased, they had recovered their strength, found the tomb empty, and the body of Jesus nowhere to be found.

When the priests, scribes, and rulers heard this account, their faces were blanched to a deadly pallor. They could not utter a word. With horror they perceived that two-thirds of the prophecy concerning Messiah had now been fulfilled, and their hearts failed them with fear of what might be about to take place. They could not question the evidence of the witnesses before them. Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified one, had indeed risen from the dead.

When they had recovered from their first shock at hearing this news, they began to consider what course they would best pursue, and Satan was present to suggest ways and means. They felt that they had placed themselves where they had no alternative but to brave it out, and deny Christ to the very last. They reasoned that if

this report should be circulated among the people, they would not only be stripped of their honor and authority, but would probably lose their lives. Jesus had said that he would rise from the dead and ascend to Heaven; they determined to keep the people in ignorance of the fulfillment of his word. They thought this could be done if the Roman guard could be bought with money.

They found upon trial that the guard could be induced by large bribes to deny their former report, and to testify that the disciples had stolen the body of Jesus in the night, while the sentinels slept. It was a crime punishable by death for a sentinel to sleep at his post; and, in order to secure the evidence they wished, the priests promised to insure the safety of the guard. The Roman soldiers sold their integrity to the false Jews for money. They came in before the priests burdened with a most startling message of truth, and went out with a burden of money, and with a lying report upon their tongues which had been framed for them by the priests.

Meanwhile a messenger had been sent, bearing the news to Pilate. When he heard what had occurred, his soul was filled with terror. He shut himself within his home, not wishing to see any one; but the priests found their way into his presence, and urged him to make no investigation of the affirmed neglect of the sentinels, but to let the matter pass. Pilate at length consented to this, after having a private interview with the guard, and learning all the particulars from them. They dared not conceal anything from the governor for fear of losing their lives. Pilate did not prosecute the matter farther, but from that time there was no more peace or comfort for him.

THE WOMEN AT THE TOMB.

THE spices with which the body of Jesus was to be anointed had been prepared on the day preceding the Sabbath. Early in the morning of the first day of the week, the Marys, with certain other women, went to the sepulcher to proceed with the work of embalming the body of the Saviour. As they neared the garden, they were surprised to see the heavens beautifully lighted up, and the earth trembling beneath their feet. They hastened to the sepulcher, and were astonished to find that the stone was rolled away from the door, and that the Roman guard were not there. They noticed a light shining about the tomb, and, looking in, saw that it was empty.

Mary then hastened with all speed to the disciples, and informed them that Jesus was not in the sepulcher where they had laid him. While she was upon this errand, the other women, who waited for her at the sepulcher, made a more thorough examination of the interior, to satisfy themselves that their Lord was indeed gone. Suddenly they beheld a beautiful young man, clothed in shining garments, sitting by the sepulcher. It was the angel who had rolled away the stone, and who now assumed a character that would not terrify the women who had been the friends of Christ, and assisted him in his public ministry. But notwithstanding the veiling of the brightness of the angel, the women were greatly amazed and terrified at the glory of the Lord which encircled him. They turned to flee from the sepulcher, but the heavenly messenger addressed

them with soothing and comforting words: "Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here, for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him; lo, I have told you."

As the women responded to the invitation of the angel, and looked again into the sepulcher, they saw another angel of shining brightness, who addressed them with the inquiry: "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen; remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again." These angels were well acquainted with the words of Jesus to his disciples, for they had been with him in the capacity of guardian angels, through all the scenes of his life, and had witnessed his trial and crucifixion.

With combined wisdom and tenderness, the angels reminded the women of the words of Jesus, warning them beforehand of his crucifixion and resurrection. The women now fully comprehended the words of their Master, which at the time were veiled in mystery to them. They gathered fresh hope and courage. Jesus had declared that he would rise from the dead, and had rested his claims as the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world, upon his future resurrection from the dead.

Mary, who had first discovered that the tomb was empty, hurried to Peter and John, and announced that the Lord had been taken out of the

sepulcher, and she knew not where they had laid him. At these words the disciples both hastened to the sepulcher, and found it as Mary had said. The body of their Master was not there, and the linen clothes lay by themselves. Peter was perplexed; but John believed that Jesus had risen from the dead, as he had told them he should do. They did not understand the scripture of the Old Testament, which taught that Christ should rise from the dead; but the belief of John was based upon the words of Jesus himself while he was yet with them.

The disciples left the sepulcher, and returned to their homes; but Mary could not bear to leave while all was uncertainty as to what had become of the body of her Lord. As she stood weeping, she stooped down to once more look into the sepulcher; and lo, there were two angels, clothed in garments of white. They were disguised by an appearance of humanity, and Mary did not recognize them as celestial beings. One sat where the head of Jesus had rested, and the other where his feet had been. They addressed Mary with the words: "Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." In view of the open sepulcher, and the disappearance of her Master's body, Mary was not easily comforted.

In her abandonment of grief she did not notice the heavenly appearance of those who addressed her. As she turned aside to weep, another voice inquired, "Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?" Her eyes were so blinded by tears that she did not observe the person who spoke to her, but she immediately

grasped the idea of obtaining from her interrogator some information concerning the whereabouts of her Master's body. She thought that the speaker might be the one who had charge of the garden, and she addressed him pleadingly: "Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away."

She felt that if she could only gain possession of the precious crucified body of her Saviour, it would be a great consolation to her grief. She thought that if this rich man's tomb was considered too honorable a place for her Lord, she would herself provide a place for him. Her great anxiety was to find him, that she might give him honorable burial. But now the voice of Jesus himself fell upon her astonished ears. He said to her, "Mary." Instantly her tears were brushed away; and he whom she supposed was the gardener stood revealed before her—it was Jesus! For a moment she forgot in her joy that he had been crucified; she stretched forth her hands to him, saying, "Rabboni!" Jesus then said, "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God."

Jesus refused to receive the homage of his people until he knew that his sacrifice had been accepted by the Father, and until he had received the assurance from God himself that his atonement for the sins of his people had been full and ample, that through his blood they might gain eternal life. Jesus immediately ascended to Heaven and presented himself before the throne of God, showing the marks of shame and cruelty upon his brow, his hands and feet. But he refused to receive the coronet of glory, and the royal robe, and he also refused the adoration of the angels as he had refused the homage of Mary, until the Father signified that his offering was accepted.

He also had a request to prefer concerning his chosen ones upon earth. He wished to have the relation clearly defined that his redeemed should hereafter sustain to Heaven, and to his Father. His church must be justified and accepted before he could accept heavenly honor. He declared it to be his will that where he was, there his church should be; if he was to have glory, his people must share it with him. They who suffer with him on earth must finally reign with him in his kingdom. In the most explicit manner Christ pleaded for his church, identifying his interest with theirs, and advocating, with a love and constancy stronger than death, their rights and titles gained through him.

God's answer to this appeal goes forth in the proclamation: "Let all the angels of God worship him." Every angelic commander obeys the royal mandate, and Worthy, worthy is the Lamb that was slain; and that lives again a triumphant conqueror! echoes and re-echoes through all Heaven. The innumerable company of angels prostrate themselves before the Redeemer. The request of Christ is granted; the church is justified through him, its representative and head. Here the Father ratifies the contract with his Son, that he will be reconciled to repentant and obedient men, and take them into divine favor through the merits of Christ. Christ guarantees that he will make a man "more precious than fine gold, even a man than the golden wedge of

Ophir." All power in Heaven and on earth is now given to the Prince of life; yet he does not for a moment forget his poor disciples in a sinful world, but prepares to return to them, that he may impart to them his power and glory. Thus did the Redeemer of mankind, by the sacrifice of himself, connect earth with Heaven, and finite man with the infinite God.

Jesus said to Mary, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father." When he closed his eyes in death upon the cross, the soul of Christ did not go at once to Heaven, as many believe, or how could his words be true—"I am not yet ascended to my Father"? The spirit of Jesus slept in the tomb with his body, and did not wing its way to Heaven, there to maintain a separate existence, and to look down upon the mourning disciples embalming the body from which it had taken flight. All that comprised the life and intelligence of Jesus remained with his body in the sepulcher; and when he came forth it was as a whole being; he did not have to summon his spirit from Heaven. He had power to lay down his life and to take it up again.

The brightest morning that ever dawned upon a fallen world, was that in which the Saviour rose from the dead; but it was of no greater importance to man than the day upon which his trial and crucifixion took place. It was no marvel to the heavenly host that He who controlled the power of death, and had life in himself, should awaken from the sleep of the grave. But it was a marvel to them that their loved Commander should die for rebellious men.

Christ rested in the tomb on the Sabbath day, and when holy beings of both Heaven and earth

were astir on the morning of the first day of the week, he rose from the grave to renew his work of teaching his disciples. But this fact does not consecrate the first day of the week, and make it a Sabbath. Jesus, prior to his death, established a memorial of the breaking of his body and the spilling of his blood for the sins of the world, in the ordinance of the Lord's supper, saying, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." And the repentant believer, who takes the steps required in conversion, commemorates in his baptism the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. He goes down into the water in the likeness of Christ's death and burial, and he is raised out of the water in the likeness of his resurrection—not to take up the old life of sin, but to live a new life in Christ Jesus.

The other women who had seen and been addressed by the angels, left the sepulcher with mingled feelings of fear and great joy. They hastened to the disciples, as the angels had directed, and related to them the things which they had seen and heard. Peter was expressly mentioned by the angel as one to whom the women were to communicate their news. This disciple had been the most despondent of all the little company of Christ's followers, because of his shameful denial of the Lord. Peter's remorse for his crime was well understood by the holy angels, and their tender compassion for the wayward and sorrowing is revealed in the solicitude they manifested for the unhappy disciple, and which evidenced to him that his repentance was accepted, and his sin forgiven.

When the disciples heard the account which

the women brought, they were astonished. They began to recall the words of their Lord which foretold his resurrection. Still, this event, which should have filled their hearts with joy, was a great perplexity to them. After their great disappointment in the death of Christ, their faith was not strong enough to accept the fact of the resurrection. Their hopes had been so blighted that they could not believe the statement of the women, but thought that they were the subjects of an illusion. Even when Mary Magdalene testified that she had seen and spoken with her Lord, they still refused to believe that he had risen.

They were terribly depressed by the events that had crowded upon them. On the sixth day they had seen their Master die; upon the first day of the succeeding week they found themselves deprived of his body, and the stigma resting upon them of having stolen it away for the purpose of practicing a deception upon the people. They despaired of ever correcting the false impressions that had gained ground against them; and now they were newly perplexed by the reports of the believing women. In their trouble their hearts yearned for their beloved Master, who had always been ready to explain the mysteries that perplexed them and to smooth their difficulties.

JESUS AT EMMAUS.

On this same day Jesus met several of his disciples, and greeted them with "All hail," upon which they approached him and held him by the feet and worshiped him. He permitted this

homage, for he had then ascended to his Father, and had received his approval, and the worship of the holy angels. Late in the afternoon of the same day, two of the disciples were on their way to Emmaus, eight miles from Jerusalem. They had come to the city to keep the passover, and the news of the morning in regard to the removal of the body of Jesus from the sepulcher had greatly perplexed them. This perplexity had been increased by the reports of the women concerning the heavenly messengers, and the appearance of Jesus himself. They were now returning to their home to meditate and pray, in hope of gaining some light in reference to these matters which so confused their understanding.

These two disciples had not held a prominent position beside Jesus in his ministry, but they were earnest believers in him. Soon after they began their journey, they observed a stranger coming up behind them, who presently joined their company; but they were so busy with perplexing thoughts, which they were communicating to each other, that they scarcely noticed they were not alone. Those strong men were so burdened with grief that they wept as they traveled on. Christ's pitying heart of love saw here a sorrow which he could relieve. The disciples were reasoning with each other concerning the events of the past few days, and marveling how the fact of Jesus yielding himself up to a shameful death could be reconciled with his claims as the Son of God.

One maintained that he could be no pretender, but had been himself deceived in regard to his mission and his future glory. They both feared that what his enemies had flung in his teeth was

too true—"He saved others; himself he cannot save." Yet they wondered how he could be so mistaken in himself, when he had given them such repeated evidence that he could read the hearts of others. And the strange reports of the women threw them into still greater uncertainty.

Long might these disciples have perplexed themselves over the mysteries of the past few days, if they had not received enlightenment from Jesus. He, disguised as a stranger, entered into conversation with them. "But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad? And the one of them whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people."

They then recounted to him the facts of the trial and crucifixion of their Master, together with the testimony of the women in regard to the removal of his body, the vision of angels which they had seen, the news of the resurrection, and the report of those disciples who had gone to the sepulcher. "Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken; ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself."

The disciples were silent from amazement and delight. They did not venture to ask the stranger who he was. They listened to him intently, charmed by his intelligence, and drawn toward him by his gracious words and manner, as he opened the Scriptures to their understanding, showing them from prophecy how Christ must suffer, and after suffering enter into his glory.

Jesus began with the first book written by Moses, and traced down through all the prophets the inspired proof in regard to his life, his mission, his suffering, death, and resurrection. He did not deem it necessary to work a miracle to evidence that he was the risen Redeemer of the world; but he went back to the prophecies, and gave a full and clear explanation of them to settle the question of his identity, and the fact that all which had occurred to him was foretold by the inspired writers. Jesus ever carried the minds of his hearers back to the precious mine of truth found in the Old-Testament Scriptures. The esteem in which he held those sacred records is exemplified in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, where he says, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." The apostles also all testify to the importance of the Old-Testament Scriptures. Peter says: "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Luke thus speaks of the prophets who predicted the coming of Christ: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people; and hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, as he spake by the

mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began."

It is the voice of Christ that speaks through the prophets and patriarchs, from the days of Adam even down to the closing scenes of time. This truth was not discerned by the Jews who rejected Jesus, and it is not discerned by many professing Christians to-day. A beautiful harmony runs through the Old and New Testaments; passages which may seem dark at a first reading, present clear interpretations when diligently studied, and compared with other scripture referring to the same subject. A careful search of the prophecies would have so enlightened the understanding of the Jews that they would have recognized Jesus as the predicted Messiah. But they had interpreted those predictions to meet their own perverted ideas and ambitious aspirations.

The disciples had been confused by the interpretations and traditions of the priests, and hence their darkness and unbelief in regard to the trial, death, and resurrection of their Master. These misinterpreted prophecies were now made plain to the understanding of the two disciples, by Him who, through his Holy Spirit, inspired men to write them. Jesus showed his disciples that every specification of prophecy regarding Messiah had found an exact fulfillment in the life and death of their Master. He addressed them as a stranger, and as one who was astonished that they had not interpreted the Scriptures correctly, which would have relieved them from all their difficulties.

Although Jesus had previously taught them in regard to the prophecies, yet they had been

unable to entirely relinquish the idea of the temporal kingdom of Christ at his first coming. Their preconceived views led them to look upon his crucifixion as the final destruction of all their hopes. But when, in the midst of their discouragement, they were shown that the very things which had caused them to despair formed the climax of proof that their belief had been correct, their faith returned with increased strength. They now comprehended many things which their Master had said before his trial, and which they could not at that time understand. Everything was clear and plain to their minds. In the life and death of Jesus they saw the fulfillment of prophecy, and their hearts burned with love for their Saviour.

Many professed Christians throw aside the Old Testament, and shut themselves up to the New. The cry now is, "Away with the law and the prophets, and give us the gospel of Christ." If the life of Christ and the teachings of the New-Testament Scriptures were all that was necessary to establish belief, why did not Jesus upon this occasion merely refer to the doctrines he had taught, the wisdom and purity of his character, and the miracles he had performed, as sufficient evidence of his Messiahship?

The history of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, as that of the Son of God, cannot be fully demonstrated without the evidence contained in the Old Testament. Christ is revealed in the Old Testament as clearly as in the New. The one testifies of a Saviour to come, while the other testifies of a Saviour that *has* come in the manner predicted by the prophets. In order to appreciate the plan of redemption, the Script-

ure of the Old Testament must be thoroughly understood. It is the glorified light from the prophetic past that brings out the life of Christ and the teachings of the New Testament with clearness and beauty. The miracles of Jesus are a proof of his divinity; but the strongest proofs that he is the world's Redeemer are found in the prophecies of the Old Testament compared with the history of the New. Jesus said to the Jews "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." At that time there was no other scripture in existence save that of the Old Testament; so the injunction of the Saviour is plain.

As the disciples walked on with Jesus, listening intently to his gracious words, nothing in his bearing suggested to them that they were listening to other than a casual pilgrim, returning from the feast, but one who thoroughly understood the prophecies. He walked as carefully as they over the rough stones, halting with them for a little rest after climbing some unusually steep place. Thus the two disciples made their way along the mountainous road in company with the divine Saviour, who could say, "All power is given unto me in Heaven and on earth."

This mighty conqueror of death, who had reached to the very depths of human misery to rescue a lost world, assumed the humble task of walking with the two disciples to Emmaus, to teach and comfort them. Thus he ever identifies himself with his suffering and perplexed people. In our hardest and most trying paths, lo, Jesus is with us to smooth the way. He is the same Son of man, with the same sympathies and love

which he had before he passed through the tomb and ascended to his Father.

At length, as the sun was going down, the disciples with their companion arrived at their home. The way had never before seemed so short to them, nor had time ever passed so quickly. The stranger made no sign of halting; but the disciples could not endure the thought of parting so soon from one who had inspired their hearts with new hope and joy, and they urged him to remain with them over night. Jesus did not at once yield to their invitation, but seemed disposed to pursue his journey. Thereupon the disciples, in their affection for the stranger, importuned him earnestly to tarry with them, urging as a reason that "the day was far spent." Jesus yielded to their entreaties and entered their humble abode.

The Saviour never forces his presence upon us. He seeks the company of those whom he knows need his care, and gives them an opportunity to urge his continuance with them. If they, with longing desire, entreat him to abide with them he will enter the humblest homes, and brighten the lowliest hearts. While waiting for the evening meal, Jesus continued to open the Scriptures to his hosts, bringing forward the evidence of his divinity, and unfolding to them the plan of salvation. The simple fare was soon ready, and the three took their position at the table, Jesus taking his place at the head as was his custom.

The duty of asking a blessing upon the food usually devolved upon the head of the family; but Jesus placed his hands upon the bread and blessed it. At the first word of his petition the disciples looked up in amazement. Surely none

other than their Lord had ever done in this manner. His voice strikes upon their ear as the voice of their Master, and, behold, there are the wounds in his hands! It is indeed the well-known form of their beloved Master! For a moment they are spell-bound; then they arise to fall at his feet and worship him; but he suddenly disappears from their midst.

Now they know that they have been walking and talking with the risen Redeemer. Their eyes had been clouded so that they had not before discerned him, although the truths he uttered had sunk deep in their discouraged hearts. He who had endured the conflict of the garden, the shame of the cross, and who had gained the victory over death and the tomb—He, before whom angels had fallen prostrate, worshiping with thanksgiving and praise, had sought the two lonely and desponding disciples, and been in their presence for hours, teaching and comforting them, yet they had not known him.

Jesus did not first reveal himself in his true character to them, and then open the Scriptures to their minds; for he knew that they would be so overjoyed to see him again, risen from the dead, that their souls would be satisfied. They would not hunger for the sacred truths which he wished to indelibly impress upon their minds, that they might impart them to others, who should in their turn spread the precious knowledge, until thousands of people should receive the light given that day to the despairing disciples as they journeyed to Emmaus.

He maintained his disguise till he had interpreted the Scriptures, and had led them to an intelligent faith in his life, his character, his mission

to earth, and his death and resurrection. He wished the truth to take firm root in their minds, not because it was supported by his personal testimony, but because the typical law, and the prophets of the Old Testament, agreeing with the facts of his life and death, presented unquestionable evidence of that truth. When the object of his labors with the two disciples was gained, he revealed himself to them that their joy might be full, and then vanished from their sight.

When these disciples left Jerusalem, to return to their homes, they intended to take up their old employment again, and conceal their blighted hopes as best they could. But now their joy exceeded their former despair. "And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?"

They forgot their hunger and fatigue, and left the prepared repast, for they could not tarry in their homes and hold their newly found knowledge from the other disciples. They longed to impart their own joy to their companions, that they might rejoice together in a living Saviour risen from the dead. Late as it was, they set about retracing their way to Jerusalem; but how different were their feelings now from those which depressed them when they set out upon their way to Emmaus. Jesus was by their side, but they knew it not. He heard with gladness their expressions of joy and gratitude as they talked with each other by the way.

They were too happy to notice the difficulties of the rough, uncertain road. There was no moon to light them, but their hearts were light with

the joy of a new revelation. They picked their way over the rough stones, and the dangerous ledges, sometimes stumbling and falling in their haste. But not at all disconcerted by this, they pressed resolutely on. Occasionally they lost their path in the darkness, and were obliged to retrace their steps until they found the track, when they renewed their journey with fresh speed. They longed to deliver their precious message to their friends. Never before had human lips such tidings to proclaim; for the fact of Christ's resurrection was to be the great truth around which all the faith and hope of the church would center.

IN THE UPPER CHAMBER.

WHEN the disciples arrived at Jerusalem they entered the eastern gate, which was open on festal occasions. The houses were dark and silent, but they made their way through the narrow streets by the light of the rising moon. They knew that they would find their brethren in the memorable upper chamber where Jesus had spent the last night before his death. Here the disciples had passed the Sabbath in mourning for their Lord. And now they had no disposition to sleep, for exciting events were being related among them. Cautious hands unbarred the door to the repeated demand of the two travelers; they entered, and with them also entered Jesus, who had been their unseen companion all the way.

They found the disciples assembled, and in a state of excitement. Hope and faith were struggling for ascendency in their minds. The report

of Mary Magdalene, and that of the other women, had been heard by all; but some were too hopeless to believe their testimony. The evidence of Peter, concerning his interview with the risen Lord, was borne with great ardor and assurance, and had more weight with the brethren, and their faith began to revive. When the disciples from Emmaus entered with their joyful tidings, they were met by the exclamation from many voices: "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon."

The two from Emmaus told their story of how the Lord had opened their eyes, and revealed to them the straight chain of prophecy which reached from the days of the patriarchs to that time, and foreshadowed all that had transpired regarding their Saviour. The company heard this report in breathless silence. Some were inspired with new faith; others were incredulous. Suddenly Jesus himself was in their midst. His hands were raised in blessing, and he said unto them, "Peace be unto you."

"But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he showed them his hands and his feet."

There they beheld the feet and hands marred by the cruel nails; and they recognized his melodious voice, like none other they had ever heard. "And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled

fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them." Faith and joy now took the place of doubt and unbelief, and they acknowledged their risen Saviour with feelings which no words could express.

Jesus now expounded the Scriptures to the entire company, commencing with the first book of Moses, and dwelling particularly on the prophecy pointing to the time then present, and foretelling the sufferings of Christ and his resurrection. "And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures. And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things."

The disciples now began to realize the nature and extent of their commission. They were to proclaim to the world the wonderful truths which Christ had intrusted to them. The events of his life, his death, and resurrection, the harmony of prophecy with those events, the sacredness of the law of God, the mysteries of the plan of salvation, the power of Jesus for the remission of sins—to all these things were they witnesses, and it was their work to make them known to all men, beginning at Jerusalem. They were to proclaim a gospel of peace and salvation through repentance and the power of the Saviour. At

the first advent of Jesus to the world, the angel announced: Peace on earth, and good will to men. After his earthly life was completed, he came forth from the dead, and, appearing for the first time to his assembled disciples, addressed them with the blessed words, "Peace be unto you."

Jesus is ever ready to speak peace to souls that are troubled with doubts and fear. This precious Saviour waits for us to open the door of our heart to him, and say, Abide with us. He says, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Our life is a continual strife; we must war against principalities and powers, against spiritual wickedness, and foes that never sleep; we must resist temptations, and overcome as Christ overcame. When the peace of Jesus enters our heart we are calm and patient under the severest trials.

The resurrection of Jesus was a sample of the final resurrection of all who sleep in him. The risen body of the Saviour, his deportment, the accents of his speech, were all familiar to his followers. In like manner will those who sleep in Jesus rise again. We shall know our friends even as the disciples knew Jesus. Though they may have been deformed, diseased, or disfigured in this mortal life, yet in their resurrected and glorified body their individual identity will be perfectly preserved, and we shall recognize, in the face radiant with the light shining from the face of Jesus, the lineaments of those we love.

The death of Jesus had left Thomas in blank despair. His faith seemed to have gone out in

utter darkness. He was not present in the upper chamber when Jesus appeared to his disciples. He had heard the reports of the others, and had received copious proof that Jesus had risen, but stolid gloom and stubborn unbelief closed his heart against all cheering testimony. As he heard the disciples repeat their account of the wonderful manifestation of the resurrected Saviour, it only served to plunge him in deeper despair; for if Jesus had really risen from the dead there could be no farther hope of his literal earthly kingdom. It also wounded his vanity to think that his Master would reveal himself to all his disciples but him; so he was determined not to believe, and for an entire week he brooded over his wretchedness, which seemed all the darker as contrasted with the reviving hope and faith of his brethren.

During this time he frequently, when in company with his brethren, reiterated the words, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." He would not see through the eyes of his brethren, nor exercise faith which was dependent upon their testimony. He ardently loved his Lord, but jealousy and unbelief took possession of his mind and heart.

The upper chamber was the home of a number of the disciples, and every evening they all assembled in this place. On a certain evening Thomas decided to meet with his brethren; for notwithstanding his unbelief, he cherished a faint hope, unacknowledged to himself, that the good news was true. While the disciples were partaking of their usual meal, and meanwhile can-

vassing the evidences of the truth of their faith which Christ had given them in the prophecies, "then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you."

He then reproved the unbelieving who had not received the testimony of those who had seen him, and, turning to Thomas, said, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing." These words showed that he had read the thoughts and words of Thomas. The doubting disciple knew that none of his companions had seen Jesus for a week, and therefore could not have told the Master of his stubborn unbelief. He recognized the person before him as his Lord who had been crucified; he had no desire for farther proof; his heart leaped for joy as he realized that Jesus was indeed risen from the dead. He cast himself at the feet of his Master in deep affection and devotion, crying, "My Lord and my God."

Jesus accepted his acknowledgment, but mildly rebuked him for his unbelief: "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." Jesus here showed Thomas that his faith would have been more acceptable to him if he had believed the evidence of his brethren, and had not refused to believe until he had seen Jesus with his own eyes. If the world should follow this example of Thomas, no one would believe unto salvation; for all who now receive Christ do so through the testimony of others.

Many who have a weak and wavering faith, reason that if they had the evidence which

Thomas had from his companions they would not doubt as he did. They do not realize that they have not only that evidence, but additional testimony piled up about them on every side. Many who, like Thomas, wait for all cause of doubt to be removed, may never realize their desire as he did, but gradually become entrenched in their unbelief, until they cannot perceive the weight of evidence in favor of Jesus, and, like the skeptical Jews, what little light they have will go out in the darkness which closes around their minds. To reject the plain and conclusive evidences of divine truth hardens the heart, and blinds the understanding. The precious light, being neglected, fades utterly from the mind that is unwilling to receive it.

Jesus, in his treatment of Thomas, gave his followers a lesson regarding the manner in which they should treat those who have doubts upon religious truth, and who make those doubts prominent. He did not overwhelm Thomas with words of reproach, nor did he enter into a controversy with him; but, with marked condescension and tenderness, he revealed himself unto the doubting one. Thomas had taken a most unreasonable position, in dictating the only conditions of his faith; but Jesus, by his generous love and consideration, broke down all the barriers he had raised. Persistent controversy will seldom weaken unbelief, but rather put it upon self-defense, where it will find new support and excuse. Jesus, revealed in his love and mercy as the crucified Saviour, will wring from many once unwilling lips the acknowledgment of Thomas, "My Lord and my God."

JESUS AT GALILEE.

THE captives brought up from the graves at the time of the resurrection of Jesus were his trophies as a conquering Prince. Thus he attested his victory over death and the grave; thus he gave a pledge and an earnest of the resurrection of all the righteous dead. Those who were called from their graves went into the city, and appeared unto many in their resurrected forms, and testified that Jesus had indeed risen from the dead, and that they had risen with him. The voice that cried, "It is finished," was heard among the dead. It pierced the walls of sepulchers, and summoned the sleepers to arise. Thus shall it be when God's voice shall be heard shaking the heavens and earth. That voice will penetrate the graves and unbar the tombs. A mighty earthquake will then cause the world to reel to and fro like a drunkard. Then Christ, the King of Glory, shall appear, attended by all the heavenly angels. The trumpet shall sound, and the Life-giver shall call forth the righteous dead to immortal life.

It was well known to the priests and rulers that certain persons who were dead had risen at the resurrection of Jesus. Authentic reports were brought to them of different ones who had seen and conversed with these resurrected ones, and heard their testimony that Jesus, the Prince of life, whom the priests and rulers had slain, was risen from the dead. The false report that the disciples had robbed the sepulcher of the body of their Master was so diligently circulated that very many believed it. But the priests, in

manufacturing their false report, overreached themselves, and all thinking persons, not blinded by bigotry, detected the falsehood.

If the soldiers had been asleep, they could not know how the sepulcher became empty. If one sentinel had been awake, he would assuredly have wakened others. If they had really slept, as they affirmed they had, the consequence was well known to all. The penalty for such neglect of duty was death, and there could be no hope of pardon; so the offenders would not be likely to proclaim their fault. If the Jewish priests and rulers had discovered the sentinels asleep at their post, they would not have passed the matter over so lightly, but would have demanded a thorough investigation of the matter, and the full penalty of the law upon the unfaithful soldiers.

Had they had the least faith in the truthfulness of their statements, they would have called the disciples to account, and visited upon them the most unrelenting punishment. That they did not do this was a thorough proof of the innocence of the disciples, and of the fact that the priests were driven to the dire necessity of fabricating and circulating a lie to meet the evidence accumulating against them, and establishing the truth of the resurrection of Jesus, and his claims as the divine Son of God. The oft-repeated appearance of Jesus to his disciples, and the persons of the dead who were resurrected with him, also did much to plant the truth in the minds of those who were willing to believe.

This fabrication of the Jews has a parallel in our time; the proud persecutors of righteousness expend their time, influence, and money to silence or controvert the evidence of truth; and the

most inconsistent measures are taken to accomplish this object. And there are not wanting persons of intelligence who will greedily swallow the most ridiculous falsehoods because they accord with the sentiments of their hearts. This reveals the sad fact that God has given them up to blindness of mind, and hardness of heart. There are innocent persons, who may be deceived for a time because of the confidence they place in their deceivers; but if they are teachable, and really desire a knowledge of the truth, they will have opportunity to perceive it. Doubts and perplexities will vanish; they will discover the inconsistencies of their false guides; for error itself bears a constrained testimony for the truth.

The priests and rulers were in continual dread lest, in walking the streets, or within the privacy of their own homes, they should meet face to face with the resurrected Christ. They felt that there was no safety for them; bolts and bars seemed but poor protection against the risen Son of God.

Before his death Jesus had, in the upper chamber, told his disciples that after he was risen he would go before them into Galilee; and on the morning of the resurrection the angel at the sepulcher had said unto the women, "Go your way; tell his disciples, and Peter, that he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him, as he said unto you." The disciples were detained at Jerusalem during the passover week, for their absence would have been interpreted as disaffection and heresy. During that time they assembled together at evening in the upper chamber, where some of them had their home; here Jesus

twice revealed himself to them, and bade them tarry for a time at Jerusalem.

As soon as the passover was finished, the brethren left Jerusalem, and went to Galilee as they had been directed. Seven of the disciples were in company; they were clad in the humble garb of fishermen; they were poor in worldly goods, but rich in the knowledge and practice of the truth, which gave them, in the sight of Heaven, the highest rank as teachers. They had not been students in the school of the prophets, but for three years they had taken lessons from the greatest educator the world has ever known. Under his tuition they had become elevated, intelligent, and refined, fit mediums through which the souls of men might be led to a knowledge of the truth.

Much of the time of the Saviour's ministry was spent on the shores of Galilee, and there many of his most wonderful miracles were performed. As the disciples gathered together in a place where they were not likely to be disturbed, their minds were full of Jesus and his mighty works. On this sea, when their hearts were filled with terror, and the fierce storm was hurrying them on to destruction, Jesus had walked upon the crested billows to their rescue. Here the wildest storm was hushed by his voice, which said to the raging deep, "Peace, be still." Within sight was the beach, where, by a mighty miracle, he had fed above ten thousand persons from a few small loaves and fishes. Not far distant was Capernaum, the scene of his most wonderful manifestations, in healing the sick and in raising the dead. As the disciples looked again

upon Galilee, their minds were full of the words and deeds of their Saviour.

The evening was pleasant, and Peter, who retained much of his old love for boats and fishing, proposed that they should go out upon the sea and cast their nets. This proposition met with the approval of all, for they were poor and in need of food and clothing, which they would be able to procure with the proceeds of a successful night's fishing. So they went out upon the sea in their boat, to pursue their old employment. But they toiled through the entire night with no success. Through the long, weary hours they talked of their absent Lord, and recalled the scenes and events of thrilling interest which had been enacted in that vicinity, and of which they had been witnesses. They speculated upon what their own future would be, and grew sad at the prospect before them.

All the while a lone watcher upon the shore followed them with his eye, while he himself was unseen. At length the morning dawned. The boat was but a little distance from the shore, and the disciples saw a stranger standing upon the beach, who accosted them with the question, "Children, have ye any meat?" Not recognizing Jesus, they answered, "No." "And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes."

The disciples were filled with wonder at the result of their trial; but John now discerned who the stranger was, and exclaimed to Peter, "It is the Lord." Joy now took the place of disappointment. Peter immediately girt about

him his fisher's coat, and, throwing himself into the water, was soon standing by the side of his Lord. The other disciples came in their boat, dragging the net with fishes. "As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread."

They were too much amazed to question whence came the fire and the repast. "Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught." Peter, obeying the command, rushed for the net which he had so unceremoniously dropped, and helped his brethren drag it to the shore. After the work was all done, and the preparation made, Jesus bade the disciples come and dine. He broke the bread and the fish, and divided it among them, and in so doing he was known and acknowledged of all the seven. The miracle of feeding the five thousand upon the mountain-side was now brought distinctly to their minds; but a mysterious awe was upon them, and they kept silent as they looked upon their resurrected Saviour.

They remembered that at the commencement of his ministry a similar scene had been enacted to that which had just taken place. Jesus had then bade them launch out into the deep, and let down their nets for a draught, and the net had broken because of the amount of fishes taken. Then he had bade them leave their nets and follow him, and he would make them fishers of men. This last miracle that Jesus had just wrought was for the purpose of making the former miracle more impressive; that the disciples might perceive that, notwithstanding they were to be deprived of the personal companionship of their Master, and of the means of sustenance by the

pursuit of their favorite employment, yet a resurrected Saviour had a care over them, and would provide for them while they were doing his work. Jesus also had a purpose in bidding them cast their net upon the right side of the ship. On that side stood Christ upon the shore. If they labored in connection with him—his divine power uniting with their human effort—they would not fail of success.

The repetition of the miraculous draught of fishes was a renewal of Christ's commission to his disciples. It showed them that the death of their Master did not remove their obligation to do the work which he had assigned them. To Peter, who had acted on many occasions as representative of the twelve, a special lesson was given. The part which he had acted on the night of his Lord's betrayal was so shameful and inconsistent with his former assertions of loyalty and devotion, that it was necessary for him to give evidence to all the disciples that he sincerely repented of his sin before he could resume his apostolic work. The Saviour designed to place him where he could regain the entire confidence of his brethren, lest, in the time of emergency, their distrust because of his former failure might cripple his usefulness.

The disciples expected that Peter would no longer be allowed to occupy the prominent position in the work which he had hitherto held, and he himself had lost his customary self-confidence. But Jesus, while dining by the sea-side, singled out Peter, saying, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?" referring to his brethren. Peter had once said, "Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never

be offended," and had expressed himself ready to go to prison and to death with his Master. But now he puts a true estimate upon himself in the presence of the disciples: "Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." In this response of Peter there is no vehement assurance that his affection is greater than that of his companions; he does not even express his own opinion of his devotion to his Saviour, but appeals to that Saviour, who can read all the motives of the human heart, to himself judge as to his sincerity,—"Thou knowest that I love thee."

The reply of Jesus was positively favorable to the repentant disciple, and placed him in a position of trust. It was, "Feed my lambs." Again Jesus applied the test to Peter, repeating his former words: "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" This time he did not ask the disciple whether he loved him better than did his brethren. The second response of Peter was like the first, free from all extravagant assurance: "Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." Jesus said unto him, "Feed my sheep." Once more the Saviour put the trying question: "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" Peter was grieved, for he thought the repetition of this question indicated that Jesus did not believe his statement. He knew that his Lord had cause to doubt him, and with an aching heart he answered, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep."

Three times had Peter openly denied his Lord, and three times did Jesus draw from him the assurance of his love and loyalty, by pressing home that pointed question, like a barbed arrow, to his wounded heart. Jesus, before the assembled disciples, brought out the depth of Peter's penitence, and showed how thoroughly humbled was the once boasting disciple. He was now intrusted with the important commission of caring for the flock of Christ. Though every other qualification might be unexceptionable, yet without the love of Christ he could not be a faithful shepherd over the Christian flock. Knowledge, eloquence, benevolence, gratitude, and zeal are all aids in the good work, but without an inflowing of the love of Jesus in the heart, the work of the Christian minister is a failure.

Peter was naturally forward and impulsive, and Satan had taken advantage of these characteristics to lead him astray. When Jesus had opened before his disciples the fact that he must go to Jerusalem to suffer and die at the hands of the chief priests and scribes, Peter had presumptuously contradicted his Master, saying, "Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee." He could not conceive it possible that the Son of God should be put to death. Satan suggested to his mind that if Jesus was the Son of God he could not die. Just prior to the fall of Peter, Jesus had said to him, "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." That period had now come, and the transformation wrought in Peter was evident. The close, testing questions of the Lord had not provoked one forward, self-sufficient reply; and because of his humiliation and repentance he was better prepared than ever before to fill the office of shepherd to the flock.

The lesson which he had received from the chief

Shepherd, in the treatment of his case, was a most important one to Peter, and also to the other disciples. It taught them to deal with the transgressor with patience, sympathy, and forgiving love. During the time in which Peter denied his Lord, the love which Jesus bore him never faltered. Just such love should the under-shepherd feel for the sheep and lambs committed to his care. Remembering his own weakness and failure, Peter was to deal with his flock as tenderly as Christ had dealt with him.

Jesus walked alone with Peter, for there was something which he wished to communicate to him only. In that memorable upper chamber, previous to his death, Jesus had said to his disciple, "Whither I go thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards;" Peter had replied to this: "Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake." Jesus now, in sympathy for him, and that he might be strengthened for the final test of his faith in Christ, opened before him his future. He told him that after living a life of usefulness, when age was telling upon his strength, he should indeed follow his Lord. Said Jesus, "When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself and walkedst whither thou wouldest; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God."

Jesus here explicitly stated to Peter the fact and manner of his death; he even referred to the stretching forth of his hands upon the cross; and after he had thus spoken he repeated his former injunction: "Follow me." The disciple was not

disconcerted by the revelation of his Master. He felt willing to suffer any death for his Lord. Peter saw that John was following, and a desire came over him to know *his* future, and he "saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me." Peter should have considered that his Lord would reveal to him all that it was best for him to know, without inquiry on his part. It is the duty of every one to follow Christ, without undue anxiety as to the duty assigned to others. In saying of John, "If I will that he tarry till I come," Jesus gave no assurance that this disciple should live until the second coming of Christ; he merely asserted his own supreme power, and that even if he should will this to be so, it would in no way affect the work of Peter. The future of both John and Peter was in the hands of their Lord, and obedience in following him was the duty required of each.

John lived to be very aged; he witnessed the fulfillment of the words of Christ in regard to the desolation of Jerusalem. He saw the stately temple of the Jews in ruins, and not one stone left upon another that was not thrown down. Peter was now an entirely converted man; but the honor and authority received from Christ did not give him supremacy over his brethren. He was venerated, and had much influence in the church because of the favor of God in forgiving him his apostasy, and intrusting to him the feeding of his flock, and because he ever remained one of the closest followers of Christ in his daily life.

MEETING OF THE BRETHREN.

THEN the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted." There were others besides the eleven who assembled on the mountain-side. After he had revealed himself to them, certain followers of Jesus were only partially convinced of his identity with the crucified One. But none of the eleven had any doubt upon the subject. They had listened to his words, revealing the straight chain of prophecy in regard to himself. He had eaten with them, and shown them his wounded side and his pierced hands and feet, and they had handled him, so there was no room for unbelief in their minds.

This meeting at Galilee had been appointed by the Saviour; the angel from Heaven had announced it to several of the disciples; and Jesus himself had given them special directions in regard to it, saying, "After I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee." The place upon the mountain-side was selected by Jesus, because of its accommodation for a large company. This meeting was of the utmost importance to the church, which was soon to be left to carry on the work without the personal presence of the Saviour. Jesus here designed to manifest himself to all the brethren that should assemble, in order that all their doubt and unbelief might be swept away.

The appointment of Jesus was repeated to those who believed on him, while they were yet lingering at Jerusalem, attending the festal

occasions which followed the passover. The tidings reached many lonely ones who were mourning the death of their Lord; and they made their way to the place of meeting by circuitous routes, coming in from every direction, that they might not excite the suspicion of the jealous Jews. With the most intense interest they assembled together. Those who had been favored with a sight of the resurrected Saviour recounted to the doubting ones the messages of the angels, and their interviews with their Master. They reasoned from scripture, as Jesus had done with them, showing how every specification of prophecy relating to the first advent of Christ had been fulfilled in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

Thus the favored disciples passed from group to group, encouraging and strengthening the faith of their brethren. Many of those assembled heard these communications with amazement. A new train of thought was started in their minds regarding the crucified One. If what they had just heard was true, then Jesus was more than a prophet. No one could triumph over death, and burst the fetters of the tomb, but Messiah. Their ideas of Messiah and his mission had been so confused by the false teachings of the priests that it was necessary for them to unlearn what had been taught them, in order to be able to accept the truth, that Christ, through ignominy, suffering, and death, should finally take his throne.

With mingled anxiety, fear, and hope, they waited to see if Jesus would indeed appear to fulfill his appointment. Thomas recounted to an eager, listening crowd his former unbelief, and

his refusal to believe unless he saw the wounded hands, feet, and side of his Lord, and put his finger in the prints of the nails. He told them how his doubts were swept away forever by the sight of his Saviour, bearing the cruel marks of the crucifixion, and that he wished for no farther evidence.

While the people were watching and waiting, suddenly Jesus stood in their midst. No one could tell from whence or how he came. The disciples recognized him at once, and hastened to pay him homage. Many who were present had never before seen him, but when they looked upon his divine countenance, and then upon his wounded hands and feet, pierced by the nails of the crucifixion, they knew it was the Saviour, and worshiped him.

But there were some who still doubted; they could not believe the joyous truth. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in Heaven and in earth." This assurance of Jesus exceeded all their expectations. They knew of his power, while he was one among them, over disease of every type, and over Satan and his angels; but they could not at first grasp the grand reality that all power in Heaven and on earth had been given to Him who had walked their streets, and sat at their tables, and taught in their midst.

Jesus sought to draw their minds away from himself personally, to the importance of his position as the heir of all things, an equal with God himself; that through suffering and conflict he had gained his great inheritance, the kingdoms of Heaven and of earth. He wished them to understand at once how ample was his authority,

and, as one above all powers and principalities, he issued the great commission to his chosen disciples:—

"Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

A wide door was thus thrown open before his amazed listeners, who had heretofore been taught the most rigid seclusion from all save their own nation. A new and fuller interpretation of the prophecies dawned upon their minds; they labored to comprehend the work that was assigned them. The world regarded Jesus as an impostor; only a few hundreds ranked under his banner, and the faith of these had been fearfully shaken by the fact of his death, and they had not been able to settle upon any definite plan of action. Now Christ had revealed himself to them in his resurrected form, and had given them a mission so extensive that, with their limited views, they could scarcely comprehend it. It was difficult for them to realize that the faith which had bound them to the side of Jesus should not only be the religion of the Jews, but of all nations.

Superstition, tradition, bigotry, and idolatry ruled the world. The Jews alone claimed to have a certain knowledge of God, and they were so exclusive, both socially and religiously, that they were despised by every other people. The high wall of separation which they had raised made the Jews a little world to themselves, and they called all other classes heathen and dogs.

But Jesus committed to his disciples the scheme of making known their religion to all nations, tongues, and people. It was the most sublime enterprise ever intrusted to man—to preach a crucified and risen Saviour, and a full and free salvation to all men, both rich and poor, learned and ignorant—to teach that Christ came to the world to pardon the repentant, and to offer them a love high as heaven, broad as the world, and enduring as eternity.

They were to teach the observance of all things whatsoever Jesus had commanded them, and were to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Jesus was about to be removed from his disciples; but he assured them that although he should ascend to his Father, his Spirit and influence would be with them always, and with their sucessors even unto the end of the world. Christ could not have left his followers a more precious legacy than the assurance that his presence would be with them through all the dark and trying hours of life. When Satan seems ready to destroy the church of God, and bring his people to confusion, they should remember that One has promised to be with them who has said, "All power is given unto me in Heaven and on earth."

Persecution and reproach have ever been the lot of the true followers of Christ. The world hated the Master, and it has ever hated his servants; but the Holy Spirit, the Comforter which Christ sent unto his disciples, cheers and strengthens them to do his work with fidelity during his personal absence. The Comforter, the Spirit of truth, was to abide with them forever, and Christ assured them that the union existing between

himself and the Father, now also embraced them.

The understanding of the disciples, which had been clouded by misinterpretation of the prophecies, was now fully opened by Jesus, who shed a clear light upon those scriptures referring to himself. He showed them the true character of his kingdom; and they now began to see that it was not the mission of Christ to establish a temporal power, but that his kingdom of divine grace was to be manifested in the hearts of his people, and that only through his humiliation, suffering, and death, could the kingdom of his glory finally be established.

The power of death was held by the devil; but Jesus had removed its stinging despair, by meeting the enemy upon his own territory and there conquering him. Henceforth death would be robbed of its terror for the Christian, since Christ himself had felt its pangs, and risen from the grave to sit at the right hand of the Father in Heaven, having all power in Heaven and on earth. The conflict between Christ and Satan was determined when the Lord arose from the dead, shaking the prison-house of his enemy to its foundations, and robbing him of his spoils by bringing up a company of the sleeping dead, as a fresh trophy of the victory achieved by the second Adam. This resurrection was a sample, and an assurance, of the final resurrection of the righteous dead at Christ's second coming.

Jerusalem had been the scene of Christ's amazing condescension for the human race. There had he suffered, been rejected, and condemned. The land of Judea, of which Jerusalem was the metropolis, was his birthplace. There, clad in the garb of humanity, he had walked with men,

and few had discerned how near Heaven came to earth when Jesus dwelt among them. It was, therefore, very appropriate that the work of the disciples should begin at Jerusalem. While all minds were agitated by the thrilling scenes of the past few weeks, it was a most fitting opportunity for the message to be borne to that city.

As the instruction of Jesus to the apostles was drawing to a close, and as the hour of his separation from them approached, he directed their minds more definitely to the work of the Spirit of God in fitting them for their mission. Through the medium of a familiar intercourse, he illuminated their minds to understand the sublime truths which they were to reveal to the world. But their work was not to be entered upon till they should know of a surety, by the baptism of the Holy Ghost, that they were connected with Heaven. They were promised new courage and joy from the heavenly illumination they should then experience, and which would enable them to comprehend the depth and breadth and fullness of God's love.

After being fitted for their mission by the descent of the Holy Ghost, the disciples were to proclaim pardon for sin, and salvation through repentance, and the merits of a crucified and risen Saviour, and to reveal the principles of the kingdom of Christ, beginning at Jerusalem, and from thence extending their labors throughout Judea, and into Samaria, and finally to the uttermost parts of the earth. Here is a lesson to all who have a message of truth to give to the world: Their own hearts must first be imbued with the Spirit of God, and their labors should commence at home; their families should have the benefit

of their influence; and the transforming power of the Spirit of God should be demonstrated in their own homes by a well-disciplined family. Then the circle should widen; the whole neighborhood should perceive the interest felt for their salvation, and the light of truth should be faithfully presented to them; for their salvation is of as much importance as that of persons at a distance. From the immediate neighborhood, and adjoining cities and towns, the circle of the labors of God's servants should widen, till the message of truth is given to the uttermost parts of the earth.

This was the order which Christ instituted for the labors of his disciples; but it is frequently reversed by the evangelical workers of this time. They neglect the inner circle; it is not felt to be a necessity that the quickening influence of the Spirit of God should first operate upon their own hearts, and sanctify and ennoble their lives. The simplest duties, lying directly in their path, are neglected for some wider and more distant field, where their labors are frequently expended in vain. Whereas in a field easier of access they would have labored with success, and encountered fewer trials, gaining influence and new courage as the way opened and broadened before them.

The apostles might have entreated the Lord that, in view of the unappreciated efforts which had been put forth in Jerusalem, and the insult and cruel death to which Christ had been subjected, they might be permitted to seek some more promising field, where they would find hearts more ready to hear and receive their message. But no such plea was made. Jesus was the sole director of the work. The very ground

where the greatest of all teachers had scattered the seeds of truth, was to be thoroughly cultivated by the apostles until those seeds should spring up and yield an abundant harvest. In their labors the disciples were to endure the hatred, oppression, and jealousy of the Jews; but this had been experienced by their Master before them, and they were not to fly from it.

Before his death, Jesus had said to his disciples, while comforting them in view of his approaching humiliation and death, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you." Now, after the conflict and the victory, after triumphing over death, and receiving his reward, in a more emphatic manner he bestowed upon them that peace which passeth all understanding. He qualified them to enter upon the work which he had commenced. As he had been sent by his Father, so he sent forth the disciples. He breathed upon them, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost."

The apostles were not sent forth to be witnesses for Christ until they had received that spiritual endowment necessary to fit them for the execution of their great commission. All professions of Christianity are but lifeless expressions of faith until Jesus imbues the believer with his spiritual life, which is the Holy Ghost. The evangelist is not prepared to teach the truth, and to be the representative of Christ, till he has received this heavenly gift.

Men in responsible positions, who are proclaiming the truth of God in the name of Jesus without the spiritual energy given by the quickening power of God, are doing an unreal work, and cannot be certain whether success or defeat

will attend their labors. Many forget that religion and duty are not dreary sentimentalisms, but earnest action. It is not the great services and lofty aspirations which receive the approval of God, but the love and consecration through which the service is performed, be it great or little. Storms of opposition and rebuffs are God's providences to drive us under the shelter of his wing. When the cloud envelops us, his voice is heard: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you."

The act of Christ in breathing upon his disciples the Holy Ghost, and in imparting his peace to them, was as a few drops before the plentiful shower to be given on the day of Pentecost. Jesus impressed this fact upon his disciples, that as they should proceed in the work intrusted to them, they would the more fully comprehend the nature of that work, and the manner in which the kingdom of Christ was to be set up on earth. They were appointed to be witnesses for the Saviour; they were to testify what they had seen and heard of his resurrection; they were to repeat the gracious words which proceeded from his lips. They were acquainted with his holy character; he was as an angel standing in the sun, yet casting no shadow. It was the sacred work of the apostles to present the spotless character of Christ to men, as the standard for their lives. The disciples had been so intimately associated with this Pattern of holiness that they were in some degree assimilated to him in character, and were specially fitted to make known to the world his precepts and example.

The more that the minister of Christ associ-

ates with his Master, through contemplation of his life and character, the more closely will he resemble him, and the better qualified will he be to teach his truths. Every feature in the life of the great Example should be studied with care, and close converse should be held with him through the prayer of living faith. Thus will the defective human character be transformed into the image of his glorious character. Thus will the teacher of the truth be prepared to lead souls to Christ.

Jesus, in giving the disciples their first commission, had said, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of Heaven, and whatsoever thou [referring to responsible men who should represent his church] shalt bind upon earth shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven." In renewing the commission of those to whom he had imparted the Holy Ghost, he said, "Whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained." These words conveyed to the disciples a sense of the sacredness of their work, and its tremendous results. Imbued with the Spirit of God, they were to go forth preaching the merits of a sin-pardoning Saviour; and they had the assurance that all Heaven was interested in their labors, and that what they did on earth, in the spirit and power of Christ, should be ratified in Heaven.

Jesus did not, by this assurance, give the apostles or their successors power to forgive sins, as his representatives. The Roman Catholic Church directs its people to confess the secrets of their lives to the priest, and from him, acting in the place

of Christ, to receive absolution from their sins. The Saviour taught that *his* is the only name given under Heaven whereby men shall be saved. Jesus, however, delegated to his church upon earth, in her organized capacity, the power to censure and to remove censure according to the rules prescribed by inspiration; but these acts were only to be done by men of good repute, who were consecrated by the great Head of the church, and who showed by their lives that they were earnestly seeking to follow the guidance of the Spirit of God.

No man was to exercise an arbitrary power over another man's conscience. Christ gave no ecclesiastical right to forgive sin, nor to sell indulgences, that men may sin without incurring the displeasure of God, nor did he give his servants liberty to accept a gift or bribe for cloaking sin, that it may escape merited censure. Jesus charged his disciples to preach the remission of sin *in his name* among all nations; but they themselves were not empowered to remove one stain of sin from the children of Adam. Nor were they to execute judgment against the guilty; the wrath of an offended God was to be proclaimed against the sinner; but the power which the Roman Church assumes to visit that wrath upon the offender is not established by any direction of Christ; he himself will execute the sentence pronounced against the impenitent. Whoever would attract the people to himself as one in whom is invested power to forgive sins, incurs the wrath of God, for he turns souls away from the heavenly Pardoner to a weak and erring mortal.

Jesus showed his disciples that only as they

should partake of his Spirit, and be assimilated to his merciful character, would they be endowed with spiritual discernment and miraculous power. All their strength and wisdom must come from him. When dealing with obstinately offending members, the holy men of the church were to follow the directions laid down by Christ; this, the only course of safety for the church, has been traced step by step by the apostles with the pen of inspiration.

When the church takes up the case of an offender, the prayer of faith will bring Christ into the midst as an all-wise counselor. Men are in danger of being controlled by prejudice or the reports and opinions of others. Their own unsanctified judgment may balance their decisions. Therefore, where important decisions are to be made in reference to individuals in the church, the judgment of one man, however wise and experienced he may be, is not to be regarded as sufficient to act upon.

Jesus has said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst." With Christ to preside over the council of the church, how cautiously should each man speak and act. Prayer should be offered for the erring, and every means be used to restore him to the favor of God and the church; but if the voice of the church is disregarded, and his individual will is set up above it, then the offender must be promptly dealt with, and the decision of the brethren, made with prayer and faith, and according to the wisdom given them of God, is ratified by Heaven.

The repentance of the sinner is to be accepted by the church with grateful hearts. The church

is empowered to absolve sins only in the sense of assuring the repenting sinner of the forgiving mercy of the Saviour, and in leading him out from the darkness of unbelief and guilt, to the light of faith and righteousness. It may place his trembling hand in the loving hand of Jesus. Such a remission is ratified by Heaven. The directions of the apostles in regard to condemnation or acquittal in case of church trials are to remain valid till the end of time. And the promise of Christ's presence in answer to prayer should comfort and encourage his church to-day as much as it comforted and encouraged the apostles whom Christ directly addressed. Those who despise the authority of the church despise the authority of Christ himself.

Notwithstanding the refusal of Heaven's best gift by Jerusalem, the work of the apostles was to commence there. The first overtures of mercy were to be made to the murderers of the Son of God. There were also many there who had secretly believed on Jesus, and many who had been deceived by the priests and rulers, but were ready to accept him, if it could be proven that he was indeed the Christ. The apostles, as eyewitnesses, were to testify of Jesus and his resurrection. They were to open to the people the prophecies relating to him, and to show how perfectly they had been fulfilled. They were to bring before the people the most convincing evidence of the truths which they taught, and they were to proclaim the joyful tidings of salvation to the world.

As all minds were interested in the history and mission of Jesus, because of the events

which had just transpired at Jerusalem, this was a time when the preaching of his gospel would make the most decided impression upon the public mind. At the commencement of their work the disciples were to receive a marvelous power. Their testimony of Christ was to be confirmed by signs and wonders, and the performance of miracles by the apostles, and those who received their message. Said Jesus, "They shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents [as in the case of Paul], and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

ASCENSION OF CHRIST.

AFTER the meeting of Jesus with the brethren, at Galilee, the disciples returned to Jerusalem; and while the eleven were gathered together in the city Jesus met with them, and again led their minds out into the prophecies concerning himself. He deeply impressed upon their understanding the necessity of thoroughly studying the ancient prophecies regarding Messiah, and of comparing them with the facts of his life, death, and resurrection, in order to establish their fulfillment in himself. They were to diligently trace link after link of sacred truth revealed by the prophets, in types and figures representing the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. He lifted the vail from their understanding, concerning the typical system of the Jews, and they now saw clearly the meaning of the forms and symbols which were virtually abolished by the death of Christ.

The Saviour of the world, as a divine Conqueror, was about to ascend to his Father's throne. He selected the Mount of Olives as the scene of this last display of his glory. Accompanied by the eleven, he made his way to the mountain. The disciples were not aware that this was to be their last season with their Master. He employed the time in sacred converse with them, reiterating his former instructions. As they passed through the gates of Jerusalem, many wondering eyes looked upon the little company, led by one whom a few weeks before the priests and rulers had condemned and crucified.

They crossed the Kedron, and approached Gethsemane. Here Jesus paused, that his disciples might call to mind the lessons he had given them while on his way to the garden on the night of his great agony. He looked again upon the vine which he had then used as a symbol to represent the union of his church with himself and his Father; and he refreshed the memory of his followers by repeating the impressive truths which he had then illustrated to them. Reminders of the unrequited love of Jesus were all around him; even the disciples walking by his side, who were so dear to his heart, had, in the hour of his humiliation, when he most needed their sympathy and comfort, reproached and forsaken him.

Christ had sojourned in the world for thirty-three years; he had endured its scorn, insult, and mockery; he had been rejected and crucified. Now, when about to ascend to his throne of glory—as he reviews the ingratitude of the people he came to save—will he not withdraw his

sympathy and love from them? Will not his affections be centered on that world where he is appreciated, and where sinless angels adore him, and wait to do his bidding? No; his promise to those loved ones whom he leaves on earth is "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Before his conflict, he had prayed the Father that they might not be taken out of the world, but should be kept from the evil which is in the world.

At length the little company reach the Mount of Olives. This place had been peculiarly hallowed by the presence of Jesus while he bore the nature of man. It was consecrated by his prayers and tears. When he had ridden into Jerusalem, just prior to his trial, the steeps of Olivet had echoed the joyous shouts of the triumphant multitude. On its sloping descent was Bethany, where he had often found repose at the house of Lazarus. At the foot of the mount was the garden of Gethsemane, where he had agonized alone, and moistened the sod with his blood.

Jesus led the way across the summit, to the vicinity of Bethany. He then paused, and they all gathered about him. Beams of light seemed to radiate from his countenance, as he looked with deep love upon his disciples. He upbraided them not for their faults and failures; but words of unutterable tenderness were the last which fell upon their ears from the lips of their Lord. With hands outstretched in blessing them, and as if in assurance of his protecting care, he slowly ascended from among them, drawn heavenward by a power stronger than any earthly attraction. As he passed upward, the awe-struck disciples looked with straining eyes for the last glimpse of

their ascending Lord. A cloud of glory received him out of their sight, and at the same moment there floated down to their charmed senses the sweetest and most joyous music from the angel choir.

While their gaze was still riveted upward, voices addressed them which sounded like the music which had just charmed them. They turned, and saw two beings in the form of men; yet their heavenly character was immediately discerned by the disciples, whom they addressed in comforting accents, saying, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into Heaven." These angels were of the company that had been waiting in a shining cloud to escort Jesus to his throne; and in sympathy and love for those whom the Saviour had left, they came to remove all uncertainty from their minds, and to give them the assurance that he would come to earth again.

All Heaven was waiting to welcome the Saviour to the celestial courts. As he ascended he led the way, and the multitude of captives whom he had raised from the dead at the time when he came forth from the tomb, followed him. The heavenly host, with songs of joy and triumph, escorted him upward. At the portals of the city of God an innumerable company of angels awaited his coming. As they approached the gates of the city, the angels who were escorting the Majesty of Heaven, in triumphant tones addressed the company at the portals: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in!"

The waiting angels at the gates of the city inquire in rapturous strains, "Who is this King of Glory?" The escorting angels joyously reply in songs of triumph, "The Lord, strong and mighty! The Lord, mighty in battle! Lift up your heads, O ye gates, even lift them up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in!" Again the waiting angels ask, "Who is this King of Glory?" and the escorting angels respond in melodious strains, "The Lord of hosts! He is the King of Glory!" Then the portals of the city of God are widely opened, and the heavenly train pass in amid a burst of angelic music. All the heavenly host surround their majestic Commander as he takes his position upon the throne of the Father.

With the deepest adoration and joy, the hosts of angels bow before him, while the glad shout rings through the courts of Heaven: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing!" Songs of triumph mingle with music from angelic harps, till Heaven seems to overflow with delightful harmony, and inconceivable joy and praise. The Son of God has triumphed over the prince of darkness, and conquered death and the grave. Heaven rings with voices in lofty strains proclaiming: "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever!"

He is seated by the side of his Father on his throne. The Saviour presents the captives he has rescued from the bonds of death, at the price of his own life. His hands place immortal crowns upon their brows; for they are the representatives, and samples, of those who shall be redeemed, by the blood of Christ, from all nations, tongues, and people, and come forth from the dead, when he shall call the just from their graves at his second coming. Then shall they see the marks of Calvary in the glorified body of the Son of God. Their greatest joy will be found in the presence of Him who sitteth on the throne; and the enraptured saints will exclaim, My Beloved is mine, and I am his! He is the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely!

The disciples returned to Jerusalem, not mourning, but full of joy. When last they looked upon their Lord, his countenance shone with heavenly brightness, and he smiled lovingly upon them. Those hands that had so often been stretched forth in the act of blessing the sick and the afflicted, and in rebuking demons—those hands which had been bruised by the cruel nails, were mercifully extended, as though in the disciples they embraced the whole world, and called down a blessing upon all the followers of Christ. Beams of light seemed to emanate from those dear hands and to fall upon the watching, waiting ones.

The most precious fact to the disciples in the ascension of Jesus was that he went from them into Heaven in the tangible form of their divine Teacher. The very same Jesus, who had walked, and talked, and prayed with them; who had broken bread with them; who had been with them in their boats on the lake; who had sought retirement with them in the groves; and who had that very day toiled with them up the steep ascent of Olivet,—had ascended to Heaven in the form of humanity. And the heavenly messen-

gers had assured them that the very same Jesus whom they had seen go up into Heaven, should come again in like manner as he had ascended. This assurance has ever been, and will be till the close of time, the hope and joy of all true lovers of Christ.

The disciples not only saw the Lord ascend, but they had the testimony of the angels that he had gone to occupy his Father's throne in Heaven. The last remembrance that the disciples were to have of their Lord was as the sympathizing Friend, the glorified Redeemer. Moses veiled his face to hide the glory of the law which was reflected upon it, and the glory of Christ's ascension was veiled from human sight. The brightness of the heavenly escort, and the opening of the glorious gates of God to welcome him, were not to be discerned by mortal eyes.

Had the track of Christ to Heaven been revealed to the disciples in all its inexpressible glory, they could not have endured the sight. Had they beheld the myriads of angels, and heard the bursts of triumph from the battlements of Heaven, as the everlasting doors were lifted up, the contrast between that glory and their own lives in a world of trial, would have been so great that they would hardly have been able to again take up the burden of their earthly lives, prepared to execute with courage and faithfulness the commission given them by the Saviour. Even the Comforter, the Holy Ghost which was sent to them, would not have been properly appreciated, nor would it have strengthened their hearts sufficiently to bear reproach, contumely, imprisonment, and death if need be.

Their senses were not to become so infatuated

with the glories of Heaven that they would lose sight of the character of Christ on earth, which they were to copy in themselves. They were to keep distinctly before their minds the beauty and majesty of his life, the perfect harmony of all his attributes, and the mysterious union of the divine and human in his nature. It was better that the earthly acquaintance of the disciples with their Saviour should end in the solemn, quiet, and sublime manner in which it did. His visible ascent from the world was in harmony with the meekness and quiet of his life.

The disciples returned to Jerusalem rejoicing, not that they were deprived of their Master and Teacher, for this was to them a cause for personal mourning rather than joy. But Jesus had assured them that he would send the Comforter, as an equivalent for his visible presence. He had said, "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father." They rejoiced because Jesus had wrought out salvation for man; he had answered the claims of the law, and had become a perfect offering for man; he had ascended to Heaven to carry forward the work of atonement begun on earth. He was the Advocate of man, his Intercessor with the Father.

Jesus, who was born in Bethlehem; who worked with his earthly father at the carpenter's trade; who sat in weariness by Jacob's well; who slept in weariness in Peter's fishing-boat; who hungered and thirsted; who took little children in his arms and blessed them; who was rejected, scourged, and crucified,—ascended in the form of a man to Heaven, and took his place at the right hand of God. Having felt our infirmities, our sorrows, and temptations, he is amply fitted to

plead for man as his representative. Jesus, when upon earth, was the most perfect type of man; and it is the Christian's joy and comfort that this patient, loving Saviour is to be his King and Judge; for "the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son."

We are not inclined to associate kingly glory and judicial authority with the self-denial, patience, love, and forgiveness shown in the life of Christ; yet these attributes qualified the Saviour for his exalted position. The qualities of character which he developed on earth constitute his exaltation in glory. His triumphs were gained by love, not by force. In coming to Christ the sinner consents to be elevated to the noblest ideal of man.

"Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" The attributes which exalted Christ, if obtained by his followers, will place the scepter in their hands, and they shall be kings and priests with God. Christ pledged himself to keep the law which Adam transgressed, and to magnify that law and make it honorable by demonstrating that it was not arbitrary, and could be kept inviolate by man. Christ showed by his life that the law of God is faultless, and that man, by disobeying it, brings upon himself the evils which its restrictions seek to avert from him.

When the disciples returned to Jerusalem alone, people looked at them, expecting to see in their faces expressions of sorrow, confusion, and defeat; but they saw there gladness and triumph. They did not wail over disappointed hopes, but were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. The priests and rulers were at a

loss to understand this mystery. After the discouraging events connected with the trial, condemnation, and ignominious death of their Master, the disciples were supposed to be defeated and ashamed; but they now came forth with buoyant spirits, and countenances beaming with a joy not born of earth.

They told the wonderful story of Christ's glorious resurrection, and ascension to Heaven, and many believed their testimony. The disciples had no longer a vague distrust of the future; they knew that Jesus was in Heaven; that his sympathies were unchanged; that he was identifying himself with suffering humanity, receiving the prayers of his people; that he was pleading with God the merits of his own precious blood, showing his wounded hands and feet, as a remembrance of the price he had paid for his redeemed. They knew that he would come again escorted by the heavenly host, and they looked upon this event, not as a dreaded calamity, but as an occasion for great joy and longing anticipation. They knew that he would stand again upon the Mount of Olives, while the Hebrew hallelujahs should mingle with Gentile hosannas, and myriads of voices should unite in the glad acclamation of "Crown him Lord of all!" They knew that he had ascended to Heaven to prepare mansions for his obedient children, and that he would return and take them unto himself.

With joy the disciples related to their brethren the news of their Lord's ascension. They now felt that they had a Friend at the throne of God, and were eager to prefer their requests to the Father in the name of Jesus. They gath-

ered together in solemn awe and bowed in prayer, repeating to each other the assurance of the Saviour, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." During the ten days following the ascension, they, with one accord, devoted the time to prayer and praise, waiting for the descent of the Holy Ghost. They extended the hand of faith higher and higher, with the mighty argument, "It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

"Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." The Saviour came into the world, outwardly the son of David, not manifesting the full significance of his character. His spirit was subject to that discipline and experience through which humanity must in some measure pass. His divinity was veiled beneath humanity. He hid within himself those all-powerful attributes which belonged to him as one equal with God. At times his divine character flashed forth with such wonderful power that all who were capable of discerning spiritual things pronounced him the Son of God.

Christ exiled himself to the world that he might bring heavenly light within the reach of humanity. The Jews did not comprehend the twofold character of Christ; and as he did not assume temporal, kingly power, and establish his reign on David's throne, bringing into subjection

every foreign authority, the Jewish dignitaries refused to accept him. They could not connect man's suffering, grief, and poverty with their idea of the Messiah. Yet this was the only Saviour the word of God through his prophets had ever predicted.

The Jews utterly failed to understand the spiritual connection which identified Christ with both the human and the divine, and gave fallen man a presentation of what he should strive to become. Christ was God in the flesh. As the son of David, he stood forth a perfect type of true manhood, bold in doing his duty, and of the strictest integrity, yet full of love, compassion, and tender sympathy. In his miracles he revealed himself as Lord. When he was asked by Philip to show him the Father, he answered, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father."

The Jews were continually seeking for and expecting a Divinity among them that would be revealed in outward show, and by one flash of overmastering will would change the current of all minds, force from them an acknowledgment of his superiority, elevate himself, and gratify the ambition of his people. This being the case, when Christ was treated with contempt, there was a powerful temptation before him to reveal his heavenly character, and to compel his persecutors to admit that he was Lord above kings and potentates, priests and temple. But it was his difficult task to maintain the level of humanity.

In the intercessory prayer of Jesus with his Father, he claimed that he had fulfilled the con-

ditions which made it obligatory upon the Father to fulfill his part of the contract made in Heaven, with regard to fallen man. He prayed: "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. [That is, he had wrought out a righteous character on earth as an example for men to follow.] And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." In this prayer he farther goes on to state what is comprehended by the work which he has accomplished, and which has given him all those who believe on his name.

He values this recompense so highly that he forgets the anguish it has cost him to redeem fallen man. He declares himself glorified in those who believe on him. The church, in his name, is to carry to glorious perfection the work which he has commenced; and when that church shall be finally ransomed in the Paradise of God, he will look upon the travail of his soul and be satisfied. Through all eternity the ransomed host will be his chief glory.

Jesus, the Majesty of Heaven, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; "wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name." This mighty Saviour has promised to come again, and to take his church to the mansions he has prepared for them. While he is in Heaven carrying on the work of intercession and atonement commenced on earth, his life and character are to be exemplified by his church upon earth. He has promised that, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father." And again, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name." "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you."

He who considered it not robbery to be equal with God, once trod the earth, bearing our suffering and sorrowing nature, and tempted in all points like as we are; and now he appears in the presence of God as our great High Priest, ready to accept the repentance, and to answer the prayers of his people, and, through the merits of his own righteousness, to present them to the Father. He raises his wounded hands to God, and claims their blood-bought pardon. I have graven them on the palms of my hands, he pleads. Those memorial wounds of my humiliation and anguish secure to my church the best gifts of Omnipotence.

What a source of joy to the disciples, to know that they had such a Friend in Heaven to plead in their behalf! Through the visible ascension of Christ all their views and contemplation of Heaven are changed. Their minds had formerly dwelt upon it as a region of unlimited space, tenanted by spirits without substance. Now Heaven was connected with the thought of Jesus, whom they had loved and reverenced above all others, with whom they had conversed and journeyed, whom they had handled, even in his resurrected body, who had spoken hope and comfort to their hearts, and who, while the words were upon his lips, had been taken up before their eyes, the tones of his voice coming back to them as the cloudy chariot of angels received him: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

Heaven could no longer appear to them as an indefinite, incomprehensible space, filled with intangible spirits. They now looked upon it as their future home, where mansions were being prepared for them by their loving Redeemer. Prayer was clothed with a new interest, since it was a communion with their Saviour. With new and thrilling emotions and a firm confidence that their prayer would be answered, they gathered in the upper chamber to offer their petitions, and to claim the promise of the Saviour, who had said "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." They prayed in the name of Jesus.

They had a gospel to preach—Christ in human form, a man of sorrows; Christ in humiliation, taken by wicked hands and crucified; Christ resurrected, and ascended to Heaven, into the presence of God, to be man's Advocate; Christ to come again with power and great glory in the clouds of heaven, and to receive the obedient and loyal to himself.

The apostles went forth with courage and hope, to do their Master's work with fidelity. They knew that the most acceptable way of waiting for Christ was to work for him. It was theirs to direct others to the coming Lord, and to teach them to wait patiently for his appearing. This work was given to every disciple of Christ.

REDEMPTION:

OR THE

MINISTRY OF PETER

AND THE

CONVERSION OF SAUL.

BY MRS. E. G. WHITE.

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TO THE READER.

To all who are interested in the service of God, and the progress of the church on earth, the history of the work of the apostles furnishes a chapter of peculiar attractions. History, it is said, repeats itself. So the experience of the church repeats itself; and in the experiences of the apostles we read, in many particulars, our own. To those who have read the series of pamphlets on the Life of Christ, by the same author, we need say nothing about the chaste and impressive style in which the matter is presented, nor the new and striking thoughts which by the casual thinker would be unperceived. We commend this to the reader as a valuable help in understanding the lessons the Scriptures would teach us in what they have recorded of the lives and experiences of these servants of God.

PUBLISHERS.

THE

APOSTLES OF CHRIST.

THE PENTECOST.

WHEN Jesus opened the understanding of the disciples to the meaning of the prophecies concerning himself, he assured them that all power was given him in Heaven and on earth, and bade them go preach the gospel to every creature. The disciples, with a sudden revival of their old hope that Jesus would take his place upon the throne of David at Jerusalem, inquired, "Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" The Saviour threw an uncertainty over their minds in regard to the subject, by replying that it was not for them "to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power."

The disciples began to hope that the wonderful descent of the Holy Ghost would influence the Jewish people to accept Jesus. The Saviour forbore to farther explain, for he knew that when the Holy Spirit should come upon them in full measure their minds would be illuminated and they would fully understand the work before them, and take it up just where he had left it.

The disciples assembled in the upper chamber, uniting in supplications with the believing wom-

en, with Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren. These brethren, who had been unbelieving, were now fully established in their faith by the scenes attending the crucifixion, and by the resurrection and ascension of the Lord. The number assembled was about one hundred and twenty. While they were awaiting the descent of the Holy Ghost, they supplied the office left vacant by Judas. Two men were selected, who, in the careful judgment of the believers, were best qualified for the place. But the disciples, distrusting their ability to decide the question farther, referred it to One that knew all hearts. They sought the Lord in prayer to ascertain which of the two men was more suitable for the important position of trust, as an apostle of Christ. The Spirit of God selected Matthias for the office.

Both men who had been selected were considered to be persons of stern integrity, and in every way worthy of the vacant position; but notwithstanding the disciples were intimately acquainted with them, they felt that their own judgment was imperfect, and trusted the selection only to the Lord, whose eyes could read the hidden secrets of the heart. There is a lesson for our time in this occurrence. Many who are apparently well qualified to labor for God, are urged into the ministry, without a proper consideration of their case, and at length become a grievous burden to the church instead of burden-bearers. If the church of the present time would act as cautiously and wisely as did the apostles in filling the vacancy among them, much perplexity and serious injury might be saved the cause of God. The work has often suffered much by putting persons forward to do that which they were not capable of doing.

After filling the vacancy in the apostolic number, the disciples gave their time to meditation and prayer, being often in the temple, testifying of Christ, and praising God. The Pentecost was a feast celebrated seven weeks after the passover. Upon these occasions the Jews were required to repair to the temple and to present the first-fruits of all the harvest, thus acknowledging their dependence on the great Giver of all good, and their obligation to render back to God, in gifts and offerings to sustain his cause, that which he had intrusted to them. On this day of divine appointment, the Lord graciously poured out his Spirit on the little company of believers, who were the first-fruits of the Christian church.

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." The Holy Ghost assuming the form of tongues of fire divided at the tips, and resting upon those assembled, was an emblem of the gift which was bestowed upon them of speaking with fluency several different languages, with which they had formerly been unacquainted; and the appearance of fire signified the fervent zeal with which they would labor, and the power which would attend their words.

Under this heavenly illumination, the scriptures which Christ had explained to them, stood forth in their minds with the vivid luster and loveliness of clear and powerful truth. The vail which had prevented them from seeing the end of that which was abolished was now removed, and the object of Christ's mission and the nature of his kingdom were comprehended with perfect clearness.

The Jews had been scattered to almost every nation, and spoke various languages. They had come long distances to Jerusalem, and had temporarily taken up their abode there, to remain through the religious festivals then in progress, and to observe their requirements. When assembled, they were of every known tongue. This diversity of languages was a great obstacle to the labors of God's servants in publishing the doctrine of Christ to the uttermost parts of the earth. That God should supply the deficiency of the apostles in a miraculous manner was to the people the most perfect confirmation of the testimony of these witnesses for Christ. The Holy Spirit had done for them that which they could not have accomplished for themselves in a lifetime; they could now spread the truth of the gospel abroad, speaking with accuracy the language of those for whom they were laboring. This miraculous gift was the highest evidence they could present to the world that their commission bore the signet of Heaven.

"And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own

language. And they were all amazed, and marveled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?"

The priests and rulers were greatly enraged at this wonderful manifestation, which was reported throughout all Jerusalem and its vicinity; but they dared not give way to their malice, for fear of exposing themselves to the hatred of the people. They had put the Master to death, but here were his servants, unlearned men of Galilee, tracing out the wonderful fulfillment of prophecy, and teaching the doctrine of Jesus in all the languages then spoken. They spoke with power of the wonderful works of the Saviour, and unfolded to their hearers the plan of salvation in the mercy and sacrifice of the Son of God. Their words convicted and converted thousands who listened. The traditions and superstitions inculcated by the priests were swept away from their minds, and they accepted the pure teachings of the Word of God.

The priests and rulers, determined to account for the miraculous power of the disciples in some natural way, declared that they were simply drunken from partaking largely of the new wine prepared for the feast. Some of the most ignorant seized this suggestion as the truth; but the more intelligent knew that it was false; and those speaking the different languages testified to the accuracy with which they were used by the disciples. And Peter, in answer to the vile accusation of the priests, addressed the assembly in these words:—

"Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at

Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words; for these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams."

The effect of Peter's words was very marked; and many who had ridiculed the religion of Jesus were now convinced of its truth. It was certainly unreasonable to suppose that more than one hundred persons should become intoxicated at that unseasonable hour of the day, and on the occasion of a solemn religious festival. This wonderful demonstration was before the customary meal at which wine was taken. Peter showed them that this manifestation was the direct fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel, wherein he foretold that such power would come upon men of God to fit them for a special work.

Peter traced back the lineage of Christ in a direct line to the honorable house of David. He did not use any of the teachings of Jesus to prove his true position, because he knew their prejudices were so great that it would be of no effect. But he referred them to David, whom the Jews regarded as a venerable patriarch of their nation.

On that memorable occasion, large numbers who had heretofore ridiculed the idea of so unpretending a person as Jesus being the Son of God, became thoroughly convinced of the truth, and acknowledged him as their Saviour. Three

thousand souls were added to the church. The apostles spoke by the power of the Holy Ghost; and their words could not be controverted, for they were confirmed by mighty miracles, wrought by them through the outpouring of the Spirit of God. The disciples were themselves astonished at the results of this visitation, and the quick and abundant harvest of souls. All the people were filled with amazement. Those who did not yield their prejudice and bigotry were so overawed that they dared not by voice or violence attempt to stay the mighty work, and, for the time being, their opposition ceased.

This testimony in regard to the establishment of the Christian church is given us, not only as an important portion of sacred history, but also as a lesson. All who profess the name of Christ should be waiting, watching, and praying with one heart. All differences should be put away, and unity and tender love one for another pervade the whole. Then our prayers may go up together to our Heavenly Father with strong, earnest faith. Then we may wait with patience and hope the fulfillment of the promise.

The answer may come with sudden velocity and overpowering might; or it may be delayed for days and weeks, and our faith receive a trial. But God knows how and when to answer our prayer. It is *our* part of the work to put ourselves in connection with the divine channel. God is responsible for *his* part of the work. He is faithful who hath promised. The great and important matter with us is to be of one heart and mind, putting aside all envy and malice, and, as humble supplicants, to watch and wait. Jesus, our Representative and Head, is ready to

do for us what he did for the praying, watching ones on the day of Pentecost.

Jesus is as willing to impart courage and grace to his followers to-day as he was to the disciples of the early church. None should rashly invite an opportunity to battle with the principalities and powers of darkness. When God bids them engage in the conflict it will be time enough; he will then give the weak and hesitating boldness and utterance beyond their hope or expectation.

The same scorn and hatred that was manifested against Christ may be seen now to exist against those whom he has evidently chosen to be his co-workers. Those whose spirits rise up against the doctrines of truth make hard work for the servants of Christ. But God will make their wrath to praise him; they accomplish his purpose by stirring up minds to investigate the truth. God may allow men to follow their own wicked inclinations for a time, in opposing him; but when he sees it is for his glory, and the good of his people, he will arrest the scorners, expose their presumptive course, and give triumph to his truth.

The arguments of the apostles alone, although clear and convincing, would not have removed the prejudice of the Jews which had withstood so much evidence. But the Holy Ghost sent those arguments home with divine power to their hearts. They were as sharp arrows of the Almighty, convicting them of their terrible guilt in rejecting and crucifying the Lord of glory. "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus

Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

The disciples and apostles of Christ had a deep sense of their own inefficiency, and with humiliation and prayer they joined their weakness to his strength, their ignorance to his wisdom, their unworthiness to his righteousness, their poverty to his inexhaustible wealth. Thus strengthened and equipped they hesitated not in the service of their Master.

Peter urged home upon the convicted people the fact that they had rejected Christ because they had been deceived by the priests and rulers; and if they continued to look to them for counsel, and waited for those leaders to acknowledge Christ before they dared to do so, they would never accept him. Those powerful men, although they made a profession of sanctity, were ambitious, and zealous for riches and earthly glory. They would never come to Christ to receive light. Jesus had foretold a terrible retribution to come upon that people for their obstinate unbelief, notwithstanding the most powerful evidences given them that Jesus was the Son of God.

"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul; and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles."

From this time forth the language of the disciples was pure, simple, and accurate in word and accent, whether they spoke their native tongue or a foreign language. These humble men, who

had never learned in the school of the prophets, presented truths so elevated and pure as to astonish those who heard them. They could not go personally to the uttermost parts of the earth; but there were men at the feast from every quarter of the world, and the truths received by them were carried to their various homes, and published among their people, winning souls to Christ.

THE CRIPPLE HEALED.

A SHORT time after the descent of the Holy Spirit, and immediately after a season of fervent prayer, Peter and John, going up to the temple to worship, saw a distressed and poverty-stricken cripple, forty years of age, who had known no other life than one of pain and infirmity. This unfortunate man had long desired to go to Jesus and be healed; but he was almost helpless, and was removed far from the scene of the great Physician's labors. Finally his earnest pleadings induced some kind persons to bear him to the gate of the temple. But upon arriving there he discovered that the Healer, upon whom his hopes were centered, had been put to a cruel death.

His disappointment excited the pity of those who knew how long he had eagerly hoped and expected to be healed by Jesus, and they daily brought him to the temple, that the passers-by might be moved to give him a trifle to relieve his present wants. As Peter and John passed, he begged charity from them. The disciples regarded him with compassion. "And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us." "Silver and gold have I none; but such

as I have give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk."

The poor man's countenance had fallen when Peter declared his own poverty, but grew bright with hope and faith as the disciple continued. "And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up; and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God. And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him."

The Jews were astonished that the disciples could perform miracles similar to those of Jesus. He, they supposed, was dead, and they had expected all such wonderful manifestations to cease with him. Yet here was this man who had been a helpless cripple for forty years, now rejoicing in the full use of his limbs, free from pain, and happy in believing upon Jesus.

The apostles saw the amazement of the people, and questioned them why they should be astonished at the miracle which they had witnessed, and regard them with awe as though it were through their own power they had done this thing. Peter assured them it was done through the merits of Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had rejected and crucified, but whom God had raised from the dead the third day. "And his name, through faith in his name, hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know; yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect

soundness in the presence of you all. And now brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled."

The manner of Jesus in working his miracles was very different from that of his apostles. His language was that of one who possessed power in himself: "Be thou clean." "Peace, be still." Neither did he hesitate to accept the honor offered him on these occasions, nor seek to divert the minds of the people from himself, as though his miracles were not wrought by his own power, for his own glory. But the apostles wrought miracles only in the name of Jesus, and refused to receive the least honor to themselves. They claimed to be only instruments of that Jesus whom the Jews had crucified, but whom God had raised and elevated to his right hand. He was to receive all the honor and praise.

After the performance of this miracle, the people flocked together in the temple, and Peter addressed them in one part of the temple, while John spoke to them in another part. The apostles, having spoken plainly of the great crime of the Jews, in rejecting and putting to death the Prince of Life, were careful not to drive them to madness or despair. Peter was willing to lessen the atrocity of their guilt as much as possible, by presuming that they did the deed ignorantly. He declared to them that the Holy Ghost was calling for them to repent of their sins and to be converted; that there was no hope for them except through the mercy of that Christ whom

they had crucified; through faith in him only could their sins be canceled by his blood.

This preaching the resurrection of Christ, and that through his death and resurrection he would finally bring up all the dead from their graves, deeply stirred the Sadducees. They felt that their favorite doctrine was in danger, and their reputation at stake. Some of the officials of the temple, and the captain of the temple, were Sadducees. The captain, with the help of a number of Sadducees, arrested the two apostles, and put them in prison, as it was too late for their cases to be examined that night.

These opponents of Christ and of the doctrines of the apostles, could but believe, although they refused to acknowledge, that Jesus had risen from the dead and remained on the earth for forty days afterward; the evidence was too convincing for them to doubt it. Yet, nevertheless, their hearts did not soften, nor their consciences smite them for the terrible deed they had committed in putting him to death. When the power from Heaven came upon the apostles in so remarkable a manner, fear held them from violence, but their bitterness and malice were unchanged. Five thousand had already embraced the new doctrine taught by the apostles, and both Pharisees and Sadducees decided among themselves that if those teachers were suffered to go unchecked, their own influence would be in greater danger than when Jesus was upon earth. If one or two discourses from the disciples could accomplish such marvelous results, the world would soon believe on Christ if they were left free, and the influence of priests and potentates would be lost.

The following day Annas and Caiaphas, with

the other dignitaries of the temple, met together for the trial of the prisoners, who were then brought before them. In that very room, and before those very men, Peter had shamefully denied his Lord. All this came distinctly before the mind of the disciple, as he now appeared for his own trial. He had now an opportunity of redeeming his former wicked cowardice.

The company present remembered the part Peter had acted at the trial of his Master, and they flattered themselves that he could be intimidated by the threat of imprisonment and death. But the Peter who denied Christ in the hour of his greatest need, was the impulsive, self-confident disciple, differing widely from the Peter who was before the Sanhedrim for examination that day. He had been converted; he was distrustful of self, and no longer a proud boaster. He was filled with the Holy Spirit, and through its power he had become firm as a rock, courageous, yet modest, in magnifying Christ. He was ready to remove the stain of his apostasy by honoring the name he had once disowned.

Hitherto the priests had avoided having the crucifixion or resurrection of Jesus mentioned; but now, in fulfillment of their purpose, they were forced to inquire of the accused by what power they had accomplished the remarkable cure of the impotent man. Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, addressed the priests and elders respectfully, and declared: "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at naught of you build-

ers, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

The seal of Christ was on the words of Peter, and his countenance was illuminated by the Holy Spirit. Close beside him, as a convincing witness, stood the man who had been so miraculously cured. The appearance of this man, who but a few hours before was a helpless cripple, now restored to soundness of body, and being enlightened concerning Jesus of Nazareth, added a weight of testimony to the words of Peter. Priests, rulers, and people were silent. The rulers had no power to refute his statement. They had been obliged to hear that which they most desired not to hear,—the fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and his power in Heaven to perform miracles through the medium of his apostles on earth.

The crowning miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead had sealed the determination of the priests to rid the world of Jesus and his wonderful works, which were fast destroying their own influence with the people. But here was a convincing proof that the death of Jesus had not put a stop to the working of miracles in his name, nor to the promulgation of the doctrine he had taught. Already the news of the miracle, and the preaching of the apostles, had filled all Jerusalem with excitement.

The defense of Peter, in which he boldly avowed from whence his strength was obtained, appalled them. He had referred to the stone set at naught by the builders which had become the head of the corner. These builders were the au-

thorities of the Jewish church, who should have perceived the value of Him whom they rejected. In those words he directly referred to Christ, who was the foundation-stone of the church.

The people were amazed at the boldness of the disciples. They supposed, because they were ignorant fishermen, they would be overcome with embarrassment when confronted by the priests, scribes, and elders. But they took knowledge that they had been with Jesus. The apostles spoke as he had spoken, with a convincing power that silenced their adversaries. In order to conceal their perplexity, the priests and rulers ordered the apostles to be taken away, that they might counsel among themselves.

They all agreed that it would be useless to deny that the man had been healed through power given the apostles in the name of the crucified Jesus. They would gladly have covered up the miracle by falsehoods; but the work was done in the full light of day and before a crowd of people, and had already come to the knowledge of thousands. They felt that the work must be immediately stopped, or Jesus would gain many believers, their own disgrace would follow, and they would be held guilty of the murder of the Son of God.

But notwithstanding their disposition to destroy the disciples, they dared not do worse than threaten them with the severest punishment if they continued to teach or work in the name of Jesus. Thereupon Peter and John boldly declared that their work had been given them of God, and they could not but speak the things which they had seen and heard. The priests would gladly have punished these noble men for

their unswerving fidelity to their sacred calling, but they feared the people, "for all men glorified God for that which was done." So, with repeated threats and injunctions, the apostles were set at liberty.

While Peter and John were prisoners, the other disciples, knowing the malignity of the Jews, had prayed for them unceasingly, fearing that the cruelty exercised upon Christ would be repeated upon their brethren. As soon as the apostles were released they sought their anxious brethren and reported to them the result of the examination. Great was the joy of the believers, and they again betook themselves to prayer, that greater strength might be imparted to them in the work of the ministry, which they saw would meet the same determined opposition which Christ encountered when upon earth. The disciples had no desire to glorify themselves, but sought to exalt Jesus, and to rescue souls through his saving message.

While their united prayers were ascending in faith to Heaven, the answer came. The place where they were assembled was shaken, and they were filled with the Holy Ghost. They went forth to their work, speaking the Word of God with convincing power, and there were daily large additions to the church. Great numbers had collected at Jerusalem to observe the sacred feast. The exciting scenes of the crucifixion and resurrection had called out a much larger number than usual. When the truth taught by the apostles was brought suddenly and with convincing power before them, thousands were converted in a day.

These early believers were most of them imme-

diately cut off from family and friends by the zealous bigotry of the Jews. Many of the converts were thrown out of business, and exiled from their homes because they followed the convictions of their consciences, and espoused the cause of Christ. It was necessary to provide this large number, congregated at Jerusalem, with homes and sustenance. Those having money and possessions cheerfully sacrificed them to the existing emergency. Their means were laid at the feet of the apostles, who made distribution to every man according as he had need; and there were none among them who lacked.

One example of noble benevolence is particularly mentioned in the Scriptures: "And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas (which is, being interpreted, the son of consolation), a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet." This was the effect of the pouring out of the Spirit of God upon the believers. It made them of one heart and soul. They had one common interest,—the success of the mission intrusted to them. Their love for their brethren, and the cause which they had espoused, was far greater than their love for money and possessions. They acted out their faith, and by their works testified that they accounted the souls of men of far greater value than any earthly heritage.

When selfish love of the world enters the heart, spirituality dies. The very best antidote for love of the world is the outpouring of the Spirit of God. When the love of Christ takes full possession of the heart, we shall strive to follow the example of Him who for our sakes became

poor, that through his poverty we might be made rich. When it becomes apparent that the Spirit of truth weakens the affections of its disciples from the world, and renders them self-sacrificing and benevolent, in order to save their fellow-men, the advocates of the truth will have a powerful influence upon their hearers.

As a contrast to the example which has been cited, another case has been recorded by the inspired pen which leaves a dark stain upon the first church: "But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, and kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet." This couple had noted the fact that those who had parted with their possessions to supply the wants of their poorer brethren were held in high esteem among the believers. They therefore, upon consulting together, decided to sell their property, and affect to give all the proceeds into the general fund, but really to retain a large share for themselves. They thus designed to receive their living, which they intended to estimate much higher than it really was, from the common stock, and to secure the high esteem of their brethren.

But a holy God hates hypocrisy and falsehood. The apostles were impressed by a sense of the true state of the case, and when Ananias presented himself with his offering, representing it as the entire proceeds of the sale of his property, Peter said to him, "Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? While it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?

Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. And Ananias, hearing these words, fell down, and gave up the ghost; and great fear came on all them that heard these things."

Peter asked, "Was it not thine own?" thus showing that no undue influence had been brought to bear upon Ananias and Sapphira to compel them to sacrifice their possessions to the general good. They had acted from choice. But in pretending to be wrought upon by the Holy Ghost, and attempting to deceive the apostles, they had lied to the Almighty.

"And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much. Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost; and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband. And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things."

This signal manifestation of the wrath of God upon the dissemblers was a check which Infinite Wisdom knew was needed. The church would have been disgraced, if, in the rapid increase of professed Christians, there were persons professing to serve God, but worshiping mammon. There are many Ananiases and Sapphiras in our day, whom Satan tempts to dissemble, because of their love of money. By various plans and ex-

cuses they withhold from the treasury of God the means intrusted to them for the advancement of the cause of God. Should the punishment of Ananias and Sapphira be visited upon this class, there would be many dead bodies in our churches requiring burial.

This marked judgment upon two avaricious hypocrites, whose sin had been detected by the evidence of the Spirit of God to the apostles, excited the reverential awe of all the new converts. From that time there was greater caution manifested by them, and a more thorough self-examination, testing the motives of their actions. In any great religious movement there is always a class who are carried away by the current of feeling, but who soon reveal selfishness and vainglory. Such persons can never be an honor to the cause they advocate.

The discernment of the apostles in detecting hidden sin added to the confidence of their brethren in them and the message which they preached. The apostles continued their work of mercy, in healing the afflicted and in proclaiming a crucified and risen Saviour, with great power. Numbers were continually added to the church by baptism, but none dared join them who were not united heart and mind with the believers in Christ. Multitudes flocked to Jerusalem, bringing their sick, and those who were vexed by unclean spirits. Many sufferers were laid in the streets as Peter and John passed by, that their shadows might fall upon and heal them. The power of the risen Saviour had indeed fallen upon the apostles, and they worked signs and miracles that daily increased the number of believers.

These things greatly perplexed the priests and

rulers, especially those among them who were Sadducees. They saw that if the apostles were allowed to preach a resurrected Saviour, and to do miracles in his name, their doctrine that there was no resurrection of the dead would be rejected by all, and their sect would soon become extinct. The Pharisees saw that the tendency of their preaching would be to undermine the Jewish ceremonies, and make the sacrificial offerings of none effect. Their former efforts to suppress these preachers had been in vain; but they now felt determined to put down the excitement.

The apostles were accordingly arrested and imprisoned, and the Sanhedrim was called to try their case. A large number of learned men, in addition to the council, were summoned, and they counseled together what should be done with these disturbers of the peace. "But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life. And when they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught."

When the apostles appeared among the believers, and recounted how the angel had led them directly through the band of soldiers guarding the prison, and bade them resume the work which had been interrupted by the priests and rulers, the brethren were filled with joy and amazement.

The priests and rulers in council had decided to fix upon them the charge of insurrection, and accuse them of murdering Ananias and Sapphira, and of conspiring to deprive the priests of their authority and put them to death. They trusted

that the mob would then be excited to take the matter in hand, and to deal by the apostles as they had dealt by Jesus. They were aware that many who did not accept the doctrine of Christ were weary of the arbitrary rule of the Jewish authorities, and were anxious for some decided change. If these persons became interested in and embraced the belief of the apostles, acknowledging Jesus as the Messiah, they feared the anger of the entire people would be raised against the priests, who would be made to answer for the murder of Christ. They decided to take strong measures to prevent this. They finally sent for the supposed prisoners to be brought before them. Great was their amazement when the report was brought back that the prison doors were found securely bolted, and the guard stationed before them, but that the prisoners were nowhere to be found.

Soon the report was brought: "Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people." Although the apostles were miraculously delivered from prison, they were not saved from examination and punishment. Christ had said when he was with them, "Take heed to yourselves, for they shall deliver you up to councils." God had given them a token of his care, and an assurance of his presence, by sending the angel to them; it was now their part to suffer for the sake of that Jesus whom they preached. The people were so wrought upon by what they had seen and heard that the priests and rulers knew it would be impossible to excite them against the apostles.

"Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence; for they feared

the people, lest they should have been stoned. And when they had brought them, they set them before the council; and the high priest asked them, saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us." They were not as willing to bear the blame of slaying Jesus as when they swelled the cry with the debased mob: "His blood be on us and on our children!"

Peter, with the other apostles, took up the same line of defense he had followed at his former trial: "Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men." It was the angel sent by God who delivered them from prison, and who commanded them to teach in the temple. In following his directions they were obeying the divine command, which they must continue to do at any cost to themselves. Peter continued: "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him."

The spirit of inspiration was upon the apostles, and the accused became the accusers, charging the murder of Christ upon the priests and rulers who composed the council. The Jews were so enraged at this that they decided, without any further trial, and without authority from the Roman officers, to take the law into their own hands, and put the prisoners to death. Already guilty

of the blood of Christ, they were now eager to imbrue their hands in the blood of his apostles. But there was one man of learning and high position whose clear intellect saw that this violent step would lead to terrible consequences. God raised up a man of their own council to stay the violence of the priests and rulers.

Gamaliel, the learned Pharisee and doctor, a man of great reputation, was a person of extreme caution, who, before speaking in behalf of the prisoners, requested them to be removed. He then spoke with great deliberation and calmness: "Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men. For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves; who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to naught. After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him; he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed. And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone; for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to naught. But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God."

The priests could not but see the reasonableness of his views; they were obliged to agree with him, and very reluctantly released the prisoners, after beating them with rods, and charging them again and again to preach no more in the name of Jesus, or their lives would pay the penalty of their boldness. "And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that

they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ."

THE SEVEN DEACONS.

"AND in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration." These Grecians were residents of other countries, where the Greek language was spoken. By far the larger number of converts were Jews who spoke Hebrew; but these had lived in the Roman Empire, and spoke only Greek. Murmurings began to rise among them that the Grecian widows were not so liberally supplied as the needy among the Hebrews. Any partiality of this kind would have been grievous to God; and prompt measures were taken to restore peace and harmony to the believers.

The Holy Spirit suggested a method whereby the apostles might be relieved from the task of apportioning to the poor, and similar burdens, so that they could be left free to preach Christ. "Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word."

The church accordingly selected seven men full

of faith and the wisdom of the Spirit of God, to attend to the business pertaining to the cause. Stephen was chosen first; he was a Jew by birth and religion, but spoke the Greek language, and was conversant with the customs and manners of the Greeks. He was therefore considered the most proper person to stand at the head, and have supervision of the disbursement of the funds appropriated to the widows, orphans, and the worthy poor. This selection met the minds of all, and the dissatisfaction and murmuring were quieted.

The seven chosen men were solemnly set apart for their duties by prayer and the laying on of hands. Those who were thus ordained, were not thereby excluded from teaching the faith. On the contrary, it is recorded that "Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people." They were fully qualified to instruct in the truth. They were also men of calm judgment and discretion, well calculated to deal with difficult cases of trial, of murmuring or jealousy.

This choosing of men to transact the business of the church, so that the apostles could be left free for their special work of teaching the truth, was greatly blessed of God. The church advanced in numbers and strength. "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith."

It is necessary that the same order and system should be maintained in the church now as in the days of the apostles. The prosperity of the cause depends very largely upon its various de-

partments being conducted by men of ability, who are qualified for their positions. Those who are chosen of God to be leaders in the cause of truth, having the general oversight of the spiritual interest of the church, should be relieved, as far as possible, from cares and perplexities of a temporal nature. Those whom God has called to minister in word and doctrine should have time for meditation, prayer, and study of the Scriptures. Their clear spiritual discernment is dimmed by entering into the lesser details of business, and dealing with the various temperaments of those who meet together in church capacity. It is proper for all matters of a temporal nature to come before the proper officers, and be by them adjusted. But if they are of so difficult a character as to baffle their wisdom, they should be carried into the council of those who have the oversight of the entire church.

Stephen was very active in the cause of God, and declared his faith boldly. "Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake." These students of the great Rabbis had felt confident that in a public discussion they could obtain a complete victory over Stephen, because of his supposed ignorance. But he not only spoke with the power of the Holy Ghost, but it was plain to all the vast assembly that he was also a student of the prophecies, and learned in all matters of the law. He ably defended the truths he advocated, and utterly defeated his opponents.

The priests and rulers who witnessed the wonderful manifestation of the power that attended the ministration of Stephen, were filled with bitter hatred. Instead of yielding to the weight of evidence he presented, they determined to silence his voice by putting him to death. They had on several occasions bribed the Roman authorities to pass over without comment instances where the Jews had taken the law into their own hands, and tried, condemned, and executed prisoners according to their national custom. The enemies of Stephen did not doubt that they could pursue such a course without danger to themselves. They determined to risk the consequences at all events, and therefore seized Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrim council for trial.

Learned Jews from the surrounding countries were summoned for the purpose of refuting the arguments of the accused. Saul, who had distinguished himself as a zealous opponent of the doctrine of Christ, and a persecutor of all who believed on him, was also present. This learned man took a leading part against Stephen. He brought the weight of eloquence and the logic of the Rabbis to bear upon the case, to convince the people that Stephen was preaching delusive and dangerous doctrines.

But Saul met in Stephen one as highly educated as himself, and one who had a full understanding of the purpose of God in the spreading of the gospel to other nations. He believed in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and was fully established in regard to the privileges of the Jews; but his faith was broad, and he knew the time had come when the true believers should

worship not alone in temples made with hands; but, throughout the world, they might worship God in Spirit and in truth. The vail had dropped from the eyes of Stephen, and he discerned to the end of that which was abolished by the death of Christ.

The priests and rulers prevailed nothing against his clear, calm wisdom, though they were vehement in their opposition. They determined to make an example of Stephen, and, while they thus satisfied their revengeful hatred, prevent others, through fear, from adopting his belief. Charges were preferred against him in a most imposing manner. False witnesses were hired to testify that they had heard him speak blasphemous words against the temple and the law. Said they, "For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us."

As Stephen stood face to face with his judges, to answer to the crime of blasphemy, a holy radiance shone upon his countenance. "And all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." Those who exalted Moses might have seen in the face of the prisoner the same holy light which radiated the face of that ancient prophet. The shekinah was a spectacle which they would never again witness in the temple whose glory had departed forever. Many who beheld the lighted countenance of Stephen trembled and veiled their faces; but stubborn unbelief and prejudice never faltered.

Stephen was questioned as to the truth of the charges against him, and took up his defense in a

clear, thrilling voice that rang through the council hall. He proceeded to rehearse the history of the chosen people of God, in words that held the assembly spell-bound. He showed a thorough knowledge of the Jewish economy, and the spiritual interpretation of it now made manifest through Christ. He began with Abraham, and traced down through history from generation to generation, going through all the national records of Israel to Solomon, and taking up the most impressive points to vindicate his cause.

He showed that God commended the faith of Abraham, which claimed the land of promise, though he owned no foot of land. He dwelt especially upon Moses, who received the law by the dispensation of angels. He repeated the words of Moses which foretold of Christ: "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear." He presented distinctly before them that the sin of Israel was in not heeding the voice of the angel, who was Christ himself. Said he, "This is He that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers, who received the lively oracles to give unto us."

He made plain his own loyalty to God and to the Jewish faith, while he showed that the law in which they trusted for salvation had not been able to preserve Israel from idolatry. He connected Jesus Christ with all the Jewish history. He referred to the building of the temple by Solomon, and to the words of both Solomon and Isaiah: "Howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands." "Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool. What house

will ye build me? saith the Lord; or what is the place of my rest? Hath not my hand made all these things?" The place of God's highest worship was in Heaven.

When Stephen had reached this point there was a tumult among the people. The prisoner read his fate in the countenances before him. He perceived the resistance that met his words, which were spoken at the dictation of the Holy Ghost. He knew that he was giving his last testimony. Few who read this address of Stephen properly appreciate it. The occasion, the time and place should be borne in mind to make his words convey their full significance.

When he connected Jesus Christ with the prophecies, and spoke of the temple as he did, the priest, affecting to be horror-stricken, rent his robe. This act was to Stephen a signal that his voice would soon be silenced forever. Although he was just in the midst of his sermon, he abruptly concluded it by suddenly breaking away from the chain of history, and, turning upon his infuriated judges, said, "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers; who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it."

At this the priests and rulers were beside themselves with anger. They were more like wild beasts of prey than like human beings. They rushed upon Stephen, gnashing their teeth. But he was not intimidated; he had expected this.

His face was calm, and shone with an angelic light. The infuriated priests and the excited mob had no terrors for him. "But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into Heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God."

The scene about him faded from his vision; the gates of Heaven were ajar, and Stephen, looking in, saw the glory of the courts of God, and Christ, as if just risen from his throne, standing ready to sustain his servant, who was about to suffer martyrdom for his name. When Stephen proclaimed the glorious scene opened before him, it was more than his persecutors could endure. They stopped their ears, that they might not hear his words, and uttering loud cries ran furiously upon him with one accord. "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this he fell asleep."

Amid the agonies of this most cruel death, the faithful martyr, like his divine Master, prayed for his murderers. The witnesses who had accused Stephen were required to cast the first stones. These persons laid down their clothes at the feet of Saul, who had taken an active part in the disputation, and had consented to the prisoner's death.

The martyrdom of Stephen made a deep impression upon all who witnessed it. It was a sore trial to the church, but resulted in the conversion of Saul. The faith, constancy, and glorification of the martyr could not be effaced from

his memory. The signet of God upon his face, his words, that reached to the very soul of all who heard them, except those who were hardened by resisting the light, remained in the memory of the beholders, and testified to the truth of that which he had proclaimed.

There had been no legal sentence passed upon Stephen; but the Roman authorities were bribed by large sums of money to make no investigation of the case. Saul seemed to be imbued with a frenzied zeal at the scene of Stephen's trial and death. He seemed to be angered at his own secret convictions that Stephen was honored of God, at the very period when he was dishonored of men. He continued to persecute the church of God, hunting them down, seizing them in their houses, and delivering them up to the priests and rulers for imprisonment and death. His zeal in carrying forward the persecution was a terror to the Christians in Jerusalem. The Roman authorities made no special effort to stay the cruel work, and secretly aided the Jews, in order to conciliate them, and to secure their favor.

After the death of Stephen the disciples were restrained in their active ministry, and many of the believers who had temporarily resided in Jerusalem now retired to their distant homes because of the violent persecution against them. But the apostles dared not leave Jerusalem till the Spirit of God indicated it to be their duty to do so; for Christ had bidden them to first work in that field. Although the priests and rulers bitterly persecuted the new converts, they did not venture for a time to arrest the apostles, being overawed by the dying testimony of Stephen, and realizing that their course with him had injured their own cause in the minds of the people.

Christ had commanded his disciples to go and teach all nations; but the previous teachings which they had received from the Jews made it difficult for them to fully comprehend the words of their Master, and therefore they were slow to act upon them. They called themselves the children of Abraham, and regarded themselves as the heirs of divine promise. It was not until several years after the Lord's ascension that their minds were sufficiently expanded to clearly understand the intent of Christ's words, that they were to labor for the conversion of the Gentiles as well as that of the Jews.

CONVERSION OF SAUL.

THE mind of Saul was greatly stirred by the triumphant death of Stephen. He was shaken in his prejudice; but the opinions and arguments of the priests and rulers finally convinced him that Stephen was a blasphemer; that Jesus Christ whom he preached was an impostor, and that those ministering in holy offices must be right. Being a man of decided mind, and strong purpose, he became very bitter in his opposition to Christianity, after having once entirely settled in his mind that the views of the priests and scribes were right. His zeal led him to voluntarily engage in persecuting the believers. He caused holy men to be dragged before the councils, and to be imprisoned or condemned to death without evidence of any offense, save their faith in Jesus. Of a similar character, though in a different direction, was the zeal of James and John, when they would have called

down fire from heaven to consume those who slighted and scorned their Master.

Saul was about to journey to Damascus upon his own business; but he was determined to accomplish a double purpose, by searching out, as he went, all the believers in Christ. For this purpose he obtained letters from the high priest to read in the synagogues, which authorized him to seize all those who were suspected of being believers in Jesus, and to send them by messengers to Jerusalem, there to be tried and punished. He set out upon his way, full of the strength and vigor of manhood, and the fire of a mistaken zeal.

As the weary travelers neared Damascus, the eyes of Saul rested with pleasure upon the fertile land, the beautiful gardens, the fruitful orchards, and the cool streams that ran murmuring amid the fresh green shrubbery. It was very refreshing to look upon such a scene after a long, wearisome journey over a desolate waste. While Saul, with his companions, was gazing and admiring, suddenly a light above the brightness of the sun shone round about him, "and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest; it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks."

The scene was one of the greatest confusion. The companions of Saul were stricken with terror, and almost blinded by the intensity of the light. They heard the voice, but saw no one, and to them all was unintelligible and mysterious. But Saul, lying prostrate upon the ground, understood the words that were spoken, and saw

clearly before him the Son of God. One look upon that glorious Being, imprinted his image forever upon the soul of the stricken Jew. The words struck home to his heart with appalling force. A flood of light poured in upon the darkened chambers of his mind, revealing his ignorance and error. He saw that, while imagining himself to be zealously serving God in persecuting the followers of Christ, he had in reality been doing the work of Satan.

He saw his folly in resting his faith upon the assurances of the priests and rulers, whose sacred office had given them great influence over his mind, and caused him to believe that the story of the resurrection was an artful fabrication of the disciples of Jesus. Now that Christ was revealed to Saul, the sermon of Stephen was brought forcibly to his mind. Those words which the priests had pronounced blasphemy, now appeared to him as truth and verity. In that time of wonderful illumination, his mind acted with remarkable rapidity. He traced down through prophetic history, and saw that the rejection of Jesus by the Jews, his crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension had been foretold by the prophets, and proved him to be the promised Messiah. He remembered the words of Stephen: "I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God;" and he knew that the dying saint had looked upon the kingdom of glory.

What a revelation was all this to the persecutor of the believers. Clear, but terrible light had broken in upon his soul. Christ was revealed to him as having come to earth in fulfillment of his mission, having been rejected,

condemned, and crucified by those whom he came to save, and as having risen from the dead, and ascended into the heavens. In that terrible moment he remembered that the holy Stephen had been sacrificed by his consent; and that through his instrumentality many worthy saints had met their death by cruel persecution.

"And he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." No doubt entered the mind of Saul that this was the veritable Jesus of Nazareth who spoke to him, and that he was indeed the long-looked-for Messiah, the Consolation and Redeemer of Israel. And now this Jesus, who had, while teaching upon earth, spoken in parables to his hearers, using familiar objects to illustrate his meaning, likened the work of Saul, in persecuting the followers of Christ, to kicking against the pricks. Those forcible words illustrated the fact that it would be impossible for any man to stay the onward progress of the truth of Christ. It would march on to triumph and victory, while every effort to stay it would result in injury to the opposer. The persecutor, in the end, would suffer a thousand-fold more than those whom he had persecuted. Sooner or later his own mind and heart would condemn him; he would find that he had indeed been kicking against the pricks.

The Saviour had spoken to Saul through Stephen, whose clear reasoning from the Scriptures could not be controverted. The learned Jew had seen the face of the martyr reflecting the light of Christ's glory, and looking like the face of an angel. He had witnessed his forbearance toward his enemies, and his forgiveness of them. He had further witnessed the fortitude and cheerful resignation of other believers in Jesus while tormented and afflicted, some of whom had yielded up their lives with rejoicing for their faith's sake.

All this testimony had appealed loudly to Saul, and thrust conviction upon his mind; but his education and prejudices, his respect for priests and rulers, and his pride of popularity, braced him to rebel against the voice of conscience, and the grace of God. He had struggled entire nights against conviction, and had always ended the matter by avowing his belief that Jesus was not the Messiah, that he was an impostor, and his followers were deluded fanatics.

Now Christ had spoken to Saul with his own voice: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" And the question, "Who art thou, Lord?" was answered by the same voice, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." Here Christ identifies himself with his suffering people. Saul, in persecuting the followers of Jesus, had struck directly against the Lord of Heaven. Jesus declares that in afflicting his brethren upon earth, Saul had struck against their Head and Representative in Heaven. In falsely accusing and testifying against them, he had falsely accused and testified against the Saviour of the world. Here it is plainly seen that Christ suffers in the person of his saints.

When the effulgent glory was withdrawn, and Saul arose from the earth, he found himself totally deprived of sight. The brightness of Christ's glory had been too intense for his mortal

sight, and when it was removed the blackness of night settled upon his vision. He believed that this blindness was the punishment of God for his cruel persecution of the followers of Jesus. He groped about in terrible darkness, and his companions, in fear and amazement, led him by the hand into Damascus.

How different from what he had anticipated was his entrance into that city! In proud satisfaction he had neared Damascus, expecting on his arrival to be greeted with ostentation and applause because of the honor conferred upon him by the high priest, and the great zeal and penetration he had manifested in searching out the believers, to carry them as captives to Jerusalem, there to be condemned, and punished without mercy. He had determined that his journey should be crowned with success; and his courageous and persevering spirit quailed at no difficulties nor dangers in the pursuance of his object. He had determined that no Christian should escape his vigilance; he would inquire of men, women, and children concerning their faith, and that of those with whom they were connected; he would enter houses, with power to seize their inmates, and to send them as prisoners to Jerusalem.

But how changed was the scene from that which he had anticipated! Instead of wielding power, and receiving honor, he was himself virtually a prisoner, being deprived of sight, and dependent upon the guidance of his companions. Helpless, and tortured by remorse, he felt himself to be under sentence of death, and knew not what farther disposition the Lord would make of him.

He was taken to the house of the disciple Judas, and there he remained, solitary and alone, studying upon the strange revelation that had broken up all his plans, and changed the entire current of his life. He passed three days in perfect blindness, occupying that terrible time with reflection, repentance, and earnest prayer, neither eating nor drinking during the entire period. With bitterness he remembered Stephen, and the evidence he had given of being sustained in his martyrdom, by a power higher than that of earth. He thought with horror of his own guilt in being carried away by the malice and prejudice of the priests and rulers, closing his eyes and ears against the most striking evidence, and relentlessly leading the van in the persecution of the believers in Christ.

He was in lonely seclusion; he had no communication with the church, for they had been warned of the purpose of his journey to Damascus by the believers in Jerusalem; and they believed that he was acting a part, the better to carry out his design of persecuting them. He had no desire to appeal to the unconverted Jews; for he knew they would not listen to or heed his statements. He seemed to be utterly shut out from human sympathy; and he reflected, and prayed with a thoroughly broken and repentant spirit.

Those three days were like three years to the blind and conscience-smitten Jew. He was no novice in the Scriptures, and in his darkness and solitude he recalled the passages which referred to the Messiah, and traced down the prophecies, with a memory sharpened by the convic-

tion that had taken possession of his mind. He became astonished at his former blindness of understanding, and at the blindness of the Jews in general, in rejecting Jesus as the promised Messiah. All now seemed plain to him, and he knew that it was prejudice and unbelief which had clouded his perceptions, and prevented him from discerning in Jesus of Nazareth the Messiah of prophecy.

This wonderful conversion of Saul demonstrates in a startling manner the miraculous power of Christ in convicting the mind and heart of man. Saul had verily believed that to have faith in Jesus was virtually to repudiate the law of God, and the service of sacrificial offerings. He had believed that Jesus had himself disregarded the law, and had taught his disciples that it was now of no effect. He believed it to be his duty to strive with his utmost power to exterminate the alarming doctrine that Jesus was the Prince of life; and with conscientious zeal he had become a persevering persecutor of the church of Christ.

But Jesus, whose name of all others he most hated and despised, had revealed himself to Saul, for the purpose of arresting him in his mad career, and of making, from this most unpromising subject, an instrument by which to bear the gospel to the Gentiles. Saul was overwhelmed by this revelation, and perceived that in opposing Jesus of Nazareth, he had arrayed himself against the Redeemer of the world. Overcome by a sense of his guilt he cried out, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Jesus did not then and there inform him of the work he had assigned him,

but sent him for instruction to the very disciples whom he had so bitterly persecuted.

The marvelous light that illuminated the darkness of Saul was the work of the Lord; but there was also a work that was to be done for him by the disciples of Christ. The answer to Saul's question is, "Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." Jesus sends the inquiring Jew to his church, to obtain from them a knowledge of his duty. Christ performed the work of revelation and conviction; and now the penitent was in a condition to learn of those whom God had ordained to teach his truth. Thus Jesus gave sanction to the authority of his organized church, and placed Saul in connection with his representatives on earth. The light of heavenly illumination deprived Saul of sight; but Jesus, the great Healer, did not at once restore it. All blessings flow from Christ, but he had now established a church as his representative on earth, and to it belonged the work of directing the repentant sinner in the way of life. The very men whom Saul had purposed to destroy were to be his instructors in the religion which he had despised and persecuted.

The faith of Saul was severely tested during his three days of fasting and prayer at the house of Judas, in Damascus. He was totally blind, and in utter darkness of mind as to what was required of him. He had been directed to go to Damascus, where it would be told him what he was to do. In his uncertainty and distress he cried earnestly to God. "And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And

he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus; for, behold, he prayeth, and hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight."

Ananias could hardly credit the words of the angel messenger, for Saul's bitter persecution of the saints at Jerusalem had spread far and near. He presumed to expostulate, and said, "Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem. And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name." But the command to Ananias was imperative: "Go thy way, for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel."

The disciple, obedient to the direction of the angel, sought out the man who had but recently breathed out threatenings against all who believed on the name of Jesus. He addressed him: "Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost; and immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales, and he received sight forthwith, and arose and was baptized."

Christ here gives an example of his manner of working for the salvation of men. He might have done all this work directly for Saul; but this was not in accordance with his plan. His

blessings were to come through the agencies which he had ordained. Saul had something to do in the line of confession to those whose destruction he had meditated; and God had a responsible work for the men to do whom he had authorized to act in his stead.

Saul becomes a learner of the disciples. In the light of the law he sees himself a sinner. He sees that Jesus, whom in his ignorance he had considered an impostor, is the author and foundation of the religion of God's people from the days of Adam, and the finisher of the faith now so clear to his enlightened vision, the vindicator of the truth, and the fulfiller of the prophecies. He had regarded Jesus as making of none effect the law of God; but when his spiritual vision was touched by the finger of God, he learned that Christ was the originator of the entire Jewish system of sacrifices; that he came into the world for the express purpose of vindicating his Father's law; and that in his death the typical law had met its antitype. By the light of the moral law, which he had believed himself to be zealously keeping, Saul saw himself a sinner of sinners. He repented, that is died to sin, became obedient to the law of God, had faith in Jesus Christ as his Saviour, was baptized, and preached Jesus as earnestly and zealously as he had once denounced him.

The Redeemer of the world does not sanction experience and exercise in religious matters independent of his organized and acknowledged church. Many have an idea that they are responsible to Christ alone for their light and experience, independent of his recognized followers

on earth. But in the history of the conversion of Saul, important principles are given us, which we should ever bear in mind. Saul was brought directly into the presence of Christ. He was one whom Christ intended for a most important work, one who was to be "a chosen vessel" unto him; yet he does not personally impart to him the lessons of truth. He arrests his course and convicts him; but when asked by him, "What wilt thou have me to do?" the Saviour places him in connection with his church, and lets them direct him what to do.

Jesus is the Friend of sinners; his heart is touched by their woe; he has all power, both in Heaven and upon earth; but he respects the means which he has ordained for the enlightenment and salvation of men; he directs sinners to the church, which he has made a channel of light to the world.

Saul was a learned teacher in Israel; but, while in the midst of his blind error and prejudice, Christ reveals himself to him, and then places him in communication with his church, which is the light of the world. In this case Ananias represents Christ, and also represents Christ's ministers upon earth, who are appointed to act in his stead. In Christ's stead, Ananias touches the eyes of Saul that they may receive sight. In Christ's stead, he places his hands upon him, and, praying in Christ's name, Saul receives the Holy Ghost. All is done in the name and by the authority of Christ; but the church is the channel of communication.

PAUL COMMENCES HIS MINISTRY.

PAUL was baptized by Ananias in the river of Damascus. He was then strengthened by food, and immediately began to preach Jesus to the believers in the city, the very ones whom he had set out from Jerusalem with the purpose of destroying. He also taught in the synagogues that Jesus who had been put to death was indeed the Son of God. His arguments from prophecy were so conclusive, and his efforts were so attended by the power of God, that the opposing Jews were confounded and unable to answer him. Paul's Rabbinical and Pharisaic education was now to be used to good account in preaching the gospel, and in sustaining the cause he had once used every effort to destroy.

The Jews were thoroughly surprised and confounded by the conversion of Paul. They were aware of his position at Jerusalem, and knew what was his principal errand to Damascus, and that he was armed with a commission from the high priest that authorized him to take the believers in Jesus, and to send them as prisoners to Jerusalem; yet now they beheld him preaching the gospel of Jesus, strengthening those who were already its disciples, and continually making new converts to the faith he had once so zealously opposed. Paul demonstrated to all who heard him that his change of faith was not from impulse nor fanaticism, but was brought about by overwhelming evidence.

As he labored in the synagogues his faith grew stronger; his zeal in maintaining that Jesus was

the Son of God increased in the face of the fierce opposition of the Jews. He could not remain long in Damascus, for after the Jews had recovered from their surprise at his wonderful conversion, and subsequent labors, they turned resolutely from the overwhelming evidence thus brought to bear in favor of the doctrine of Christ. Their astonishment at the conversion of Paul was changed into an intense hatred of him like unto that which they had manifested against Jesus.

Paul's life was in peril, and he received a commission from God to leave Damascus for a time. He went into Arabia, and there, in comparative solitude, he had ample opportunity for communion with God, and for contemplation. He wished to be alone with God, to search his own heart, to deepen his repentance, and to prepare himself by prayer and study to engage in a work which appeared to him too great and too important for him to undertake. He was an apostle, not chosen of men, but chosen of God, and his work was plainly stated to be among the Gentiles.

While in Arabia he did not communicate with the apostles; he sought God earnestly with all his heart, determining not to rest till he knew for a certainty that his repentance was accepted, and his great sin pardoned. He would not give up the conflict until he had the assurance that Jesus would be with him in his coming ministry. He was ever to carry about with him in the body the marks of Christ's glory, in his eyes, which had been blinded by the heavenly light, and he desired also to bear with him constantly

the assurance of Christ's sustaining grace. Paul came in close connection with Heaven, and Jesus communed with him, and established him in his faith, bestowing upon him his wisdom and grace.

Paul now returned to Damascus, and preached boldly in the name of Jesus. The Jews could not withstand the wisdom of his arguments, and they therefore counseled together to silence his voice by force—the only argument left to a sinking cause. They decided to assassinate him. The apostle was made acquainted with their purpose. The gates of the city were vigilantly guarded, day and night, to cut off his escape. The anxiety of the disciples drew them to God in prayer; there was little sleeping among them, as they were busy in devising ways and means for the escape of the chosen apostle. Finally they conceived a plan by which he was let down from a window, and lowered over the wall in a basket at night. In this humiliating manner Paul made his escape from Damascus.

He now proceeded to Jerusalem, wishing to become acquainted with the apostles there, and especially with Peter. He was very anxious to meet the Galilean fishermen who had lived, and prayed, and conversed with Christ upon earth. It was with a yearning heart that he desired to meet the chief of apostles. As Paul entered Jerusalem, he regarded with changed views the city and the temple. He now knew that the retributive judgment of God was hanging over them.

The grief and anger of the Jews because of the conversion of Paul knew no bounds. But he was

firm as a rock, and flattered himself that when he related his wonderful experience to his friends, they would change their faith as he had done, and believe on Jesus. He had been strictly conscientious in his opposition to Christ and his followers, therefore when arrested and convicted of his sin, he immediately forsook his evil ways, and professed the faith of Jesus. He now fully believed that when his friends and former associates heard the circumstances of his marvelous conversion, and saw how changed he was from the proud Pharisee who persecuted and delivered unto death those who believed in Jesus as the Son of God, they would also become convicted of their error, and join the ranks of the believers.

He attempted to join himself to his brethren, the disciples; but great was his grief and disappointment when he found that they would not receive him as one of their number. They remembered his former persecutions, and suspected him of acting a part to deceive and destroy them. True, they had heard of his wonderful conversion, but as he had immediately retired into Arabia, and they had heard nothing definite of him farther, they had not credited the rumor of his great change.

Barnabas, who had liberally contributed his money to sustain the cause of Christ, and to relieve the necessities of the poor, had been acquainted with Paul when he opposed the believers. He now came forward and renewed that acquaintance, heard the testimony of Paul in regard to his miraculous conversion, and his experience from that time. He fully believed and

received Paul, took him by the hand and led him into the presence of the apostles. He related his experience which he had just heard—that Jesus had personally appeared to Paul while on his way to Damascus; that he had talked with him; that Paul had recovered his sight in answer to the prayers of Ananias, and had afterward maintained that Jesus was the Son of God in the synagogues of the city.

The apostles no longer hesitated; they could not withstand God. Peter and James, who at that time were the only apostles in Jerusalem, gave the right hand of fellowship to the once fierce persecutor of their faith; and he was now as much beloved and respected as he had formerly been feared and avoided. Here the two grand characters of the new faith met—Peter, one of the chosen companions of Christ while he was upon earth, and Paul, a Pharisee, who, since the ascension of Jesus, had met him face to face, and had talked with him, and had also seen him in vision, and the nature of his work in Heaven.

This first interview was of great consequence to both these apostles, but it was of short duration, for Paul was eager to get about his Master's business. Soon the voice which had so earnestly disputed with Stephen was heard in the same synagogue fearlessly proclaiming that Jesus was the Son of God—advocating the same cause that Stephen had died to vindicate. He related his own wonderful experience, and with a heart filled with yearning for his brethren and former associates, presented the evidences from prophecy, as Stephen had done, that Jesus, who had been crucified, was the Son of God.

But Paul had miscalculated the spirit of his Jewish brethren. The same fury that had burst forth upon Stephen was visited upon himself. He saw that he must separate from his brethren, and sorrow filled his heart. He would willingly have yielded up his life, if by that means they might have been brought to a knowledge of the truth. The Jews began to lay plans to take his life, and the disciples urged him to leave Jerusalem; but he lingered, unwilling to leave the place, and anxious to labor a little longer for his Jewish brethren. He had taken so active a part in the martyrdom of Stephen that he was deeply anxious to wipe out the stain by boldly vindicating the truth which had cost Stephen his life. It looked to him like cowardice to flee from Jerusalem.

While Paul, braving all the consequences of such a step, was praying earnestly to God in the temple, the Saviour appeared to him in vision, saying, "Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem; for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me." Paul even then hesitated to leave Jerusalem without convincing the obstinate Jews of the truth of his faith; he thought that, even if his life should be sacrificed for the truth, it would not more than settle the fearful account which he held against himself for the death of Stephen. He answered, "Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee. And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him." But the reply was more decided than before: "Depart; for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles."

When the brethren learned of the vision of Paul, and the care which God had over him, their anxiety on his behalf was increased; for they realized that he was indeed a chosen vessel of the Lord, to bear the truth to the Gentiles. They hastened his secret escape from Jerusalem, for fear of his assassination by the Jews. The departure of Paul suspended for a time the violent opposition of the Jews, and the church had a period of rest, in which many were added to the number of believers.

THE MINISTRY OF PETER.

PETER, in pursuance of his work, visited the saints at Lydda. There he healed Æneas, who had been confined to his bed for eight years with the palsy. "And Peter said unto him, Æneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole; arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately. And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord."

Joppa was near Lydda, and at that time Tabitha—called Dorcas by interpretation—lay there dead. She had been a worthy disciple of Jesus Christ, and her life had been characterized by deeds of charity and kindness to the poor and sorrowful, and by zeal in the cause of truth. Her death was a great loss; the infant church could not well spare her noble efforts. When the believers heard of the marvelous cures which Peter had performed in Lydda, they greatly desired him to come to Joppa. Messengers were sent to him to solicit his presence there.

"Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber; and all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made while she was with them." Peter had the weeping and wailing friends sent from the room. He then kneeled down, and prayed fervently to God to restore life and health to the pulseless body of Dorcas; "and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes; and when she saw Peter, she sat up. And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her alive." This great work of raising the dead to life was the means of converting many in Joppa to the faith of Jesus.

"There was a certain man in Cesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always." Though Cornelius was a Roman, he had become acquainted with the true God, and had renounced idolatry. He was obedient to the will of God, and worshiped him with a true heart. He had not connected himself with the Jews, but was acquainted with, and obedient to, the moral law. He had not been circumcised, nor did he take part in the sacrificial offerings; he was therefore accounted by the Jews as unclean. He, however, sustained the Jewish cause by liberal donations, and was known far and near for his deeds of charity and benevolence. His righteous life made him of good repute, among both Jews and Gentiles.

Cornelius had not an understanding faith in Christ, although he believed the prophecies, and was looking for Messiah to come. Through his love and obedience to God, he was brought nigh unto him, and was prepared to receive the Saviour when he should be revealed to him. Condemnation comes by rejecting the light given. The centurion was a man of noble family, and held a position of high trust and honor; but these circumstances had not tended to subvert the noble attributes of his character. True goodness and greatness united to make him a man of moral worth. His influence was beneficial to all with whom he was brought in contact.

He believed in the one God, the Creator of Heaven and earth. He revered him, acknowledged his authority, and sought counsel of him in all the business of his life. He was faithful in his home duties as well as in his official responsibilities, and had erected the altar of God in his family. He dared not venture to carry out his plans, and bear the burden of his weighty responsibilities, without the help of God; therefore he prayed much and earnestly for that help. Faith marked all his works, and God regarded him for the purity of his actions, and his liberalities, and came near to him in word and Spirit.

While Cornelius was praying, God sent a celestial messenger to him, and "he saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius." He was afraid, yet knew that the angel was sent of God to instruct him, and said, "What is it, Lord? And he said

unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter. He lodgeth with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea-side. He shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do."

Here again God showed his regard for the gospel ministry, and for his organized church. His angel was not the one to tell the story of the cross to Cornelius. A man, subject as himself to human frailties and temptations, was to instruct him concerning the crucified, risen, and ascended Saviour. The heavenly messenger was sent for the express purpose of putting Cornelius in connection with the minister of God, who would teach him how he and his house could be saved.

Cornelius was gladly obedient to the message. "And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually; and when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa." The explicitness of these directions, in which was even named the occupation of the man with whom Peter was then making his home, evidences that Heaven is well acquainted with the history and business of men in every grade of life. God is cognizant of the daily employment of the humble laborer, as well as of that of the king upon his throne. And the avarice, cruelty, secret crimes, and selfishness of men are known to him, as well as their good deeds, charity, liberality, and kindness. Nothing is hidden from God.

Immediately after this interview with Cornelius, the angel went to Peter, who was praying upon the housetop. While praying he was shown a vision, "and saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth; wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. This was done thrice; and the vessel was received up again into heaven."

Here we may perceive the workings of God's plan to set the machinery in motion, whereby his will may be done on earth as it is done in Heaven. Peter had not yet preached the gospel to the Gentiles. Many of them had been interested listeners to the truths which he taught; but the middle wall of partition, which the death of Christ had broken down, still existed in the minds of the apostles, and excluded the Gentiles from the privileges of the gospel. The Greek Jews had received the labors of the apostles, and many of them had responded to those efforts by embracing the faith of Jesus; but the conversion of Cornelius was to be the first one of importance among the Gentiles.

By the vision of the sheet and its contents, let down from heaven, Peter was to be divested of his settled prejudices against the Gentiles; to understand that, through Christ, heathen nations

were made partakers of the blessings and privileges of the Jews, and were to be thus benefited equally with them. Some have urged that this vision was to signify that God had removed his prohibition from the use of the flesh of animals which he had formerly pronounced unclean; and that therefore swines' flesh was fit for food. This is a very narrow, and altogether erroneous interpretation, and is plainly contradicted in the scriptural account of the vision and its consequences.

The vision of all manner of live beasts, which the sheet contained, and of which Peter was commanded to kill and eat, being assured that what God had cleansed should not be called common or unclean by him, was simply an illustration presenting to his mind the true position of the Gentiles; that by the death of Christ they were made fellow-heirs with the Israel of God. It conveyed to Peter both reproof and instruction. His labors had heretofore been confined entirely to the Jews; and he had looked upon the Gentiles as an unclean race, and excluded from the promises of God. His mind was now being led to comprehend the world-wide extent of the plan of God.

Even while he pondered over the vision, it was explained to him. "Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate, and called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there. While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him,

Behold, three men seek thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them."

It was a trying command to Peter; but he dared not act according to his own feelings, and therefore "went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek; what is the cause wherefore ye are come? And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee. Then called he them in, and lodged them." Thus they communicated their singular errand to the apostle, and, according to the direction he had just received from God, he at once agreed to accompany them on the morrow. He courteously entertained them that night, and in the morning set out with them for Cesarea, accompanied by six of his brethren, who were to be witnesses of all he should say or do while visiting the Gentiles; for he knew that he should be called to account for so direct an opposition to the Jewish faith and teachings.

It was nearly two days before the journey was ended and Cornelius had the glad privilege of opening his doors to a gospel minister, who, according to the assurance of God, should teach him and his house how they might be saved. While the messengers were upon their errand, the centurion had gathered together as many of his relatives as were accessible, that they, as well as he, might be instructed in the truth. When

Peter arrived, a large company were gathered, eagerly waiting to listen to his words.

As Peter entered the house of the Gentile, Cornelius did not salute him as an ordinary visitor, but as one honored of Heaven, and sent to him by God. It is an Eastern custom to bow before a prince or other high dignitary, and for children to bow before their parents who are honored with positions of trust. But Cornelius, overwhelmed with reverence for the apostle who had been delegated by God, fell at his feet and worshiped him. Peter shrank with horror from this act of the centurion, and lifted him to his feet, saying, "Stand up; I myself also am a man." He then commenced to converse with him familiarly, in order to remove the sense of awe and extreme reverence with which the centurion regarded him.

Had Peter been invested with the authority and position accorded to him by the Roman Catholic Church, he would have encouraged, rather than have checked, the veneration of Cornelius. The so-called successors of Peter require kings and emperors to bow at their feet; but Peter himself claimed to be only an erring and fallible man.

Peter spoke with Cornelius and those assembled in his house, concerning the custom of the Jews; that it was considered unlawful for them to mingle socially with Gentiles, and involved ceremonial defilement. It was not prohibited by the law of God, but the tradition of men had made it a binding custom. Said he, "Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another

nation; but God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean. Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for; I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me."

Cornelius thereupon related his experience, and the words of the angel that had appeared to him in vision: "Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, and said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of one Simon, a tanner, by the sea-side; who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee. Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God. Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." Although God had favored the Jews above all other nations, yet if they rejected light, and did not live up to their profession, they were no more exalted in his esteem than other nations. Those among the Gentiles who, like Cornelius, feared God, and worked righteousness, living up to what light they had, were kindly regarded by God, and their sincere service was accepted.

But the faith and righteousness of Cornelius could not be perfect without a knowledge of

Christ; therefore God sent that light and knowledge to him for the farther development of his righteous character. Many refuse to receive the light which the providence of God sends them, and, as an excuse for so doing, quote the words of Peter to Cornelius and his friends: "But in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." They maintain that it is of no consequence what men believe, so long as their works are good. Such ones are wrong; faith must unite with their works. They should advance with the light that is given them. If God brings them in connection with his servants who have received new truth, substantiated by the Word of God, they should accept it with joy. Truth is onward. Truth is upward. On the other hand, those who claim that their faith alone will save them, are trusting to a rope of sand; for faith is strengthened and made perfect by works only.

Peter preached Jesus to that company of attentive hearers; his life, ministry, miracles, betrayal, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, and his work in Heaven, as man's Representative and Advocate, to plead in the sinner's behalf. As the apostle spoke, his heart glowed with the Spirit of God's truth which he was presenting to the people. His hearers were charmed by the doctrine they heard, for their hearts had been prepared to receive the truth. The apostle was interrupted by the descent of the Holy Ghost, as was manifested on the day of Pentecost. "And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy

Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days."

The descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Gentiles was not an equivalent for baptism. The requisite steps in conversion, in all cases, are faith, repentance, and baptism. Thus the true Christian church are united in one Lord, one faith, one baptism. Diverse temperaments are modified by sanctifying grace, and the same distinguishing principles regulate the lives of all. Peter yielded to the entreaties of the believing Gentiles, and remained with them for a time, preaching Jesus to all the Gentiles thereabout.

When the brethren in Judea heard that Peter had preached to the Gentiles, and had met with them, and eaten with them in their houses, they were surprised and offended by such strange movements on his part. They feared that such a course, which looked presumptuous to them, would tend to contradict his own teachings. As soon as Peter visited them, they met him with severe censure, saying, "Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them."

Then "Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them, saying, I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, a certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me. Upon the which when I had fas-

tened mine eyes, I considered, and saw four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat. But I said, Not so, Lord; for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth. But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. And this was done three times; and all were drawn up again into heaven. And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Cesarea unto me. And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover, these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house. And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved." He pleaded that the vision admonished him no longer to keep up the ceremonial distinction of circumcision and uncircumcision, nor to look upon the Gentiles as unclean, for God was not a respecter of persons. His caution was made manifest to his brethren from the fact that, although commanded by God to go to the Gentile's house, he had taken with him six of the disciples then present, as witnesses of all he should say or do while there.

He recounted the events of this first meeting with the Gentiles, saying, "And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I, that I could withstand God?"

The disciples, upon hearing this account, were silenced, and convinced that Peter's course was in direct fulfillment of the plan of God, and that their old prejudices and exclusiveness were to be utterly destroyed by the gospel of Christ. "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."

DELIVERANCE OF PETER.

HEROD was professedly a proselyte to the Jewish faith, and apparently very zealous in perpetuating the ceremonies of the law. The government of Judea was in his hands, subject to Claudius, the Roman emperor; he also held the position of tetrarch of Galilee. Herod was anxious to obtain the favor of the Jews, hoping thus to make secure his offices and honors. He therefore proceeded to carry out the desires of the Jews in persecuting the church of Christ. He began his work by spoiling the houses and goods of the believers; he then began to imprison the leading ones. He seized upon James and cast him into prison, and there sent an executioner to kill him with a sword, as another Herod had caused the prophet John to be beheaded. He then became bolder, seeing that the Jews were well pleased with his acts, and imprisoned Peter. These cru-

elties were performed during the sacred occasion of the passover.

James was one of the three favored disciples who had been brought into the closest relationship with Christ. James, John, and Peter were his chief witnesses after his death. They saw the transfiguration of the Saviour, and beheld him glorified. They were in the garden with him during the night of his agony. James and John were the sons of Zebedee, the ones whom Jesus had asked, "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" When James was rudely thrust into prison, and unceremoniously summoned to execution, he understood more fully than ever before, the words of his Lord upon that occasion.

There was great grief and consternation at the death of James. When Peter was also imprisoned, the entire church engaged in fasting and prayer. While the Jews were celebrating the memorial of their deliverance from Egypt, and pretending great zeal for the law, they were at the same time persecuting and murdering the believers in Christ, thus transgressing every principle of that law. At these great religious gatherings they stirred one another up against the Christians, till they were united in a bitter hatred of them.

The people applauded the act of Herod in causing the death of James, though some of them complained of the private manner in which it was accomplished, maintaining that a public execution would have had the effect to more thoroughly intimidate all believers and sympathizers. Herod therefore held Peter in custody for the purpose of gratifying the Jews by the public spectacle of his death. But it was suggested to the ruler that it would not be safe to bring the veteran apostle out for execution before all the people who were assembled in Jerusalem for the passover. It was feared that his venerable appearance might excite their pity and respect; they also dreaded lest he should make one of those powerful appeals which had frequently roused the people to investigate the life and character of Jesus Christ, and which they, with all their artifice, were totally unable to controvert. In such a case, the Jews apprehended that his release would be demanded at the hands of the king.

Peter's ardent zeal in vindicating himself, and in advocating the cause of Christ, had lost to the Jews many of their brethren, and they stood in great dread of his having an opportunity to lift up his voice in the presence of all the nations and people that had come to the city to worship. Therefore the apostle was placed under charge of sixteen soldiers, who alternated in guarding him day and night. But it was in vain that the puny arm of man was lifted against the Lord. He, by the putting forth of his might, was about to stay the precious blood which the Jews would have been emboldened to shed, had not divine power interposed.

While the execution of Peter was being delayed, upon various pretexts, until after the passover, the church of Christ had time for deep searching of heart, and earnest prayer. Strong petitions, tears, and fasting were mingled to-

gether. They prayed without ceasing for Peter; they felt that he could not be spared from the Christian work; and they felt that they had arrived at a point, where, without the special help of God, the church of Christ would become extinct.

Meanwhile worshipers of every nation sought the temple which had been dedicated to the service of God, and which remained, to all appearance, the same as when the shekinah had glorified it, with the exception of additional embellishment. But God was no longer to be found in that palace of loveliness, glittering with gold and precious stones, and presenting a spectacle of grandeur and beauty to all beholders.

The day of Peter's execution was at last appointed; but still the prayers of the believers ascended to Heaven. And while all their energies and sympathies were called out in fervent appeals, angels of God were guarding the imprisoned apostle. Man's extremity is God's opportunity. Peter was placed between two soldiers, and was bound by two chains, each chain being fastened to the wrist of one of his guard. He was therefore unable to move without their knowledge. The prison doors were securely fastened, and a strong guard was placed before them. All chance of rescue or escape, by human means, was thus cut off.

The apostle was not intimidated by his situation. Since his re-instatement after his denial of Christ, he had unflinchingly braved danger, and manifested a noble courage and boldness in preaching a crucified, risen, and ascended Saviour. He now called to mind the words of Jesus addressed to him: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not." He believed the time had now come when he was to yield up his life for Christ's sake.

The night before his appointed execution, Peter, bound with chains, slept between the two soldiers, as usual. Herod, remembering the escape of Peter and John from prison, where they had been confined because of their faith, took double precautions on this occasion. The soldiers on guard, in order to secure their extra vigilance, were made answerable for the safe-keeping of the prisoner. He was bound, as has been described, in a cell of massive rock, the doors of which were bolted and barred. Sixteen men were detailed to guard this cell, relieving each other at regular intervals. Four comprised the watch at one time. But the bolts and bars, and Roman guard, which effectually cut off from the prisoner a possibility of human aid, were only to result in making the triumph of God more complete in Peter's deliverance from prison. Herod was lifting his hand against Omnipotence, and he was to be utterly humiliated and defeated in his attempt upon the life of the servant of God.

On this last night before the execution, a mighty angel, commissioned from Heaven, descended to rescue him. The strong gates which shut in the saint of God, open without the aid of human hands; the angel of the Most High enters,

and they close again noiselessly behind him. He enters the cell, hewn from the solid rock, and there lies Peter, sleeping the blessed peaceful sleep of innocence and perfect trust in God while chained to a powerful guard on either side of him. The light which enveloped the angel illuminated the prison, but did not waken the sleeping apostle. His was the sound repose that invigorates and renews, and that comes of a good conscience.

Peter is not awakened until he feels the stroke of the angel's hand, and hears his voice saying, "Arise up quickly." He sees his cell, which had never been blessed by a ray of sunshine, illuminated by the light of Heaven, and an angel of great glory standing before him. He mechanically obeys the voice of the angel; and in rising lifts his hands, and finds that the chains have been broken from his wrists. Again the voice of the angel is heard: "Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals."

Again Peter mechanically obeys, keeping his wondering gaze riveted upon his heavenly visitant, and believing himself to be dreaming, or in a vision. The armed soldiers are passive as if chiseled from marble, as the angel again commands, "Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me." Thereupon the heavenly being moves toward the door, and the usually talkative Peter follows, dumb from amazement. They step over the motionless guard, and reach the heavily bolted and barred door, which swings open of its own accord, and closes again immediately, while the guard within and outside the door are motionless at their posts.

The second gate, which is also guarded within and without, is reached; it opens as did the first, with no creaking of hinges, or rattling of iron bolts; they pass without, and it closes again as noiselessly. They pass through the third gateway in the same manner, and at last find themselves in the open street. No word is spoken; there is no sound of footstep; the angel glides on before, encircled by a light of dazzling brightness, and Peter follows his deliverer, bewildered, and believing himself to be in a dream. Street after street is threaded thus, and then, the mission of the angel being completed, he suddenly disappears.

As the heavenly light faded away, Peter felt himself to be in profound darkness; but gradually the darkness seemed to decrease, as he became accustomed to it, and he found himself alone in the silent street, with the cool night air upon his brow. He now realized that it was no dream or vision that had visited him. He was free, in a familiar part of the city; he recognized the place as one which he had often frequented, and had expected to pass for the last time on the morrow, when upon the way to the scene of his prospective death. He tried to recall the events of the last few moments. He remembered falling asleep, bound between the two soldiers, with his sandals and outer garment removed. He examined his person, and found himself fully dressed, and girded.

His wrists, swollen from wearing the cruel irons, were now free from the manacles, and he realized that his freedom was no delusion, but a blessed reality. On the morrow he was to have

been led forth to die; but lo, an angel had delivered him from prison and from death. "And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews."

The apostle made his way direct to the house where his brethren were assembled together for prayer; he found them engaged in earnest prayer for him at that moment. "And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda. And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate. And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, It is his angel. But Peter continued knocking; and when they had opened the door, and saw him, they were astonished. But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, Go show these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place."

Joy and praise filled the hearts of the fasting, praying believers, that God had heard and answered their prayers, and delivered Peter from the hand of Herod. In the morning the people gathered together to witness the execution of the apostle. Herod sent officers to bring Peter from prison with great display of arms and guard, in order to insure against his escape, to intimidate all sympathizers, and to exhibit his own power.

Meanwhile terror and mortification had seized the Roman guard at the prison, when they found that the prisoner was gone. It had been expressly stated to them that their lives would be answerable for the life of their charge, and for that reason they had been specially vigilant. But the God of Heaven had thwarted the purpose of wicked Herod. There was the guard at the door of the prison, the bolts and bars of the door still fast and strong, the guard inside, the chains attached to the wrists of the two soldiers; but the prisoner was gone.

When the report of these things was brought to Herod, he was exasperated, and charged the keepers of the prison with unfaithfulness. They were accordingly put to death for the alleged crime of sleeping at their post. At the same time, Herod knew that no human power had rescued Peter. But he was determined not to acknowledge that a divine power had been at work to thwart his base designs. He would not humiliate himself thus, but set himself boldly in defiance of God.

Herod, not long after Peter's deliverance from prison, went down from Judea to Cesarea, and there abode. He there made a grand festival, designed to excite the admiration and applause of the people. Pleasure-lovers from all quarters were assembled together, and there was much feasting and wine-drinking. Herod made a most gorgeous appearance before the people. He was clad in a robe, sparkling with silver and gold, that caught the rays of the sun in its glittering folds, and dazzled the eyes of the beholders. With great pomp and ceremony he stood

before the multitude, and addressed them in an eloquent oration.

The majesty of his appearance, and the power of his well-chosen language, swayed the assembly with a mighty influence. Their senses were already perverted by feasting and wine; they were dazzled by his glittering decorations, and charmed by his grand deportment and eloquent words; and, wild with enthusiasm, they showered upon him adulation, and proclaimed him a god, declaring that mortal man could not present such an appearance, or command such startling eloquence of language. They farther declared that they had ever respected him as a ruler, but from henceforth they should worship him as a god.

These people had refused to acknowledge Christ, whose coarse and often travel-stained garments were worn over a heart of divine love, rich with that inward adorning, a meek and gentle spirit. Their eyes, blinded by sin, refused to see, beneath that humble exterior, the Lord of life and glory, though his mercy and divine power were revealed before them in works that no man could do. But they were ready to bow down and worship, as a god, the haughty king, whose splendid garments of silver and gold were worn over a corrupt and cruel heart. They did not attempt to penetrate his vain display, and read the depravity and deceit of his character, and the wickedness of his daily life.

Herod knew that he deserved none of this praise and homage; yet he did not rebuke the idolatry of the people, but accepted it as his due. The glow of gratified pride was on his countenance as he heard the shout ascend: It is the

voice of a god, and not of man! The same voices which now glorified a vile sinner, had, but a few years before, raised the frenzied cry of, Away with Jesus! Crucify him, crucify him! Herod received this flattery and homage with great pleasure, and his heart bounded with triumph; but suddenly a swift and terrible change came over him. His countenance became pallid as death, and distorted with agony; great drops of sweat started from his pores. He stood a moment as if transfixed with pain and terror, then, turning his blanched and livid face to his horror-stricken friends, he cried in hollow, despairing tones, He whom you have exalted as a god is struck with death!

He was borne in a state of the most excruciating anguish from the scene of wicked revelry, the mirth, and pomp, and display of which he now loathed in his soul. A moment before, he had been the proud recipient of the praise and worship of that vast throng—now he felt himself in the hands of a Ruler mightier than himself. Remorse seized him; he remembered his cruel command to slay the innocent James; he remembered his relentless persecution of the followers of Christ, and his design to put to death the apostle Peter, whom God had delivered out of his hand; he remembered how, in his mortification and disappointed rage, he had wreaked his unreasoning revenge upon the keepers of the prisoner, and executed them without mercy. He felt that God, who had rescued the apostle from death, was now dealing with him, the relentless persecutor. He found no relief from pain of body or anguish of mind, and he expected none. Herod

was acquainted with the law of God, which says, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," and he knew that in accepting the worship of the people he had filled up the measure of his iniquity, and had brought upon him the just wrath of God.

The same angel who had left the royal courts of Heaven to rescue Peter from the power of his persecutor, had been the messenger of wrath and judgment to Herod. The angel smote Peter to arouse him from slumber; but it was with a different stroke that he smote the wicked king, bringing mortal disease upon him. God poured contempt upon Herod's pride, and his person, which he had exhibited decked in shining apparel before the admiring gaze of the people, was eaten by worms, and putrefied while yet alive. Herod died in great agony of mind and body, under the retributive justice of God.

This demonstration of divine judgment had a mighty influence upon the people. While the apostle of Christ had been miraculously delivered from prison and death, his persecutor had been stricken down by the curse of God. The news was borne to all lands, and was the means of bringing many to believe on Christ.

REDEMPTION:

OR THE

TEACHINGS OF PAUL,

AND HIS

MISSION TO THE GENTILES.

BY MRS. E. G. WHITE.

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TO THE READER.

NEXT to the two chief characters of the Old and New Testaments, Moses and Jesus Christ, the apostle Paul, through his labors and writings, has had more influence upon the world than any other person. The call of this remarkable man, and his being commissioned to go to the Gentiles, marked an era in the progress of the gospel. The reader will be pleased to read the following thoughts upon this subject, from one so well qualified to write upon it, as the author of this work.

PUBLISHERS.

THE

TEACHINGS OF PAUL.

ORDINATION OF PAUL AND BARNABAS.

THE apostles and disciples who left Jerusalem during the fierce persecution that raged there after the martyrdom of Stephen, preached Christ in the cities round about, confining their labors to the Hebrew and Greek Jews. "And the hand of the Lord was with them; and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord." When the believers in Jerusalem heard the good tidings they rejoiced; and Barnabas, "a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith," was sent to Antioch, the metropolis of Syria, to help the church there. He labored there with great success. As the work increased, he solicited and obtained the help of Paul; and the two disciples labored together in that city for a year, teaching the people, and adding to the numbers of the church of Christ.

Antioch had both a large Jewish and Gentile population; it was a great resort for lovers of ease and pleasure, because of the healthfulness of its situation, its beautiful scenery, and the wealth, culture, and refinement that centered there. Its extensive commerce made it a place of great importance, where people of all nationalities were

found. It was therefore a city of luxury and vice. The retribution of God finally came upon Antioch, because of the wickedness of its inhabitants.

It was here that the disciples were first called Christians. This name was given them because Christ was the main theme of their preaching, teaching, and conversation. They were continually recounting the incidents of his life, during the time in which his disciples were blessed with his personal company. They dwelt untiringly upon his teachings, his miracles of healing the sick, casting out devils, and raising the dead to life. With quivering lips and tearful eyes they spoke of his agony in the garden, his betrayal, trial, and execution, the forbearance and humility with which he endured the contumely and torture imposed upon him by his enemies, and the Godlike pity with which he prayed for those who persecuted him. His resurrection and ascension, and his work in Heaven as a Mediator for fallen man, were joyful topics with them. The heathen might well call them Christians, since they preached of Christ, and addressed their prayers to God through him.

Paul found, in the populous city of Antioch, an excellent field of labor, where his great learning, wisdom, and zeal, combined, wielded a powerful influence over the inhabitants and frequenters of that city of culture.

Meanwhile the work of the apostles was centered at Jerusalem, where Jews of all tongues and countries came to worship at the temple during the stated festivals. At such times the apostles preached Christ with unflinching courage, though they knew that in so doing their lives

were in constant jeopardy. Many converts to the faith were made, and these, scattering to their homes in different parts of the country, dispersed the seeds of truth throughout all nations, and among all classes of society.

Peter, James, and John felt confident that God had appointed them to preach Christ among their own countrymen at home. But Paul had received his commission from God, while praying in the temple, and his broad missionary field had been presented before him with remarkable distinctness. To prepare him for his extensive and important work, God had brought him into close connection with himself, and had opened before his enraptured vision a glimpse of the beauty and glory of Heaven.

God communicated with the devout prophets and teachers in the church at Antioch. "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." These apostles were therefore dedicated to God in a most solemn manner by fasting and prayer and the laying on of hands; and they were sent forth to their field of labor among the Gentiles.

Both Paul and Barnabas had been laboring as ministers of Christ, and God had abundantly blessed their efforts; but neither of them had previously been formally ordained to the gospel ministry by prayer and the laying on of hands. They were now authorized by the church, not only to teach the truth, but to baptize, and to organize churches, being invested with full ecclesiastical authority. This was an important era for the church. Though the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile had been broken

down by the death of Christ, letting the Gentiles into the full privileges of the gospel, yet the vail had not yet been torn away from the eyes of many of the believing Jews, and they could not clearly discern to the end of that which was abolished by the Son of God. The work was now to be prosecuted with vigor among the Gentiles, and was to result in strengthening the church by a great ingathering of souls.

The apostles, in this, their special work, were to be exposed to suspicion, prejudice, and jealousy. As a natural consequence of their departure from the exclusiveness of the Jews, their doctrine and views would be subject to the charge of heresy; and their credentials as ministers of the gospel would be questioned by many zealous, believing Jews. God foresaw all these difficulties which his servants would undergo, and, in his wise providence, caused them to be invested with unquestionable authority from the established church of God, that their work should be above challenge.

The brethren in Jerusalem and in Antioch were made thoroughly acquainted with all the particulars of this divine appointment, and the specific work of teaching the Gentiles, which the Lord had given to these apostles. Their ordination was an open recognition of their divine mission, as messengers specially chosen by the Holy Ghost for a special work. Paul witnesses, in his Epistle to the Romans, that he considered this sacred appointment as a new and important epoch in his life; he names himself, "a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God."

The ordination by the laying on of hands, was,

at a later date, greatly abused; unwarrantable importance was attached to the act, as though a power came at once upon those who received such ordination, which immediately qualified them for any and all ministerial work, as though virtue lay in the act of laying on of hands. We have, in the history of these two apostles, only a simple record of the laying on of hands, and its bearing upon their work. Both Paul and Barnabas had already received their commission from God himself; and the ceremony of the laying on of hands added no new grace or virtual qualification. It was merely setting the seal of the church upon the work of God—an acknowledged form of designation to an appointed office.

This form was a significant one to the Jews. When a Jewish father blessed his children, he laid his hands reverently upon their heads. When an animal was devoted to sacrifice, the hand of the one invested with priestly authority was laid upon the head of the victim. Therefore, when the ministers of Antioch laid their hands upon the apostles, they, by that action, asked God to bestow his blessing upon them, in their devotion to the specific work which God had chosen them to do.

The apostles started out upon their mission, taking with them Mark. They went into Seleucia, and from thence sailed to Cyprus. At Salamis they preached in the synagogues of the Jews. "And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus; which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the

word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith."

The deputy being a man of repute and influence, the sorcerer Elymas, who was under the control of Satan, sought by false reports, and various specious deceptions, to turn him against the apostles and destroy their influence over him. As the magicians in Pharaoh's court withstood Moses and Aaron, so did this sorcerer withstand the apostles. When the deputy sent for the apostles, that he might be instructed in the truth, Satan was on hand with his servant, seeking to thwart the purpose of God, and prevent this influential man from embracing the faith of Christ. This agent of Satan greatly hindered the work of the apostles. Thus does the fallen foe ever work in a special manner to prevent persons of influence, who could be of great service to the cause, from embracing the truth of God.

But Paul, in the Spirit and power of the Holy Ghost, rebuked the wicked deceiver. He "set his eyes upon him, and said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord."

The sorcerer had closed his eyes to the evidences of truth, and the light of the gospel, therefore the Lord, in his righteous anger, caused his

natural eyes to be closed, shutting out from him the light of day. This blindness was not permanent, but only for a season, to warn him to repent, and to seek pardon of God whom he had so offended. The confusion into which this man was brought, with all his boasted power, made all his subtle arts against the doctrine of Christ of none effect. The fact of his being obliged to grope about in blindness, proved to all beholders that the miracles which the apostles had performed, and which Elymas had denounced as being produced by sleight of hand, were in truth wrought by the power of God. The deputy was convinced of the truth of the doctrine taught by the apostles, and embraced the gospel of Christ.

Elymas was not a man of education, yet he was peculiarly fitted to do the work of Satan. Those who preach the truth of God will be obliged to meet the wily foe in many different shapes. Sometimes it is in the person of learned, and often in the person of ignorant, men, whom Satan has educated to be his successful instruments in deceiving souls, and in working iniquity. It is the duty of the minister of Christ to stand faithfully at his post, in the fear of God, and in the power of his strength. Thus he may put to confusion the hosts of Satan, and triumph in the name of the Lord.

Paul and his company now continued their journey, going into Perga, in Pamphylia. Their way was toilsome, they encountered hardships and privations, and were beset by dangers on every side, which intimidated Mark, who was unused to hardships. As still greater difficulties were apprehended, he became disheartened, and refused to go farther, just at the time when his

services were most needed. He accordingly returned to Jerusalem, and to the peace and comfort of his home.

Mark did not apostatize from the faith of Christianity; but, like many young ministers, he shrank from hardships, and preferred the comfort and safety of home to the travels, labors, and dangers of the missionary field. This desertion caused Paul to judge him unfavorably and severely for a long time. He distrusted his steadiness of character, and his devotion to the cause of Christ. The mother of Mark was a convert to the Christian religion; and her home was an asylum for the disciples. There they were always sure of a welcome, and a season of rest, in which they could rally from the effect of the fierce persecutions that everywhere assailed them in their labors.

It was during one of these visits of the apostles to his mother's that Mark proposed to Paul and Barnabas that he should accompany them on their missionary tour. He had witnessed the wonderful power attending their ministry; he had felt the favor of God in his own heart; he had seen the faith of his mother tested and tried without wavering; he had witnessed the miracles performed by the apostles, and which set the seal of God upon their work; he had himself preached the Christian faith, and had longed to enter more fully into the work, and entirely devote himself to it. He had, as the companion of the apostles, rejoiced in the success of their mission; but fear and discouragement overwhelmed him in the face of privation, persecution, and danger; and he sought the attractions of home at

a time when his services were most needful to the apostles.

At a future period there was a sharp contention between Paul and Barnabas concerning Mark, who was still anxious to devote himself to the work of the ministry. Paul could not, at that time, excuse in any degree the weakness of Mark in deserting them and the work upon which they had entered, for the ease and quiet of home; and he urged that one with so little stamina was unfit for the gospel ministry, which required patience, self-denial, bravery, and faith, with a willingness to sacrifice even life if need be.

Barnabas, on the other hand, was inclined to excuse Mark, who was his nephew, because of his inexperience. He felt anxious that he should not abandon the ministry, for he saw in him qualifications for a useful laborer in the field of Christ. This contention caused Paul and Barnabas to separate, the latter following out his convictions, and taking Mark with him in his work.

Mark, therefore, accompanied Barnabas to Cyprus, and assisted him there. Paul was afterward reconciled to Mark, and received him as a fellow-laborer. He also recommended him to the Colossians as one who was a "fellow-worker unto the kingdom of God," and a personal comfort to him, Paul. Again, not long prior to his death, he spoke of him as profitable to him in the ministry.

Paul and Barnabas next visited Antioch in Pisidia, and on the Sabbath went into the synagogue, and sat down; "and after the reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the

people, say on." Being thus invited to speak, "Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience." He then proceeded to give a history of the manner in which the Lord had dealt with the Jews from the time of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, and how a Saviour had been promised of the seed of David. He then preached Jesus as the Saviour of men, the Messiah of prophecy.

When he had finished, and the Jews had left the synagogue, the Gentiles still lingered, and entreated that the same words might be spoken unto them the next Sabbath day. The apostles created a great interest in the place, among both Jews and Gentiles. They encouraged the believers and converts to stand fast in their faith, and to continue in the grace of God. The interest to hear the words of the apostles was so great that the whole city came together on the next Sabbath day. But now, as in the days of Christ, when the Jewish priests and rulers saw the multitudes that had assembled to hear the new doctrine, they were moved by envy and jealousy, and contradicted the words of the apostles with blasphemy. Their old bigotry and prejudice were also aroused, when they perceived great numbers of Gentiles mingling with the Jews in the congregation. They could not endure that the Gentiles should enjoy religious privileges on an equality with themselves, but clung tenaciously to the idea that the blessing of God was reserved exclusively for them. This had ever been the great sin of the Jews, which Christ, on several occasions, had rebuked.

They listened, on one Sabbath day, with intense interest to the teachings of Paul and Barnabas, who preached Jesus as the promised Messiah; and upon the next Sabbath day, because of the multitude of Gentiles who assembled also to hear them, they were excited to a frenzy of indignation, the words of the apostles were distorted in their minds, and they were unfitted to weigh the evidence presented by them. When they learned that the Messiah preached by the apostles was to be a light to the Gentiles, as well as the glory of his people Israel, they were beside themselves with rage, and used the most insulting language to the apostles.

The Gentiles, on the other hand, rejoiced exceedingly that Christ recognized them as the children of God, and with grateful hearts they listened to the word preached. The apostles now clearly discerned their duty, and the work which God would have them do. They turned without hesitation to the Gentiles, preaching Christ to them, and leaving the Jews to their bigotry, blindness of mind, and hardness of heart. The mind of Paul had been well prepared to make this decision, by the circumstances attending his conversion, his vision in the temple at Jerusalem, his appointment by God to preach to the Gentiles, and the success which had already crowned his efforts among them.

When Paul and Barnabas turned from the Jews who derided them, they addressed them boldly, saying, "It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gen-

tiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth."

This gathering in of the Gentiles to the church of God had been traced by the pen of inspiration, but had been but faintly understood. Hosea had said, "Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God." And again, "I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God."

During the life of Christ on earth he had sought to lead the Jews out of their exclusiveness. The conversion of the centurion, and that of the Syrophenician woman, were instances of his direct work outside of the acknowledged people of Israel. The time had now come for active and continued work among the Gentiles, of whom whole communities received the gospel gladly, and glorified God for the light of an intelligent faith. The unbelief and malice of the Jews did not turn aside the purpose of God; for a new Israel was being grafted into the old olive-tree. The synagogues were closed against the apostles; but private houses were thrown open for their use, and public buildings of the Gentiles were also used in which to preach the Word of God.

The Jews, however, were not satisfied with closing their synagogues against the apostles, but desired to banish them from that region. To effect this purpose they sought to prejudice certain devout and honorable women, who had great influence with the government, and also men of influence. This they accomplished by subtle arts, and false reports. These persons of good repute complained to the authorities against the apostles, and they were accordingly expelled from those coasts.

On this occasion the apostles followed the instruction of Christ: "Whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily, I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of Judgment than for that city." The apostles were not discouraged by this expulsion; they remembered the words of their Master: "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in Heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

PREACHING AMONG THE HEATHEN.

THE apostles next visited Iconium. This place was a great resort for pleasure-seekers, and persons who had no particular object in life. The population was composed of Romans, Greeks, and Jews. The apostles here, as at Antioch, first commenced their labors in the synagogues for their own people, the Jews. They met with marked success; numbers of both Jews and Greeks accepted the gospel of Christ. But here, as in former places where the apostles had labored, the unbelieving Jews commenced an unreason-

able opposition of those who accepted the true faith, and, as far as lay in their power, influenced the Gentiles against them.

The apostles, however, were not easily turned from their work, for many were daily embracing the doctrine of Christ. They went on faithfully in the face of opposition, envy, and prejudice. Miracles were daily wrought by the disciples through the power of God; and all whose minds were open to evidence were affected by the convincing power of these things.

This increasing popularity of the doctrine of Christ stirred the unbelieving Jews to fresh opposition. They were filled with envy and hatred, and determined to stop the labors of the apostles at once. They went to the authorities, and represented their work in the most false and exaggerated light, leading the officers to fear that the entire city was in danger of being incited to insurrection. They stated that great numbers were attaching themselves to the apostles, and suggested that it was for secret and dangerous designs.

In consequence of these charges, the disciples were repeatedly brought before the authorities; but in every case they so ably defended themselves before the people, that, although the magistrates were prejudiced against them by the false statements they had heard, they dared not condemn them. They could but acknowledge that the teachings of the apostles were calculated to make men virtuous, law-abiding citizens.

The unprejudiced Jews and Greeks took the position that the morals and good order of the city would be improved, if the apostles were allowed to remain and work there. Upon the occasions when the apostles were brought before the authorities, their defense was so clear and sensible, and the statement which they gave of their doctrine was so calm and comprehensive, that a considerable influence was raised in their favor. The doctrine they preached gained great publicity, and was brought before a much larger number of unprejudiced hearers than ever before in that place.

The Jews perceived that their efforts to thwart the work of the apostles were unavailing, and only resulted in adding greater numbers to the new faith. The rage of the Jews was worked up to such a pitch on this account that they determined to compass their ends in some manner. They stirred up the worst passions of the ignorant, noisy mob, creating a tumult which they attributed to the efforts of the apostles. They then prepared to make a false charge of telling force, and to gain the help of the magistrates in carrying out their purpose. They determined that the apostles should have no opportunity to vindicate themselves; but that mob power should interfere, and put a stop to their labors by stoning them to death.

Friends of the apostles, although unbelievers, warned them of the designs of the malicious Jews, and urged them not uselessly to expose themselves to their fury, but to escape for their lives. They accordingly departed from Iconium in secret, and left the faithful and opposing parties to battle for themselves, trusting God to give victory to the doctrine of Christ. But they by no means took a final leave of Iconium; they purposed to return, after the excitement then rag-

ing had abated, and complete the work they had begun.

Those who observe and teach the binding claims of God's law frequently receive, in a degree, similar treatment to that of the apostles at Iconium. They often meet a bitter opposition from ministers and people who persistently refuse the light of God, and, by misrepresentation and falsehood, close every door by which the messenger of truth might have access to the people.

The apostles next went to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia. These were populated by a heathen, superstitious people; but among them were souls that would hear and accept the doctrine of Christ. The apostles chose to labor in those cities because they would not there meet Jewish prejudice and persecution. They now came in contact with an entirely new element,—heathen superstition and idolatry.

The apostles, in their work, met all grades of people, and all kinds of faith and religions. They were brought in opposition with Jewish bigotry and intolerance, sorcery, blasphemy, unjust magistrates who loved to exercise their power, false shepherds, superstition, and idolatry. While persecution and opposition met them on every hand, victory still crowned their efforts, and converts were daily added to the faith.

In Lystra there was no Jewish synagogue, though there were a few Jews in the place. The temple of Jupiter occupied a conspicuous position there. Paul and Barnabas appeared in the city together, teaching the doctrine of Christ with great power and eloquence. The credulous people believed them to be gods come down from Heaven. As the apostles gathered the people

about them, and explained their strange belief, the worshipers of Jupiter sought to connect these doctrines, as far as they were able, with their own superstitious faith.

Paul addressed them in the Greek language, presenting for their consideration such subjects as would lead them to a correct knowledge of Him who should be the object of their adoration. He directed their attention to the firmament of the heavens—the sun, moon, and stars—the beautiful order of the recurring seasons, the mighty mountains whose peaks were capped with snow, the lofty trees, and the varied wonders of nature, which showed a skill and exactitude almost beyond finite comprehension. Through these visible works of the Almighty, the apostle led the minds of the heathen to the contemplation of the great Mind of the universe.

He then told them of the Son of God, who came from Heaven to our world because he loved the children of men. His life and ministry were presented before them; his rejection by those whom he came to save; his trial and crucifixion by wicked men; his resurrection from the dead to finish his work on earth; and his ascension to Heaven to be man's Advocate in the presence of the Maker of the world. With the Spirit and power of God, Paul and Barnabas declared the gospel of Christ.

As Paul recounted the works of Christ in healing the afflicted, he perceived a cripple whose eyes were fastened upon him, and who received and believed his words. Paul's heart went out in sympathy toward the afflicted man, whose faith he discerned; and he eagerly grasped the hope that he might be healed by that Saviour,

who, although he had ascended to Heaven, was still man's Friend and Physician, having more power even than when he was upon earth.

In the presence of that idolatrous assembly, Paul commanded the cripple to stand upright upon his feet. Hitherto he had only been able to take a sitting posture; but he now grasped with faith the words of Paul, and instantly obeyed his command, and stood on his feet for the first time in his life. Strength came with this effort of faith; and he who had been a cripple walked and leaped as though he had never experienced an infirmity.

This work performed on the cripple was a marvel to all beholders. The subject was so well known, and the cure was so complete, that there was no room for skepticism on their part. The Lycaonians were all convinced that supernatural power attended the labors of the apostles, and cried out with great enthusiasm that the gods had come down to them from Heaven in the likeness of men. This belief was in harmony with their traditions that gods visited the earth. They conceived the idea that the great heathen deities, Jupiter and Mercury, were in their midst in the persons of Paul and Barnabas. The former they believed to be Mercury; for Paul was active, earnest, quick, and eloquent with words of warning and exhortation. Barnabas was believed to be Jupiter, the father of gods, because of his venerable appearance, his dignified bearing, and the mildness and benevolence which was expressed in his countenance.

The news of the miraculous cure of the cripple was soon noised throughout all that region, until a general excitement was aroused, and priests

from the temple of the gods prepared to do the apostles honor, as visitants from the courts of Heaven, to sacrifice beasts to them, and to bring offerings of garlands and precious things. The apostles had sought retirement and rest in a private dwelling, when their attention was attracted by the sound of music, and the enthusiastic shouting of a vast assembly, who had come to the gate of the house where they were abiding.

When these ministers of God ascertained the cause of this visit and its attendant excitement, they were filled with indignation and horror. They rent their clothing, and rushed in among the multitude to prevent farther proceedings. Paul, in a loud, ringing voice that rose above the noise of the multitude, demanded their attention; and, as the tumult was suddenly quelled, he inquired,—

"Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein; who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."

The people listened to the words of Paul with manifest impatience. Their superstition and enthusiasm had been so great in regard to the apostles that they were loth to acknowledge their error, and have their expectations and purposes thwarted. Notwithstanding the apostles positively denied the divinity attributed to them by the heathen, and Paul made a masterly effort to

direct their minds to the true God as the only object worthy of worship, it was still most difficult to turn them from their purpose.

They reasoned that they had with their own eyes beheld the miraculous power exercised by the apostles; that they had seen a cripple who had never before used his limbs, made to leap and rejoice in perfect health and strength through the exercise of the marvelous power possessed by these strangers. But, after much persuasion on the part of Paul, and explanation as to the true mission of the apostles, the people were reluctantly led to give up their purpose. They were not satisfied, however, and led the sacrificial beasts away in great disappointment, that their traditions of divine beings visiting the earth could not be strengthened by this example of their favor in coming to confer special blessings upon them, which would exalt them and their religion in the estimation of the world.

And now a strange change came upon the fickle, excitable people, because their faith was not anchored in the true God. The opposing Jews of Antioch, through whose influence the apostles were driven from that coast, united with certain Jews of Iconium, and followed upon the track of the apostles. The miracle wrought upon the cripple, and its effect upon those who witnessed it, stirred up their envy and led them to go to the scene of the apostles' labor, and put their false version upon the work. They denied that God had any part in it, and claimed that it was accomplished through the demons whom these men served.

The same class had formerly accused the Saviour of casting out devils through the power of

the prince of devils; they had denounced him as a deceiver; and they now visited the same unreasoning wrath upon his apostles. By means of falsehoods they inspired the people of Lystra with the bitterness of spirit by which they were themselves actuated. They claimed to be thoroughly acquainted with the history and faith of Paul and Barnabas, and so misrepresented their characters and work that the heathen idolaters, who had been ready to worship the apostles as divine beings, now considered them as worse than murderers, and that whoever should put them out of the world would do God and mankind good service.

Those who believe and teach the truths of God's Word in these days meet with similar opposition from unprincipled persons who will not accept the truth, and who do not hesitate to prevaricate, and even to circulate the most glaring falsehoods in order to destroy the influence and hedge up the way of those whom God has sent with a message of warning to the world. While one class make the falsehoods and circulate them, another class are so blinded by the delusions of Satan as to receive them as the words of truth. They are in the toils of the arch-enemy, while they flatter themselves that they are the children of God. "For this cause, God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

The disappointment experienced by the idolaters in being refused the privilege of offering sacrifices to the apostles, prepared them to turn against these ministers of God with a zeal which approached that of the enthusiasm with which they had hailed them as gods. The malicious

Jews did not hesitate to take full advantage of the superstition and credulity of this heathen people to carry out their cruel designs. They incited them to attack the apostles by force; and they charged them not to allow Paul an opportunity to speak, alleging that if they did so he would bewitch the people.

The Lystrians rushed upon the apostles with great rage and fury. They hurled stones violently; and Paul, bruised, battered, and fainting, felt that his end had come. The martyrdom of Stephen was brought vividly to his mind, and the cruel part he had acted on that occasion. He fell to the ground apparently dead, and the infuriated mob dragged his insensible body through the gates of the city, and threw it beneath the walls. The apostle mentions this occurrence in the subsequent enumeration of his sufferings for the truth's sake: "Thrice was I beaten with rods; once was I stoned; thrice I suffered shipwreck; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often; in perils of waters; in perils of robbers; in perils by mine own countrymen; in perils by the heathen; in perils in the city; in perils in the wilderness; in perils in the sea; in perils among false brethren."

The disciples stood around the body of Paul, lamenting over him whom they supposed was dead, when he suddenly lifted his head, and arose to his feet with the praise of God upon his lips. To the disciples this seemed like a resurrection from the dead, a miracle of God to preserve the life of his faithful servant. They rejoiced with inexpressible gladness over his restoration, and praised God with renewed faith in the doctrine preached by the apostles.

These disciples had been newly converted to the faith through the teachings of Paul, and had stood steadfast notwithstanding the misrepresentation and malignant persecution of the Jews. In fact, the unreasoning opposition of those wicked men had only confirmed these devoted brethren in the faith of Christ; and the restoration to life of Paul seemed to set the signet of God upon their belief.

Timothy had been converted through the ministration of Paul, and was an eye-witness of the sufferings of the apostle upon this occasion. He stood by his apparently dead body, and saw him arise, bruised and covered with blood, not with groans nor murmurings upon his lips, but with praises to Jesus Christ, that he was permitted to suffer for his name. In one of the epistles of Paul to Timothy he refers to his personal knowledge of this occurrence. Timothy became the most important help to Paul and to the church. He was the faithful companion of the apostle in his trials and in his joys. The father of Timothy was a Greek; but his mother was a Jewess, and he had been thoroughly educated in the Jewish religion.

JEW AND GENTILE.

THE next day after the stoning of Paul, the apostles left the city, according to the direction of Christ: "When they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another." They departed for Derbe, where their labors were blessed by leading many souls to embrace the truth. But both Paul and Barnabas returned again to visit Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra, the fields of labor where they

had met such opposition and persecution. In all those places were many souls that believed the truth; and the apostles felt it their duty to strengthen and encourage their brethren who were exposed to reproach and bitter opposition. They were determined to securely bind off the work which they had done, that it might not ravel out.

Churches were duly organized in the places before mentioned, elders appointed in each church, and the proper order and system established there. Paul and Barnabas labored in Antioch some time; and many Gentiles there embraced the doctrine of Christ. But certain Jews from Judea raised a general consternation among the believing Gentiles by agitating the question of circumcision. They asserted, with great assurance, that none could be saved without being circumcised, and keeping the entire ceremonial law.

This was an important question, and one which affected the church in a very great degree. Paul and Barnabas met it with promptness, and opposed introducing the subject to the Gentiles. They were opposed in this by the believing Jews of Antioch, who favored the position of those from Judea. The matter resulted in much discussion and want of harmony in the church, until finally the church at Antioch, apprehending that a division among them would occur from any further discussion of the question, decided to send Paul and Barnabas, together with some responsible men of Antioch, to Jerusalem, and lay the matter before the apostles and elders. There they were to meet delegates from the different churches, and those who had come to attend the approaching annual festivals. Meanwhile all

controversy was to cease, until a final decision should be made by the responsible men of the church. This decision was then to be universally accepted by the various churches throughout the country.

The apostles, in making their way to Jerusalem, called upon the brethren of the cities through which they passed, and encouraged them by relating their experience in the work of God, and the conversion of the Gentiles to the faith. Upon arriving at Jerusalem, the delegates from Antioch related before the assembly of the churches the success that had attended the ministry with them, and the confusion that had resulted from the fact that certain converted Pharisees declared that the Gentile converts must be circumcised and keep the law of Moses in order to be saved.

The Jews were not generally prepared to move as fast as the providence of God opened the way. It was evident to them from the result of the apostles' labors among the Gentiles that the converts among the latter people would far exceed the Jewish converts; and that if the restrictions and ceremonies of the Jewish law were not made obligatory upon their accepting the faith of Christ, the national peculiarities of the Jews, which kept them distinct from all other people, would finally disappear from among those who embraced the gospel truths.

The Jews had prided themselves upon their divinely appointed services; and they concluded that as God once specified the Hebrew manner of worship, it was impossible that he should ever authorize a change in any of its specifications. They decided that Christianity must connect

itself with the Jewish laws and ceremonies. They were slow to discern to the end of that which had been abolished by the death of Christ, and to perceive that all their sacrificial offerings had but prefigured the death of the Son of God, in which type had met its antitype, rendering valueless the divinely appointed ceremonies and sacrifices of the Jewish religion.

Paul had prided himself upon his Pharisaical strictness; but after the revelation of Christ to him on the road to Damascus, the mission of the Saviour, and his own work in the conversion of the Gentiles, were plain to his mind; and he fully comprehended the difference between a living faith and a dead formalism. Paul still claimed to be one of the children of Abraham, and kept the ten commandments in letter and in spirit as faithfully as he had ever done before his conversion to Christianity. But he knew that the typical ceremonies must soon altogether cease, since that which they had shadowed forth had come to pass, and the light of the gospel was shedding its glory upon the Jewish religion, giving a new significance to its ancient rites.

The question of circumcision was warmly discussed in the assembly. The Gentile converts lived in a community of idolaters. Sacrifices and offerings were made to senseless idols by these ignorant and superstitious people. The priests of these gods carried on an extensive merchandise with the offerings brought to them; and the Jews feared that the Gentile converts would bring Christianity into disrepute by purchasing those things which had been offered to idols, and thereby sanctioning, in some measure, an idolatrous worship.

Also the Gentiles were accustomed to eat the flesh of animals that had been strangled; while the Jews had been divinely instructed with regard to the food they should use. They were particular, in killing beasts, that the blood should flow from the body, else it was not regarded as healthful meat. God had given these injunctions to the Jews for the purpose of preserving their health and strength. The Jews considered it sinful to use blood as an article of diet. They considered that the blood was the life; that the shedding of blood was in consequence of sin, and was a sacred emblem of the Son of God.

The Gentiles, on the contrary, practiced catching the blood which flowed from the victim of sacrifice, and drinking it, or using it in the preparation of their food. The Jews could not change the customs which they had so long observed, and which they had adopted under the special direction of God. Therefore, as things then stood, if Jew and Gentile came to eat at the same table, the former would be shocked and outraged by the habits and manners of the latter.

The Gentiles, and especially the Greeks, were extremely licentious; and many, in accepting Christianity, had united the truth to their unsanctified natures, and continued to practice fornication. The Jewish Christians could not tolerate such immorality, which was not even regarded as criminal by the Greeks. The Jews, therefore, held it highly proper that circumcision, and the observance of the ceremonial law, should be brought to the Gentile converts as a test of their sincerity and devotion. This they believed would prevent the accession to the church of those who were carried away by mere feeling, or who adopt-

ed the faith without a true conversion of heart, and who might afterward disgrace the cause by immorality and excesses.

The questions thus brought under the consideration of the council seemed to present insurmountable difficulties, viewed in whatever light. But the Holy Ghost had, in reality, already settled this problem, upon the decision of which depended the prosperity, and even the existence, of the Christian church. Grace, wisdom, and sanctified judgment were given to the apostles to decide the vexed question.

Peter reasoned that the Holy Ghost had decided the matter by descending with equal power upon the uncircumcised Gentiles and the circumcised Jews. He recounted his vision, in which God had presented before him a sheet filled with all manner of four-footed beasts, and had bidden him kill and eat; that when he had refused, affirming that he had never eaten that which was common or unclean, God had said, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common."

He related the plain interpretation of these words, which was given to him almost immediately in his summons to go to the Gentile centurion, and instruct him in the faith of Christ. This message showed that God was no respecter of persons, but accepted and acknowledged those who feared him, and worked righteousness. Peter told of his astonishment, when, in speaking the words of truth to the Gentiles, he witnessed the Holy Spirit take possession of his hearers, both Jews and Gentiles. The same light and glory that was reflected upon the circumcised Jews, shone also upon the countenances of the uncircumcised Gentiles. This was the warning

of God that he should not regard the one as inferior to the other; for the blood of Jesus Christ could cleanse from all uncleanness.

Peter had reasoned once before, in like manner, with his brethren, concerning the conversion of Cornelius and his friends, and his fellowship with them. On that occasion he had related how the Holy Ghost fell on them, and had said, "Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I that I could resist God?" Now, with equal fervor and force, he said, "God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us, and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now, therefore, why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?"

This yoke was not the law of the ten commandments, as those who oppose the binding claim of the law assert; but Peter referred to the law of ceremonies, which was made null and void by the crucifixion of Christ. This address of Peter brought the assembly to a point where they could listen with reason to Paul and Barnabas, who related their experience in working among the Gentiles. "Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them."

James bore his testimony with decision—that God designed to bring in the Gentiles to enjoy all the privileges of the Jews. The Holy Ghost saw good not to impose the ceremonial law on the Gentile converts; and the apostles and elders,

after careful investigation of the subject, saw the matter in the same light, and their mind was as the mind of the Spirit of God. James presided at the council, and his final decision was, "Wherefore my sentence is that we trouble not them which from among the Gentiles are turned to God."

This ended the discussion. In this instance we have a refutation of the doctrine held by the Roman Catholic Church—that Peter was the head of the church. Those who, as popes, have claimed to be his successors, have no foundation for their pretensions. Nothing in the life of Peter gives sanction to those pretended claims. If the professed successors of Peter had imitated his example, they would have taken no authoritative position, but one on an equality with that of their brethren.

James, in this instance, seems to have been chosen to decide the matter which was brought before the council. It was his sentence that the ceremonial law, and especially the ordinance of circumcision, be not in any wise urged upon the Gentiles, or even recommended to them. James sought to impress the fact upon his brethren that the Gentiles, in turning to God from idolatry, made a great change in their faith; and that much caution should be used not to trouble their minds with perplexing and doubtful questions, lest they be discouraged in following Christ.

The Gentiles, however, were to take no course which should materially conflict with the views of their Jewish brethren, or which would create prejudice in their minds against them. The apostles and elders therefore agreed to instruct the Gentiles by letter to abstain from meats offered to idols, from fornication, from things strangled,

and from blood. They were required to keep the commandments, and to lead holy lives. The Gentiles were assured that the men who had urged circumcision upon them were not authorized to do so by the apostles.

Paul and Barnabas were recommended to them as men who had hazarded their lives for the Lord. Judas and Silas were sent with these apostles to declare to the Gentiles, by word of mouth, the decision of the council: "For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication, from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well." The four servants of God were sent to Antioch with the epistle and message, which put an end to all controversy; for it was the voice of the highest authority upon earth.

The council which decided this case was composed of the founders of the Jewish and Gentile Christian churches. Elders from Jerusalem, and deputies from Antioch, were present; and the most influential churches were represented. The council did not claim infallibility in their deliberations, but moved from the dictates of enlightened judgment, and with the dignity of a church established by the divine will. They saw that God himself had decided this question by favoring the Gentiles with the Holy Ghost; and it was left for them to follow the guidance of the Spirit.

The entire body of Christians were not called to vote upon the question. The apostles and elders—men of influence and judgment—framed and issued the decree, which was thereupon

generally accepted by the Christian churches. All were not pleased, however, with this decision; there was a faction of false brethren who assumed to engage in a work on their own responsibility. They indulged in murmuring and fault-finding, proposing new plans, and seeking to pull down the work of the experienced men whom God had ordained to teach the doctrine of Christ. The church has had such obstacles to meet from the first, and will ever have them to the close of time.

Jerusalem was the metropolis of the Jews, and there were found the greatest exclusiveness and bigotry. The Jewish Christians who lived in sight of the temple would naturally allow their minds to revert to the peculiar privileges of the Jews as a nation. As they saw Christianity departing from the ceremonies and traditions of Judaism, and perceived that the peculiar sacredness with which the Jewish customs had been invested would soon be lost sight of in the light of the new faith, many grew indignant against Paul, as one who had, in a great measure, caused this change. Even the disciples were not all prepared to willingly accept the decision of the council. Some were zealous for the ceremonial law, and regarded Paul with jealousy, because they thought his principles were lax in regard to the obligation of the Jewish law.

When Peter, at a later date, visited Antioch, he acted in accordance with the light given him from Heaven, and the decision of the council. He overcame his natural prejudice so far as to sit at table with the Gentile converts. But when certain Jews who were most zealous for the ceremonial law came from Jerusalem, he changed his

deportment toward the converts from paganism in so marked a degree that it left a most painful impression upon their minds. Quite a number followed Peter's example. Even Barnabas was influenced by the injudicious course of the apostle; and a division was threatened in the church. But Paul, who saw the wrong done the church through the double part acted by Peter, openly rebuked him for thus disguising his true sentiments.

Peter saw the error into which he had fallen, and immediately set about repairing it as far as possible. God, who knoweth the end from the beginning, permitted Peter to exhibit this weakness of character, in order that he might see that there was nothing in himself whereof he might boast. God also saw that, in time to come, some would be so deluded as to claim for Peter and his pretended successors, exalted prerogatives which belong only to God; and this history of the apostle's weakness was to remain as a proof of his human fallibility, and of the fact that he stood in no way above the level of the other apostles.

IMPRISONMENT OF PAUL AND SILAS.

AFTER a time Paul again visited Lystra, where he had been greeted as a god by the heathen; where the opposing Jews had followed on his track, and by falsehood and misrepresentation had turned the reverence of the people into insult, abuse, and a determination to kill him. Yet we find him again on the scene of his former danger, looking after the fruit of his labors there.

He found that the converts to Christ had not been intimidated by the violent persecution of the apostles; but, on the contrary, were confirmed

in the faith, believing that through trial and suffering, the kingdom of Christ would be reached.

Paul found that Timothy was closely bound to him by the ties of Christian union. This man had been instructed in the Holy Scriptures from his childhood, and educated for a strictly religious life. He had witnessed the sufferings of Paul upon his former visit to Lystra, and the bonds of Christian sympathy had knit his heart firmly to that of the apostle. Paul accordingly thought best to take Timothy with him to assist in his labors.

The extreme caution of Paul is manifested in this act. He had refused the companionship of Mark, because he dared not trust him in an emergency. But in Timothy he saw one who fully appreciated the ministerial work, who respected his position, and was not appalled at the prospect of suffering and persecution. Yet he did not venture to accept Timothy, an untried youth, without diligent inquiry with regard to his life and character. After fully satisfying himself on those points, Paul received Timothy as his fellow-laborer and son in the gospel.

Paul, with his usual good judgment, caused Timothy to be circumcised; not that God required it, but in order to remove from the minds of the Jews an obstacle to Timothy's ministration. Paul was to labor from place to place in the synagogues, and there to preach Christ. If his companion should be known as an uncircumcised heathen, the work of both would be greatly hindered by the prejudice and bigotry of the people. The apostle everywhere met a storm of persecution. He desired to bring the Jews to Christianity, and sought, as far as was consistent with the faith, to remove every pretext for opposition.

Yet while he conceded this much to Jewish prejudice, his faith and teachings declared that circumcision or uncircumcision was nothing, but the gospel of Christ was everything.

At Philippi, Lydia, of the city of Thyatira, heard the apostles, and her heart was open to receive the truth. She and her household were converted and baptized, and she entreated the apostles to make her house their home.

Day after day, as they went to their devotions, a woman with the spirit of divination followed them, crying, "These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation." This woman was a special agent of Satan; and, as the devils were troubled by the presence of Christ, so the evil spirit which possessed her was ill at ease in the presence of the apostles. Satan knew that his kingdom was invaded, and took this way of opposing the work of the ministers of God. The words of recommendation uttered by this woman were an injury to the cause, distracting the minds of the people from the truths presented to them, and throwing disrepute upon the work by causing people to believe that the men who spoke with the Spirit and power of God were actuated by the same spirit as this emissary of Satan.

The apostles endured this opposition for several days; then Paul, under inspiration of the Spirit of God, commanded the evil spirit to leave the woman. Satan was thus met and rebuked. The immediate and continued silence of the woman testified that the apostles were the servants of God, and that the demon had acknowledged them to be such, and had obeyed their command. When the woman was dispossessed of the spirit

of the devil, and restored to herself, her masters were alarmed for their craft. They saw that all hope of receiving money from her divinations and soothsayings was at an end, and perceived that, if the apostles were allowed to continue their work, their own source of income would soon be entirely cut off.

A mighty cry was therefore raised against the servants of God, for many were interested in gaining money by Satanic delusions. They brought the apostles before the magistrates with the charge that "these men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, and teach customs which are not lawful for us to receive, being Romans."

Satan stirred up a frenzy among the people. Mob spirit prevailed, and was sanctioned by the authorities, who, with their official hands, tore the clothes from the apostles, and commanded them to be scourged. "And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailer to keep them safely; who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks."

The apostles were left in a very painful condition. Their lacerated and bleeding backs were in contact with the rough stone floor, while their feet were elevated and bound fast in the stocks. In this unnatural position they suffered extreme torture; yet they did not groan nor complain, but conversed with and encouraged each other, and praised God with grateful hearts that they were found worthy to suffer shame for his dear name. Paul was reminded of the persecution he had been instrumental in heaping upon the disciples of Christ, and he was devoutly thankful that his eyes had been opened to see, and his heart to feel, the glorious truths of the gospel of the Son of God, and that he had been privileged to preach the doctrine which he had once despised.

There, in the pitchy darkness and desolation of the dungeon, Paul and Silas prayed, and sung songs of praise to God. The other prisoners heard with astonishment the voice of prayer and praise issuing from the inner prison. They had been accustomed to hear shrieks and moans, cursing and swearing, breaking at night upon the silence of the prison; but they had never before heard the words of prayer and praise ascending from that gloomy cell. The guards and prisoners marveled who were these men, who, cold, hungry, and tortured, could still rejoice and converse cheerfully with each other.

Meanwhile the magistrates had returned to their homes congratulating themselves upon having quelled a tumult, by their prompt and decisive measures. But upon their way home they heard more fully concerning the character and work of the men whom they had sentenced to scourging and imprisonment. They also saw the woman who had been freed from Satanic influence, and who had been a very troublesome subject to them. They were sensibly struck by the change in her countenance and demeanor. She had become quiet, peaceful, and possessed of her right mind. They were indignant with themselves when they discovered that, in all probability, they had visited upon two innocent men the rigorous penalty of the Roman law against the worst criminals. They decided that in the morning they would command them to be pri-

vately released, and escorted in safety from the city beyond the danger of violence from the mob.

But while men were cruel and vindictive, or criminally negligent of the solemn responsibilities devolving upon them, God had not forgotten to be gracious to his suffering servants. An angel was sent from Heaven to release the apostles. As he neared the Roman prison, the earth trembled beneath his feet, the whole city was shaken by the earthquake, and the prison walls reeled like a reed in the wind. The heavily bolted doors flew open; the chains and fetters fell from the hands and feet of every prisoner.

The keeper of the jail had heard with amazement the prayers and singing of the imprisoned apostles. When they were led in, he had seen their swollen and bleeding wounds, and he had himself caused their feet to be fastened in the instruments of torture. He had expected to hear bitter wailing, groans, and imprecations; but lo! his ears were greeted with joyful praise. He fell asleep with these sounds in his ears; but was awakened by the earthquake, and the shaking of the prison walls.

Upon awakening he saw all the prison doors open, and his first thought was that the prisoners had escaped. He remembered with what an explicit charge the prisoners of the night before had been intrusted to his care, and he felt sure that death would be the penalty of his apparent unfaithfulness. He cried out in the bitterness of his spirit that it was better for him to die by his own hand than to submit to a disgraceful execution. He was about to kill himself, when Paul cried out with a loud voice, "Do thyself no harm; for we are all here."

The severity with which the jailer had treated the apostles had not roused their resentment, or they would have allowed him to commit suicide. But their hearts were filled with the love of Christ, and they held no malice against their persecutors. The jailer dropped his sword, and called for a light. He hastened into the inner dungeon, and fell down before Paul and Silas, begging their forgiveness. He then brought them up into the open court, and inquired of them, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

He had trembled because of the wrath of God expressed in the earthquake; he had been ready to die by his own hand for fear of the penalty of the Roman law, when he thought the prisoners had escaped; but now all these things were of little consequence to him compared with the new and strange dread that agitated his mind, and his desire to possess that tranquility and cheerfulness manifested by the apostles under their extreme suffering and abuse. He saw the light of Heaven mirrored in their countenances; he knew that God had interposed in a miraculous manner to save their lives; and the words of the woman possessed by the power of divination came to his mind with peculiar force: "These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation."

He saw his own deplorable condition in contrast with that of the disciples, and with deep humility and reverence asked them to show him the way of life. "And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house." The jailer then washed the wounds of the apos-

tles, and ministered unto them; and was baptized by them. A sanctifying influence spread among the inmates of the prison, and the hearts of all were opened to receive the truths uttered by the apostles. They were convinced also that the living God, whom these men served, had miraculously released them from bondage.

The citizens had been greatly terrified by the earthquake. When the officers informed the magistrates in the morning of what had occurred at the prison, they were alarmed, and sent the sergeants to liberate the apostles from prison. "But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly, uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay, verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out."

Paul and Silas felt that to maintain the dignity of Christ's church, they must not submit to the illegal course proposed by the Roman magistrates. The apostles were Roman citizens, and it was unlawful to scourge a Roman, save for the most flagrant crime, or to deprive him of his liberty without a fair trial and condemnation. They had been publicly thrust into prison, and now refused to be privately released, without proper acknowledgments on the part of the magistrates.

When this word was brought to the authorities they were alarmed for fear the apostles would make complaint of their unlawful treatment to the emperor, and cause the magistrates to lose their positions. They accordingly visited the prison, apologized to the apostles for their injustice and cruelty, and themselves conducted them out of the prison, and entreated them to depart

out of the city. Thus the Lord wrought for his servants in their extremity.

The magistrates entreated them to depart, because they feared their influence over the people, and the power of Heaven that had interposed in behalf of those innocent men who had been unlawfully scourged and imprisoned. Acting upon the principles given them by Christ, the apostles would not urge their presence where it was not desired. They complied with the request of the magistrates, but did not hasten their departure precipitously. They went rejoicing from the prison to the house of Lydia, where they met the new converts to the faith of Christ, and related all the wonderful dealings of God with them. They related their night's experience, and the conversion of the keeper of the prison, and of the prisoners.

The apostles viewed their labors in Philippi as not in vain. They there met much opposition and persecution; but the intervention of Providence in their behalf, and the conversion of the jailer and all his house, more than atoned for the disgrace and suffering they had endured. The Philippians saw represented in the deportment and presence of mind of the apostles the spirit of the religion of Jesus Christ. The apostles might have fled when the earthquake opened their prison doors, and loosened their fetters; but that would have been an acknowledgment that they were criminals, which would have been a disgrace to the gospel of Christ; the jailer would have been exposed to the penalty of death, and the general influence would have been bad. As it was, Paul controlled the liberated prisoners so perfectly that not one attempted to escape.

The Philippians could but acknowledge the

nobility and generosity of the apostles in their course of action, especially in forbearing to appeal to a higher power against the magistrates who had persecuted them. The news of their unjust imprisonment, and miraculous deliverance, was noised about through all that region, and brought the apostles and their ministry before the notice of a large number who would not otherwise have been reached. Christianity was placed upon a high plane, and the converts to the faith were greatly strengthened.

Thus we have the establishment of the church at Philippi under peculiar circumstances, and its numbers steadily increased. Among them were men of wealth and influence, whose noble generosity and ready sympathy were ever on the side of right. They often came to the aid of the apostles in their affliction and pecuniary necessity. Paul said of these brethren, "Now ye Philippians, know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity."

He sends also salutations from the brethren to Cæsar's household; for officers in the employment of the emperor had been converted under the labors of the apostles, and through the manifestation of God in their deliverance from prison.

OPPOSITION AT THESSALONICA.

AFTER leaving Philippi, Paul and Silas made their way to Thessalonica. They were there privileged to address a large concourse of people in the synagogue, with good effect. Their appearance bore evidence of their recent shameful treatment, and necessitated an explanation of what they had endured. This they made without exalting themselves, but magnified the grace of God, which had wrought their deliverance. The apostles, however, felt that they had no time to dwell upon their own afflictions. They were burdened with the message of Christ, and deeply in earnest in his work.

Paul made the prophecies in the Old Testament relating to the Messiah, and the agreement of those prophecies with the life and teachings of Christ, clear in the minds of all among his hearers who would accept evidence upon the subject. Christ in his ministry had opened the minds of his disciples to the Old-Testament scriptures; "beginning with Moses and the prophets, he expounded unto them, in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself." Peter, in preaching Christ, produced his evidence from the Old-Testament scriptures, beginning with Moses and the prophets. Stephen pursued the same course, and Paul followed these examples, giving inspired proof in regard to the mission, suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. He clearly proved his identity with the Messiah, through the testimony of Moses and the prophets; and showed that it was the voice of Christ which spoke through the prophets and patriarchs from the days of Adam to that time.

He showed how impossible it was for them to explain the passover without Christ, as revealed in the Old Testament; and that the brazen serpent lifted up in the wilderness symbolized Jesus Christ, who was lifted up upon the cross. He taught them that all their religious services and

ceremonies would have been valueless if they should now reject the Saviour, who was revealed to them, and who was represented in those ceremonies. He showed them that Christ was the key which unlocked the Old Testament, and gave access to its rich treasures.

Thus Paul preached to the Thessalonians three successive Sabbaths, reasoning with them from the Scriptures, upon the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. He showed them that the expectation of the Jews with regard to the Messiah was not according to prophecy, which had foretold a Saviour to come in humility and poverty, to be rejected, despised, and slain.

He declared that Christ would come a second time in power and great glory, and establish his kingdom upon the earth, subduing all authority, and ruling over all nations. Paul was an Adventist; he presented the important event of the second coming of Christ with such power and reasoning that a deep impression, which never wore away, was made upon the minds of the Thessalonians.

They had strong faith in the second coming of Christ, and greatly feared that they might not live to witness the event. Paul, however, did not leave them with the impression that Christ would come in their day. He referred them to coming events which must transpire before that time should arrive. He warned them that they should "be not shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition."

Paul foresaw that there was danger of his words being misinterpreted, and that some would claim that he, by special revelation, warned the people of the immediate coming of Christ. This he knew would cause confusion of faith; for disappointment usually brings unbelief. He therefore cautioned the brethren to receive no such message as coming from him.

In his Epistle to the Thessalonians, Paul reminds them of his manner of laboring among them. 1 Thess. 2:1–4. He declares that he did not seek to win souls through flattery, deception, or guile. "But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts." Paul rebuked and warned his converts with the faithfulness of a father to his children, while, at the same time, he cherished them as tenderly as a fond mother would her child.

When the Jews saw that the apostles were successful in obtaining large congregations; that many were accepting their doctrines—among them the leading women of the city, and multitudes of Gentiles—they were filled with envy and jealousy. These Jews were not then in favor with the Roman power, because they had raised an insurrection in the metropolis not long previous to this time. They were regarded with suspicion, and their liberty was, in a measure, restricted. They now saw an opportunity to take advantage of circumstances to re-establish themselves in favor, and, at the same time, to throw reproach upon the apostles, and the converts to Christianity.

This they set about doing by representing that the leaders in the new doctrine were raising a tumult among the people. They accordingly ex-

cited the passions of the worthless mob by cunningly devised falsehoods, and incited them to make an uproarious assault upon the house of Jason, the temporary home of the apostles. This they did with a fury more like that of wild beasts than of men. They had been instructed by the Jews to bring out Paul and Silas, and drag them to the authorities, accusing them of creating all this uproar, and of raising an insurrection.

When they had broken into the house, however, they found that the apostles were not there. Friends who had apprehended what was about to occur, had hastened them out of the city, and they had departed for Berea. In their mad disappointment at not finding Paul and Silas, the mob seized Jason and his brother, and dragged them before the authorities with the complaint: "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; whom Jason hath received; and these all do contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus."

The Jews interpreted the words of Paul to mean that Christ would come the second time in that generation, and reign upon the earth as king over all nations. The charge was brought against the apostles with so much determination that the magistrates credited it, and put Jason under bonds to keep the peace, as Paul and Silas were not to be found. The persecuting Jews flattered themselves that by their course toward the Christians they had regained the confidence of the magistrates, and had established their reputation as loyal citizens, while they had, at the same time, gratified their malice toward the apostles, and transferred the suspicion which had

heretofore rested upon themselves to the converts to Christianity.

In his first Epistle to the Thessalonians, Paul says, "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost; so that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia."

Those who preach unpopular truth in our day meet with determined resistance, as did the apostles. They need expect no more favorable reception from a large majority of professed Christians than did Paul from his Jewish brethren. There will be a union of opposing elements against them; for however diverse from each other different organizations may be in their sentiments and religious faith, their forces are united in trampling under foot the fourth commandment in the law of God.

Those who will not themselves accept the truth are most zealous that others shall not receive it; and those are not wanting who perseveringly manufacture falsehoods, and stir up the base passions of the people to make the truth of God of none effect. But the messengers of Christ must arm themselves with watchfulness and prayer, and move forward with faith, firmness, and courage, and, in the name of Jesus, keep at their work as did the apostles. They must sound the note of warning to the world, teaching the transgressors of the law what is sin, and pointing them to Jesus Christ as its great and only remedy.

PAUL AT BEREA AND ATHENS.

AT Berea Paul commenced his work again by going into the synagogues of the Jews to preach the gospel of Christ. He says of them, "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so. Therefore many of them believed; also of honorable women, which were Greeks, and of men not a few."

We here see that questioning doubts and obstinate unbelief were not commended by the inspired apostle. In the presentation of the truth, in these last days, a diligent searching of the Scriptures should be awakened in those who honestly desire to be right. This will produce similar results to those that attended the labors of the apostles in Berea. Those who preach the truth in these days meet many who are the opposite of the Bereans. They cannot controvert the doctrine presented to them, yet they manifest the utmost reluctance to investigate the evidence offered in its favor, and assume that even if it is the truth it is a matter of little or no consequence whether or not they accept it as such. They think that their old customs and faith are good enough for them. But the Lord, who has sent out the apostles and their successors to their work, giving them a message to bear to the world, will hold the people responsible for the manner in which they treat that message of heavenly origin. God will judge all according to the light which has been presented to them.

The apostles taught during the day, disseminating light to those who were in darkness; and then, through the larger portion of the night, labored with their hands to sustain themselves without calling upon any one for material aid. They did this to remove all suspicion that they were seeking personal advantage. Paul afterward writes, "For ye remember, brethren, our labor and travail; for laboring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God."

The minds of the Bereans were not narrowed by prejudice, and they were willing to investigate and receive the truths preached by the apostles. If men and women would follow the example of the noble Bereans, in searching the Scriptures daily, and in comparing the messages brought to them with what is there recorded, there would be thousands loyal to God's law, where there is one to-day. Even many who profess to love God have no desire to change from error to truth, but cling to the pleasing fables of Satan's creation. Error never sanctifies the receiver; but truth of heavenly origin purifies the heart.

The unbelieving Jews of Thessalonica, filled with jealousy and hatred of the apostles, not content with having driven them from their labors among the Thessalonians, followed them to Berea, and again stirred up the excitable passions of the lower class to do them violence. The teachers of the truth were again driven from their field of labor. Persecution followed them from city to city. This hasty retreat from Berea deprived Paul of the opportunity he had anticipated of again visiting the brethren at Thessalonica.

Although the opposers of the doctrine of Christ

could not hinder its actual advancement, they still succeeded in making the work of the apostles exceedingly hard. God, in his providence, permitted Satan to hinder the return of Paul to the Thessalonians. The faithful apostle pressed on through opposition, conflict, and persecution, to carry out the purpose of God as revealed to him in vision.

Paul was sent from Berea to Athens. He was accompanied on his journey by some of the Bereans who had been newly brought into the faith, and who were desirous of learning more concerning the way of life from his teachings. When the apostle arrived at Athens, he sent these men back with a message to Silas and Timotheus to join him immediately in that city. The latter had remained behind in Berea to carry on the work so well commenced there, and to guide the new converts into the mysteries of their holy faith.

Athens was indeed the metropolis of heathendom. Paul did not here meet with ignorant, superstitious idolaters, as at Lystra; but he encountered a people famous for their intelligence and education. Sculpture, representing gods, and deified heroes of history and poetry, met the eye in every direction; while magnificent architecture and paintings represented the national glory, and the national worship of imaginary gods.

The senses were entranced by the beauty and glory of art. Sanctuaries and temples, erected with a total disregard to cost, reared their lofty forms on every hand. Victories of arms, and deeds of renowned men, were commemorated by tablets, and inscriptions upon marble. All these

things made this renowned city like a vast gallery of art. As Paul looked upon the beauty and grandeur surrounding him, and saw the city crowded with idols, his spirit was stirred with jealousy for God, whom he saw dishonored on every side.

His heart was drawn out in deep pity for the citizens of that grand metropolis, who, notwithstanding their intellectual greatness, were given to idolatry. Paul was not deceived by the grandeur and beauty of that which his eyes rested upon, nor by the material wisdom and philosophy which encountered him in this great center of learning. He perceived that human art had done its best to deify vice and make falsehood attractive by glorifying the memory of those whose whole lives had been devoted to leading men to deny God.

The great moral nature of the apostle was so alive to the attraction of heavenly things, that the joy and splendor of those riches that will never fade occupied his mind, and made valueless the earthly pomp and glory with which he was surrounded. As he saw the magnificence of the city, and its costly devices, he realized their seductive power over the minds of the lovers of art and science; his mind was deeply impressed by the importance of the work before him in Athens. He longed with affection for the sympathy and aid of his fellow-laborers. His solitude in that city of magnificence, where God was not worshiped, was oppressive. As far as human fellowship was concerned, he felt himself to be utterly isolated. In his Epistle to the Thessalonians he expresses his feelings in these words: "Left at Athens alone."

Paul's work was to bear the tidings of salvation to a people who had no intelligent understanding of God and his plans. He was not traveling for the purpose of sight-seeing, nor to gratify a morbid desire for new and strange scenes. His dejection of mind was caused by the apparently insurmountable obstacles which presented themselves against his reaching the minds of the people of Athens. Grieved and indignant at the idolatry everywhere visible about him, he felt a holy zeal for his Master's cause. He sought out his Jewish brethren, and, in the Jewish synagogue of Athens, proclaimed the doctrine of Christ. But the principal work of Paul in that city was to deal with paganism.

The religion of the Athenians, of which they made great boast, was of no value, for it was destitute of the knowledge of the true God. It consisted, in great part, of art-worship, and a round of dissipating amusement and festivity. It wanted the virtue of true goodness. Genuine religion gives men the victory over themselves; but a religion of dry intellect and taste is lacking in the essential qualities to raise its possessor above the evils of his nature, and to connect him with God. On the very stones of the altar in Athens this great want was expressed by the inscription, "To the Unknown God." Yes, though boasting of their wisdom, wealth, and skill of art and science, the learned Athenians could but acknowledge that the great Ruler of the universe was unknown to them.

The great men of the city seemed hungering for matters of discussion, in which they would have opportunity to display their wisdom and oratory. While waiting for Silas and Timotheus

to meet him, Paul was not idle. "He disputed in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him." The great men of Athens were not long in finding out this singular teacher, who propounded such strange things to the people on all suitable occasions.

Some who prided themselves upon the depth of their intellectual culture entered into conversation with him. This soon drew a crowd of listeners about them. Some were prepared to ridicule the apostle, as one far beneath them, socially and intellectually, and said jeeringly among themselves, "What will this babbler say? Other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods; because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection."

The Stoics and the Epicureans encountered him; but they, and all others who came in contact with him, soon saw that he had a fund of knowledge even greater than their own. His intellectual power commanded the respect and attention of the more intelligent and learned; while his earnest, logical reasoning, and his power of oratory, held the promiscuous audience. Thus the apostle stood undaunted, meeting his opposers on their own ground, matching logic with their logic, and philosophy with their philosophy.

They reminded him of Socrates, a great philosopher, who was condemned to death because he was a setter forth of strange gods. Paul was counseled not to endanger his life in the same way. But the apostle's discourse riveted the attention of the people; and his unaffected wisdom commanded their admiration and respect. He was not silenced by the science or irony of the

savants; and, after bandying many words with him and satisfying themselves that he was determined to accomplish his errand among them, and tell his story at all hazards, they decided to give him a fair opportunity of doing so.

They accordingly conducted him to Mars' Hill. This place was the highest on the Athenian coast, and its recollections and associations were such as to cause it to be regarded with superstitious awe and reverence, that with some amounted to dread. There courts of justice had been held to determine upon criminal cases, and to decide difficult religious questions. There was a platform in the open air, with seats for the judges hewn out of solid rock. This platform was reached by stone steps. At a little distance below stood the temple of the gods, and their sanctuaries; and massive architecture, sculpture, and statuary made the place one of great magnificence.

Here the Athenians conducted Paul, away from the public thoroughfares, and the tumult of promiscuous discussion; for the frivolous, thoughtless class of society did not care to follow him to this place of highest reverence. Here the apostle could be heard without interruption. Learned men addressed him: "May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is? for thou bringest certain strange things to our ears; we would know, therefore, what these things mean." "Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' Hill and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all

things therein, seeing that he is Lord of Heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshiped with men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us."

Thus, in the most impressive manner, with hand outstretched toward the temple crowded with idols, Paul poured out the burden of his soul, and with deep reasoning revealed the fallacies of the religion of the Athenians. His words could not be controverted. Pointing to their statuary and idols, he declared to them that God could not be likened to forms of men's device. The works of art could not, in the faintest sense, represent the glory of the infinite God. He reminded them that their images had no breath nor life. They were controlled by human power; they could move only as the hands of men moved them; and those who worshiped them were in every way superior to that which they worshiped. Pointing to noble specimens of manhood about him, he declared, "Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device."

Man was created in the image of this infinite God, being blessed with intellectual power, and a perfect and symmetrical body. He declared that the heavens were not large enough to con-

tain God; yet how much less able were those temples made with hands. Paul, under the inspiration of his subject, soared above the comprehension of the idolatrous assembly, and sought to draw their minds beyond the limits of their false religion to right views of the true Deity, whom they instinctively acknowledged, and had called the "Unknown God." This glorious Being, whom he now declared unto them, was independent of man, needing nothing from his hand to add to his power and glory.

The people were carried away with admiration of Paul's reasoning and eloquence. The Epicureans began to breathe more freely, believing that he was strengthening their position, that everything had its origin in blind chance; and that certain ruling principles controlled the universe. But his next sentence brought a cloud to their brows. He asserted the creative power of God, and the existence of his overruling providence. He declared unto them the true God, who is the living center of government.

This divine Ruler had, in the dark ages of the world, passed lightly over heathen idolatry; but now he had sent them the light of truth, through his Son; and he exacted repentance from all men unto salvation; not only from the poor and humble, but from the proud philosopher, and the princes of the earth. "Because He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."

As Paul thus spoke of the resurrection from the dead, his speech was interrupted. Some

mocked; others put his words aside, saying, "We will hear thee again of this matter." Thus the teaching of the apostle was brought to a close; for the Athenians, though enjoying the reputation of high literary and scientific culture, clung to their idolatry, and turned away from the light of a true and reasonable religion. When a people are wholly satisfied with their own attainments, little more need be expected of them. Highly educated, and boasting of their learning and refinement, the Athenians were yearly becoming more corrupt, and having less desire for anything better than that which they possessed.

The labors of Paul in Athens were not wholly in vain. Several became converts to Christianity, and joined themselves to him. His words also, and the description of his attitude and surroundings, as traced by the pen of inspiration, were to be handed down through all coming generations, bearing witness of his unshaken confidence, his courage in loneliness and adversity, and the victory he gained for Christianity, even in the very heart of paganism.

The providence of God has given us this glance at the life of the Athenians, in all their knowledge, refinement, and art, yet marked with vice and shame, that he might show how through his servant he rebuked idolatry, and the sins of a proud, self-sufficient people. The words of Paul memorialize the occasion, and give a treasure of knowledge to the church. He was placed in a position where he might easily have spoken that which would irritate his proud listeners, and bring himself into difficulty. Had his oration been a direct attack upon their gods, and the great men of the city who were before him, he would have

been in danger of meeting the fate of Socrates. But he carefully drew their minds away from heathen deities, by revealing to them the true God, whom he acknowledged, but who was to them unknown, as they themselves confessed by a public inscription.

PAUL GOES TO CORINTH.

PAUL did not wait for his brethren, but, leaving them to follow him, went at once to Corinth. Here he adopted a different course of action from that which had marked his labors at Athens. While in the latter place, he had adapted his style to the character of his audience; and much of his time had been devoted to the discussion of natural religion, matching science with science, logic with logic, and philosophy with philosophy. But when the apostle reviewed the time and labor he had there devoted to the exposition of Christianity, and realized that his style of teaching had not been productive of much fruit, he decided upon a different plan of labor in the future. He determined to avoid discussions of theories and elaborate arguments as much as possible, but to urge the doctrine of salvation through Christ upon sinners. In his epistle to his Corinthian brethren, he afterward described his manner of laboring among them:—

"And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching

was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

Here the apostle has given the most successful manner of converting souls from ignorance and the darkness of error, to the light of truth. If ministers would follow more closely the example of Paul in this particular, they would see greater success attending their efforts. If all who minister in word and doctrine would make it their first business to be pure in heart and life, and to connect themselves closely with Heaven, their teaching would have greater power to convict souls, and many would be converted to God.

Corinth presented to the apostle an important field. It was a large mercantile city, closely connected with Rome. Paul saw that if the gospel could be established there it would be rapidly communicated to all parts of the world. The Jews who had recently been banished from Rome, because of their continual insurrections, had taken up their residence at Corinth. Many who were innocent of any wrong were violently persecuted and were compelled to suffer with the guilty. Among this class were Aquila and Priscilla. Paul made the particular acquaintance of these persons, because their trade and his own were the same.

The apostle preached through the day, and at night worked with Aquila and Priscilla at tent-making. While in a city of strangers, he would not be chargeable to any one, but labored with his hands for his own support; and while thus preaching and working, he presented the highest type of Christianity. He combined teaching

with his labor; and, while toiling with those of his trade, he imparted to his fellow-workmen knowledge in regard to the way of salvation. In this way he had access to many whom he could not otherwise have reached.

Corinth was regarded as a very unpromising field of labor. Idolaters were there in numbers, and Venus was their favorite goddess. A large number of dissolute women were employed in connection with the worship of this reigning deity, for the purpose of attracting pleasure-seekers of lax morals. The Corinthians were sunken to the depths of moral pollution.

Paul found himself in the midst of a numerous population of Greeks and Jews. People from all parts of the world were called to this place. The apostle, according to his custom, preached first in the synagogue every Sabbath. When Silas and Timotheus joined him, they labored together with Paul. But when he taught that Jesus was the Messiah, the Jews were angry. "And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean; from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshiped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue."

The apostle, in his teaching, dwelt upon Christ, and proved from Moses and the prophets that he was the long-looked-for Messiah. He did not labor to charm the ear with oratory, nor to engage the mind with philosophical discussions, which would leave the heart untouched. He preached the cross of Christ, not with labored

eloquence of speech, but with the grace of God; and his words had a powerful effect. "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord, with all his house; and many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized."

Paul met the worst opposition from the Jews. They hindered his labor in every way possible, blaspheming the Spirit and power which everywhere attended him, and attributing to Satanic agency the miracles he wrought in the name of Christ. The conversion and baptism of Crispus had the effect to exasperate instead of to convince these stubborn opposers. Their opposition increased as the converts to Christianity increased in numbers. Similar results attend the labors of those who seek to win souls to the present truth. Many professed Christians are the most bitter and unreasonable opposers, in defiance of the most convincing evidence.

Paul was very anxious to understand his duty, and the Lord gave him evidence that he was interested in his work, and cognizant of his anxiety and discouragement. A vision was given him in the night season, assuring him of the divine presence and support, promising him safety and success, and urging him not to keep silence, but to continue his efforts with renewed courage. In the moment of severe trial, conscious strength was thus given him of God to prepare him for still greater demonstrations on the part of the Jews.

The increased success of Paul in presenting Christ to the people, roused the unbelieving Jews to more determined opposition. They arose in a body with great tumult, and brought him before

the judgment-seat of Gallio, who was then deputy of Achaia. They expected, as on former occasions, to have the authorities on their side, and with loud and angry voices preferred their complaints against the apostle, saying, "This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law."

The proconsul, disgusted with the bigotry and self-righteousness of the accusing Jews, refused to take notice of the charge. As Paul prepared to speak in self-defense, Gallio informed him that it was not necessary; that the affair did not come under his authority. Then turning to the angry accusers, he said, "If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you. But if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters. And he drove them from the judgment-seat."

For the first time during Paul's labors in Europe, the mob turned on the side of the minister of truth; and, under the very eye of the proconsul, and without interference from him, the people violently beset the most prominent accusers of the apostle. "Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment-seat. And Gallio cared for none of those things."

Gallio was a man of integrity, and would not become the dupe of the jealous and intriguing Jews. Unlike Pilate, he refused to do injustice to one whom he knew to be an innocent man. The Jewish religion was under the protection of Roman power; and the accusers of Paul thought that, if they could fasten upon him the charge of violating the laws of their religion, he would

probably be given into their hands for such punishment as they saw fit to inflict. They thus hoped to compass his death.

Both Greeks and Jews had waited eagerly for the decision of Gallio; and his immediate dismissal of the case, as one that had no bearing upon the public interest, was the signal for the Jews to retire, baffled, and enraged, and for the mob to assail the ruler of the synagogue. Even the ignorant rabble could but perceive the unjust and vindictive spirit which the Jews displayed in their unreasonable attack upon Paul. Thus Christianity obtained a signal victory. If the apostle had been driven from Corinth at this time, because of the malice of the Jews, the whole community of converts to the faith of Christ would have been placed in great danger. The Jews would have endeavored to follow up their advantage, as was their custom, even to the extermination of Christianity.

"And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the Word of God among them."

APOLLOS AT CORINTH.

PAUL'S next scene of labor was at Ephesus. He was on his way to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Pentecost; and his stay at Ephesus was necessarily short. He reasoned with the Jews in the synagogue, and produced such a favorable impression that he was entreated to tarry there, and to protract his labors among them. His plan to visit Jerusalem prevented him from doing so; but he promised to visit them on his return. He left Aquila and Priscilla to

carry forward the good work which he had begun.

It was at this time that Apollos, an Alexandrian Jew, visited Ephesus. He had received the highest Grecian cultivation, and was a scholar and an orator. He had heard the teachings of John the Baptist, had received the baptism of repentance, and was a living witness that the work of the prophet was not in vain. Apollos was a deep student of the prophecies, and was a powerful expounder of scripture, publicly proclaiming his faith in Christ, as far as he himself had received the light.

Aquila and Priscilla listened to this able speaker, and saw that his teaching was defective. He had not a thorough knowledge of the mission of Christ, his resurrection and ascension, and of his Spirit, the Comforter, which he sent to his people. They accordingly sent for Apollos, and the educated orator received instruction from them with grateful surprise and joy. They explained the scripture to him more clearly than he had before understood it, and he became one of the ablest defenders of the Christian church. Thus a deep scholar and brilliant orator learned the way of the Lord more perfectly from the teachings of a Christian man and woman whose humble employment was that of tent-making.

Apollos, having seen new light in regard to the way of salvation through Christ, accepted it gladly, and reasoned from the Scriptures with greater power and success than he had ever before done. He felt anxious to visit Corinth, and the Ephesian brethren wrote to the Corinthians to receive him as a teacher who was in full harmony with the acknowledged church of Christ. He accordingly went to Corinth, and labored

with the very Jews who had rejected the truth as preached to them by Paul. He argued with them from house to house, both publicly and privately, showing them Christ in prophecy; that he was Jesus whom Paul had preached, and that all their expectations of another Messiah to come were in vain. Thus Paul planted the seed of truth, and Apollos watered it; and the fact of Apollos supporting the mission of Paul gave character to the past labors of the apostle among them.

His success in preaching the gospel occasioned some of the church to exalt his labors above those of Paul, while he himself was working in perfect harmony with Paul for the advancement of the cause. This rival spirit threatened to greatly hinder the work. Paul had purposely presented the gospel to the Corinthians in its veriest simplicity. Disappointed with the result of his labors in Athens, where he had brought his learning, eloquence, and ability to bear upon his hearers, he determined to pursue an entirely different course in Corinth. He presented there the plain, simple truth, unadorned with worldly wisdom, and studiously dwelt upon Christ, and his mission to the world. The eloquent discourses of Apollos, and his manifest learning, were contrasted by his hearers with the purposely simple and unadorned preaching of Paul.

Many declared themselves to be under the leadership of Apollos, while others composed another party perseveringly adhering to the instructions of Paul. Satan came in to take advantage of these imaginary differences in the Corinthian church, tempting them to draw comparisons between the ministers who taught the

way of salvation. Some claimed Apollos as their leader, some Paul, and some Peter. Thus Paul, in his efforts to establish Christianity, met with conflicts and trials in the church as well as outside of it. Factions were beginning to rise through the influence of Judaizing teachers, who urged that the converts to Christianity should observe the ceremonial law in the matter of circumcision.

They still maintained that the original Israel were the exalted and privileged children of Abraham, entitled to all the promises made to Abraham. They sincerely thought that in taking this medium ground between Jew and Christian, they would succeed in wiping out the odium which attached to Christianity, and gather in large numbers of the Jews who would not otherwise embrace the true faith. They vindicated their position, which was in opposition to that of Paul, by showing that the course of the apostle, in accepting the Gentiles into the church without circumcision, prevented more Jews from accepting the faith than there were accessions from the Gentiles. Thus they excused their opposition to the results of the calm deliberations of God's acknowledged servants.

They refused to admit that the work of Christ embraced the whole world; but claimed that he was the Saviour of the Hebrews alone; therefore they maintained that the Gentiles should receive circumcision before being admitted to the privileges of the church of Christ. After the decision of the council at Jerusalem concerning this question, many were of this same opinion, but did not then venture to push the matter farther. The council had, on that occasion, decided that

the Jewish Christians might observe the ordinances of the Mosaic law if they chose, while they should not be made obligatory upon the Gentile Christians. The opposing class now took advantage of this to urge a distinction between the observers of the ceremonial law and those who did not observe it, holding that the latter were removed farther from God than the former.

Here Paul was forced into the battle, to argue the question whether the converts to Christianity should be Jews in every respect, save their belief that Jesus Christ was the Messiah, or whether they should discern to the end of that which had been abolished by the death of Christ, and bear evidence that they were children of Abraham, not merely in their bodies, but in their hearts, showing by their righteous lives the merits of the grace of Christ.

Paul's indignation was stirred. His voice was raised in stern rebuke: "If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." The party maintaining that Christianity was valueless without circumcision arrayed themselves against the apostle, and Paul had to meet them in every church which he had raised up; in Jerusalem, Antioch, Galatia, Corinth, Ephesus, and Rome. God urged him out to the great work of preaching Christ and him crucified; that circumcision or uncircumcision was nothing. The Judaizing party looked upon Paul as an apostate, bent upon breaking down the partition wall which God had established between the Israelites and the world. They visited every church which he had organized, creating divisions. Reasoning that the end would justify the means, they circulated false charges against the apostle, and endeavored to

bring him into disrepute. As Paul, in visiting the churches, followed after these zealous and unscrupulous opposers, he met many who viewed him with distrust, and some who even despised his labors.

These divisions in regard to the ceremonial law, and the relative merits of the different ministers teaching the doctrine of Christ, caused the apostle much anxiety and hard labor. In his Epistle to the Corinthians, he thus addresses them on the latter subject:—

"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"

He also explains the reason of his manner of labor among them: "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal; for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?"

He thus shows them that he could not, when with them, address them as those who had an experience in spiritual life and the mystery of

godliness. However wise they might have been in worldly knowledge, they were but babes in the knowledge of Christ, and it was his work to instruct them in the first rudiments, the very alphabet of Christian faith and doctrine. It was his task to sow the seed, which another must water. It was the business of those who followed him to carry forward the work from the point where he had left it, and to give spiritual light and knowledge in due season, as they were able to bear it.

When he came to them they had no experimental knowledge of the way of salvation, and he was obliged to present the truth in its simplest form. Their carnal minds could not discern the sacred revealings of God; they were strangers to the manifestations of divine grace. Paul had spoken to them as those who were ignorant of the operations of that grace upon the heart. They were carnal-minded, and the apostle was aware that they could not comprehend the mysteries of salvation; for spiritual things must be spiritually discerned. He knew that many of his hearers were proud believers in human theories, and reasoners of false theologies, groping with blind eyes in the book of nature for a contradiction of the spiritual and immortal life revealed in the Book of God.

He knew that criticism would set about controverting the Christian interpretation of the revealed word, and skepticism would treat the gospel of Christ with scoffing and derision. It behooved him to introduce most carefully the great truths he wished to teach them. True Christianity is a religion of progress. It is ever giving light and blessing, and has in resource still greater

light and blessing to bestow on those who receive its truths. The illuminating influence of the gospel of Christ, and the sanctifying grace of God, can alone transform the carnal mind to be in harmony with spiritual things.

Paul did not venture to directly rebuke the licentious, and to show them how heinous was their sin in the sight of a holy God. His work was, as a wise teacher, to set before them the true iam and object of life, impressing upon their minds the lessons of the divine Teacher, which sought to bring them up from worldliness and sin, to purity and immortal life. The spiritual senses must be matured by continual advancement in the knowledge of heavenly things. Thus the mind would learn to delight in them; and every precept of the Word of God would shine forth as a priceless gem.

Paul had especially dwelt upon practical godliness, and the character of that holiness which must be gained in order to make sure of the kingdom of Heaven. He wished the light of the gospel of Christ to pierce the darkness of their minds, that they might discern how aggravating to God were their immoral practices. Therefore the burden of Paul's preaching among them had been Christ, and him crucified. He wished them to understand that the theme for their most earnest study, and greatest joy, should be the grand truth of salvation through repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and in the saving merits of his blood.

The philosopher turns aside from the light of salvation because it puts his proud theories to shame. The worldling refuses to receive it, because it would separate him from his earthly

idols, and draw him to a holier life, for which he has no inclination. Paul saw that the character of Christ must be understood before men could love him, and view the cross with the eye of faith. Here must begin that study which shall be the science and the song of the redeemed through all eternity. In the light of the cross alone can the true value of the human soul be estimated.

The refining influence of the grace of God changes the natural disposition of man. Heaven would not be desirable to the carnal-minded; their natural, unsanctified hearts would feel no attraction toward that pure and holy place; and if it were possible for them to enter, they would find nothing there congenial to them, in their sinful condition. The carnal propensities which reign in the natural heart must be subdued by the grace of Christ, before fallen man can be elevated to harmonize with Heaven, and enjoy the society of the pure and holy angels. When man dies to sin, and is quickened to new life in Christ Jesus, divine love fills his heart; his understanding is sanctified; he drinks from an inexhaustible fountain of joy and knowledge; and the light of an eternal day shines upon his path, for he has the light of life with him continually.

Paul now sought to impress upon them the fact that he himself, and the ministers who followed him, were only men, commissioned of God to teach them the truth; that they were individually engaged in the same work, which was marked out for them by their Heavenly Father; that they were all dependent upon him for the success which attended their labors. "For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of

Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase."

The consciousness of being God's servants inspires the minister with energy and diligence to perseveringly discharge his duty, with an eye single to the glory of his Master. God has given to each of his messengers his distinctive work; and, while there is a diversity of gifts, all are to blend harmoniously in carrying forward the great work of salvation. They are only instruments of divine grace and power.

Paul says, "So, then, neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one; and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are laborers together with God; ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building." The teacher of Christ's truth must be near the cross himself, in order to bring sinners to it. His work should be to preach Christ, and to studiously avoid calling attention to himself and thus encumbering the sacred truth, lest he hinder its saving power.

There can be no stronger evidence in churches that the truths of the Bible have not sanctified the receivers than their attachment to some favorite minister, and their unwillingness to accept and be profited by the labors of some other teacher who is sent to them in the providence of God. The Lord sends help to his church as they need, not as they choose; for short-sighted mortals cannot discern what is for their best good.

It is seldom that one minister has all the qualifications necessary to perfect any one church in all the requirements of Christianity; therefore God sends other ministers to follow him, one after another, each one possessing some qualifications in which the others were deficient.

The church should gratefully accept these servants of Christ, even as they would accept their Master himself. They should seek to derive all the benefit possible from the instruction which ministers may give them from the Word of God. But the ministers themselves are not to be idolized; there should be no religious pets and favorites among the people; it is the truths they bring which are to be accepted, and appreciated in the meekness of humility.

In the apostles' day, one party claimed to believe in Christ, yet would not give due respect to his ambassadors. They claimed to follow no human teacher, but to be taught directly from Christ, without the aid of ministers of the gospel. They were independent in spirit, and unwilling to submit to the voice of the church. Another party claimed Paul as their leader, and drew comparisons between him and Peter, which were unfavorable to the latter. Another declared that Apollos far exceeded Paul in address, and power of oratory. Another claimed Peter as their leader, affirming that he had been most intimate with Christ when he was upon earth, while Paul had been a persecutor of the believers. This party spirit was in danger of ruining the Christian church.

Paul and Apollos were in perfect harmony. The latter was disappointed and grieved because of the dissension in the church; he took no ad-

vantage of the preference shown himself, nor did he encourage it; but hastily left the field of strife. When Paul afterward urged him to visit Corinth, he declined, and did not do so until long after, when the church had reached a better spiritual state.

In writing to the Corinthians, Paul speaks of Apollos as one who had watered the precious seed sown by himself. He made no mention of the false teachers who were sent to Corinth to destroy the fruit of his labor. Because of the darkness and division in the church, he wisely forbore to irritate them by such references, for fear of turning some entirely from the truth. But he called the attention of the Corinthians to his work among them, saying, "According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

Paul, as a champion of the faith, did not hesitate to declare the character of his work. But he did not thereby exalt himself when he asserted that he was a wise master-builder, who had laid the foundation for another to build upon. He had just stated, "For we are laborers together with God." He claimed no wisdom of his own; but divine power, uniting with his human efforts, had enabled him to present the truth in a manner pleasing to God. He was a co-laborer with Christ, a diligent worker in bringing spiritual knowledge from the Word of God and the works of Christ, to all whose hearts were open to evidence. United with Christ, who was the greatest of all teachers, he had been enabled to communicate lessons of divine wisdom that met the necessities of all classes and conditions of men, and which were to apply to all times, all places, and all people. In so doing, Paul took no glory to himself, as a humble instrument in the hands of God.

God gave Paul the wisdom of a skillful architect, that he might lay the foundation of the church of Christ. This figure of the building of a temple is frequently repeated in the Scriptures, as forcibly illustrating the building up of the true Christian church. Zechariah refers to Christ as the Branch that should build the temple of the Lord. He also refers to the Gentiles as helping in this building: "And they that are far off shall come and build in the temple of the Lord."

Paul had now been working in the Gentile quarry, to bring out valuable stones to lay upon the foundation stone, which was Jesus Christ, that by coming in contact with that living stone, they might also become living stones. In writing to the Ephesians, he says, "Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord. In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God."

Some ministers, through their labors, furnish the most precious material: gold, silver, and precious stones, which represent true moral worth sanctified and purified by the Spirit of God. The false material, gilded to imitate the true,—

that is a carnal mind, and unsanctified character, glossed over with seeming righteousness,—may not be readily detected by mortal eye; but the day of God will test the material. "Every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it."

The precious stones represent the most perfect Christians, who have been refined and polished by the grace of God, and affliction which they have endured with much prayer and patience. Their obedience and love resemble that of the great Pattern. Their lives are beautified and ennobled by self-sacrifice. They will endure the test of the burning day, for they are living stones. "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out."

Many, from worldly policy, endeavor, by their own efforts, to become as polished stones, but cannot be living stones, because they are not built upon the true foundation. The day of God will reveal that they are, in reality, only hay, wood, and stubble. The great temple of Diana was ruined; her magnificence utterly perished; those who shouted, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," perished with their goddess and the temple which enshrined her. Their religion is forgotten, or seems like an idle tale. That temple was built upon a false foundation, and when tried, it was found to be worthless. But the stones that Paul quarried out from Ephesus were found to be precious and enduring.

Paul laid himself upon the true foundation, and brought every stone, whether large or small, polished or unhewn, common or precious, to be connected with the living foundation stone, Christ

Jesus. Thus slowly ascended the temple of the church of God. The apostle says, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."

Paul, in vision, had a view of the city of God, with its foundation of precious stones; and he represents the true Christian converts to be gold, silver, and precious stones. But the Jews made the work of Paul exceedingly difficult. They were continually claiming to be the only true children of Abraham, and therefore the only legitimate building-stones for God's house; and when the Gentiles accepted the truth, and were brought to the true foundation, they murmured about this material. Thus they hindered the work of God; nevertheless, the apostle unflinchingly continued his labors.

Paul and his fellow-workmen were skillful architects because they had learned from Christ and his works. They had not only to build, but to tear down. They had to contend with the bigotry, prejudice, and violence of men who had built upon a false foundation. Through the power of God the apostles became mighty in pulling down these strongholds of the enemy. Many who wrought as builders of the temple of Christ's church could be likened to the builders of the wall in Nehemiah's day: "They which builded on the wall, and they that bore burdens, with those that laded, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon."

One after another of the noble builders fell at his work by the hand of the enemy. Stephen

was stoned; James was slain by the sword; Paul was beheaded; Peter was crucified; John was exiled. And yet stone after stone was added to the building, the church increased in the midst of the terrible persecutions that afflicted it, and new workers on the wall took the place of the fallen.

These faithful builders sought diligently to bring precious material to the living foundation. Paul labored to have his own heart, affections, and character correct and in harmony with the law of God; and then earnestly sought to bring about the same result with his converts. He exhorted Timothy: "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine." This is the duty of every teacher of Bible truth, to illustrate in his own life the active Christian virtues, to be pure in heart, given to holy conversation, to be good, and to do good.

God will not accept the most splendid service, or the most brilliant talent, unless it is laid upon, and connected with, the living foundation stone; for this alone gives true value to the ability possessed, and makes it a living service to God. We may look back through centuries, and see the living stones gleaming like jets of light through the rubbish of moral darkness, errors, and superstition. These precious jewels shine with continually increasing luster, not alone for time, but for eternity. Although dead, the words and deeds of the righteous of all ages testify to the truth of God. The names of the martyrs for Christ's sake are immortalized among the angels in Heaven; and a bright reward awaits them when the Life-giver shall call them from their graves.

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