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by Lady Mary Ross**

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"GRANNY'S CHAPTERS"

(ON SCRIPTURAL SUBJECTS)

BY

LADY MARY ROSS.

THE NEW TESTAMENT,

**WITH A SKETCH OF THE SUBSEQUENT HISTORY OF
THE JEWS.**

NEW EDITION.

**LONDON:
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1882.**

PREFACE TO VOLUME IV.

THE New Testament has been treated in a manner somewhat different to that adopted in regard to the Books of the Old Testament.

The object has been, to sketch out the earthly Life of our Blessed Lord, and to draw attention to a few important points.

It was obviously impossible to dwell particularly upon the details of every Miracle, Parable, and Conversation, recorded by the Evangelists. Nor was such a course necessary.

The language of the Gospels is so simple and clear, that details are better read from Holy Writ itself.

That this volume may lead the young to a reverent study of our Saviour's character, and an earnest endeavour to "follow the blessed steps of His most Holy Life," is the earnest prayer of the Author.

MARY ROSS.

November, 1871.

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PART I.

CHAPTER I.—JOHN THE BAPTIST BORN.

WE have now seen that the Sceptre had departed from Judah. The whole country was subject to the Romans, who had appointed Herod to govern it for them; and the time was now come when the blessed promises, that "the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head," and that "in the seed of Abraham all nations of the earth should be blessed," were to be fulfilled by the coming of the Messiah, the Son of God, Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Redeemer; born of a woman, that thus being as Man upon the earth, He might suffer for man, and make that atonement for man, which He could only make because He was the Son of God. Unless the Messiah had been at once God and Man, He could have been no Saviour for man; no mediator between a holy God and His sinful creatures.

Very soon after the death of Herod's sons, Alexander and Aristobulus, the last princes of the Asmonean family, the wonderful events related in the New Testament began to take place. No doubt we are all well acquainted with the story of the priest Zacharias, a good and holy man, who, whilst performing his duty in the house of God, saw an Angel standing on the right side of the altar of incense. Zacharias was an old man, and his wife Elisabeth was also an old woman, and therefore when the Angel told him that the Lord would work as great a miracle as He had done in Abraham's case, and give a son to Elisabeth, as He had given Isaac to Sarah, Zacharias must indeed have been greatly astonished.

The Angel moreover told Zacharias, that this child, whom God would give him, was to be named John; and that he should be in an especial manner guided and protected by the Holy Spirit, for that he was to be the messenger spoken of by prophets, as sent to prepare the way for the Messiah, and give notice of His coming. Such particulars should have overcome any doubts which Zacharias might at the first moment have felt; but his faith failed him, and therefore, considering only the impossibility of such an event happening without the special interposition of the Lord, he, guided by sight and not by faith, presumed to ask for some sign, to assure him that what the Angel spake would really come to pass.

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This sinful unbelief was punished, even whilst his faithless request was granted; for Zacharias immediately lost the power of speaking, and remained speechless for many months: but his unbelief was gone, and he certainly made his wife Elisabeth acquainted with the promises and directions spoken by the Angel.

About six months after this appearance of the Angel Gabriel to Zacharias, He "was sent from God, unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary." The Angel told Mary, that she had been chosen by the Almighty to be the mother of the promised Messiah, whose birth was to be a miracle; inasmuch as He would have no earthly father, but should be called the Son of God. Gabriel also told Mary, that when she had brought forth her son, she should call His name Jesus; that is, a Saviour. Mary was greatly troubled when the Angel first spake to her, and when she expressed her wonder and astonishment, He comforted her, and told her that her cousin Elisabeth, the wife of Zacharias, was also about to become a mother; adding, "For with God nothing shall be impossible." Mary's faith now showed itself, and she said, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word." Meaning that she was willing to serve the Lord in everything, and suffer whatever might come upon her in consequence. For, as she had no husband whom she could name as the father of her Child, she was liable to punishment. When Joseph, to whom Mary was espoused, or promised in marriage, found that she would have a Son, he was astonished, and had some thoughts of putting her away from being his wife; but being a just, or good and kind man, he meant to do this quietly and secretly, or "privily," so as not to expose Mary to blame or punishment. But while he thought on these things, behold the Angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, and told him not to fear about taking Mary to be his wife, for that the Holy Spirit had worked a great miracle, and that Mary was to be the mother of the

promised Messiah; and as the Angel had said to Mary herself, so He now repeated to Joseph, "she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins." Then all Joseph's doubts and fears were at an end: he did as the Angel bade him, and thus was looked upon by men as the father of Mary's holy Son, who had in truth no Father but God.

The Scripture tells us, "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel; which being interpreted is, God with us." That is, God taking the form and nature of man; living as man amongst men; dying as man for men. "Emmanuel—God with us."

The next thing we read of is, that "Mary arose and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Judah" where Zacharias dwelt, that she might talk over with Elisabeth all those wonderful things which the angel Gabriel had said to her. "And she entered into the house of Zacharias and saluted Elisabeth"; who, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, "spake out with a loud voice" words that must have greatly comforted Mary. Elisabeth told her, that she was blessed among women in being chosen for the mother of the Messiah, and said, "Whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" meaning that she was not worthy of the honour of receiving in her house one who was to be the mother of the Son of God. Elisabeth ended by commending Mary for her faith and trust, saying, "blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord."

Mary now uttered that beautiful hymn of praise, beginning, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." A hymn familiar to us all, as part of our Liturgy, or form of public worship, used in our Churches. This hymn, called "The Magnificat," is said or sung after the first Lesson in the Evening Service.

Mary abode with her cousin for about three months, and then returned to her own home, at Nazareth, in Galilee. Not long after Mary's departure, John the Baptist was born; "Elisabeth brought forth a son. And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had showed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her. And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child," and give him a name, as amongst us is done in Baptism; for Baptism in the Christian Church, takes the place of Circumcision in the Jewish Church.

When the friends of Zacharias wished to give the infant his father's name, Elisabeth spoke out at once, and said, "He shall be called John." This surprised them so much, that they at once asked Zacharias "how he would have him called." Zacharias immediately, by signs, asked for a writing-table, or rather for a tablet, upon which to write, and then wrote down, "His name is John. And they marvelled all." They must have marvelled, or wondered, still more, when suddenly Zacharias recovered his power of speaking; for "his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake and praised God." Now he could tell all that had happened to him, and how his unbelief in the Angel's promise had been punished by temporary dumbness. "And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judæa: and all they that heard" these things "laid them up in their hearts": took notice of them, and remembered them, "saying, What manner of child shall this be!" The extraordinary events connected with the birth of John, made all men believe that a child so born must be intended to do great things during his lifetime. Zacharias, inspired by the Holy Spirit, then uttered the hymn called "The Benedictus," sometimes said in our Churches after the second Lesson in the Morning Service, instead of the Psalm (c.), "Jubilate Deo," also belonging to our Liturgy. In this hymn, Zacharias praised and blessed God for the coming of the Saviour; and then, addressing the unconscious infant John, he foretold that he should be the messenger to prepare the way of the Lord Jesus Christ, and incline men to listen to, and believe in, Him.

Of John's infancy and childhood we are told nothing, except that he grew in body, and waxed strong in spirit, and that "the hand of the Lord was with him." "And he was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel." He passed a quiet and retired life, until he was called upon to baptize the people, and point to the Son of Mary as the Son of God; the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.

CHAPTER II.—BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST.

MARY and her husband Joseph lived at Nazareth, a town in Galilee not far from the lake of Tiberias, or Sea of Galilee; and the prophets had declared that the Messiah should be born in "Bethlehem of Judah," a small place to the South of Jerusalem, nearly a hundred miles from Nazareth. That Mary should take such a long journey to a strange place, instead of staying quietly at home until her Child was born, was the most unlikely thing that could well be imagined. Here, therefore, we again see how wonderfully the Lord rules all things, and makes use of people who know nothing of Him, to do what He wills should be done. God now made use of a heathen Emperor, to accomplish His will, that Jesus Christ should be born in Bethlehem.

The Roman Emperor Augustus, in order to know what taxes he could lay upon the different parts of his dominions, determined to take the number of the people who were subject to him; and in order to do this, he commanded that the name of every one should be written down. As

Judæa was now under the dominion of the Romans, all the inhabitants of that country were obliged to put their names upon lists, prepared for the purpose: but all belonging to the same tribe or family were to go to one place, so that many of the Jews, who were scattered throughout the country, had to travel a long way to the place appointed for the registering of their tribe.

Amongst these were Mary and Joseph, who were both "of the house and lineage of David"; that is, both were descended from David, who was of the tribe of Judah; and therefore Bethlehem was the place in which they must appear before the Roman officers, appointed to take down the names of all the people, and register, or make lists of them. The commands of the Roman Emperor were not to be disobeyed: and Mary and Joseph set out upon their long and fatiguing journey. Upon their arrival, they found the place so full of people come upon the same business, that there was no room for them in the inn, and they being poor, and not able to pay for better accommodation, were glad to lodge in a stable; and here, it pleased God, that Jesus Christ, the Lord of Life, the King of Glory, should be born: and Mary "brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger."

But though born in a stable, unnoticed and uncared for by men, the Angels of God proclaimed the wonderful event to the Shepherds, keeping watch over their flocks by night.

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At that time, there was amongst the Jews, a general expectation that the Messiah would soon appear upon earth: those who believed all that God had made known by the prophets, seeing that the sceptre, or kingly power, had departed from Shiloh, were daily looking for the fulfilment of the blessed promise, and were ready to welcome the Saviour under any circumstances: of this number were the Shepherds, who, when they had heard the "good tidings of great joy," at once followed the direction to go to Bethlehem: and when they found all things there, exactly as the Angels had told them, they at once believed, and acknowledged the Infant as their Saviour; and "made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this Child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them of the Shepherds." They wondered; but alas! too many of them only wondered, and did not believe. The greater part of the Jews at this time had forsaken their God, and had become careless about pleasing Him. They expected a Messiah, but regardless of the prophets who had spoken such different things, they had formed their own notions on the subject, and looked for the Messiah to come as a king or conqueror, surrounded with pomp and splendour. These men would not believe that a helpless infant, born in a stable at Bethlehem, *could* be the Son of God, the promised Messiah, Who was to be the Saviour of the world: pride and unbelief led them to reject the Lord, even from His birth. Mary, who knew that her Son was no common child, marked everything that happened; "she kept all these things, and pondered," or thought over "them in her heart."

Jesus Christ came not only to be a sacrifice for sin, but also an example of godly life; He was to fulfil all righteousness, and therefore, though He came to do away with the ceremonial Law, and establish a better covenant, He submitted to all the Ordinances of the Law, just as if He had been a sinful mortal.

Thus on the eighth day He was circumcised, and publicly received the name of Jesus, which had before been given to Him by the Angel Gabriel. And again, in obedience to the Law, the infant Saviour was brought by His mother to Jerusalem "to present Him to the Lord." We have heard before, that among the children of Israel, the first-born child, if a son, was especially dedicated to the service of the Lord; though afterwards, the whole tribe of Levi was taken, "instead of the first-born of all Israel." The same Law ordained, that after a certain time, called "the days of her Purification," every woman to whom God had given a son or daughter, should offer in sacrifice, a young lamb and a turtledove or pigeon. But if she was too poor to be able to bring a lamb, she was allowed to bring two turtledoves or pigeons instead; and this sacrifice Mary brought with her Son, into the temple. Then were fulfilled the prophecies, that the Lord should come suddenly into His temple; and that the glory of the second temple should exceed that of the first. At the Presentation of Jesus Christ in the temple, a remarkable testimony to His being the promised Messiah was given by the just and devout Simeon, to whom it had been made known by the Holy Ghost, that he should not die until He had seen the Lord's Christ. Full of faith, this old man was "waiting for the consolation of Israel," the Messiah, Who was to save His people from their sins. Guided by the Holy Spirit, Simeon was in the temple "when the Parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for Him after the custom of the Law." At once the Holy Spirit made known to the aged Simeon, that in this infant he beheld the Saviour for whom he waited; "Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel." We are told that Joseph and Mary marvelled at those things which were spoken by Simeon; and we may be sure that Mary treasured them up also in her heart, and looked upon her infant Son with reverence, as well as love. Then Simeon blessed Mary, and warned her of future suffering. Another testimony to the divinity of Jesus Christ was then given by an aged widow, who coming into the temple "in that instant, gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem." Nor did these aged Jews alone bear testimony to the Messiah. The glorious light of the Shechinah, the visible sign of the presence of God, which had not been seen for many hundred years, until it appeared surrounding the Angels who proclaimed the birth of Jesus to the Shepherds of Bethlehem, was not seen by them alone. In far off countries, it was seen as a remarkable star. The inhabitants of Chaldea, part of the once famous Babylonian Empire, were at this time very learned in Astronomy: that is, they studied the stars, and the motions of the heavenly bodies. They worshipped the sun, because they thought

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that must be the best representation of the Deity: had they known the real true God, the God of Israel, they would not have worshipped any of His works, which He had created and made. The wise and learned men of Chaldea were called Magi, and many of them were princes and rulers in their various tribes. Some of these Magi, generally supposed to have been three, (though the Scripture says nothing as to their number,) saw a wonderful star shining in the direction of Judæa. They at once concluded that this star signified the birth of the king of the Jews—and immediately they set off and travelled towards the land of Judæa. And when they reached Jerusalem, they enquired, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the East, and are come to worship him." That is, in the Eastern land where they lived, they had seen this star.

CHAPTER III.—FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.

To understand the question of the Magi, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" a few words of explanation may be useful.

The expectation of a coming Messiah was not confined to the Jews: through the long captivity of the Jews, the writings of the prophets had become known throughout many lands, and there was therefore at this time, in all the countries of the East, a general idea that a King would shortly be born in Judæa, who should rule over all the world. Balaam, who was well known in those countries of which we are speaking, had said, "there shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall arise out of Israel"; hence it was generally believed, that the appearance of some peculiar star in the Heavens, would inform mankind of the birth of this mighty King. The Messiah, we must recollect, was promised to Gentiles as well as to Jews; and therefore all nations who had heard any of the prophecies concerning Him, expected some benefit from the birth of this wonderful Being. Under such circumstances, we can easily imagine that the Magi, who paid such attention to the stars in general, should eagerly watch for the appearance of one, which was to announce, that the long-looked-for King was born in Judæa. Hence, when from their home in the East, they beheld the glorious light of the Shechinah, shining in the direction of the land of Judæa, they felt no doubt as to its meaning; and without hesitation, they at once set off on their long journey, to worship and do honour to the new-born King. The star had disappeared; but the prophets had so plainly pointed out the land of Judæa as the birthplace of the Messiah, that the Magi fearlessly and confidently journeyed on to that country. When at length they reached it, they naturally expected that so wonderful an event would be well known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and that they should have no difficulty in finding the abode of this glorious Child; therefore, as soon as they arrived in the city, they asked, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the East, and are come to worship him." When Herod the King had heard these words he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

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The birth of Jesus Christ made known by Angels to the Shepherds, and by them "made known abroad" among their neighbours and friends, the humble of the land, does not seem to have been noticed by the rulers and Priests living at Jerusalem. Their own Scriptures taught them that the Messiah was to come; and they expected that His birth would be immediately followed by Revolts and Wars, Earthquakes, Famine and Plague; therefore they might well be "troubled," when they heard He was actually come; though, if they had rightly believed and understood the great blessing He was to bring to mankind, they would have rejoiced at His coming, and thought all temporal sufferings easy to be borne for His sake.

Herod was troubled; for though he was now an old man, and not likely to live till a new-born Infant should grow up, yet he did not like the idea of another king to interfere with him: he did not understand the nature of the Messiah's kingdom, and thought only of a king who would govern the country and the people, make laws, and impose taxes; he had no idea of a King who was to reign over the hearts of men on earth, and finally receive them into His kingdom in heaven.

Herod's behaviour on this occasion showed a strange mixture of belief and unbelief. In common with the Jews in general, he believed that the Messiah was to come; and he evidently believed that the Child, whose birth had been made known by the star, was indeed the Christ. He therefore called together the wise and learned men, well acquainted with the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and asked them where the Messiah should be born. The chief priests and Scribes at once declared that Bethlehem was pointed out by the prophets as the birthplace of Messiah; thus giving another proof, that the Infant just born in that place, was the promised Messiah. So far Herod believed; but now his unbelief was shown by his fancying for one moment, that if this Child really was the Messiah, he could kill him, and so frustrate the purpose for which he was sent by God.

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It seems strange that any one believing as Herod did, that the Infant whom the Magi were seeking was really the Messiah, should have thought it possible to fight against God, and destroy His Anointed: but so it was. Herod, under pretence of wishing to go himself and worship the King of the Jews, begged the Magi to come and bring him word when they had found the young Child; and he also asked them particularly about the time at which the star had first appeared, that he might know what would be the age of the Babe, whom he was determined to destroy. The wise men, or Magi, departed, and though they had received no clear directions from the inhabitants of

Jerusalem, better help was at hand: the star which they had seen in the East, now appeared to them again, and even moved on before them: "when they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy," and followed it, until "it came and stood over" the stable "where the young child was." "And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down and worshipped him:" at once they acknowledged him to be something more than an earthly king—a Being entitled to worship. Then they gave such presents as were given to kings. It was the custom in the East, where presents were so much given, to proportion their value to the rank and station of those to whom the gift was offered. Mary and Joseph were poor and in a humble rank of life, and to their infant, therefore, flowers or fruit, or something of little value, would have been a sufficient gift. But in the Son of Mary, the Magi acknowledged the long-promised Messiah; and to Him they gave the most valuable gifts, suitable for a King to receive: "when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto Him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh." Thus the Lord provided Joseph with the means for taking proper care of the young child and his mother. At Bethlehem, the place of his birth, Jesus had now been worshipped as a King, both by Jews and Gentiles; thus fulfilling prophecy, and showing that the Messiah was to be the Saviour of Gentiles, as well as Jews. Our Church has appointed a day, to be observed in remembrance of this first showing, or manifestation, of Christ to the Gentiles. In common talk we call this day Twelfth Day, and the custom of drawing for King and Queen is very old, and is founded upon the visit of the Magi, or kings of the East to Bethlehem. The name by which Twelfth Day is distinguished in our Prayer-Book is the "Epiphany," a word which means "manifestation" or "showing"—the manifestation of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles.

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The wise men, not suspecting Herod's wicked purpose, would no doubt have gone back to him as he desired, but "being warned of God in a dream" not to return to Jerusalem, "they departed into their country another way."

After the departure of the Magi, the Lord, Who knows the secrets of all hearts, warned Joseph in a dream, that Herod would seek the young child to destroy him. In obedience to the command then given to him, Joseph "arose, and took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt"; thus fulfilling a prophecy which had spoken of that country, as the place where the Messiah should for a time dwell. At this time, a great many Jewish families lived in Egypt, and supported themselves by their own industry: there were so many of them, that they divided themselves into companies, according to their trades or occupations: there was a company of silversmiths, who manufactured articles of gold and silver, set jewels, and made ornaments to be worn; there was another company of weavers, who wove threads of flax and silk, into linen and silk of which garments were made; and so on. In short, every trade had its own company; so that if a poor Jew came into any city inhabited by his fellow countrymen, he always knew where to find those who carried on the trade which he had learned: then he could join them at once, and so find work, and earn a maintenance for himself and family.

Perhaps Joseph joined one of these companies of his countrymen; but the presents given by the Magi, would for a long time supply him with all that he needed.

CHAPTER IV.—THE INNOCENTS.

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HEROD anxiously expected the return of the wise men, with full information as to where he might find the infant King of the Jews: but, as day after day passed and they came not, he saw that they did not mean to do his bidding. "Then was Herod exceeding wroth, and sent forth his soldiers, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof,"—that is, in the neighbouring parts of the country,—"from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men." As much less than two years had passed, since the wise men saw the star which heralded the birth of the Messiah, Herod made sure that, by killing all the little boys under that age, he should destroy the infant King of the Jews, and so rid himself of any further anxiety.

Terrible was the distress and mourning amongst the poor Mothers, who saw their infants torn from their arms and murdered! but their dear babes were safe; taken from the dangers and troubles of this world, to be for ever happy in the presence of God: "for they are without fault before the throne of God."

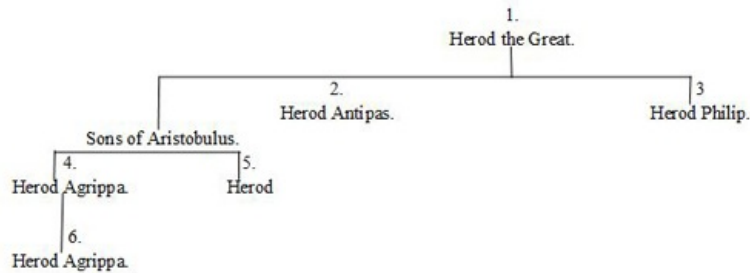
Our Church sets apart three days, immediately after Christmas Day, in remembrance of three classes of Martyrs. A Martyr is one who suffers in the cause of duty, and will die rather than give way: those who thus suffered for Christ, and would die rather than offend or forsake Him, are called Martyrs. "The Innocents," as the murdered babes of Bethlehem are called, suffered death for Jesus's sake; but, of course, they had no will in the matter; they were too young: these were the first Martyrs.

The day after Christmas Day is called "St. John the Evangelist's Day": St. John was, when Jesus grew up, one of His disciples: he dearly loved his Master, and was ready to die for Him, but he was not called upon to give up his life, though he suffered much for Jesus's sake. The day following "St. John's Day," is called "St. Stephen's Day": St. Stephen was the first who willingly gave up his life for the sake of Jesus Christ. Thus we have three classes of Martyrs commemorated in our Church: Martyrs in Deed only—the Innocents; Martyrs in Will only—St. John; Martyrs in Will and in Deed—St. Stephen.

But to return to our history. Herod was guilty of a great sin; and, in spite of all his wickedness, the Child Jesus lived and was safe.

It is said that Antipater, who had caused the death of Mariamne's sons, advised his father to slay the infants of Bethlehem. Antipater was a bad man, and, as he was very anxious to be King of Judæa whenever Herod should die, he wished to destroy one who might, as he feared, dispute the kingdom with him: no doubt he rejoiced when the cruel deed was done, concluding that Jesus had perished, and that he was now sure of the throne: but he was disappointed; for very shortly afterwards he in some way displeased his father, who at once caused him to be put to death. It is dreadful to think of the numbers of persons killed by Herod's orders, but Antipater was the last; for five days afterwards Herod himself died.

This Herod, called Herod the Great, left four sons living—Archelaus, Herod Antipas, Philip, and Herod Philip. There are three other Herods also mentioned in Scripture—Herod Agrippa, and his brother, also called Herod, who were sons of Aristobulus, and consequently grandsons of Herod the Great; and, afterwards, a son of Herod Agrippa, called by the same names as his father, Herod Agrippa. As it is difficult always to know which Herod is spoken of, the Table below will be useful to refer to.



After the death of Herod the Great, Archelaus became governor of the provinces of Judæa and Samaria, and Herod Antipas ruled over the province of Galilee, under the title of Tetrarch: but upon this subject we must say a little more before we go on with the history of Jesus Christ.

When Herod died, he left a Will, in which he declared his wish, that his son Archelaus should be king over the greatest part of his dominions: but as the whole kingdom was subject to the Romans, this could not be done without the Emperor's leave. Before Archelaus could go to Home to ask this permission, there was a great disturbance amongst the Jews in Jerusalem, in consequence of Archelaus refusing to grant some request: they assembled in great numbers in the Courts of the Temple, and behaved in such a riotous and disorderly manner, that Archelaus ordered his soldiers to attack them, and 3,000 men are said to have been killed on this occasion; a piece of cruelty which probably disinclined the Emperor Augustus to give Archelaus as much power as his father Herod the Great had had; at any rate, Archelaus only succeeded in being made Governor of Judæa and Samaria, with the promise, that if he acted so as to give the Emperor satisfaction, he should have the title of King: but instead of obtaining this, he behaved so ill, that a few years afterwards he was deprived of all power, and banished to a city in Gaul, where he died.

Returning to the history of our blessed Lord, we find that after the death of Antipater and Herod, the Angel appeared to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel, for they are dead which sought the young child's life." The Angel did not name any particular place for the young Child to go to, but the Messiah was not to stay long out of the Holy Land, given to Abraham and his descendants, as a heritage for ever. When Joseph, with Mary and the holy Child, got back into the land of Israel, he found that "Archelaus reigned in the room of his father"; that is, he was Governor of Judæa; fearing his cruelty, he was afraid to take the young Child and his mother there, and the Lord, by means of a dream, warned him to go into the land of Galilee, which was under the government of Herod Antipas.

Joseph in consequence made choice of Nazareth in Galilee as a dwelling-place, and there the Lord Jesus Christ lived till he grew up to be a Man, and was ready to begin the work which He came into the world to do. During all these years, up to the time when Jesus was thirty years old, we are told nothing of what He did, except His questioning the priests in the temple, when He was twelve years old. Twelve was the age appointed for the young Jews to begin to keep the Feasts and Fasts prescribed by their Law; and accordingly, Jesus, who came to fulfil all righteousness, accompanied Mary and Joseph to Jerusalem on this occasion: but after all the ceremonies had been observed, He, unknown to them, remained behind, and going into the temple astonished the priests and learned men by His questions, His knowledge of the Scriptures, and the way in which He spake: no wonder that all who looked upon Him merely as a human being, should be astonished. When Mary missed her Son, she and Joseph returned to Jerusalem, where "after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions." To His mother's gentle rebuke, "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us?" the holy Child made that answer at once referring to His divine nature, and to the work for which He had left His Father's kingdom, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" They understood not fully then His meaning; but Mary "kept all these sayings in her heart."

But Jesus had now done all that was to be done for many years, as to His great work; and

therefore, though He knew Himself to be the Son of God, He submitted to His earthly parents: He went "down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them"—thus in His first work, setting us the great example of obedience to parents—an example which all of us must carefully and cheerfully copy. No sin, not even the least approach to it, was found in Him: one act of disobedience would have prevented His making atonement for us. And this perfect Being so loved us, His sinful creatures, as to die for us: let us love Him; and show our love by trying to copy His example in all things; beginning with obedience to our Parents, and all whom they set over us.

CHAPTER V.—BAPTISM OF JESUS.

How gladly should we all learn something of our Saviour's early life; of His childhood; of the pursuits of His youth and manhood! But these things are hidden from us, and whatever legends may exist respecting such matters, we must remember that Scripture has not revealed to us any knowledge of these things. For the eighteen years following His questioning the learned men in the temple, one entry suffices—"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." As partaking of the human nature, His body grew gradually to its full size and strength, enduring, no doubt, pain and sickness, so inseparable from mortality: in this, all who are born into the world follow His example, whether they will or no; but are all careful to "increase in wisdom, and in favour with God and man"? And yet this is what all may do. These words again set the Saviour before us, as an example to be diligently followed: by prayer and study of the Scriptures, we shall obtain from God, that heavenly wisdom which will make us wise unto salvation; that practical wisdom, by which we shall walk daily in a manner pleasing to God; so shall we, day by day, grow in favour with our heavenly Father, and with all men whose approbation and favour is worth securing.

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Of John the Baptist's early life we have not even one glimpse afforded us, beyond the notice "that the child grew, and waxed strong in the spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel." In silence and solitude was the wonderful son of Zacharias prepared for his work: the Spirit of the Lord was upon him, and under its blessed influence he became strong to do, and suffer.

For thirty years did the Sons of Mary and of Elisabeth wait patiently, unnoticed, till the time came when they were to enter on the work appointed for each. At that time, Herod Antipas (one of the sons of Herod the Great) was tetrarch or governor of Galilee, while his brother Philip was tetrarch of Ituræa, and of other parts of the country lying to the East of the Sea of Galilee and the river Jordan.

Archelaus, as we have already said, had for his misconduct been banished by the Romans into Gaul, and the province of Judæa was governed by a Roman, called Pontius Pilate. Augustus Cæsar, who was the Emperor of Rome when Jesus Christ was born, died when our Lord was about fourteen years old; and another Emperor, called Tiberius Cæsar, ruled over the vast possessions of the Romans, when Jesus and His forerunner John the Baptist, entered upon their public ministry.

The Bible tells us, that at this time Annas and Caiaphas were high priests: by the Law of Moses, the Jews could only have one high priest at a time, and when once appointed, he continued to hold that high office as long as he lived; but when the Romans took possession of the Holy Land, they appointed the high priest at their pleasure—often depriving one of the office, in order to bestow it upon another. Annas was high priest for eleven years, and then the Roman Governor deprived him of the office, and made Caiaphas, who had married the daughter of Annas, high priest in the place of his father-in-law.

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According to the will of the Romans, therefore, Caiaphas was actually high priest at this time; though, according to the Law of Moses, he had no right to be so, as long as Annas was alive. No doubt the more devout Jews, who wished to keep their Law, looked upon Annas as their high priest; whilst those who were careless and indifferent, and wished rather to please the Romans, acknowledged Caiaphas: for this reason St. Luke speaks of them both as high priests.

We must remember that John was born a few months before Jesus, to "go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways," consequently he was the first to appear in public. He went first as a Messenger, to prepare the people to listen to the Messiah: John came, and called upon all men to repent of their sins and wickedness, to leave off doing wrong, and to do such things as God commanded them to do. John also invited the people to be baptized. Baptism was a rite or ceremony in use amongst the Jews before this time, by way of admitting strangers into their Church: for instance, if any Gentiles wished to join the Jews, and worship God as they did, they were baptized, or washed with Water; and after this ceremony, they were looked upon as new creatures, fit to be admitted into the Jewish Church.

The Jews, by baptizing the heathen, admitted them into their Church, into a new religion; John called upon the Jews to be baptized, because they were to change their religion, and become members of a Church, which should have Christ for her head. The Jews baptized persons who, according to their Law, were unclean, in order to purify them; but John called upon those, who according to the Law were clean already, to come to him and be baptized, in order to show, that

all who would belong to Christ must purify their hearts, and obey the spirit as well as the letter of all the commandments.

This distinction between the letter and the spirit of any commandment, must be carefully and constantly borne in mind, by every Christian.

For example, the Sixth Commandment says, "Thou shalt do no murder"; therefore all, who do not actually kill a fellow creature, may be said to obey the *letter*, or exact *words*, of this commandment; but to obey the spirit, we must never do anything wilfully to hurt our neighbour in any way; we must, on the contrary, do all the good we possibly can to our fellow creatures.

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To make this plainer, suppose a mother to say to her children, "You may go out, but it is so hot that you must not run about": the children go out, and then amuse themselves by jumping—they have obeyed the letter of their mother's commands, for they did not *run*, but they have broken the spirit—she wished them not to heat themselves,—that was the spirit and meaning of the precept; and that they have broken, just as much as if they had run about.

The Jews must have well understood, that when John the Baptist called upon them to be baptized as if they were unclean, he meant to show them that the Messiah required men to be holy, far beyond what they then were; and great numbers of the people listened to his teaching, and went out unto him, and were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

"And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee to Jordan unto John to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him." John spake of the baptism administered by him, as "the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins"; meaning that those who repented and were baptized, would have their sins forgiven and done away with, so that they would no longer be looked upon as guilty. John knew that Jesus was perfectly holy, and had no need of the baptism of repentance, so necessary for mere mortals. John had also told those who came to him to be baptized "with water unto repentance," that they still needed another baptism from the Son of God; even the gift of the Holy Spirit, without which no man could please the Lord. He told them, "there cometh one mightier than I after me, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear,"—"the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose,"—"He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost."

In Eastern countries, the visitors to princes and great men, took off their shoes, that is, the sandals or slippers worn upon the feet, and left them at the door, whilst they went barefooted into the presence of the prince. The fastenings or latches of these shoes were often undone by a slave, who also held the shoes till his master again required them. Thus to unfasten or bear the shoes of another, signified being his servant, ready to do any service that might be required. John therefore meant, that He who was to come after him was so greatly his superior, that he (John) was not worthy even to do for Him the lowest offices required from a slave. No wonder that with such feelings, John objected to Jesus being baptized by him, who was in every respect so far His inferior; and who, like all other human beings, had need of the Holy Spirit which God alone could give.

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But amongst the Jews, those who were admitted to perform the office of Priest were always anointed and baptized; and, as Jesus came to be our great High Priest, it was necessary that He should observe this form, as He had undergone the rite of circumcision. He came to fulfil all righteousness, to do all that was right, and then to suffer punishment, as if He had been sinful instead of sinless. To make atonement for the sin of man, it was necessary that He Who made it, should obey and fulfil perfectly the whole Will of God, and then suffer, "the just for the unjust." Only so could atonement be made: this Jesus explained to John, and then the Baptist no longer hesitated to baptize with water the sinless Son of God.

CHAPTER VI.—JESUS TEMPTED OF THE DEVIL

"AND Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and, lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The Three Persons in the Holy Trinity were thus at once made manifest, or shown to John the Baptist: before Him, under the form of Man, stood God the Son: God the Holy Ghost came down from heaven in a bodily form, with a gentle motion like that of a dove, and rested upon the Son of God: God the Father was not made visible to the eyes, but His voice was heard, declaring Jesus to be His Son, the promised Messiah, the Saviour of the world.

After His baptism, Jesus was, by the appointment of His Father, "led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil." It was necessary that Jesus should gain a victory over the great enemy of mankind, and show that the Devil had no power to lead Him to do evil. Since Adam fell, no human being had ever so completely resisted the Devil as to *deserve* the favour of God; thus no one had ever earned eternal life even for himself. Jesus came to make atonement for the sin of countless millions: but He could not have made satisfaction for the sins of others, if He had in the least thing given way to the Devil. Therefore He must fight and conquer, or the work

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which He came to do must have remained for ever undone.

In Scripture, Jesus Christ is called the second Adam: "the first Adam is of the earth, earthy, the last Adam is the Lord from heaven." The first Adam was created holy and good, but he was tempted by the Devil and sinned; "so by the disobedience of one man came death, for in Adam all die." All who bear the same nature, must share the punishment due to that sinful nature. But the Holy and Eternal Son of God took upon Himself the human nature of man, and became subject to the like infirmities, but without sin. Thus was atonement made—"in Christ shall all," who give themselves to Him, "be made alive": "thus by man came also the resurrection of the dead." The Devil exerted all his power to lead Jesus to do something which would displease God, and destroy the blessed work of redemption. Taking advantage of Jesus being hungry and faint after long fasting, the Devil gently proposed that He should turn some stones into bread, and thus at the same time supply His own wants, and give a convincing proof that He was indeed the Son of God, as He had been just declared to be.

We are ready enough to take any excuse for doing what we wish to do; and by this means we often fall into the snare which Satan so cleverly spreads for us. But Jesus thought of nothing but how to do the Will of His Father completely and entirely. He had been led into the wilderness by the Spirit of God, and it was the Will of His heavenly Father that He should now be enhungered. Jesus was therefore determined to leave the matter entirely in the hands of God. This is what we should all do, rather than try to help ourselves by doing anything that we fear may displease God.

Satan next wanted Jesus to throw Himself down from the roof of the temple into the court below, where the people were assembled, and thus show them at once that He was the promised Messiah, the Son of God, of whom David had written, God "shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee; and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." But Jesus, still bent upon doing His Father's will, answered from Scripture, "It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God," meaning that no one must run into unnecessary danger, to try whether God will preserve him: this is tempting Providence, and is sinful. To do our duty in spite of danger is trusting God, and is right: but to run into danger just to please ourselves, expecting that God will preserve us, is presumptuous and sinful.

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Satan made a last attempt to get Jesus to bow down to him, by promising to give Him power over all the kingdoms of the world; but Jesus was content to have only what God saw fit to give Him, and replied, "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

The battle was over; the victory was gained: as Man, Jesus had been tempted; as Man, He had resisted the Devil. He had fought and conquered, and thus could go on with His blessed work, which He never could have accomplished, had He at this, or any other time, given way in the least degree to the Devil. For the first time since the Creation, Satan found himself defeated: against our blessed Saviour he could not prevail, as he had done against Adam and his descendants; He departed therefore: we are told, "Then the Devil leaveth Him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto Him." The Father sent His Angels to minister to His Son; that is, to serve Him; to supply those wants to which, as Man, He was subject. No doubt they brought Him food of which His human nature stood greatly in need.

We have seen how Jesus resisted the Devil; each time using the very words of Scripture, which forbade Him to do as the Tempter proposed. The Devil is constantly tempting every human being to sin, by suggesting that they had better follow their own wishes and inclinations, instead of denying themselves, and trying in all things to please God. We should therefore bear in mind, that we possess the same Scriptures, and far more; since we have now our Saviour's own words whilst He was upon earth, and also the letters of His Apostles: and then, when we are tempted to do what is wrong, let us remember what the Scriptures say, and obey *that*, instead of following our own wills. The young are never too young to begin to resist the Devil, who has temptations suited to every age and condition: if you feel disinclined to obey your Parents cheerfully, remember that the Bible says, "Children obey your Parents in all things": let all inclination to dispute with one another be driven away by the recollection of the precept, "Be ye kind one to another."

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The direction, "Speak every man truth with his neighbour," should strengthen you to resist every temptation to hide a fault, by saying what is not true, or even by keeping silence, or doing anything to deceive another. The fault into which so many young people fall, of being idle and careless about their lessons, would best be checked by calling to mind the precepts, "Be not slothful in business," and "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as unto the Lord." These, and many like precepts, warn us to conquer faults of which we are apt to think too lightly; not seeing that they are temptations set before us by the Devil, who strives to destroy our souls. But it is also written, "Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you." Begin at once to resist him with all your strength—struggle against your own will and inclinations, which will too often incline you to yield to his suggestions. Fight manfully as long as you live upon earth; praying always for help from God, without Whom ye can do nothing. If thus steadily and heartily you endeavour to renounce the Devil and all his works, with all the sinful lusts of the flesh, and do everything to please God, you will hereafter receive your reward in Heaven for Jesus Christ's sake.

After the Baptism and Temptation of Jesus Christ, He began His work amongst men, by declaring to them the blessed truths of the Gospel.

The first men who became disciples, or followers of Jesus Christ, were Andrew and John, who

were already disciples of John the Baptist. "The next day," after the Baptism of our Lord, "John stood and two of his disciples; and looking upon Jesus as He walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!" The Priests and Levites, as well as all the people of the Jews, knew that lambs were daily offered up as an atonement for sin, but that the blood of these creatures could never wash out the stain of sin, nor obtain its forgiveness. They were quite aware that these sacrifices were only offered up as a type, or sign of the Messiah; for Whose coming they looked, to make atonement for the sin of the whole world. John the Baptist had repeatedly told his disciples that he was not himself the Messiah, but was the messenger to prepare his way before Him. When, therefore, John the Baptist exclaimed, "Behold the Lamb of God," Andrew and John at once understood, that this was indeed the long-looked-for Messiah, the true Lamb of God, Who was to take away the sins of the whole world. "The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus." Jesus asked them, "What seek ye?" At once acknowledging Him to be their Master, the disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, where dwellest thou? He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where He dwelt, and abode with Him that day; for it was about the tenth hour." That is, it was about two hours before sunset.

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Andrew next went in search of his own brother Simon Peter, and "saith unto him, We have found the Messiah." Simon Peter at once believed these glad tidings, and went with Andrew to Jesus, who received him kindly. The next day Philip, who lived in the same town as Andrew and Peter, and had no doubt often talked with them of the promised Saviour, also became a follower of Jesus; and he likewise brought a friend called Nathanael, of whom we must say something more.

CHAPTER VII.—THE FIRST MIRACLE.

NATHANAEL, who was brought to Jesus by Philip, was one of those devout Jews who had studied the writings of Moses and the prophets, and was in consequence anxiously expecting the coming of the promised Messiah. Philip went and told him that the Messiah was really come at last, and that he himself had seen the wondrous Being, of whom Moses and the prophets had written; and that He was no other than Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. Now at that time the inhabitants of Nazareth did not generally bear a good character, and were not therefore held in esteem by their fellow countrymen; and besides, Nathanael had learned from the Scriptures, that Christ should be born in Bethlehem; hence he doubted the possibility of Jesus being the promised Redeemer, and asked in a tone of incredulity, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip, whose faith was firm, gave the best answer which ever can be given to those who doubt the testimony of others, "Come and see"; certain that if Nathanael were to see and talk with Jesus, he would be convinced that He was indeed the Messiah.

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Nathanael, who was willing and anxious to learn the truth, laid aside all prejudice, and went to Jesus; and fully was he rewarded for his willingness to learn. When Jesus saw Nathanael coming unto Him, He spoke in a manner which surprised the latter, and made him ask, "Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee." It seems that Nathanael, following a custom amongst the devout Jews, had gone into a quiet, retired part of his garden, to meditate and pray. Here he knew that no human eye could see him, and therefore the words now spoken by Jesus convinced him that Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the promised Messiah; he doubted no longer, but without hesitation, exclaimed, "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel." Jesus, pleased with Nathanael's willing faith, told him that he should see greater proofs of His being indeed the Son of God, the promised Messiah. The word Rabbi means a "teacher having authority." Andrew and Peter, James and John, of whom we have heard as the first disciples of Christ, did not at this time remain with Him as his constant attendants, but returned to their own occupation as fishermen: they all lived at Bethsaida, a town on the northern coast of the sea of Galilee.

The next event which we have to notice, is the first miracle worked by Christ, at Cana in Galilee, where with those who had already become his disciples, He attended a marriage feast. Here, when wine was wanted, Jesus performed His first miracle, by turning water into wine. Thirty years had now passed away since the birth of Christ; the Shepherds, and others who had seen or heard the wonderful things which took place at that time, had probably ceased to think much about them; or if they thought of them, it was probably to wonder what had become of the Holy Babe, Who had been declared by Angels to be "Christ the Lord." Such a miracle as that now worked at Cana, would be talked of far and wide; and those who remembered the birth of Mary's Son at Bethlehem, would have no difficulty in believing that Jesus Christ was that wondrous Child. To all who were inclined to listen to Jesus, miracles were a confirmation of their faith; for these wonderful displays of supernatural power plainly showed Him to be the Son of God; yet in spite of such unmistakable signs, few of the Jews accepted Jesus as their expected Messiah. The poorer people, the lower classes, who benefited mostly by his miracles, "heard him gladly," for a time, at least; though at the period of His crucifixion their voices called out, "Crucify him, Crucify him!"

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When we read the account of Christ's life and miracles, it does seem most extraordinary, that throughout His career on earth, very few of the higher class of Jews, or of the Priests and those best acquainted with the Scriptures, would acknowledge Him. But we must remember that they had made up their minds, in spite of all that the prophets had said to the contrary, that the

Messiah was to come as an earthly King and Conqueror, surrounded with pomp and splendour: this idea they would not give up: they were not like Nathanael, willing to be taught, and they could not bear the idea that a poor man, born in a humble rank of life, and only distinguished from other men by his holiness, should be their Messiah. Besides this, the greater part of the Jews had by this time grown careless about their religion; they still observed the outward forms and ceremonies ordered by the Law, but they did not obey the command given through Moses, to love the Lord their God with all their heart: they did not wish to be holy, as Jesus plainly told his disciples they must be. He went about preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, that is, telling all men that they must repent of all their sins, and leave off doing wrong, and try to please God in everything, if they would hereafter be received into the Kingdom of Heaven. Such doctrine was very displeasing to the Jews, and therefore they were determined not to own such a Teacher as their Lord: thus they rejected the true Messiah, whilst they pretended to be anxiously looking out for His coming.

Not very long after the miracle at Cana, we are told that "the Jews' Passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem." The Law of Moses commanded, that at this feast every male among the Jews, should appear before the Lord in His holy temple; and Jesus, Who was to set an example of perfect obedience to all the commandments of God, journeyed from Capernaum up to Jerusalem, to keep the feast in the place which the Lord had chosen. When Jesus went up to this Passover, He drove the buyers and sellers out of the temple, an action repeated on a future occasion. At this time St. John says, that Jesus "found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: and when he had made a scourge of small cords, He drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; and said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house a house of merchandise."

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It is not meant that these animals, or the money changers, were in the *building of the temple itself*, but in one of the courts surrounding it.

So many creatures were required for sacrifices, that it was a great convenience for persons coming from a distance, to be able to buy what they wanted on the spot; and therefore it had long been the custom for traders to establish themselves outside of the outer Court of the temple, to supply the worshippers with oxen, sheep or doves. Then again, people coming from a distance, might bring their money in a large sum, and then they would want to have it changed for coins of less value; just as we might carry a sovereign, which would give us no trouble to carry, and then get it changed into shillings, when we wanted to spend it. Some Jews also, who came to the temple from time to time, lived in foreign countries, and they would naturally bring the money of those countries, which would be of no use in Judæa; and they would therefore wish to change their foreign money into the money current amongst the Jews. For these reasons the money changers were most useful; and they therefore established themselves with the traders, outside the temple Courts.

But the Priests, as well as the people, became careless about obeying God perfectly, or worshipping Him in a proper manner and honouring His house; and therefore, at length, these money changers and sellers of cattle, established themselves in the Court of the Gentiles, and so carried on their trade within the sacred precincts of the temple. This outer Court, in which the money changers and those who sold oxen, sheep, and doves appear to have established themselves, was the Court of the Gentiles; and was intended for the use of devout persons, who, though not willing in all respects to imitate the Jews, were to worship the One True God. In this Court also, all Jews who happened to be *unclean*, performed their devotions, as they were not then allowed to go into the inner Court. There were very many things which caused a Jew to be looked upon as unclean, without any fault of his. Illness, a death in the house, nursing the sick; and many other things, rendered a man "unclean," and unfit to enter the inner Court. Under these circumstances, there were always many unclean Jews, worshipping God in the Court of the Gentiles; and the presence of the traders and money changers was a great disturbance to both Jews and Gentiles; for they could not attend properly to their prayers, in the midst of all the noise and confusion made by the buyers and sellers. This wrong state of things Jesus put an end to, by driving all these traders out of the temple courts; telling the people not to make the house of God a house of business, a place for buying and selling.

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The disciples of Jesus who witnessed his conduct on this occasion, remembered that David, speaking of the Messiah Who was to come, said, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up," words that meant, that Jesus would not allow any dishonour or disrespect to be shown to the House of God.

By saying to the people, "Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise," Jesus plainly declared himself to be the Son of God; and the Jews so understood His words, though they would not own him to be the Son of God, but immediately asked, "What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?" that is, What proof can you give us that you are what you say, and that you have any right to turn these people out of the Court of the temple?

Had this question been asked in a proper spirit, from a real desire to know for certain, in order that they might worship Jesus as the Messiah, they would no doubt have received a plain and direct answer. But they had no intention of following and obeying Jesus as their Lord and Master, and only wished to find excuses for not believing in Him; therefore our Lord, Who knew all the thoughts in their hearts, answered them in a very remarkable way, giving them a sign which would hereafter prove Him to be indeed the Son of God.

CHAPTER VIII.—NICODEMUS COMES BY NIGHT TO JESUS.

To the question, What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? Jesus answered, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." These words were a prophecy: Jesus "spake of the temple of his body," and thus declared that His own body would be killed, but that after three days He would rise to life again.

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The Jews, thinking only of the building before their eyes now, exclaimed in astonishment, "Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?" It had taken Herod forty-six years to repair and beautify the second temple, and the Jews might well doubt its being done in three days: they thought of nothing further, and were probably quite satisfied that Jesus had now said what could not possibly be. But the disciples felt sure that these words of their Lord had some hidden meaning, though they did not understand what: they therefore remembered them; and after their accomplishment their faith was strengthened; for we read, "When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had said."

All Scripture, as we know, was written for our instruction, and therefore we must always think what we can learn from it: now the clearing of the temple court by Jesus teaches us two great lessons: first, that we must never use the House of God for any purpose but that for which it is intended. Now, to us, our Churches are the house of God; and if we do not use them as we ought, we sin as did the Jews. Of course, we cannot make them a house of merchandise as the Jews did; but if we are thinking of our business, or our pleasure, or anything else, instead of attending to what is going on, we are not using the house of God in a proper manner. Our Churches are set apart for the worship of God as much as the Temple was; and if we do not worship God when we go for that purpose, we displease our heavenly Father. Everything belonging to God must be treated with reverence, and honoured by being used according to His Will. In this way, therefore, we must reverence and honour His day, His house, and His word. You will thus see that being careless and inattentive at Church is a great sin. God sees your heart, and knows all your thoughts, so that if you are thinking of something else, though you may be sitting still and thus *appear* good to man, He will be displeased.

In all the prayers you must join heartily: when the Lessons are read, you will generally be able to understand them. When the Clergyman begins to preach his Sermon, try to understand what he says: if you really cannot understand his sermon, then think about some person mentioned in Scripture, as Adam, Abraham, Jacob, David, Solomon, Samuel, and many others, and consider what they did to please or displease God; or say over your hymns and texts to yourself: this will prevent your thoughts from wandering off to your business, or pleasures, or any such things. In the house of God, you must *think of nothing but* God, and how to please Him.

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Now let us talk of the other lesson, which we are to learn from what Jesus did.

Jesus spake of His body as a temple; and St. Paul tells us, that all who love and follow Christ are so joined together in Him, that they are like stones joined together to build up a holy temple, for an habitation of God through the Spirit. As Christians baptized in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, we have all become stones or parts of that holy temple the Church of Christ; members or parts of His body: for the Scripture calls the Church of Christ His body. Now as long as we are obedient and faithful members of Christ's body, the Church, the Holy Spirit will bless and help us: but if we give way to our own sinful feelings, we bring bad passions into this holy temple, the Church of Christ, and "defile," or make it unclean, as the Jews defiled the temple built by hands by bringing oxen and sheep into its courts. St Paul warns us of the consequence of such sin: "If any man defile the temple of God, him will God destroy."

But further, the same Apostle St. Paul teaches each one of us to look upon our own body as a temple, for the abode of the Holy Spirit. Now, as a temple is devoted to the service of God, so we must employ our bodies in serving Him, and doing His will. The temple must not be defiled; so we must try hard to keep all naughty tempers out of our hearts. Disobedience, passion, quarrelsomeness, idleness—in short, all the faults you can have—are evil things which defile the temple, and render it unfit for the abode of the Holy Spirit. If you try to resist evil, the Holy Spirit will help you to do so; but if you give way to bad passions, and allow the Devil to govern you, you will grieve the Holy Spirit of God, and at last *force* Him to leave you to follow your own ways. To be left to follow your own evil ways is the most dreadful thing that can happen to you. Pray to God, and try to have Him always for your friend.

We have said that during our Saviour's ministry on earth, few of the higher class of Jews became His disciples; but there was one remarkable exception, in the case of a man named Nicodemus, whose conversation with our blessed Lord is particularly instructive. We read in the Gospel of St. John, "There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, 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." Nicodemus was a man of sense, and the miracles of Jesus had convinced him; for he felt certain that no one but the Son of God, the Messiah, could do such things. He was willing to acknowledge this; but afraid of the ridicule or reproaches of his friends, he came to Jesus by night, that no man might know of his visit. Christ, who is very merciful, did not refuse to listen to Nicodemus, but began to show him that there must be some proof of faith in a holy life. So when Nicodemus declared his

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belief that Jesus came from God, "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus, not understanding the real meaning of these words, "saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old?" meaning that it was impossible for a man who had been born many years before, again to become a baby. "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Jesus meant that, as to the body or flesh, no man could of course be born again; but that by the help of the Holy Spirit, the man's nature might be changed so that he would become holy, trying in all things to please God: such a change in the character, temper, and disposition might be compared to a new birth; and without such a complete change, no one could enter into the kingdom of God. Such teaching might well cause Nicodemus great surprise; and Jesus said unto him, "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." In these words our Saviour warns Nicodemus, that a man's conduct only can show whether he has been born of the Spirit: just as we cannot see the wind, but we know that it blows, because we hear the noise it makes, and see its effects in the way the trees and other things are blown about.

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Nicodemus, in astonishment at all he heard, now said, "How can these things be?" and then Jesus told him how necessary it was to have faith when hearing of heavenly things, since it is impossible for man to understand how the great works of God are done. At this time Jesus uttered that remarkable prophecy, comparing His crucifixion to the setting up of the Brazen Serpent in the wilderness; saying, "And 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." When the children of Israel were dying from the effects of the bites of the fiery flying serpents, those who so believed the words of Moses, as to look up at the brazen serpent, were saved at once from the death of the body. When all the children of men were dying from the effects of sin (the bite of that old serpent the Devil), all who would in faith look up to the cross of Christ, and believe in Him, would be saved from the far more dreadful death (or eternal misery) of the soul. And then our Saviour went on to speak of the great love of God, as shown by His giving His Son to die for man.

"After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judæa; and there he tarried with them, and baptized. And John also was baptizing in Ænon, near to Salim, because there was much water there": here many of the people came to John, and were baptized. Some of those who came to him, seem to have been rather distressed or surprised that Jesus was drawing men away from him; and they said, "Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou bearest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him."

John immediately reminded his hearers, that he had always told them that he had only come as the messenger of Christ to prepare His way, and that now that Christ was come, his ministry was ended, and he had only to rejoice in the success of his Heavenly Master. He himself was but a man, "of the earth, earthy"; but of Him whose messenger he was, he said, "He that cometh from above, is above all." Moreover, John said, "He must increase, but I must decrease." Jesus had just begun His work, which would go on and increase; John's work was finished, and he himself would not long remain on earth.

And so it was; for very shortly afterwards, John the Baptist was shut up in prison by Herod Antipas, the governor of Galilee.

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CHAPTER IX.—JOHN PUT INTO PRISON.

HEROD Antipas, one of the sons of Herod the Great, was governor of Galilee: Philip, another of them, was governor or tetrarch of Itruria. The word "tetrarch" means the governor of a certain portion of a kingdom. The land of Palestine being subject to the Romans, they had divided it into portions; and the governors of each portion were styled tetrarchs. Philip had a wife called Herodias, a bad woman, who behaved ill to her husband, and at length left him, and became the wife of his brother Herod. Now this was a great sin on the part of Herod, as well as that of Herodias, and John the Baptist reproveth them for it: this holy man was not afraid to speak the truth, though doing so was sure to bring trouble upon himself, for Herod was a proud man, who would not like to be told of his faults, and Herodias would be much more angry.

But John had been sent by God the Father to prepare the way of the Lord, by teaching His Will to men, and exhorting them to repentance and amendment of life: this John was determined to do, undismayed by any fear of what man might do to him; and therefore he told Herod, that it was not lawful, not allowed by the Law of God, that he should thus take his brother's wife to be his wife.

The consequence was, that John was immediately put into prison. Herodias, who hated him for reproving her, would gladly have had him put to death; but she could not yet prevail on Herod to consent to so wicked an act.

There seems to have been two reasons which made Herod unwilling to put his prisoner to death. In the first place, many of the Jews looked upon John as a prophet and a teacher sent by

God; and Herod feared that there might be some riot amongst the people, in which case the Romans might accuse him of having misgoverned the country, and suffer him to be no longer governor. The other reason was, that although Herod was angry with John, he could not help seeing that he was a good and holy man; so much so, that he listened to his advice on many points, though he would not act according to it, in the matter of Herodias. Even after John was cast into prison, Herod often "sent for him, and heard him gladly, and did many things."

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Well would it have been for Herod, if he had done *all* things according to John's advice.

"Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God": preaching, that is, the good tidings of how sinful man might enter into the kingdom of God, from which the Fall of Adam had shut him out. "Repent ye and believe the Gospel," was the sum of his preaching: true repentance would make men leave off sinning; and belief in the Gospel would lead them to strive to be holy, out of love for the Saviour, who was come upon earth to deliver them from eternal misery.

He preached the Gospel of the kingdom of God to all who would hear him; they naturally told others; so that "there went out a fame of him through all the region round about." Besides this, "Jesus taught in their synagogues." Synagogues were buildings in which the Jews assembled to pray to God, and to hear the holy Scriptures read and explained. The use of synagogues began after the return of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon; and in our Saviour's time there were great numbers of them, not only in towns and villages, but all over the country: some writers tell us, that wherever there were ten grown-up men, able to form a congregation, the Jews thought it right to build a synagogue.

It would be well if Christians had in this matter followed the example of the Jews; for unhappily there are not now nearly enough Churches in our land, so that there are great numbers of men, women, and children in England, who could not go to Church if they wished to do so, because there is not room enough for them. This is very sad, and we should always be ready to give our money to help in building Churches, which are so much wanted all over the country.

The Synagogues were generally built close to rivers and brooks, so as to have water at hand for all the ceremonies of purification: it was right in the Jews to observe these outward ceremonies, but it would have been better for them if they had remembered, that they were only ordered, to show the necessity of purifying the heart and life from sin. Let *us* remember this, and pray to God, "Make me a clean heart, O God."

The daily service in the Synagogue, consisted of prayers and the reading of a portion from the books of Moses, which was afterwards expounded or explained: on the Sabbath days, a second portion of Scripture, from the writings of the Prophets, was read in addition. A certain number of wise and serious men, were chosen to be Rulers of each Synagogue; that is, to settle all matters concerning it, and to arrange the services, and appoint the readers. The readers were usually some of the Scribes; but strangers were often allowed to read and expound the Scriptures in their place, and any one who was looked upon as a prophet, would be eagerly listened to. To show their reverence for the Scriptures, the Jewish doctors stood up whilst they read the daily portions, and then sat down, whilst they explained the meaning to their congregation. Whenever any person among the Jews set himself up as the founder or leader of a party, by teaching any peculiar doctrines, he was allowed by the Rulers to explain these doctrines publicly in the Synagogues; so that all men might have an opportunity of hearing his opinions, and judging whether such a teacher spoke according to the Scriptures, and ought to be listened to, and followed. In consequence of this custom, Jesus Christ, and in after times His Apostles also, were allowed to read and expound in the Synagogues.

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Every considerable synagogue, that is, every one so situated as to have a large congregation, had attached to it an academy, or school for elder children, who here studied the Scriptures under the guidance of the Rabbis. But unfortunately, with the Scriptures, which are the Word of God, these Rabbis instructed the Jewish youth in the traditions of man. "Traditions" were sayings and doctrines which had never been written down, but had merely been told by word of mouth from father to son, and had thus been handed down through many generations. Many of these traditions, which had some truth in them at first, had become sadly altered by thus being told by one to another; so that some of them were, in our Saviour's time, quite contrary to the commandments and precepts of God.

Other traditions again had been entirely invented by men, and were not deserving of any attention; but the Jews received them all, and looked upon them as equal in authority, or rather as superior, to the Holy Scriptures themselves.

The Rabbis who taught in the academies attached to the synagogues, sat in the midst of their scholars, who all stood round them.

We have said, that "When Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee," preaching and teaching throughout the country. "And leaving Nazareth," which had been the home of His childhood, "he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast (of the lake of Tiberias), in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthaim." Thus was fulfilled the prophecy spoken by Esaias, that is Isaiah, "The land of Zabulon and the land of Nephthaim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; the people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up." In the holy

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Scriptures, the word "darkness" constantly means ignorance and sin; whilst "light" is used to express the contrary, as knowledge and goodness. The people of Galilee were ignorant and sinful, but the Gospel of Jesus Christ was as a light to drive away this darkness, by teaching men to believe in their Saviour, and obey the Will of God. This blessing was now brought, as the prophet Isaiah had foretold, to the country round about Capernaum.

From this time, Capernaum seems to have been the home of Jesus Christ; as far, at least, as he could be said to have a home, when His whole life was spent in moving about the country from one place to another, "teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease among the people."

In the Four Gospels you must look for the full account of the miracles, parables, and conversations of our blessed Saviour; here many of them will be only briefly mentioned.

In passing on one occasion from Judæa into Galilee, "He must needs go through Samaria." His disciples being gone into the town to buy food, Jesus asked a woman of Samaria who came to draw water from the well, to give Him to drink; and He took this occasion to tell her, that it signified little in what place men worshipped God, if they worshipped Him properly "in spirit and in truth," that is, truly and sincerely, in faith; and he ended by telling her plainly that He was the Messiah, expected by Samaritans as well as by Jews. In consequence of what passed between our Lord and this woman, many of the Samaritans believed in Him as the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

Jesus appears to have remained at Samaria for two days; and we may be quite sure that during that time He preached "the Gospel of the Kingdom" to all who would hear His words.

Next we hear of another miracle worked at Cana, where He had changed the water into wine. A certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum, came to Him to implore His help: this nobleman believed that Jesus could heal his son, and his faith was rewarded by having his child restored to health. After this, Jesus "came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto 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," eagerly expecting the explanation of this passage of holy writ. Jesus told them, that this prophecy was now fulfilled in Him; and when they hesitated to believe in "Joseph's son," and seemed to wonder why He did not work miracles there, He reminded them that miracles were worked, and always had been worked, just according to the pleasure of God, who often chose the most unlikely persons to work his miracles upon. His words made all who were in the synagogue very wrath; "and they rose and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow (or edge) of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong," and so put an end to his life and his preaching; but not yet, and not so, was the Son of man to die. He therefore worked a miracle to save himself, and "passing through the midst of them, went His way."

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CHAPTER X.—CALLING OF SIMON AND OTHERS.

THE number of Christ's disciples increased, but it was necessary that He should have a certain number of faithful men constantly with Him, to be witnesses of all that He said and did whilst on earth; so that they might teach "the Gospel of the Kingdom" to others, when he should have returned to His Father in Heaven. To this end, therefore, when walking by the Sea of Galilee, Jesus bid the two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew, leave their occupation of fishermen, and follow Him wheresoever He should go; telling them that He would make them fishers of men: meaning, that as by putting their nets into the sea, they had hitherto brought fish to land; so now, by preaching the Gospel, they should bring men to the kingdom of Heaven. Jesus did not speak in vain: "straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him. And when he had gone a little farther thence, he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets. And straightway he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him." A miracle quickly confirmed the faith of these four disciples. The people, who had gathered round our Lord to hear his words, so pressed upon Him, that He entered into Simon's ship, and from thence taught the people. When He had spoken to them for some time, "he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught." Now Peter, who had been toiling all night, which is the best time for catching fish, knew that there was little chance of taking any then; but the command of his Master was enough for him. His obedience was rewarded by a wonderful draught (or take) of fishes, which greatly astonished Simon and Andrew, as well as their partners, James and John. Peter, seeing the wonderful works of God, felt that he was utterly unworthy even to be the servant of so glorious a Being, and falling at Jesus's knees, he exclaimed, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" But Jesus encouraged him, and repeated His promise, that His disciples should by their preaching of the Gospel bring the hearts of men to love and obey the Lord, for "he said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. And when they had brought their ships to

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land, they forsook all, and followed him."

From henceforth these four disciples, who had been especially called, became the constant attendants of our Lord. Three of them, Simon, James, and John, were more particularly favoured; for they are mentioned as being with the Lord on many occasions, when His other disciples were not with Him; thus they were witnesses of all the wonderful events in His life.

After the calling of Simon and his companions, Jesus went with them into Capernaum; "and on the Sabbath day he entered into the synagogue and taught." Jesus did not talk to the people, as many of the Scribes did, about ceremonies and traditions; but he tried to draw their thoughts away from such comparative trifles, and fix them upon the Lord God Almighty—upon His goodness and mercy, and upon the necessity of faith and love producing perfect obedience to His holy Will. Jesus spake of holiness and righteousness in a way that they had never before heard; and he spake also in a tone of authority as One who had a right to command. He told them that he was indeed the Son of God, and that he spake unto them in the name of the Lord God of Israel: He warned the impenitent and disobedient, that they would bring eternal misery upon themselves, while He promised eternal happiness to all who would believe and obey. No wonder that His hearers were astonished at such teaching, from one who appeared to be merely a man like themselves. But to convince them that they might safely believe in Him, Jesus, even in the synagogue, healed a man who had a spirit of an unclean devil, so that "the people spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this? for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they do obey him. And immediately the fame of him went out, and spread abroad throughout all the region, into every place of the country round about Galilee."

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"And when they were come out of the synagogue, Jesus with James and John entered into the house of Simon and Andrew: here the mother of Simon's wife lay sick of a fever." The poor woman's friends besought Jesus for her; He took her by the hand; the fever left her at once; and then, instead of being weak, as people naturally are after a fever, her health and strength returned at once, and "immediately she arose and ministered unto them." The news of so wonderful a cure, increased the fame of Jesus.

The wonderful cures performed by Jesus brought many to ask His help. "And when the even was come," that is, as soon as the Sabbath was over,—for the Jews reckoned their Sabbath to begin at sunset, or about six o'clock on Friday evening, and to end at the same hour on Saturday night,—as soon, therefore, as the Sabbath was past, "all the city was gathered together at the door, and they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick." Thus were fulfilled the words spoken, 700 years before, by Esaias the prophet, who said, "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses."

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This prophecy was doubly fulfilled: first, by healing sicknesses and diseases, Christ, during his lifetime, took away the consequence of the punishment of sin; secondly, by His death upon the Cross, He took away sin, and procured forgiveness and salvation, for all who seek it in the way appointed by Him.

"And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place and there prayed." Having taken upon Himself the form and nature of man, Jesus now set His disciples an example of what prayer ought to be. It is a blessed thing to be allowed to pray to God—to tell Him of all our joys and sorrows—and to beg Him to bless us, and make us able to do well, whatever work He may give us to do. We sinful creatures have also another thing to pray for; and that is, forgiveness of our sins for Jesus Christ's sake, and such true repentance, as will make us try every day to do His holy Will better and better. For all these blessings we should constantly pray: but you must remember, that it is quite possible for you to kneel down every morning and evening and repeat the prayers which you have learnt, and *yet never really pray one bit*.

Prayer is speaking to God, and begging Him to give us what we stand in need of, both for our souls and bodies. Now, amongst ourselves, it is thought very rude and disrespectful, to speak to any person without thinking of what we are saying: and what should we think of a person who went into the presence of an earthly king, to ask some great favour, and then spake in a careless, indifferent manner, without seeming to know or care what he was asking for? We should all blame such a person; and think that he did not deserve to have his petitions granted. What must it be, then, to speak to the Lord God Almighty, the King of Kings, in such a manner? Then, again, if you really wanted your Parents to do anything for you, or give you anything, you would not ask them carelessly, as if you did not care whether they said "Yes" or "No"; you would beg and pray earnestly with all your heart. Now this is what you should do when you say your prayers to God, your heavenly Father, Who can give you all you need on earth; and can besides, put His holy Spirit into your heart, and give you eternal happiness hereafter. Try, then, always to pray from your heart, and never allow yourself to repeat words carelessly, as if prayer was a task, to be got through as soon as possible. Such prayers can never please God; on the contrary, by praying in such a way we commit a great sin; for we take God's holy Name in vain, every time we kneel down to say our prayers. Written prayers are useful as helps; but you should also try of your own self to ask God to forgive you for any naughty things you have done, and help you to do better: God does not care what words we say, if our hearts really pray.

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Jesus, you will observe, got up before it was light, and went into a quiet place, where he could pray without interruption. He would rather give up His night's rest, than not have time to pray to His heavenly Father; and we must remember, that as He had taken upon Him the nature of man,

He was just as liable to be tired and sleepy as we are; and therefore, He suffered as much from giving up his night's rest as we should do; let His conduct, therefore, be an example to us.

In the morning, "Simon and they that were with him," (the three other disciples already called,) missed their Master, "and followed after him. And when they had found him, they said unto him, All men seek for thee." No doubt, as soon as it was day, all they that had any sick in their families, brought them to be healed, and were disappointed at finding only the disciples.

After this, "Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. And his fame went throughout all Syria; his wonderful cures were heard of in neighbouring lands, and they brought unto him all sick people and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic (or mad); and he healed them." And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judæa, and from beyond Jordan.

CHAPTER XI.—THE LEPER HEALED.

WE read so often in the Gospels, of Jesus casting out devils and unclean spirits, that it may be as well to say something on this subject, as in these days there is nothing of the kind. We know that the Devil has ever been the greatest enemy of mankind, trying to destroy the souls and bodies of men. In the Old Testament, we read of diviners, enchanters, wizards, sorcerers, and magicians, who were all persons wicked enough to try to have communication with evil spirits; and we also read that the children of Israel were commanded to put all such to death. But it seems that when men would persist in doing the Devil's work by sinning against God, the evil spirits were allowed to have power over their bodies, as they had, by listening to his temptations, given him power over their souls. Certain it is, that in the time of our Lord, the evil spirits had some extraordinary power over the bodies of some men; entering into them as it were, and making them do things hurtful to themselves and others. Such people are spoken of as "demoniacs," or as being "possessed of devils" or "unclean spirits."

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Most likely the reason why God allowed the Devil to have power over the bodies of men, was to show the people the reality of a "ghostly enemy"; and to remind them, that if they allowed the Devil to get into their hearts and make them serve him, they would be unfit ever to go into the kingdom of God. The sad state in which these poor demoniacs were, was a sort of sign of the dreadful condition in which all the descendants of Adam must for ever have continued, if the Son of God had not come down to destroy the works of the Devil, and free the souls of men from his power.

When Jesus cast the devils and unclean spirits out of the *bodies* of men, it was a plain proof that His power was greater than theirs; and that he could, therefore, most certainly deliver the *souls* of men from the power of their enemy.

Evil spirits were thus allowed to show their power, in order more clearly to manifest, or show forth, the great power and glory of the Son of God, Whom even the devils were bound to obey: they were, moreover, forced to bear witness to the fact that He *was* the Messiah, for on many occasions they cried out, "Thou art Christ, the Son of God."

When we read of these unhappy men who were possessed by devils, let us remember that the same evil spirit is watching to destroy us; and that though he has now no power over the bodies of men, he tries to get possession of our hearts, and unless we resist him steadfastly, he will succeed. To encourage us to fight against the Devil, we must remember that he has no power over our souls but what we give him, by wilfully sinning against God. Powerful as our enemy is, our Friend and Saviour is vastly more powerful; and He will bless and keep all who do resist the Devil, and strive to obey and serve God faithfully.

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The next miracle mentioned, was the cure of a leper. Both Jews and Gentiles looked upon leprosy as a type of sin; that is, as being to the body, what sin is to the soul: the leprosy first shows itself in a little spot, but quickly spreads, and covers the whole body with sores. Sin begins in some act of disobedience; not being resisted, one sin leads to another, till the whole heart is filled with evil passions.

The leper was considered unclean, and was not allowed to live amongst God's people, nor enter into the Courts of the Temple; typifying that sin is hateful in the sight of God, and that those who persist in it cannot enter into the kingdom of Heaven.

The leprosy was looked upon as incurable by any human means, and therefore whenever a leper was healed, it was attributed to an especial exertion of the Divine power. In like manner, God only could take away the guilt and punishment of sin, and cleanse the heart of a sinner.

The Leper, who went to Jesus beseeching Him, knew that no human skill could heal his disease; but believing Him to be the Son of God—the Messiah, he "fell on his face worshipping Him, and saying, Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean."

Pleased with the man's faith, Jesus touched him, and said, "I will; be thou clean: and immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed. And Jesus saith unto him, See

thou say nothing to any man: but go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded for a testimony unto them." The Levitical Law declared, that the priests were to be judges in all cases of leprosy. Any one suspected of having this dreadful disease, was to be examined by the Priest: if the Priest pronounced his disease to be leprosy, he was at once considered unclean, and cut off from all communication with his fellow men. In like manner, if it pleased God to take away the disease, the leper was to go again to the Priest to be examined, and if he pronounced him to be cured, the poor man was then considered clean, and restored to the society of his fellow creatures.

When our Lord dismissed the leper, He told him to "offer those things which Moses commanded." The ceremony of cleansing, to be observed by every one who had been cured of leprosy, was as follows:—Two live and clean birds were to be taken, with cedar-wood, hyssop, and other things; one of these birds was to be killed over a brook of running water, and its blood received in an earthen vessel: the living bird, with the other things mentioned, was to be dipped in the blood of the dead bird, and the leper was afterwards to be sprinkled with the blood. This was to show, as all sacrifices were intended to do, that sin and uncleanness could only be done away with, by shedding the blood of the innocent and clean: and thus pointing out to all men, that the blood of Jesus Christ, the spotless lamb of God, could alone wash away the sin of man.

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The living bird was then to be let loose in the open fields, to signify that the leper now cleansed from his plague, was free to go where he would amongst his fellow men. This was the ceremony which Jesus bade the leper observe, and he was not to mention his cure until all was accomplished. For this there appear to have been two reasons: in the first place, Jesus did not wish His ministry to be disturbed, by the excitement which the knowledge of such a miracle would create amongst the people, who on several occasions desired to make Him their king even on earth. In the second place, the Priests were so obstinately prejudiced against our Lord, that they would have been very unwilling to pronounce the leper to be clean, had they known how his cure had been effected: but when once they had declared him to be healed, they could not unsay their own words.

The healing of this leper, was the plainest proof that Christ could give of His being indeed the Son of God; for there was a tradition universally believed by the Jews, that when the Messiah should come, He would cure the leprosy.

The leper did not keep silence, but began to publish it abroad, and so much the more went there a fame abroad of him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and "to be healed of their infirmities; insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter the city," without exciting that attention, which at present He wished to avoid: and "He withdrew himself into the wilderness and prayed": but even here, "they came to him from every quarter."

"And again he entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was noised that he was in the house. And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them." When we read of the multitudes who crowded to hear Jesus, it does seem sad that so few profited by what they heard: let us try not to be only "hearers of the word, but doers also."

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One day, when Jesus was thus teaching, with Pharisees and doctors of the law, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judæa, and Jerusalem, sitting by, a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed which was borne of four, was brought to be healed.

The palsy is a sad disease, which often takes away the use of the legs and arms, and renders the poor sufferer perfectly helpless; nor can the physician restore the use of the limbs.

Those who had brought this poor man on a kind of litter, sought means to bring him into the house, and lay him before Jesus: and when they found that they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they went upon the house-top, and uncovered the roof where he was; and when they had broken it up, they let the poor man down through the tiling with his couch, into the midst of the multitude, before Jesus. The Jewish houses, as we must remember, were only one story high; and in the flat roof was an opening, leading directly to the room below.

This opening was closed by a flat door; but it seems that when they had uncovered the opening, by removing the trapdoor, the aperture was not large enough for the litter to pass through it; and therefore they broke up some of the roof, so as to enlarge the opening, and when they had done this, they fastened ropes to the four corners of the sick man's bed, and so let him down at Jesus's feet. The trouble they had taken to bring to Him a man, who, as they well knew, could not be cured by any human creature, showed that those who brought him, believed that Jesus was indeed the Son of God, able to heal all manner of diseases. And they received the blessing sought in faith.

CHAPTER XII.—CALLING OF MATTHEW.

WHEN Jesus saw the faith of those who had brought the man sick of the palsy, He said, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." These words offended the Scribes (or Doctors) and the Pharisees who were sitting there; and they said within themselves, or thought, "This man blasphemeth," that is, He takes to himself a power which no human being can possess, for "Who

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can forgive sins, but God alone?" Here they were right: no *man could* forgive sin, nor with a word take away the diseases consequent upon sin.

The Scribes and Pharisees do not appear to have even spoken their thoughts to each other, but Jesus, by the Spirit of God which was in Him, perceived that they so reasoned within themselves; "and knowing their thoughts, He answering, said unto them, Why reason ye these things, and think evil in your hearts?" that is, why do ye think evil of Me, and condemn Me as guilty of blasphemy, because I have spoken such words? Then Jesus asked them, "Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed and walk?" Thus Jesus reminded the Scribes and Pharisees, that to heal a man sick of the palsy was as impossible for a man, as to forgive sin; and that therefore He who could do such things, must be indeed the Son of God: and he instantly gave this proof of his being the Messiah, saying, "But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins"—no more *words* were necessary, the sentence was ended by an action; for turning to the sick of the palsy, he saith, "I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house. And immediately he rose up before them, and took up the bed whereon he lay," that is, the mattress, rolled it up, "and went forth before them all, and departed to his own house, glorifying God." Had the Pharisees and Scribes been really anxious to know the truth, praying to God to show it to them, this miracle must indeed have convinced them that Jesus was the Messiah; but their hearts were hardened against believing in a Messiah, who did not come as a king in earthly power and glory.

But whilst the Scribes and Pharisees would not believe the evidence of their own eyes, the poorer people were less obstinate. When they saw the poor sick man walk away completely cured, the multitude were all amazed at such a wonderful proof of the power of God. "And they said, We have seen strange things to-day: we never saw it on this fashion: and they glorified God, which had given such power unto men." Perhaps some of these people became real and true followers of Christ: but many of them, notwithstanding all they had seen, did not like to give up their sins, so as to become holy, as Christ's disciples must be. We think it strange that men could see such miracles, and not believe and follow Jesus: but do we do everything that He bids us? and yet we *know Him* to be the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. Let us take care that we do not love our sins, so as to make us unwilling to be true followers of Jesus Christ.

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After these things, we read that as Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw "a man, a publican named Levi," also called Matthew, "sitting at the receipt of custom." A publican was a tax-gatherer; one who was appointed by the Romans to collect the taxes which they required the inhabitants of Judæa to pay. The Jews disliked paying taxes very much, because it was a mark of their being under the dominion of Gentile rulers: and therefore they hated all publicans or tax-gatherers. In general, too, the bad characters and ill conduct of these men did not tend to make men like them: the Romans were in the habit of farming out the taxes; that is, they appointed some person who was willing to give them a certain sum of money, and take his chance of what taxes he could collect. If the taxes he collected did not amount to as much as the sum he had paid to the Romans, of course he was the loser: if, on the contrary, the taxes came to more than what he had to give to the Romans, he was the gainer: thus the publicans, having paid a large sum of money for the privilege of collecting the taxes, were anxious to collect as much as possible, in order to have more for themselves: and so they often oppressed the people, by making them pay more than was right; and of course the people could not like those whom they found so troublesome and unjust, and therefore they hated the whole class of tax-gatherers.

Levi, or Matthew, of whom we are speaking, was a Jew, who had taken the office of tax-gatherer under the Romans: his particular business seems to have been to receive the money, which every person who carried goods across the Sea of Galilee was obliged to pay as a tax to their Roman masters. Matthew was sitting in his appointed place for the receipt, or receiving, of "custom," that is, of the tax which it was the custom to pay on landing, when our Lord passed by and saw him.

The Pharisees and Scribes looked upon all publicans, whether they were Jews or not, as heathens, unfit to be even spoken to: they would not even try to make them better, as they chose to think that God had quite cast them off. Jesus taught a very different lesson, and showed that God is ready to receive all who will repent of their sins and follow Him. Jesus, who sees what thoughts and feelings are in the heart of every one, made choice of Matthew as a fit man to be one of His constant attendants, and therefore, when he saw him sitting at the receipt of custom, "He said unto him, Follow me. And he left all, rose up, and followed him." At once, without doubt or hesitation, Matthew left all and followed Jesus: now, Jesus calls all of us when we are baptized; but how few of us try to follow Him really and truly? We might perhaps think that it was wrong of Matthew thus to leave his business and go away, because then the people who crossed the sea would not pay the tax required by the Romans: but as he had paid money to the Romans for the situation, they would not be cheated out of the tax: he himself would be the only sufferer. If this had not been the case, he *would* have been wrong to go away before some other person was appointed in his place: for the Bible teaches us, that we must do our duty to man fairly and faithfully, in whatever state of life we are. By doing our earthly business honestly and well, we serve God: if our business takes up too much of our thoughts, and makes us forget God and neglect His worship, then we must give up our business; for we should always think *first* of pleasing God.

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The next event we hear of in our Saviour's life is, that with His usual obedience to the Law, He went up to Jerusalem to keep a "feast of the Jews": most probably the feast of Tabernacles; a

feast celebrated in the Autumn, as a thanksgiving for the harvest or in-gathering of corn, grapes for wine, and all other fruits of the earth: this feast was also intended to remind them of the journeyings of their forefathers in the wilderness, where they lived in booths or tents for forty years; and therefore they were to keep it, by dwelling for seven days in booths, made of the branches of trees.

It seems that by the Sheep Gate, on the eastern side of Jerusalem, there was a pool of water, in which at a certain time of the year God showed His almighty power, by the miraculous cure of any sick person, who, after the troubling or stirring up of the water, first stepped into the pool. By this pool was a building, having five porches, through which the unclean went down to wash in the pool. This building was properly called Bethesda, a Hebrew word, meaning the House of Mercy; and the pool was from it called the pool of Bethesda. Jesus visited this place, where, in the porches, "lay a great multitude of impotent folk," that is, people who were unable to help themselves on account of blindness, or of diseases which took away the use of their legs and arms. These poor creatures were waiting for the moving of the waters; each hoping that he might be the one to get first into the pool, and be cured. Amongst these was a certain man, who had been unable to walk for thirty-eight years. Jesus chose this man as the object of a miracle, and saith unto him, "Wilt thou be made whole?" The poor man, thinking only of the pool, told the Lord that he had no chance of being healed, for he had no friends to help him; and that long before he could drag himself to the water, some other person was sure to step in and secure the blessing. Jesus then "saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk."

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Whether this poor man had heard of Jesus before, we do not know; but he at once showed his faith, by *trying* to do, what he knew he *could not* do, unless he received some miraculous help from God. How delighted he must have been, when he found that a perfect cure was the reward of his faith and obedience!

It was on a Sabbath day that this miracle was worked; and the Jews, probably the Scribes and Pharisees, found fault with the man, saying, "It is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed on the Sabbath day." This was so far true, that in the Law it was written, "Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the Sabbath day"; and the Pharisees, and others who were fond of adding to the outward observances of the Law, and of keeping traditions, reckoned a man guilty of breaking the Law, if he even carried anything in his hand on the Sabbath day. When the Jews blamed this man, he answered very properly, that he could not be wrong in obeying the commands of one who had showed that he had power from God, by healing him of his disease. The Jews allowed that a prophet had power to excuse men from the strict observance of the Sabbath; and, as Jesus had proved Himself to be more than a prophet, they could say no more on that subject; but wishing to have something to find fault with, they asked the man, "What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk?" This question the man could not answer, for he "wist not who it was, for Jesus had conveyed Himself away" after working the miracle at the pool of Bethesda.

CHAPTER XIII.—THE PHARISEES' PRETENDED ZEAL FOR THE SABBATH.

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THE man whom Jesus had healed at the pool of Bethesda, seems to have made the first use of his restored power by going into the House of God, to thank and praise Him for having been made whole. Jesus, finding him in the temple, bade him remember the cure which had been worked upon him, and show his gratitude by forsaking all his sins and leading a holy life, so that he might not bring upon himself far more terrible sufferings than any which he could feel upon earth. The man now understood who had cured him, and went "and told the Jews that it was Jesus which had made him whole": evidently believing that Jesus was the Messiah, and that His command was quite sufficient to justify a man for doing that which was not strictly lawful on the Sabbath day. The Jews, however, would not allow this: therefore did they "persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the Sabbath day."

Jesus, then, in a conversation of which St. John gives us an account, tried to convince the Jews that He was indeed the Messiah, and as such, *had* authority even to heal on the Sabbath. On this occasion He gave the Jews advice that all of us should listen to and follow; for He said, "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." The Jews believed that the Scriptures of the Old Testament, which were all that at that time were written, were indeed the Word of God, and that they showed them how to obtain eternal life: Jesus therefore bids them read and study them honestly and carefully, and that they would then see that He must be the Messiah, of whom those Scriptures testify or speak. We know that the New Testament as well as the Old, is the Word of God; and that it shows us the way to eternal life. Let us then obey our Lord's command, and search the Scriptures, that we may learn His will in order to do it.

Jesus also told the Jews, that Moses, whom they pretended to obey exactly, wrote of Him; and that if they really believed Moses, and wished to obey the Law, they would acknowledge Him to be indeed the Messiah, of whom Moses and all the prophets had written. All that Jesus said, does not seem to have had any effect; for on the next Sabbath, something of the same kind happened. The disciples who were following Jesus through the corn-fields, being hungry, began to pluck the

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ears of corn, rubbing them in their hands, to take off the husk, and eating them as they went. It might seem to us that the disciples had no right to take ears of corn which did not belong to them, but this was, under the circumstances, allowed by the Law of Moses, or the Levitical Law: a hungry man, who was passing through standing corn, might pluck the ears with his hand to satisfy his wants, though he was forbidden "to move a sickle unto his neighbour's standing corn."

The Pharisees, who were constantly watching for an opportunity to find fault, now asked Jesus, why He allowed his disciples to do what was not lawful for them to do on the Sabbath day.

For very many years the Jews had neglected to observe the Sabbath in a proper manner, and this neglect of a positive command, had been one cause of the destruction of their kingdom, and of all the misery they afterwards suffered. Now their descendants had gone into another sin, and instead of making the Sabbath a day of rest from worldly cares,—a day to be devoted to the service of God, and to thinking of all His mercies,—they made so many rules as to what might or might not be done, that the most common and necessary actions, such as healing the sick, or saving the life of an animal, came to be looked upon as unlawful, and therefore sinful. Jesus reminded the Jews who thus blamed His disciples, that David was not considered to have broken the Law of Moses, because once, when pressed by hunger, he and his followers had eaten the shewbread, which it "was not lawful to eat, but for the priests alone." He also told them, that no one accused the Priests of breaking the Law, because on the Sabbath day they, in performing the temple services, did things in themselves forbidden on that holy day. Jesus ended by declaring, that "the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath": that is, that the Sabbath was meant for the benefit of mankind, as well as for the glory of God, and not to be an oppressive burden; and that the Son of man was Lord also of the Sabbath, and had therefore power to dispense with its rigorous observance; and that if they had understood the meaning of God's words, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice," they would not have been so ready to blame His disciples, as if they had been guilty of a crime, merely because, to relieve the pangs of hunger, they had plucked a few ears of corn on the Sabbath day.

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On another Sabbath, Jesus went into a synagogue and taught: and behold, there was a man whose right hand was withered; that is, his hand was so shrunk and dried up, that he could make no use of it. The Scribes and Pharisees, thinking it likely that Jesus would heal this man in spite of its being the Sabbath day, watched him; that they might find an accusation against him. "But he knew their thoughts" and purposes, and said to the man with the withered hand, "Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth" in the sight of all the people in the synagogue. "And the Scribes and Pharisees seeing this, asked him, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath days? that they might accuse him." One party of Jews, in their mistaken zeal for the strict observance of the Sabbath, had come to the extraordinary decision, that no one might comfort the sick or mourning on that day; though another party did permit the people to prepare medicine, and to perform any service which was required for the actual preservation of life. Instead of answering a question only put for the purpose of having something to accuse Him of, Jesus said unto them, "I will ask you one thing; Is it lawful on the Sabbath days to do good or to do evil? To save life or to destroy it?" for He knew that they wished to destroy Him, whilst He only wanted to do good to a suffering human creature. Whatever might be their wishes, they could not openly declare that it was more lawful to do evil than good; therefore they made no answer, but held their peace. "And he said unto them, 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." To such words the Jews could make no answer. Jesus, grieved to see the hardness of heart that prevented the Pharisees believing in Him, and made them angry instead of glad, to see a fellow-creature relieved; "looked round about on them with anger, and saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand": the man had faith to try, and the power to do so was given to him; "he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other." Then the Pharisees, almost beside themselves with anger, are said to have been filled with madness; and they went forth, with the Herodians, and straightway held a council against him; and communed one with another, what they might do to Jesus, and how they might destroy him. It is sad to think that all the proofs of our Saviour's power, only made the Pharisees and others more and more anxious to put Him to death.

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When we read such accounts as these, let us be thankful for our Sabbaths, and try to keep them holy; spending our time in worshipping God, in learning our duty, and in doing good to others. Above all, let us take particular care to be holy on this holy day; and not to do the least wrong thing, on a day which is called the Lord's Day.

The time was not yet come for Jesus to give up His life, and therefore, knowing that the Pharisees sought to destroy Him, He withdrew Himself from Jerusalem, and went with his disciples into Galilee "to the sea; and a great multitude followed him" from all parts, even from beyond Jordan; and also many of the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon, having heard what great things Jesus had done, came unto him. As many as had plagues or diseases "pressed upon him for to touch him," and he healed them all. "And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God." Thus was fulfilled what had been said 700 years before by the prophet Isaiah, who declared that when the Messiah should come to set up a new Law, even the Gospel, He would use no force nor violence, but do it entirely by kindness; and by showing an example of kindness and forbearance to the weak, encouraging them to become better. The prophet's words, put into his mouth by God, were, "Behold, my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased; I will put my spirit upon him; and he shall

show judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory. And in his name shall the Gentiles trust."

An *example* of goodness and holiness and kindness, has more effect than all that can be *said* on the subject. By the piety and good conduct of the followers of Jesus, men were led to take the same part, and thus by the blessing of God, has the Gospel spread over the earth. All Christians should remember this, and try to show by their conduct that they are followers of Jesus. Even children can set an example to other children, either for good or evil: but if they do it for evil, they are doing the work of the Devil.

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CHAPTER XIV.—THE APOSTLES CHOSEN.

As Jesus was to live only for a short time on earth, it was needful that He should leave behind Him others who should carry on His work, and preach the Gospel after His death. But if these men were to repeat to others the words which Jesus had spoken, and show them the wonderful things which He had done, it was necessary that they should be constantly with their Lord, so as to be able to bear witness as to all that He had said or done.

During the time that our Saviour had been teaching and healing the sick, many persons had become His followers, besides those whom He had especially called to be His disciples. From amongst the number of those who had become disciples, twelve were now to be chosen, to be in constant attendance upon their Master, that they might, after his death, bear witness to His life, and actions, and teaching.

The night before this choice was to be made Jesus "Went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." Thus He set us an example of the way in which we should prepare ourselves for any important work we have to do; and that is, by asking guidance and help from our heavenly Father.

"And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples whom he would; and they came unto him: and of them he chose twelve (whom also he named Apostles) that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils." He ordained twelve—Simon (whom he also named Peter) and Andrew his brother; and "James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder; and Philip, and Bartholomew; and Matthew, and Thomas; and James the son of Alphæus, and Judas Thaddæus, the brother of James; and Simon the Canaanite, called Zelotes; and Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed him."

We have already seen how Andrew, Simon Peter, James and John the sons of Zebedee, Philip, and Matthew, were called in the first instance to be the disciples of Jesus: Bartholomew, who was also ordained an Apostle, is supposed to be the same person spoken of as Nathanael, who being brought to Jesus by Philip, at once acknowledged Him to be the Son of God, and became one of His disciples. Of the other five apostles, we know nothing previous to their being now chosen: to the name of one, there is a terrible distinction, "who also betrayed him"; and in the three accounts of this event, written by different writers, he is thus pointed out as "the traitor." Of the twelve Apostles, five have left us valuable records of our Saviour's life and teaching.

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You will remember that in the Bible we have Four Gospels; that is, four different accounts of our Lord's sayings and doings whilst on earth, and of the Gospel which He came to teach. The first of these was written by Matthew, about five years after the death of Jesus Christ. The Gospels "according to St. Mark and St. Luke," were written about twenty-seven years later: St. Luke was a disciple of Christ's before His crucifixion, and St. Mark was probably one also, but neither of them was an Apostle. As the Gospel of St. Matthew gives an account of the birth of Jesus Christ, St. Mark's says nothing on the subject, but begins with the public appearance of John the Baptist; whilst, on the contrary, that of St. Luke gives many particulars omitted by St. Matthew. St. John, who lived to be 100 years old, did not write his Gospel until sixty-four years after the death of Christ: he seems to have written it, in order to tell us many things not mentioned in the former Gospels, particularly the conversations and discourses of our Lord: and he repeats very little of what is recorded by the other Evangelists, as we call those who wrote the Gospels. Out of the four Evangelists, two were Apostles also, and two were not. St. Luke has also left us another very valuable record, of the acts done by the Apostles after our Saviour's death: this is the only history of all that the Apostles did and said, and it is called "The Book of the Acts of the Apostles." Before St. John wrote his Gospel, he wrote what is called "The Book of the Revelation of St. John," being an account of visions vouchsafed him, and prophecies made known to him, whilst in banishment in the isle of Patmos, on account of his religion.

St. John also wrote three of the Epistles, or Letters, which form part of the New Testament. Peter wrote two Epistles, James and Jude, or Judas Thaddæus, each one: but the greater number of the Epistles were written by St. Paul, who did not become a disciple or follower of Jesus until after the crucifixion.

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The Jewish Rabbis preferred to take as their pupils and disciples, rich and learned men; but, as we have seen, Jesus chose poor and ignorant men, to show that learning was not necessary to

enable men to understand the Gospel; for that its truths are so plain, that even the most ignorant person, who in his heart loves God, can understand the Gospel, and learn how to please God.

Multitudes of the people continued to come to Christ, to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases: he healed them all, and also tried to show them how they ought to behave, in order to obtain the blessing of God. Seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain, and there spake all the words which we call the "Sermon on the Mount": an account of this Sermon is given to us both by St. Matthew and St. Luke. All Christians should study it, and try to obey it: even children can understand a good deal of it, if they will try.

When Jesus "had ended his sayings," and was come down from the Mount, "he entered into Capernaum, where at this time He worked the miracle of healing the Centurion's servant." A Centurion, amongst the Romans, was the captain or commander of 100 men. This Centurion, though he was himself a Gentile, was kindly disposed towards the Jews, and had at his own expense built a synagogue for their use: he also believed in Jesus as the Son of God; and did not doubt that at His word the disease of which his servant was dying would at once be removed: therefore, not thinking himself worthy even to speak to the Lord, he sent unto Him the elders of the Jews; probably the elders belonging to the synagogue he had built. Jesus immediately went with these elders; but when they got near the Centurion's house, some of his friends came at his desire, to beg that Jesus would not trouble himself to come, for if He would only speak the word, his servant would be healed. It would seem that the Centurion himself quickly followed the last messengers; and he received the reward of his faith, for his servant was healed, and at the same time Jesus told those about Him, that the Centurion had shown more faith than He had found amongst the Jews; and that many Gentiles would through their faith be received into the Kingdom of Heaven, whilst many of the Jews would be shut out, on account of their wilful unbelief.

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The next miracle we hear of, was the bringing to life of the widow's son, who was being carried out of Nain to be buried, when Jesus came to the gate of that city. "And there came a fear on all" who saw these things: "and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and that God hath visited his people." These people rightly felt, that the Doer of such things must indeed be the Messiah: and this saying was spread abroad, not only throughout all Judæa, but throughout all the region round about. "And the disciples of John" went to him in prison, where he had been, as we have heard, put by Herod; "and shewed him of all these things." "Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he, calling unto him two of his disciples, sent them to Jesus," telling them to say, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" John did not send to ask this question for his own satisfaction; he knew well enough that Jesus was indeed the Messiah that "should come," and that no other was to be looked for: but he wanted to strengthen the faith of his own disciples, and convince them that Jesus was indeed the Messiah, and that they must follow Him.

"When the men" whom John had sent "were come unto" Jesus, "they said, John Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?"

This question our Lord did not immediately answer, in words, at least; but "in the same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind, he gave sight."

Then Jesus, answering the question put to Him by the disciples of John, said unto them, "Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached unto them." The Jews all knew perfectly well, that the doing of all these wondrous miracles was to be a sign to point out the Messiah, for the prophets had declared that He should do them. Now these things were being done every day, and therefore it was quite clear, to all who were not determined not to believe, that he who did them was the promised Messiah, the Son of God. All who heard what Jesus now said must have understood Him to mean that He was the promised Messiah, and that they need not look for another.

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CHAPTER XV.—JESUS IN SIMON'S HOUSE.

WHEN the Baptist's messengers were gone away, Jesus spake to the multitude about him; telling them that John was the messenger spoken of by the prophet Malachi—the Elias, who was to come before the Messiah. He also told them, that John the Baptist was more than a prophet, but that the humblest follower of Christ might become greater than he was. Many other things spake Jesus unto the people: those who were humble, and felt that they were sinners, gladly accepted the offer of forgiveness, on the condition of repentance; but the Pharisees and Scribes, who thought themselves righteous, neglected His gracious offers of mercy.

It seems that before Jesus left Nain, where He had raised the widow's son, a Pharisee named Simon "desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat." Whilst he sat, or rather reclined upon a couch, as was the custom at meals in those days, a woman, well known to have been a great sinner, came "and stood at his feet behind him, weeping; and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment" which she had brought.

The Pharisees considered themselves too holy even to touch any person whom they looked upon as a sinner: when, therefore, the master of the house saw that Jesus allowed this woman to touch Him, he said within himself (or thought), "This man, if he were a prophet, would have known what manner of woman this is that toucheth him, for she is a sinner." Meaning, that if Jesus had known how greatly this woman had sinned, He would not have allowed her to touch Him. But Jesus did know all, and *more* than the Pharisee knew; for He knew that this woman, however sinful she had been, was now truly sorry for her sins, and anxious to lead a better life; and such truly penitent sinners He was, and is, always ready to receive. Jesus therefore, knowing what Simon's thoughts were, spake to him, and told him a little parable, to show him that this poor woman, whom he so despised, had given proofs of greater love towards Himself than Simon had done; and He ended by turning to the repentant woman, and saying the comforting words, "Thy sins are forgiven." With what joy must the poor sinner have heard these words! But we are not told what her feelings or words were; we are only told, that "they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also?" They might easily have known that He could be none other than the Son of God, the Messiah; but they would not own as such a poor man who went about amongst publicans and sinners.

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That He did show such love towards sinners, is our greatest comfort; for we are all sinners, and stand greatly in need of His mercy. Knowing how the Pharisees were offended by His words, He only repeated His assurance to the woman in other words; saying, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." Her faith had brought her to Jesus; and those who come to Him in faith and penitence, He will in no wise cast out.

In the parable which Jesus spake to Simon, reference is made to two customs of the Jews: one, washing the feet, or making the servants wash the feet, of every guest, to remove the dust which must settle on the feet during the shortest journey; the other, the custom of welcoming a distinguished guest with a kiss, as a sign of respectful attention and love.

Jesus continued to go throughout the country of Galilee, "preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him, and certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance." These women, one of whom, at least, had been delivered from bondage to Satan, having "substance," that is, some property of their own, seem to have been constant attendants upon our Lord, and to have supplied His temporal wants. Jesus so devoted himself to the work He had undertaken, that from the constant thronging of people around Him, He had not time "so much as to eat bread."

At this time there was brought to Jesus a wretched object, a man possessed with a devil, who was also blind and dumb: "and he healed him," so that the man who had been blind and dumb both saw and spake. The multitudes marvelled, saying, "It was never so seen in Israel"—never before had such things been done in the land of Israel; and therefore the multitude rightly felt, that He who could do such wonderful things must be a very different Being from any of their teachers, or from the prophets or holy men of old.

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Seeing the wonderful miracles worked by Jesus, "all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the Son of David?"—that is, is not this Man, who can cast out devils, the Messiah of David's seed, so long promised to our fathers and to us?

These people saw the truth; but the Scribes and Pharisees laboured hard to prevent their accepting Jesus as the promised Messiah: and they immediately declared, that the evil spirits were only cast out by the permission of Beelzebub, or Satan, the prince of the devils; and that therefore, so far from proving Jesus to be the Messiah, these miracles showed that He was under the power of the Devil, and that no one ought to listen to His teaching. This was dreadful blasphemy; and might have drawn upon them the immediate wrath of God: but instead of punishing them, Jesus tried to show them and all the people, how foolish it was to suppose that the Devil would fight against himself, and undo his own work. But when people are determined not to listen to those who warn them of their sins, and point out their duty, they will believe, or pretend to believe, anything however foolish, that gives them an excuse for not listening to good advice.

Jesus warned the Pharisees, that speaking of the work done by the Holy Spirit of God as being done by the Devil was a most fearful sin; and one for which there could be no forgiveness.

Jesus also told the people, that if the heart of a man was not full of faith and love, it would be as impossible for him to do anything pleasing to God, as it would be for a bad tree to bring forth good fruit; for the quality of the tree is known by its fruits; and the heart of man is known by his conduct and actions.

Certain of the Scribes and Pharisees, asked Jesus to give them a sign of His being indeed the Son of God. This was displeasing to the Lord, for His miracles were a sufficient sign of His having come from Heaven; and from the writings of their own prophets, the Jews should have understood, that the promised Messiah whilst on earth would be in a humble condition, and be finally put to death for the sins of His people. Jesus therefore told the Scribes and Pharisees, that no further sign of His being the Messiah would be given, than the sign of the prophet Jonas, or Jonah. "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." The meaning of this was, that the only further sign they could expect as to His being the Messiah, would be that one, of which Jonas was

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a type (or sign): for that as Jonas, though buried in the whale's body, came out alive; so He would be buried in the ground for three days, and then rise up again to live for ever. Then Jesus took occasion to show the Pharisees, that they were more sinful in the eyes of God than the men of Nineveh, "because *they* repented at the preaching of Jonas," whilst the Scribes and Pharisees refused to listen to Him, who was far greater than Jonas.

Many other things Jesus said unto the people, teaching them also by parables. One parable spoken at this time was that of the Sower. Afterwards, when they were alone, the disciples asked Jesus the meaning of this parable, which He immediately explained: teaching them that many may hear the Gospel, and receive no benefit from it; either because they listen carelessly; or because, having listened, they have not faith to hold its doctrines fast when temptations and trials come; or because they allow the cares and pleasures of life to take up too much of their hearts, and so prevent their serving God properly. None of these will be the better for hearing the Word: but those who listen to it with a sincere and honest intention of obeying it, and pray to God for grace to do so, striving at the same time to root out all those sinful feelings and passions which, like stones and thorns, prevent their bringing forth the fruit of good works; those, and those only, will bear fruit pleasing unto the Lord.

Let us learn from this parable to listen attentively to the Word of God, and try to do whatever it bids us.

Other parables, which seem to have been delivered at this time, are those of the Tares, the Grain of Mustard Seed, and the Leaven: "and with many such parables spake he the word unto them"; "and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples," and added the parables of the Hidden Treasure, the Goodly Pearl, and the Net. "And it came to pass when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence."

After this, Jesus went down to the Lake of Gennesareth, "and said unto his disciples, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake." "And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him." And there were also with him other little "ships." "And they launched forth."

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CHAPTER XVI.—STILLING THE TEMPEST, ETC.

THE Lake of Gennesareth, or Sea of Galilee, is a large body of water; and the River Jordan, which runs through it, causes at all times a considerable motion in the centre of the lake; when the wind blows strongly from the S.E., and meets the current of the river, the sea becomes so rough, that any small vessels are in the greatest danger, and in this way many are lost. We read, that as they sailed, Jesus fell asleep. We must remember, that for our sakes Jesus had become subject to all the pains of hunger, fatigue, cold, &c.; well might He, therefore, be tired out with his continual labours, for He never spared Himself, or consulted his own ease or comfort; but was always at work, going from one place to another, doing good to others. What a difference between Him and us! For we are unwilling to deny ourselves in the least thing for the sake of saving trouble to others; nor are we willing to give up our own wills, even for the sake of pleasing God.

Whilst Jesus and his disciples were now crossing the Lake of Gennesareth, "there came down a storm of wind on the lake," and a "great tempest in the sea," "insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves," and was filled with water, and in great danger of sinking. "And Jesus was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow." The disciples knew where to look for help; they were in jeopardy or danger, so they "came to Him and awoke him, saying, Master, carest thou not that we perish? Lord, save us: we perish!"

The fears of the Apostles were at this time stronger than their faith; they should have felt that sleeping or waking their Lord could preserve them through every danger. For this they were blamed, for "he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" but He had compassion on their weakness, for "he arose, and rebuked the winds and the raging of the water: and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm." After a great storm the waves naturally continue rough for some hours, but now at a word the waters of the lake became at once smooth and still. This sudden ceasing of the storm filled the Apostles, accustomed as they were to see wonderful works done by Jesus, with astonishment and awe. We are told, that "the men marvelled, and they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this? for he commandeth even the winds and the water, and they obey him." Such a miracle must have strengthened the faith of the disciples, and convinced them more and more, that he who could do such things, was indeed no mere man, but the Son of God, the Ruler of the universe, to whom all things do bow and obey. The voyage was now over; the ship reached the shore; and Jesus and His disciples came into the country of the Gadarenes, or Gergesenes, where Jesus immediately performed another miracle, on a man possessed with devils, exceeding fierce. Jesus, pitying the condition of this unhappy man, commanded the unclean spirit to come out of him. Then the devil who spake in this poor demoniac, cried out, "What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? Art thou come hither to torment us before the time? I beseech thee, torment me not." Even the devils acknowledged Jesus to be the Messiah; and knew well that in the end of the world, all evil spirits would be driven away into misery and darkness; but he now asks Him not to interfere with his power before that time. To such a request Jesus could not, of course, listen: and the devils, finding that they must leave the poor man whom they

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had so long tormented, then besought Him that He would at least suffer them to go away into a herd of swine, which were feeding nigh unto the mountains, a good way off from them. "And Jesus said unto them, Go." No sooner was the permission given, than the evil spirits entered into the swine, and the whole herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters: and they that fed the swine fled, and told it in the city, and in the country; and what was befallen to the possessed of the devils.

Pigs were unclean animals, and it was therefore sinful of any Jew to keep them: if the owners of these swine were Jews, they were justly punished for their disobedience. Perhaps the Gadarenes were not Jews, and kept these swine to show that they did not regard or obey the Law of Moses; if so, it was well for them to see that the Lord God of the Hebrews could force men to obey His commands. When we read what happened as soon as the evil spirits took possession of the swine, we should remember the dreadful fate of all who suffer themselves to be led or guided by the Devil. There is no escape for them; the swine could not help themselves, but the Devil has no more power over us now than we choose to give him. If we resist him, he will not harm us; he will try, and we may have to fight hard, but if we do, we shall be more than conquerors through Jesus Christ.

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We read that the keepers of the swine fled, and told how they had been destroyed, and how the demoniac had been healed. The men of the city, grieved at the loss of their property, and probably afraid that if Jesus remained amongst them the same sort of thing might happen again, besought Him to depart out of their coasts: a request in which the whole multitude of the Gadarenes joined. They had better have besought Him to remain, and teach them what they should do. It is a dreadful thing to wish God to leave us undisturbed in our sins! The man who had been delivered from the power of the Devil, wished, on the contrary, to go away in the ship with Jesus and his disciples; but he was told rather to go home to his friends, and tell them what great things the Lord had done for him. And he did so, and declared through all the country what great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel.

After this, Levi, or Matthew, made a feast for Jesus in his own house; and a great company of Publicans, and of others, and of sinners, sat down together with Jesus and his disciples. The Scribes and Pharisees took occasion to find fault with this, and asked the disciples, "How is it that your Master eateth with publicans and sinners?" But Jesus told them, that it was to do good to sinners that He was come upon earth: He reminded them that it was only sick people who had need of a physician, and that those who thought themselves well, would not send for one; and that it was the same with Him, for He was come as a Physician to heal the souls of the sick, and that therefore He must go amongst those who, feeling themselves to be sinners, wished for pardon. The Pharisees thought themselves righteous, and therefore they did not feel the need of a Saviour. After these things, Jesus appears to have returned into his own city, that is, to Capernaum, where He had taken up His abode, at those times when He was not occupied in going about the country.

Here a ruler of the synagogue, named Jairus, came to entreat Jesus to go and heal his little daughter, who was dying. Jesus immediately went with him, and on the way He cured a poor woman, whose faith was strong enough to make her believe that if she did but touch the hem of His garment she should be made whole. Her hopes were not disappointed, and Jesus commended her faith. While Jesus was yet speaking with her, messengers came from the ruler's house to tell him that his daughter was even now dead. The Lord, however, bid Jairus not to be afraid, for that if he would only believe, his child should still be made whole. No doubt the miracle that Jairus had just witnessed strengthened his faith, and the result was, that his little daughter was restored to life. On quitting the house of Jairus, two blind men followed our Lord, who gave them sight; and He also enabled a dumb man to speak, by casting out the devil which possessed him. The multitudes were filled with wonder in seeing things which had never been so seen in Israel; but the Pharisees again declared, "He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils."

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Jesus continued to teach, and to preach, and to heal sicknesses and diseases, in spite of the unbelief of the people; for though they all marvelled, and some doubtless became his disciples, many rejected Him, saying, "Is not this the carpenter's son?" meaning that a man in such a humble condition of life could not be the Messiah. After this, Jesus gave his Apostles a more solemn charge or commission for the work they were to do. For He called the twelve together, and gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease; and then He sent them forth two by two to preach the Gospel, and to heal the sick. The Gospel was to be first offered to the Jews, and therefore Jesus now commanded the twelve, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." And as ye go say, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Jesus also bade the twelve not to make any provision of money or food for their journey, but to depend on the charity of those to whom they should preach: promising a blessing to those cities where they would be well received. Many other things did He say unto them at this time: and when He "had made an end of commanding His twelve disciples, He departed thence, to teach and to preach in their cities."

And the twelve also departed, and went through the towns, preaching the Gospel, that men should repent. And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, healing them everywhere.

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CHAPTER XVII.—DEATH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

WE must now return to the history of John the Baptist; he was about this time put to death by Herod, who, as we have already seen, had thrown the Baptist into prison to please Herodias, who was angry with him because he had reprov'd her and Herod for their sins. But this wicked woman was not satisfied with the imprisonment of this holy man; she wanted to destroy him, and watched for an opportunity of doing so. It is a terrible thing to determine in one's heart to do a wicked action: it is bad enough to give way to temptation, and so sin against God, but to make up one's mind to break His commandments, is far worse.

After John the Baptist had been in prison for some months, Herod's birthday came round; and to celebrate this event, the king made a great feast to the officers of his household, and the chief men in Galilee. On this occasion, Salome, the daughter of Herodias, came in and danced before Herod and his guests, in order to amuse them. This was a very old custom among the kings of the East at that time, though to us it seems a very strange and bad custom. Herod and those who sat with him, were very much pleased with the damsel's dancing; and Herod, very rashly and foolishly, made a solemn promise, that he would, as a reward, give her anything she liked to ask for. "And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask?" Herodias had probably expected something of this kind; at any rate, she had an answer ready, and said, "The head of John the Baptist". It does not seem that Salome was astonished at this advice, or that she was at all unwilling to follow it: for she returned straightway with haste unto the king, and said, "I will that thou give me by and by in a charger, the head of John the Baptist". A charger was a large dish or tray: in some countries, even to this day, when the king orders a great man to be beheaded, the head is brought to him afterwards, to show that his commands have been obeyed. Such a request as Salome now made, startled even Herod himself: we read that "the king was exceeding sorry; yet for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat at meat with him, he would not reject her." He therefore sent an executioner, who cut off John the Baptist's head in the prison, and brought it to Salome, who gave it to her mother. This history teaches us many things: first, although it is the duty of children to obey their Parents, they must obey God before them: thus, if Parents are unhappily so wicked as to tell their children to do anything that God has forbidden, they must please God rather than their Parents. Children should, be very thankful when they have Parents who will never wish them to break the Lord's commandments. Another thing we learn is, to be careful how we make promises. A solemn promise once made ought to be kept, however inconvenient it may be to keep it; and therefore we should never promise positively to do anything, unless we are quite sure that we can do it. But though it is displeasing to God that an oath should be broken, it is still more displeasing to Him that it should be kept, when it can only be done by committing some positive act of sin. Herod made a rash oath, and to keep it, he was guilty of the murder of a good and holy man.

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Although Herod was angry with John, he had a high opinion of his holiness and goodness, and would not willingly have put him to death: but amongst men it was considered shameful to break an oath; and Herod, caring more for the praise of men than the praise of God, sacrificed John the Baptist at the request of a bad woman.

When the disciples of John heard of their master's death, they came to the prison, and took up his body and laid it in a tomb, and went and told Jesus.

After this, Herod heard of the fame of Jesus, and of all the wonderful things that He had done, and he was greatly troubled, and knew not what to think. Some people said, "That John was risen from the dead;" others, "That Elias, who was expected to come before the Messiah, had appeared;" and others, "That one of the old prophets was risen again." Amongst these different opinions, Herod was greatly perplexed: like most of the Jews of high rank, Herod belonged to the sect of the Sadducees, who denied that the body would rise again, or the soul live for ever. He would not, therefore, willingly allow the possibility of John the Baptist having returned to life; but his fears got the better of his opinions. His conscience told him that he had done wickedly in putting to death a true servant of God, and therefore, when he heard that there was One going about the country working miracles, he feared that John had returned to life, armed with power to punish all who had ill-treated him.

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Herod, disturbed by all he heard of Jesus, questioned his servants who told him these things, and said, "John have I beheaded; but who is this of whom I hear such things?" He could get no satisfactory answer, and his guilty conscience drove him to the conclusion, "It is John whom I beheaded; he is risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him." "And he desired to see Jesus." Herod's desire to see Jesus, does not appear to have been gratified until just before our Lord's death; and then the king derived no profit from the interview. Herod had had plenty of opportunities for learning the truths of the Gospel from John the Baptist. He would not make use of them. Our Lord has told us, that if we do not make a good use of all the opportunities given to us, He will take from us the blessings we will not use. In our country, the young are blessed with innumerable opportunities of learning their duty to God: make a proper use of them, and do not force the Lord to take them away, and leave you in wilful ignorance and sin.

The Feast of the Passover was now drawing near: the second Passover which had occurred, since our Saviour had entered on his public work. For this Feast, our Lord went up to Jerusalem;

and on His way, He fed 5,000 people with five loaves and two small fishes; and after they had all eaten as much as they wanted, pieces enough were left to fill twelve baskets; although the whole quantity of loaves and fishes, if they had at first been broken into pieces, could not probably have filled one of these baskets. In working this miracle, Jesus taught us never to waste anything; he said, "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost." Let us remember that many things that we do not want, may be useful to others, and that nothing should be wasted. Children should be careful not to ask for more food than they are sure they can eat, for that is wasteful.

The people, who had been fed in such a wonderful manner, now said, "This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world": meaning the Messiah, spoken of by all the prophets, and whose coming was expected about this time. Having come to this conclusion, the people, according to their mistaken ideas, that the Messiah was to be an earthly sovereign and conqueror, determined to make Him king over the land of Judæa. But Jesus desired only to rule the hearts of men; "When, therefore, he perceived that they would come and take him by force to make him a king," He sent His disciples by ship unto Bethsaida, and having dismissed the multitude, He went up into a mountain alone to pray.

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A storm of wind overtook the disciples in the midst of the lake, and then it was that Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. If the faith of the disciples had been strong, they would have felt that it was as easy for Jesus to walk on the water, as to work any other miracle; but they could not believe it was Him, and "they cried out for fear." The Lord, in His mercy, spake straightway unto them, saying, "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid." "And Peter answered, and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And He said, Come." Peter at once obeyed; but his faith was not strong enough to carry him through this trial: for a little while he walked on the water to go to Jesus, but when he found himself in the midst of raging waves, with a boisterous wind howling around him, his faith failed, and he was afraid. But he had not forgotten where to look for help; and finding himself beginning to sink, he cried out earnestly, "Lord, save me." Immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said, "Oh thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?—why didst thou doubt my power and my will to save thee?" No sooner had Jesus with Peter come into the ship, than the storm ceased, and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went. They were sore amazed: but "they came and worshipped Him saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God."

CHAPTER XVIII.—THE WOMAN OF TYRE.

IN the land of Gennesaret again, the people flocked to Jesus to be healed of their diseases: and when Jesus returned to Capernaum, many followed Him: and the Lord spake to them and told them that they only came to Him because they had seen His miracles, and more particularly because they had partaken of the loaves and fishes; and He warned them, that they had better seek those far greater spiritual blessings, which the Son of Man could give them. Many things He said unto them, trying to persuade them to believe in Him, as the Messiah the Son of God.

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What our Lord said, displeased those who were not really willing and anxious to be taught their duty, in order to do it: and in consequence, many of those who had been reckoned amongst His disciples, "went back and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?" Peter, in the name of the rest, immediately declared his faith in Jesus Christ as the Messiah, saying, "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." Believing this, Peter declared that whatever happened, they would hold fast to Him, and obey Him: let *us* make the same determination; and obey the Word of the Lord, whether it tells us what we *like* or not. Jesus now showed, that He knew the hearts of all men; for alluding to Judas He answered, "Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" thus teaching Peter not to be too hasty in answering for other men, since even in so small a number as the twelve, there was one whose heart was not really devoted to Him.

The Pharisees with certain of the Scribes came together unto Jesus, and blamed Him for not observing all the "traditions of the elders." Then Jesus explained to the Pharisees, that all their washings and outward performances could never please God, unless they also loved and served Him, and put away all their sins.

In one of those journeys which Jesus was constantly taking, He went to that part of the country bordering on Tyre and Sidon. Here a poor woman, a Gentile, came to Him, and prayed Him to heal her daughter, who had an unclean spirit. This woman, living on the borders of the land of Judæa, had doubtless heard that the Messiah was expected; and she was certainly convinced that Jesus was that Messiah, and that He had power even to cast out devils. This poor woman now came to Jesus, and cried, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." At first Jesus took no notice of her, and answered her not a word. The poor woman continued her supplications, but still in vain; this greatly surprised the disciples, who were used to see their heavenly Master listening to the prayers of all who were in distress: they were grieved also for this poor creature, who followed them, crying out for mercy; and therefore they begged their Lord to "send her away," that is, to grant her petition, that she might go away in peace. Jesus answered, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." The benefits of Christ's teaching and miracles, were at first to be offered to the

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Jews, the chosen people of God; and this woman, being a Gentile, had no claim to share them. The whole nation of the Jews, scattered without any ruler or shepherd, might well be called "lost sheep"—sheep who had strayed from their Shepherd, even from God, and who must be lost unless they were brought back to Him. The Scriptures often speak of the people of God, as his sheep: and sinners are compared to sheep, who, instead of following their shepherd, have gone astray. In the Confession, which forms part of our Morning Service, we say, "We have erred and strayed from Thy ways like lost sheep." In the East, sheep were not driven by the shepherd as with us, but followed him: remembering this fact will be a help towards understanding many passages of Scripture, especially some in the Gospel written by St. John. The poor woman continued to implore mercy; and coming nearer to the Lord, "She fell down and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me!" Jesus now answered, and said, "Let the children first be filled; for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs."

The Jews looked upon every nation except their own as "unclean"; and likened them to dogs, which are unclean animals. Jesus Himself did not look upon the Gentiles as dogs, but He spoke thus to try the faith of the woman, and to show those who were about Him, that faith in Him would save Gentiles as well as Jews.

The Lord's reply to the Syrophenician woman would have disheartened most, and offended many; but she was too much in earnest to be repulsed easily: she was quite willing to own that the Gentiles were not *worthy* to be looked upon, as in any way equal to the children of Israel, God's peculiar people: she knew she had no *claim* to the mercy of the Lord; but still, hoping to share it, she reminded Jesus, that even the dogs were allowed to pick up the crumbs which their masters did not need: she believed that in Jesus there were help and mercy for every living creature, and that He could heal the Gentiles, without taking any blessing from the Jews; therefore, she at once answered, "Truth, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs." Jesus was no longer silent: pleased with her faith, He said aloud, "O woman, great is thy faith: for this saying, be it unto thee even as thou wilt: go thy way: the devil is gone out of thy daughter." Even as He spake the words, the unclean spirit was cast out: "And her daughter was made whole from that very hour;" so that when the mother, who at once went home, "was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed."

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This poor Gentile woman is an example to us, to go on praying earnestly to God, although He may see fit not at once to grant our petitions. When we know that we are asking right and proper things, we must pray on in faith, and wait patiently. We should pray that the Devil, and all the bad feelings and thoughts he puts into our hearts, may be cast out of us, and of those we love. For this we must go on praying earnestly: Jesus granted the prayer of the Syrophenician woman because of her faith; and if we have faith like hers, He will most certainly answer our prayers: but we must watch and fight, as well as pray: for, if we encourage the Devil to abide in our hearts, we cannot expect that the Lord will cast him out.

After this miracle, Jesus, "departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, came unto the Sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis." Here we are told, that He cured one who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, and that "great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus's feet; and he healed them: insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of Israel." They glorified and praised God with their words, because of the wonderful things they had seen; but few of them, it is to be feared, glorified Him in their hearts, by becoming His disciples.

At this time, Jesus, having compassion upon the multitude, who had been with him for three days, listening to His words, and were now faint for want of food, fed 4,000 men, besides women and children, with seven loaves and a few little fishes: this time, seven baskets were filled with the pieces left, after everybody was satisfied.

Soon after the feeding of this multitude, Jesus "entered into a ship with his disciples, and came into the coast of Magdala, into the parts of Dalmanutha," to the S.E. of the Sea of Tiberias. "And when his disciples were come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf." Jesus, who lost no opportunity of impressing His lessons on His disciples, now "said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the Sadducees, and of the leaven of Herod." By leaven, our Saviour here means the doctrines and opinions taught by the Pharisees and Sadducees; doctrines very different from His, for they looked upon religion as consisting mostly in outward forms and ceremonies; whilst, in their hearts, they indulged all manner of evil passions. Jesus desired to teach His disciples, that, if they in any way followed the doctrines of the Pharisees or Sadducees, they would soon become quite unfit to be His disciples; just as leaven quite alters the nature of the dough with which it is mixed. At first, the disciples did not understand their Lord's meaning, and thought that He was reproving them for having forgotten to bring any bread with them. But Jesus reproved them for their want of faith, in being uneasy about a supply of needful food, after seeing the miracle worked with seven loaves and a few small fishes: and he said, "How is it that ye do not understand, that I spake it not to you concerning bread? Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees."

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Jesus then cometh to Bethsaida, where he healed a blind man; not all at once, but first allowing him to see objects indistinctly, and then restoring his sight, so that he saw all things

clearly. What happened in the case of this man's bodily sight, happens generally as regards our spiritual sight, that is, our understanding of spiritual things. Even in common learning, we do not all at once acquire knowledge; it comes by little and little, as we strive to gain it. So our understanding of things spiritual is a gradual work, carried on in our mind, by the Holy Spirit working *with* us; but we must work, and strive, and pray, that we may grow wise unto salvation.

CHAPTER XIX.—THE TRANSFIGURATION.

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"AND JESUS went out, and his disciples, into the towns of Cæsarea Philippi:" that is, into the country and towns round about Cæsarea Philippi, a town some miles to the north of the Sea of Galilee. The name of this city had been Paneus; but Philip, governor of that part of the country, repaired and beautified its houses and other buildings, and added more, so making quite a new and large city, which he called Cæsarea, in honour of Tiberius Cæsar, who became Emperor of Rome about fourteen years after the birth of Jesus Christ. There was another town called Cæsarea, on the Mediterranean Sea; and to distinguish between the two, that which Philip had beautified was called Cæsarea Philippi. Like most of the flourishing cities mentioned in the Bible, Cæsarea Philippi has been completely destroyed; and amongst its ruins there is a little village, consisting of twenty miserable huts, inhabited by Mahometans, for the Holy Land now belongs to the Turks, who are not Christians.

This little village is called Paneas or Baniass. The walls of the great city can be distinctly traced. Whilst they were on this journey, Jesus "asked his disciples, Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" They told Him that some thought Him John the Baptist; others, that He was Elias; others, that He was Jeremias, or some other of the old prophets, risen again from the dead. Jesus then put the still more important question, "But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

The Apostles were thoroughly convinced by all that they had seen and heard, that Jesus was indeed the expected Messiah. No doubt they had often talked over the matter together, and now, in the name of all the rest, Peter, always first and foremost when anything was to be done, declared most positively and unhesitatingly their belief in Jesus, as being at once God and Man. Jesus then pronounced Peter to be blessed in having such faith. Then He told him, that the fact of His being the true Messiah was the rock upon which His Church was to be built: that is, that it was only by depending and resting upon this truth that men could become his followers, and form a Church. Jesus also told Peter, that He would give unto him the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and power to unbind or unloose. By which He seems to have meant, that Peter would have power to open the way for the Gentiles to join the Church of Christ; and that he should have power to declare how far the Laws of Moses must be kept or dispensed with; that is, what things were lawful or unlawful.

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After the disciples had declared, through the mouth of Peter, their firm belief that Jesus was indeed the Messiah, He began to speak to them of His sufferings and death; but the Apostles could not easily give up the idea held by the Jews in general, that the Messiah was to establish a kingdom upon earth; and Peter therefore expressed his belief, that such terrible things could not happen to the Lord. For this, Peter was severely blamed by Jesus, who told him, that by objecting to the way appointed by God for the salvation of man, He was in reality doing Satan's work, and was an "offence" or hindrance in his Master's way.

At this same time Jesus taught those around Him the duty of self-denial; the necessity of giving up everything we most value, and bearing any pain or trouble, rather than do the least thing contrary to the Will of God. He said, "If any man will come after me," to be my disciple, "let him deny himself" the indulgence of his own will, "and take up his cross daily"; bearing cheerfully all those daily troubles and anxieties which may be called crosses, and "follow me"; follow in all things my example, for I came not to please myself, but to do the Will of God. Jesus also impressed upon them the fact, that the soul was of infinitely more value than the perishing body, and that our first object must be to secure the salvation of our souls, at any cost, for "what" (said He) "shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

About a week after this, what is called the "Transfiguration" took place. St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke all give an account of this event: the place where it occurred was probably Mount Tabor, which lies a little to the S.W. of the Lake of Galilee: into this mountain Jesus went up, taking with Him Peter, and James, and John his brother.

The brief account of the Transfiguration is, that whilst Jesus was praying in the Mount, the disciples fell asleep: suddenly, when they awoke, they saw a wonderful and glorious sight—"Jesus was transfigured before them": that is, His appearance was entirely changed; "his face did shine as the sun," and "his raiment became shining," "exceeding white," and "glistening." Nor was He alone; for "behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias; who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish in Jerusalem." All that the three disciples now heard, should have convinced them that Jesus must indeed die, and that His death would give the very strongest proof of his being really the Son of God, the promised Messiah. The disciples would further learn, that everything which Moses and the prophets (represented by Elijah) had taught, was intended to prepare the Jews to believe in Jesus, and follow Him.

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Peter, dazzled and confused at the wonderful scene before him, exclaimed, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if thou wilt let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." Peter seems to have had an idea, that Moses and Elijah had returned to remain on earth; and that if three tents were set up, they might abide with Jesus in the Mount, where he and the other disciples might be constantly with them. But as we read, "He wist not what to say, for they were sore afraid." Whilst Peter yet spake, an answer came; "a bright cloud overshadowed them," "and they feared as they entered into the cloud;" "and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." And when the disciples heard it, knowing it to be the voice of God, "they were sore afraid, and fell on their face." "And when the voice was past, Jesus, was found alone;" "and he came and touched the disciples, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man save Jesus only." Moses and Elias had disappeared; whilst the voice of God had plainly declared, that as the people of God had hitherto obeyed Moses and the prophets, they were in future to look to Jesus only, the Messiah of Whom Moses and the prophets did write. The old dispensation of the Law had passed away; but the new dispensation of the Gospel had taken its place, and would last for ever.

That the Law of Moses, even as regarded ceremonial observances, should ever be abolished or done away with, was what the Jews could not or would not believe. Even many years after the Resurrection of Jesus, we read, that many thousand Jews who believed in Christ were also zealous for the Law, that it should still be observed. It was not, therefore, at this time suitable to speak to the Jews in general of the abolition of the Law of Moses; and therefore as Jesus came down from the mountain with His disciples, He "charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen from the dead." "And they kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen:" "questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean." It was at this time, that in answer to a question from His disciples, whose thoughts were naturally full of what they had just seen, Jesus told them that the Elias spoken of by the prophets, as coming to prepare the way before Him, was not Elijah himself, as many supposed, but John the Baptist, who had already been put to death; and that the Son of man must in like manner suffer death.

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When Jesus was come down from the mount, He found the disciples, who had not accompanied Him, surrounded by a great crowd, and the Scribes questioning, or disputing with them. A man, whose only child was possessed of an evil spirit, had brought him to the disciples, begging them to cast out the devil; "but they could not." This failure of the Apostles gave the Scribes an opportunity of trying to persuade the people, that the power of Jesus was not so great as His disciples taught; and most likely what they said made the poor father doubt the power of Jesus, in whose name he had expected the Apostles to heal his son. When Jesus heard all that had passed, He lamented the perverse want of faith, which prevented men from believing in Him. Then He said to the man, "Bring thy son hither." Even whilst He was coming, the Devil gave a proof of his power over this poor child; and still more to convince all who stood round, that the boy really was possessed by a devil, and could not be cured by any human means, Jesus asked his father some questions on the subject: He then told the poor man, that if he could really and truly believe, there was nothing too difficult for God to do. The father did believe; but fearing that his faith was weak, and that he had sinned in allowing the Scribes to raise a doubt in his mind, he "cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief!" This was enough, and "the child was cured from that very hour."

CHAPTER XX.—JESUS GOES TO THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES.

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WHEN the disciples were alone with their Master, after the miracle of casting the devil out of the child, they naturally asked, Why, as He had given them authority to cast out evil spirits, they had not in this case been able to do so? Jesus told them plainly, that it was because their faith was weak; for that no miracle would be too hard for them if they had a lively and increasing faith, or "faith as a grain of mustard seed." This was an expression in common use amongst the Jews, to signify something very *very* small, because the mustard seed was the least of all seeds. But when sown in the ground, the plant grows from it quickly, and spreads in every direction, so as to become quite a large plant: and thus it was very properly compared to faith, which should always be increasing and growing stronger. Jesus ended by reminding His disciples that, though He had given them permission to work miracles, they would not have power to do so, unless they prayed earnestly for it, and tried to lead holy lives.

After this, Jesus and His disciples passed through Galilee, on their way to Capernaum. Again He spake to them of His sufferings, His death, and His rising again on the third day. Still they did not understand: they were exceedingly sorry to hear of such things as likely to befall their beloved Master, but they did not like to ask any questions on the subject. How little they yet understood the real nature of Christ's kingdom is plain; for at this time "there arose a reasoning (or disputing) among them, which of them should be greatest": as if they still expected Jesus to be a king on earth, and appoint them to places of trust and honour under Him.

When they were come to Capernaum, they, whose business it was to collect the tribute-money

for the service of the temple, "came to Peter, and said, Doth not your Master pay tribute? He saith, Yes." Jesus afterwards showed Peter, that He, being the Son of God, was *not* called upon to pay this tribute; for that earthly kings do not take tribute from their own children, but only of their subjects, or of strangers. Jesus, however, would not give the Jews any pretence for saying, that He taught His disciples to be careless about the temple and its worship, or to disobey the laws of the country; and therefore He now worked a miracle, to provide the tribute-money required from Him and His disciples.

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When they were quietly in a house together, Jesus spake to the disciples about their dispute by the way, as to who should be greatest; and told them that all who wished to be really and truly His disciples and followers must be humble and meek and obedient, as little children *ought* to be.

Many other things Jesus taught His disciples: and He told them a parable (Matt. xviii. 13), to show us, that if we wish God to forgive us our sins, we must be always willing to forgive those who have offended against us.

After these things, Jesus chose out from those disciples who constantly followed Him seventy persons; and desired them to go two and two together, and enter into the cities which He meant by and by to visit, and prepare the people to listen to Him. These seventy were disciples, but none of them were Apostles: all the Apostles were disciples, and are generally so called in Scripture; but all the disciples were not, of course, Apostles. To these seventy, Jesus gave many directions as to what they were to do and teach.

Jesus was at this time in Galilee; but as the time for keeping the Feast of Tabernacles was drawing near, the brethren, or rather near kinsmen of Jesus, begged Him to go into Judæa, and let all the people, who would then be assembled in Jerusalem, see His works. They said, "If thou do these things, show thyself unto the world. For neither did his brethren believe in him." To a certain degree, His kinsmen did believe in Jesus; but like the Jews in general, they expected that the Messiah would be great and powerful upon earth, publicly acknowledged and worshipped by all nations: and when they saw Jesus in such very different circumstances, they had not faith enough to feel quite sure that He was indeed the Messiah: they therefore wanted Him to take this opportunity to make Himself known, by working miracles at Jerusalem: this open display of His power would, they thought, strengthen the faith of all who were already His disciples, and force the great men among the Jews, as well as all the strangers collected together, to acknowledge Him as the Messiah.

Jesus, who in all things sought only to do His Father's will, told those who wished Him to go up at once to the Feast of Tabernacles that it was not yet time for Him to do so: that, instead of receiving Him as the Messiah, worldly men, who thought but little of God, would all be against Him, because He showed them their sinfulness. But He told His brethren, and those about Him, to "go up unto this feast." After they were gone, our Lord followed them, privately taking His journey through the country on the other side of the Jordan. Again the people resorted unto Him, and He taught them as He was wont: "and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them there." It is likely that the Jews, expecting Jesus to go up to this feast, had laid some plot for taking Him on His way: but it was not yet time for Him to lay down His life, and therefore He thus avoided the danger; setting us an example, not to run unnecessarily into danger, when we can avoid doing so without neglecting any duty.

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Meantime, the Jews assembled at Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles, seem to have been disappointed at not seeing Jesus there; and enquired, "Where is he?" And "there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people. Howbeit no man spake openly of him, for fear of the Jews." The people had seen His miracles, and heard His teaching; but all that they knew of His condition in life was so unlike what they had expected of the Messiah, that they could not make up their minds to acknowledge Him as the Son of God. They could not understand all He said, for He spake of spiritual things,—things belonging to the kingdom of heaven, which can be understood only by those who give their whole heart to God. Some of these people, seeing His holiness, allowed that He was a good man. Others objected to His being called "good," because He tried to make people acknowledge Him as the Messiah, which, according to their ideas, was deceiving the people. But even those who were most inclined to believe in Him, dared not speak openly in His favour, for fear of displeasing the Jewish rulers, who were violently opposed to Him.

The Feast of Tabernacles lasted for eight days; and in the middle of it Jesus arrived in Jerusalem, and immediately "went up into the temple, and taught." His teaching greatly astonished all the learned men, who knew that He had never been taught in any of the schools of the Scribes; and they wondered how He could know so much of the books of the Law and of the Prophets. Jesus told them plainly, that what He taught He had learnt not from man, but from God Himself; and He further said, that if any man were really desirous to do the Will of God, he would be enabled to believe that all He taught was true. Other things He said; but though His teaching might incline some of the people to believe, they had got some idea that, when the Messiah came, nothing would be known of His parents; and therefore they settled that it was impossible He could be that Messiah. "We know this man whence he is; but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is." Jesus tried to show them that they were in error; for though they knew where He was born, as man, and who His earthly parents were, this should not prevent their believing that He was indeed sent by God, and had another nature and being, of which they knew nothing. "Many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?" They doubted whether any one could do *more*

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than Jesus had done: if not, then the only reasonable conclusion would be, that He *must*, indeed, be the Christ, the promised Messiah.

The Rulers of the Jews heard of these things said by the people, and they would gladly have prevented His speaking any more to them: and they sent officers to take Him: but in vain, for the time appointed for His death was not yet come, and therefore the Lord kept Him in safety, and would allow no man to hurt Him. Moreover, Jesus plainly told them, that He should remain in the world a little longer, because it was the Will of His Father that He should do so; and that then He should go back to His Father, who had sent Him from heaven to preach the Gospel upon earth. But the Jews did not understand His meaning; and when He said, "Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me; and where I am, thither ye cannot come," they said one to another, "Whither will he go, that we shall not find him?" "What manner of saying is this that He said?"

CHAPTER XXI.—RETURN OF THE SEVENTY.

"IN the last day, that great day of the feast," when there was a holy convocation, or assembling of the people, Jesus stood up, and invited all men to believe in Him, and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, which He compared to "living water"—water that would wash away all their sins, and give life and strength to their souls: just as a good drink of pure water, given to a man who is fainting with fatigue and thirst, will revive him, and give him fresh strength and spirit for his work.

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Again was there "a division among the people because of him": some said, "Of a truth, this is the Prophet"; others, more plainly, "This is the Christ"; whilst others, influenced by their false ideas, asked, "Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the Scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?"

They were right; the Scriptures did say so: but had the people with an earnest desire endeavoured to learn the truth, they would have found that in Jesus, these words of Scripture were fulfilled, although Nazareth, in Galilee, had accidentally been His dwelling-place.

Again, the Chief Priests and Pharisees, fearing His influence with the people, sent out officers to take Jesus; and when these returned without Him, they were asked, "Why have ye not brought him?" The officers, though sent out for that very purpose, could not bring themselves to lay violent hands on one to whom they had listened with astonishment; and they now answered, as their reason for not having brought Him in as a prisoner, "Never man spake like this man." The Pharisees, in their wilful blindness and hardness of heart, reproached the officers for being also "deceived," as they called it; and reminded them that none of the rulers, or learned men, had believed in Jesus, and that as to the people, they were ignorant; adding the most unwarrantable assertion, "This people, who knoweth not the Law, are cursed."

The Pharisees, who were very proud of their own knowledge, not only despised all who were unlearned, but believed that *only* the learned would enjoy happiness after death, whilst the ignorant would be miserable. They mistook knowledge for religion. But the Gospel teaches a very different lesson; worldly knowledge is good and useful, and those who have the means, do well to acquire it; but it cannot take a man to heaven, nor will ignorance of it, keep any man *out* of heaven. A knowledge of our own sinfulness, of the Salvation brought by Jesus, and a consequent endeavour to please Him in all things, is the only knowledge that is really necessary as far as our Souls are concerned. Without *this* knowledge, the most learned man can never gain admittance into heaven; with it, the most ignorant will be received into the kingdom of God.

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One of the councillors present on this occasion was Nicodemus, who, being a believer, had come to Jesus secretly, in the night, for fear of the Jews: he now ventured to speak in behalf of Jesus, showing that it was not according to their Law to condemn any one as teaching what was wrong, or untrue, until they had heard what he had to say for himself. His words had no effect but to make the other members of the council ask him, "Art thou also of Galilee?"—that is, art thou one of those who have the folly to believe in this Galilean. "Search and look" in the Scriptures, for they will show that "out of Galilee ariseth no prophet."

Nothing more was at this time said or done, and the Pharisees probably broke up the council in anger, vexed at not having got Jesus into their power. "Every man went unto his own house."

Jesus now went unto the Mount of Olives, or Mount Olivet, where He doubtless passed part of the night in prayer. This Mount rose about half a mile east of Jerusalem, and the brook Kedron ran between it and the city. It took its name from the number of Olive trees which grew upon it; they were cultivated for the purpose of extracting oil from the fruit. On this Mount there were several villages: Bethphage was on that side farthest from Jerusalem; and on the side nearest to the city, stood the village of Gethsemane. The word Gethsemane means "the place of oil presses"; which shows that the people of the village were occupied in squeezing the oil out of the olives that were brought down from other parts of the Mount. It was up the Mount of Olives that King David went weeping, when the rebellion of Absalom had forced him to quit Jerusalem.

After spending the night on the Mount of Olives, or in one of its villages, Jesus, early in the morning, "came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down and taught them."

The Scribes and Pharisees, always trying to find some cause of complaint against Him, now brought a woman who had committed a sin, for which the Law of Moses pronounced death to be the punishment: they now asked Jesus, whether this woman should be stoned or not. If Jesus condemned the woman to death, they could accuse Him to the Romans of trespassing upon their authority: if He acquitted the woman, they could hold Him up to the people as acting contrary to the Jewish Law.

But Jesus knew the wickedness of their hearts, and that in the sight of God, their guilt was as great, if not greater, than that of this woman; therefore He gave them no answer, but "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one." None of these Scribes or Pharisees could dare to pronounce themselves free from sin, therefore they all retired. Then Jesus dismissed the woman with the warning, "Go, and sin no more."

At this time, Jesus spake many things to all who came into the temple to hear Him. He spake to them of His death: He told them that if they were really the children of Abraham, spiritually as well as by natural descent, they would do the works of Abraham: and that if God were their Father, as they pretended, they would love Him, who was the Son of God; but that they were, in fact, the children of the Devil, who was a liar from the beginning. During these discourses, "many believed on him"; but many others would gladly have "laid hands on him": and when at length, in answer to their questions, Jesus declared unto them, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am," their rage could no longer be repressed: "then took they up stones to cast at him": but "his hour was not yet come" to die, and therefore "Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by," disappointing the malice of His enemies.

After this, the seventy disciples, whom Jesus had sent out to preach and to teach in the different cities, "returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name." He then told them, that this need not surprise them, since God had begun to destroy the power of Satan: and He also told them, that they had a far greater cause for joy than the subjection of evil spirits; even that they had been chosen to be the servants and children of God, and were thereby set in the way that would, if they walked steadily in it, bring them to everlasting life.

The parable of the Good Samaritan was now told by Jesus to one of the Scribes, or Lawyers, who came and asked Him a question: not from any real desire to learn, but from a wish to make our Lord say something that he could find fault with. To his question, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" he expected that Jesus would make an answer not quite agreeing with the Law of Moses: but our Lord at once showed him that His teaching was the same as that of Moses; for He asked him, "What is written in the Law? How readest thou?" "And he answering, said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself." These words, taken from the Books of Deuteronomy and Leviticus, were repeated twice every day in the synagogue service, as a short statement of all that the Law was intended to teach; that is, Love to God and Man. These same words were written on some of the Phylacteries, or strips of parchment which the Jews wore on their foreheads, and on the left wrist. Most likely, the Lawyer who questioned Jesus had these very words written on his Phylactery; and that Jesus pointed to the words when He asked, "How readest thou?" The Gospel, as well as the Law, teaches us to love God and Man; and shows us, that those who really and truly do so are sure to find favour with God, who can alone admit us to eternal life. The Scribe's answer was right, under the Gospel as well as under the Law: and Jesus therefore replied, "Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live": by obeying the words of Moses, he would, through the tidings made known by the Gospel, inherit eternal life. May these words be written in all our hearts, and may we make them the guide of all our actions.

CHAPTER XXII.—THE LORD'S PRAYER.

THE answer which Jesus gave, as to loving God with all the heart, and his neighbour as himself, did not silence the Lawyer: he, "willing to justify himself," being anxious to prove that he was a just and righteous man, now asked, "Who is my neighbour?" The Jews had in many points altered or explained the Law, to suit their own feelings and wishes; and they would not look upon any man as a neighbour, unless he were of their own religion.

This Lawyer had probably always been kind to his Jewish brethren, and if our Lord had, as he expected, told him that his neighbour meant one of his Jewish brethren, he would have been able to boast that he had obeyed this command. But very different was our Saviour's teaching: instead of giving him a direct answer, He in a beautiful parable taught him and us, that any fellow creature who needs our help, is our neighbour in the sight of God: even though he be an enemy, or one hated, as the Jews hated the Samaritans.

The Lawyer could not but own that the Samaritan in the parable had best obeyed the commandment of Moses; and in answer to the question, "Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among thieves?" he said, "He that showed mercy on him." "Then said Jesus unto him, Go and do thou likewise," that is, copy this example; and look upon every man that needs your help as a neighbour and brother, whom you are to love; and take care

that your love is not in word and tongue only, but in deed and in truth.

Journeying through the land of Judæa with His disciples, Jesus "entered into a certain village"; this was Bethany, on the eastern side of the Mount of Olives: "and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus's feet and heard His word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving." Both these sisters loved the Lord, though they showed it in a very different way: Mary, delighted to have such an opportunity of listening to His teaching, sat at His feet to learn all that He might teach her; Martha, anxious to show her pleasure at receiving Jesus as her guest, appears to have busied herself in preparing a feast in His honour. Presently, tired with her exertions, and fearing that all might not be ready, "she came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me." But instead of doing this, Jesus rebuked Martha for thinking too much of worldly matters, instead of giving her mind to the "one thing needful" for the salvation of man: that one thing was faith in Jesus as the Son of God; such faith, as would produce piety and holiness; and that as Mary had chosen that good part, she must not be disturbed, but that Martha would do well to follow her example. When, therefore, Martha asked that Mary might be bid to help her, "Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

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Now, from this little history we should all learn this lesson: that though worldly business must be done, and well done, too, it must not take up too much of our thoughts and hearts, and so make us careless in our religious duties: to please and serve God in every way is the one thing needful for us.

On one occasion, when Jesus had been praying, according to His constant custom, "when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray as John also taught his disciples." Jesus then gave them that beautiful prayer, called the Lord's Prayer, because the very words of it were dictated by the Lord Himself, in whose name we pray unto God, the Father Almighty. The Prayer begins by acknowledging God to be "Our Father"; and these words should ever remind us of two things: that as "our Father," all we His children are bound to love and obey Him; and, secondly, that we must love all our fellow creatures as brethren, seeing that we are all the children of one Heavenly Father.

Next we pray, "Hallowed be Thy Name"; in which words we ask that all men everywhere may hallow, or treat as holy, His name, His word, His day, and all things that belong to Him.

By "Thy Kingdom come," we ask that all mankind may become Christians, and so be brought into the Lord's kingdom on earth: also, that we, and all who are Christians, may have the kingdom of God in our hearts; that is, may obey, and love, and serve Him with all our hearts; so that when we die we may be admitted into His glorious kingdom in heaven. Further, we pray, that the Will of God may be done by man on earth, as perfectly and entirely as it is done by the Angels in heaven. Let us remember that the sole object and work of the holy Angels is to do the Will of God; and that therefore we, who use this prayer, must always try to do the same, and not think of doing what will only please ourselves.

The next petition of the Lord's Prayer is, "Give us this day our daily bread." By these words we ask for all things which are needful both for our souls and bodies: the body needs daily food to preserve it in life, and make it strong to do its work; the Soul also wants food, to nourish and increase the spiritual life; and render it more active in the service of God. The word of God, Prayer, religious teaching, all the services of our religion, are the food of the Soul; by the proper use of which, the love of God will be more and more shed abroad in our hearts, producing the fruit of holy obedience, and devotion to His service.

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Next we pray, that God will forgive us our sins, on condition that we forgive all those who have sinned against us. When we consider how dreadful will be our condition, if God does *not* forgive us, we should be very careful never to indulge angry, revengeful feelings against those who have injured us. Nothing that man can do to us, can be as bad as what we have done against God; and therefore we may well forgive our fellow creatures; and we *must* do so, if we would obtain forgiveness of our heavenly Father.

We then ask the Lord not to suffer us to give way to temptation, but to keep us from all evil; to keep our bodies in safety, and above all to keep our souls from the great evil of sin, from the power of our ghostly or spiritual enemy, the Devil, who is always watching to do us harm. We end the Lord's Prayer by declaring our firm belief, that God is able to do all that we can ask or think.

Now we often *say* the Lord's Prayer with our lips, but do we really say it with our hearts, wishing and striving to gain what we are asking for? This we should all do; and besides this, throughout the day, we must each of us try to *do* those things that we pray may be done. We must each of us try to reverence and obey our heavenly Father; to be satisfied with whatever He gives us for our bodies; to take every opportunity of feeding our souls, by learning all we can about Him, and praying earnestly for His grace. We must also try to keep down all angry feelings, and be kind to those who are unkind to us; and we must watch over ourselves continually, and strive to resist the Devil, and practise self-denial, that we may not fall into sin.

The Lord's Prayer teaches us what things we ought to ask of God; and we may do so more particularly in our own words; God is well pleased when we do so.

After giving His disciples this beautiful form of words, to be a model for all their prayers, Jesus

exhorted and entreated them to pray earnestly for the help of the Holy Spirit: and told them to go on praying, and not to be discouraged, because they did not immediately receive those things for which they asked; for that the Lord would hear their prayers, and "give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him." "And as Jesus spake, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him; and he went in and sat down to meat." The word here translated "dine" means to eat the first meal of the day, and so ought rather to have been called breakfast. The Jews were accustomed to have only two regular meals in the day: breakfast, or dinner, as it is here called, about twelve of the middle of the day; and supper, which was the principal meal, in the evening, after the heat of the day was past. The Pharisees were very particular about washing before they sat down to meals, and this one who had besought the Lord to eat with him, " marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner."

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The Lord took this opportunity of teaching, that no outward washings can be pleasing in the sight of God, if the heart be full of sinful, evil passions: no outward forms and observances of any kind, can ever please God, unless those who do such things really love God, and try to do their duty and please Him in everything. Many things also Jesus said, rebuking the Scribes and Pharisees.

He likewise spake to the people who crowded to hear Him, and warned them to fear God rather than man; for though men might kill their bodies, they had no further power. "And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me."

It would seem that this brother had acted very unkindly, if not unjustly, in not sharing with his brother the money left by their father; and the one who felt himself aggrieved came, hoping that Jesus would interfere. But Jesus answered, "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?"—meaning, that He was not come upon earth to act as a Judge or Magistrate in settling such matters, but to teach men their duty to God. He then took this occasion to warn his hearers against covetousness, or the too eager desire for riches, or for any of the good things this world can give: bidding them rather be contented, and try to please God by doing good with what they have. Covetousness is, as we are elsewhere told, idolatry,—and truly, if our hearts are set upon riches, pleasures, or anything else, they will be drawn away from God.

CHAPTER XXIII.—HEALING OF THE MAN BORN BLIND.

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MUCH did the Lord say upon the subject of covetousness; an evil passion which, if indulged, must draw the heart more and more from heavenly things to things of the earth; saying unto them, "For where your treasure is there will your heart be also."

Jesus, then, in a short parable, showed the necessity of constantly watching, that we may not be found unready whenever we are summoned to die.

Many other things Jesus said, and continued to teach through the cities and villages: on one occasion He raised the indignation of the ruler of a synagogue, because He had healed a poor woman, who was "bowed down by a spirit of infirmity," which she had had for eighteen years.

But Jesus rebuked those who blamed Him, and so spake that "All his adversaries were ashamed; and all the people rejoiced for the glorious things that were done by him."

"And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?"

Some of the Jews seem at this time to have taken up an idea held by the heathen, that, after the death of a man, his soul was sent into another body; and that the souls of bad men even went into the bodies of animals.

Another false notion of the Jews was, that any one who was a great sufferer upon earth must have been a greater sinner than others, who did not so suffer: an idea quite contrary to all the teaching of Jesus. With these two ideas in their minds, some of those who had become followers of Jesus, asked him, whether this blind man was born so, as a punishment for sins he had committed in another body; or whether his blindness was a punishment for the sins of his parents. Jesus immediately answered, that it was neither for one nor the other of these causes, that this man was born blind; but that God in His wisdom had allowed it to be so, "That the works of God should be made manifest in him." Jesus then, in a very remarkable manner, gave sight to the blind man; clearly proving that it was the power of God only, and not the means used, which had effected his cure: and He also enabled the blind man to show his faith, by making the final restoration of his sight, depend upon his obedience to the command, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam: he went his way therefore, and washed, and came (back) seeing."

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"The neighbours and they which before had seen him that he was blind," were much surprised; and began questioning whether he were indeed the same man, or one like him; but he quickly put an end to all doubts, and said, "I am he."

Then, in answer to their questions, he told them the exact manner in which this cure had been effected, by "a man that is called Jesus": for at this time, he had no knowledge of Jesus as the Son of God, the promised Messiah. Whether from a good or bad motive we do not know, but "they brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind." And it was the Sabbath day when Jesus

made the clay, and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said, "He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see." The Pharisees could not deny the miracle; but immediately some of them raised the objection, "This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath day." Others, however, less determined to disbelieve even the testimony of their own senses, said, "How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them. They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes?" The blind man, though still ignorant of the real character of Jesus, felt that He was most certainly more than a common man, and said, "He is a prophet."

But the Jews now affected to disbelieve that the man had ever been blind, and called his parents, asking them, "Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see? His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: but by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself. These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews," who "had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was the Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue." His parents, therefore, not wishing to bring this punishment upon themselves, merely bore witness to the fact that he was their son who was born blind: as to the rest, they told the Jews to let him speak for himself. "Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner." That is, they called upon the man, who had been healed, to acknowledge that Jesus was merely a sinful mortal, and had in reality no part in his cure, which was the work of the God of Israel alone. The man, however, would by no means allow this: "He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." This answer by no means pleased the Jews, and again they asked, "How opened he thine eyes?" He answered them, "I have told you already, and ye did not hear (or believe): wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples? Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses's disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is." All the doubts and disputes of the Pharisees, so far from shaking the faith of this man, seem to have strengthened it; and now, fearless of consequences, he spake out boldly the words of common sense, and said, "Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God and doeth His will, him he heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing."

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The answer of the man who had been born blind, made the Pharisees very angry. They could not contradict what he said; but they were determined not to allow that Jesus came from God, and as they chose to believe that this man was a greater sinner than other men because he had been born blind, they immediately cried out, "Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out:" that is, expelled him from the synagogue, as they had resolved to do to any one who should confess that Jesus was the Christ. This casting out of the synagogue, or excommunication, was a very severe punishment; there seem to have been three degrees of it. In the first instance, the person under sentence of excommunication was forbidden to enter a synagogue, or to join in the services of the temple; and he was to be looked upon as no longer belonging to the chosen people of God. After such a sentence had been passed, no Jew would speak to, or have any intercourse with, the excommunicated person: this was the sentence now passed upon the man who had been so wonderfully healed. In the second degree of excommunication, the loss of property was added to the former sentence; all the goods possessed by the excommunicated person were taken from him, and given to the service of God. The third degree of this terrible punishment ordained the death of the unfortunate wretch, who had already been cut off from all his friends, and deprived of his property. When Jesus heard that the blind man had for His sake been cast out, He appears to have gone in search of him; "and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" The man, in doubt as to the real nature of Him who had healed him, and anxious to know the truth, "answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?" Jesus, ever ready to teach those who heartily seek to learn the truth, plainly answered, and "said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee." All doubts now vanished; "and he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him." We may surely hope that this man, to whom the Lord had given both spiritual and bodily sight, became a true and sincere disciple of Jesus.

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After this, Jesus blamed the Pharisees for not believing in Him themselves, and for trying to prevent others from doing so either. Then He spake of Himself as the good Shepherd; comparing the people to a flock of sheep. The meaning of what Jesus now said, was, that He who came to teach the people the way of salvation is the only good Shepherd; and that all who do not come to them in the way appointed by God, teaching as He has commanded, are like thieves and robbers; who only come to do mischief in the flock, and must be shut out; just as the porters, who took care of the sheep brought up to be sold for sacrifice, would not let any but the rightful owner enter into the sheepfold.

Jesus plainly declared Himself to be the good Shepherd, who would lead the Jews to salvation, if they would follow Him, as the sheep in those Eastern countries follow their Shepherd, when he calls them. Alluding to the Gentiles, Jesus also said, that He had other sheep whom He would also by means of the Gospel bring into His fold, the Church of Christ on earth; and hereafter into His heavenly fold in heaven.

All that our Lord now said, made a great impression upon some of His hearers; and again

caused a division of opinion among the Jews. Those who were disposed to believe in Him were reproached by others, who, foolishly as well as blasphemously, said, "He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him?" Others, who did not allow prejudice to blind their common sense, reasonably answered, "These are not the words of him that hath a devil,"—no man possessed with a devil could speak such good and beautiful words; and then they referred to the recent miracle, in proof that the Lord could not be under the influence of Satan in any way; for they asked, "Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?" No more appears to have been said: we will hope that many went away determined to follow Jesus, but many, no doubt, hardened their hearts and continued in unbelief.

We next hear of Jesus being at Jerusalem, for "the feast of the dedication, and it was winter." This Feast of the Dedication had been appointed by Judas Maccabeus, in remembrance of the cleansing of the temple, and devoting it again to the proper worship of God, after it had been profaned by the heathen. By attending this Feast, Jesus set us an example to keep solemn days appointed by man, in order to offer up thanksgiving to God for particular mercies. The Feast of the Dedication took place in the month which answers to our December.

CHAPTER XXIV.—JESUS'S LAST JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM.

"AND it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch:" that is, in a porch or colonnade, which stood on the same spot where Solomon's porch had formerly stood; for the temple which existed in our Saviour's time was the one built by the Jews, after their return from their captivity in Babylon. The Jews came round about Jesus whilst He was in this porch, and most unreasonably accused Him of keeping them in doubt, as to whether He was the Messiah or not; saying, "If thou be the Christ tell us plainly." Jesus in answer told them, that all the works which they had seen would have convinced them of that fact, if they had not been obstinately determined not to believe: and then, when He did plainly declare that He was the Son of God, by saying, "I and my Father are one," "the Jews took up stones again to stone him"; telling Him that they did so, because He had spoken blasphemy in making Himself, or saying that He was, the Son of God. In spite of all He could say, they persisted in their unbelief; and when He again referred them to His works as proving Him to be really the Son of God, "they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand, and went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized." "Many resorted," or went out to him, there: those who had before listened to the teaching of John the Baptist, could not but see that He was greater than the Baptist; for as they truly said, "John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true. And many believed on him there."

It seems to have been at this time, that those about our Saviour asked Him, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" whereupon our Lord bid them, "strive to enter in at the strait gate," by which He meant, that if any one really wished to go to heaven, he must try with all his might to walk in the path of holiness, by resisting the Devil and giving up his own will or wishes, to do whatever would please God.

The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, Get thee out, and depart hence: for Herod "will kill thee." The answer that Jesus made meant, that neither Herod nor any other man could put Him to death before the time appointed by God for His death; but that when the proper time came, He should perfect or finish His work by dying. He added, moreover, that He must return to Jerusalem to die, "for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem."

By the Jewish Laws, a prophet could only be judged by the Sanhedrim, or great Council of the Jews at Jerusalem. Jesus then lamented over the troubles which he foresaw would fall upon Jerusalem, because the Jews would not come to Him for safety.

Again we hear of a miracle of healing performed on the Sabbath day, when Jesus cured a man of the dropsy. At the same time, He spake various parables to the people, and taught them many things. Amongst the parables now spoken, were those of "the Prodigal Son" and "the Unjust Steward": the first of these was intended to teach the Jews, that they who had always been the chosen people of God, did wrong to be angry because the Gentiles were admitted to share their privileges; and also to show that, although the Pharisees would have nothing to say to those whom they looked upon as sinners, God was more merciful, and would receive and bless sinners who were truly penitent. The parable of "the Unjust Steward" was intended to teach all men, that they ought to use as much diligence in seeking for spiritual blessings, as they would make use of in regard to temporal blessings.

Shortly after this, we read of little children being brought to the Lord, who received them kindly, and blamed those who would have kept them from Him.

The parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus the beggar, was now told: an awful warning to all who lead a life of luxury and self-indulgence, denying themselves nothing.

"And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem."

The appointed time being near, Jesus now began His last journey to Jerusalem, in the course of which He said many things to His disciples and the people in general, speaking often in

parables; and He told His disciples plainly that He was going up to Jerusalem, not to become an earthly king, as they still hoped, but to be ill treated and put to death. During this time Jesus healed the ten lepers, only one of whom, and he was a Samaritan, "returned to give glory to God" for his cure. To him our Lord spake the comfortable words, "Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole." Then a certain young Ruler came, and asked Jesus, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life." Jesus first shows him, that he must not look upon Him as man only, but as God; and then tells him that, to enter into eternal life, he must keep all the commandments and precepts of God; and then, when the young man "went away sorrowful," Jesus warned His followers of the danger of letting the love of riches draw their hearts from God.

Another remarkable parable spoken by Jesus at this time was that of the labourers in the vineyard. This parable taught two lessons; first it showed to the Jews as a nation, that though they might be said to have been labourers, from the time that they were first chosen by God, they ought not to be envious and angry, because the Gentiles were now, at the eleventh hour, called also to be the servants of God. The Jews in general could not bear the idea of any other people sharing with them, privileges, which they considered to belong to themselves alone; and many of Christ's discourses and parables were meant to correct this wrong feeling. The second lesson taught by this parable comes home to every individual; and shows, that though those are most blessed who from their childhood have truly served God, or, as it is called, "worked in the vineyard," still, *all* who, at any age, so truly repent as to go and work, obeying the Word of God in everything, will be graciously received by the Lord of the vineyard; and must not therefore be despised by their fellow labourers, who were called at an earlier age. Jesus next received a message from Martha and Mary, the sisters of His friend Lazarus, saying, "Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick." When, after a delay of two days, Jesus "saith to his disciples, Let us go into Judæa again"; they reminded Him that the Jews had of late sought to kill Him, and that He had better not go back. But Jesus told them, that as long as it was day, that is, His time for working, He was safe anywhere. He explained to them that Lazarus was now dead, and that He was going to wake him out of the sleep of death. The faith of the disciples seems to have been weak, but their love was strong, for all agreed in Thomas's proposal, "Let us also go, that we may die with him." "And as they went on their way, Jesus took again the twelve disciples apart, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him"; speaking plainly of being betrayed, delivered unto the Chief Priests, mocked, spitefully entreated, spitted on, scourged, and put to death by the Gentiles, and rising again the third day. But "they understood none of these things": so little idea had they of the literal meaning of our Lord's words, that at this very time, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came with their mother, to beg that they might sit, one on His right hand and the other on His left hand, in His kingdom.

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In earthly courts, to be nearest the king's person, was a mark of dignity and favour; and, misunderstanding still the nature of Christ's kingdom, the sons of Zebedee made this request, to the indignation of the other Apostles; who did not see why two of their number should be favoured so far beyond the rest. But Jesus rebuked them all; and told them, that His followers must not seek for power and greatness as the Gentiles did; for that those who were humble and meek were most pleasing to God. And He bid them, and all Christians in all times, follow His example; reminding them, that although he was Lord of all, He came on earth to serve men, and give His life for them.

Passing through Jericho, Jesus, when he came near the town, gave sight to two blind men, who were sitting by the wayside begging. Hearing an unusual bustle, as of many people passing by, they asked what it meant; and being told that "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by," they, believing in His power, cried out earnestly, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou son of David:" and this prayer they continued to repeat, although many of those who accompanied Jesus "rebuked them, that they should hold their peace," and not trouble Him with their cries.

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In the Gospel accounts of this miracle, St. Mark and St. Luke only mention the healing of one blind man; but St. Matthew tells us there were two. St. Matthew, who was one of the twelve Apostles, was present on this occasion, so we may be sure that he saw two blind men healed. St. Mark and St. Luke, writing many years afterwards, only mentioned one of these men, who seems to have been the most known amongst the Jews: for St. Mark speaks of him by his name, "Bartimæus," as if those for whom he wrote would know the man, and therefore think more of the miracle, about which they could also ask him. Perhaps, too, Bartimæus is more particularly mentioned, because his faith was greater than that of his companion; for St. Mark tells us, that Jesus said to him, "Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole." However that may be, these blind men cried to Jesus for mercy, and "Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes: and their eyes received sight, and they followed him," "glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God."

"And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho": and now he gave another lesson to the Pharisees, against despising any of their fellow creatures.

CHAPTER XXV.—ZACCHÆUS AND LAZARUS.

AT Jericho "there was a man named Zacchæus, which was the chief among the Publicans, and he was rich." He had already heard much of Jesus, and now "he sought to see Jesus, who he was;

and could not for the press," or crowd of people who surrounded the Lord, for Zacchæus was a short man, or "little of stature." Being really anxious to see Jesus, Zacchæus did not content himself with merely *wishing*, and *regretting*; but he took some trouble to accomplish his object, and met with his reward. We read that Zacchæus "ran on before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree," under which Jesus must pass; and by this means nothing could prevent his seeing the Lord.

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The sycamore tree here spoken of, is also called the Egyptian fig; the leaves are like those of the mulberry tree, but the fruit resembles the fig, in size, shape, and taste.

Jesus, who knows all things, saw the heart of Zacchæus, and knew that he was willing to become a true disciple; and none such will He ever overlook. Therefore, "when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchæus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house." Most joyfully did Zacchæus obey: he had taken some trouble merely to see Jesus, and now he would have the privilege of listening to His words. But many of the Jews who were present were offended and displeased, because Jesus took such notice of a man belonging to a class, whom they, in their self-righteous spirit, condemned as unworthy to associate with them; "they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be a guest with a man that is a sinner." Zacchæus, seeing that Jesus was blamed for noticing him, thought it right to show that whatever his sins might have been, he was now truly penitent, and determined to undo as much as possible any wrong he had done to his fellow creatures, in making them pay more taxes than were justly due: so he stood up, "and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give," that is, I will from this time give, "to the poor, and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation," (or over-taxing,) "I will restore him fourfold": that is, I will give him back four times as much as he has lost, through any fault of mine. This was true repentance, springing from faith, and as such it found favour with God. "And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forso much as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Zacchæus had shown himself to be, spiritually, as well as by descent, a son of faithful Abraham; and as such he and his family were to receive that salvation, which Jesus came to bring to those who would turn from their sins and be saved.

At this time, "Jesus spake a parable; because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear." By this parable of the nobleman, who went into a far country to receive a kingdom, and then returned to judge his servants for the use they had made of the talents which he had given them, Jesus showed that although He was Lord of all, He must leave this world for a time, and return again to judge His servants, before His kingdom could be visibly established,—before the kingdom of God could appear in glory.

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It is very easy to understand the meaning of this parable: we all, that is, all the men, women, and children, who have ever been born, are sent upon earth that we may serve God, and show our love to Him, by doing His will in all things; and in doing all the good we can to others. Some have greater means and opportunities of doing good than others; such means and opportunities, as riches, wisdom, health, leisure, &c., are the "talents" entrusted to us; and we are to use them in the service of God, and not for our own pleasure only. Some have more of these "talents" than others; but all of us have opportunities of being useful, if we are ready to practise self-denial, and give up our own pleasure, wishes, and ease, in order to do little acts of kindness to others, in obedience to the word of God. If we do not do our duty to God and man to the best of our power whilst we are on earth, the Lord will be angry with us, as the king in the parable was with the "wicked servant," who had kept his talent "laid up in a napkin," instead of using it so as to make a proper return to the Master, who had given it to him.

When Jesus reached Bethany, Lazarus had already been buried four days. Bethany was a village about two miles from Jerusalem; "and many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother." It was a custom amongst the Jews for friends and relations to come in this way to the house where any one had died, and there to mourn and lament, with particular ceremonies, for seven days. We have no such custom; but when any one is in trouble, we should do all we can to comfort and help: even in all the little troubles and vexations which daily happen to those around us, we should try to do anything we can to help them. The best rule in this, as in all other matters, is to observe the precept, "Do unto others as you would wish them to do unto you." That is, think how you would feel if the same misfortune, trouble, or vexation, fell upon you; and thus try and feel for others: then think what you would wish to be done for you in a like case, and do the same for them. Show that you are sorry for them, by doing any little act of kindness that is in your power, without thinking of yourself,—your own wishes, pleasure, or convenience. Even children can do this; and the sooner they begin to do so, the more will they grow in favour with God and Man.

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The beautiful story of the raising of Lazarus is to be read in St. John's Gospel (ch. xi.).

Martha's faith seems to have been weak; for though she believed that Jesus could have saved her brother's life had He come in time, she certainly did not believe that He could now restore him to life.

Mary, too, seems only to have thought that Jesus could have kept Lazarus from dying; but her faith was stronger than Martha's, for she made no objection to the taking away the stone that lay upon the cave in which Lazarus was buried.

Jesus here sets us an example of feeling for others: He saw the great sorrow of Martha and

Mary, and, although He was going to remove the cause of their grief, yet He felt for them in their distress—"Jesus wept." What a comfort to all who are in trouble upon earth, to know that their Lord in heaven feels for them, and will hear their prayers for help and comfort; though He will not answer them in the same way that He answered the prayers of Mary and her sister.

"Many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him. But some of them," determined not to acknowledge Him as the Messiah, "went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done."

The Chief Priests and Pharisees immediately called together the members of the Sanhedrim, or great Council, and said, "What do we? for this man worketh many miracles." They could not deny that Jesus had worked many miracles; for multitudes of the people had seen, and been benefited by them. To the question, "What do we?" or rather, what shall we do? We might reasonably expect the answer, We will acknowledge Him as the Messiah, the Son of God; but, no: they did not say this; on the contrary, their only thought was to prevent others from believing in Him. Rightly did they judge, "If we let him thus alone, all men will believe in him": but they added, "and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation." In their blindness as to the spiritual nature of the Messiah's kingdom, these Jews thought, that if they acknowledged Jesus, the Roman Emperor would consider them as rebels, wishing to set up a temporal kingdom, and would send his armies to destroy them utterly. Far better would it have been for these unhappy men, if they had *only* considered the proofs before them, and acknowledged Jesus to be the Messiah, without fearing what man could do unto them. In a few years moreover, the very evil which they so wickedly strove to avoid did come upon them: their nation was totally destroyed, the people scattered over all lands, and the temple burnt to the ground.

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No doubt there were many different opinions amongst the members of the Sanhedrim, for, after much discussion, "one of them, named Caiaphas, being the High Priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this spake he not of himself; but being High Priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather in one the children of God that were scattered abroad."

CHAPTER XXVI.—JESUS IN THE HOUSE OF SIMON THE LEPER

THE speech made in the Sanhedrim by Caiaphas, meant a great deal more than he did, when he *used* the *words*. Caiaphas meant, that if there were any chance of offending the Romans, it would be better at once to put one man to death, than to bring destruction upon the whole nation. But St. John bids us take notice that, without intending it, Caiaphas thus proclaimed the blessed plan of salvation through the atonement, which, by the death of One, would be made for all mankind.

Caiaphas was the "High Priest that same year." By the appointment of God, a man who once became High Priest continued to be so as long as he lived; but the Romans forced the Jews to alter many of their customs, and it had been so in regard to the office of High Priest, which was now seldom held by the same person for more than a year.

What Caiaphas said, seems to have decided the Sanhedrim as to what should be done; and the only question that remained was, how it should be done: how the death of Jesus could be safely managed, without causing a disturbance amongst the people, who might not be willing to see one who had worked such miracles for their good, put to death. This required consideration on the part of the Sanhedrim: "and from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death."

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Jesus, knowing that His time was not fully come, went with His disciples into a small city, situated among the mountains in the wilderness of Judah, which lay on the borders of the Dead Sea. We read, "Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples." "And the Jews' Passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves": that is, to observe certain forms and ceremonies, without which no man was looked upon as fit to partake of this holy feast.

This was the third Passover which had occurred since Jesus began His public teaching; the last of which He was to partake. It was fitting that "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," should be sacrificed at this solemn season. The Feast of the Passover was kept in remembrance of the deliverance of the Children of Israel from death, by the blood of the paschal lamb; but it was also a type, or sign, of a greater deliverance to come; when through the shedding of the blood of the Lamb of God, all mankind would be delivered from a far more terrible death. In the New Testament, Jesus Christ is called "our Passover."

The Jews who now assembled in Jerusalem, to prepare themselves for the approaching Feast, naturally spake to each other of Jesus, whom all must have heard of, and whom many had, no doubt, seen. They sought for Jesus amongst those who were purifying themselves, and not finding

Him, spake to each other, saying, "What think ye, that he will not come to the feast?" Many of them probably thought, that Jesus would be afraid to show Himself in public; for "both the Chief Priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where he were, he should show it, that they might take him."

Mean time Jesus was calmly preparing to finish the work given to Him of the Father, by delivering Himself up to death; that through Him all men might have life. Till the time was fully come, Jesus remained with His disciples in the wilderness. "Then six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead." It is probable that at this time Jesus abode in the house with Lazarus and his sisters; but we read of Him as being "in the house of Simon the leper," a man whom our Lord had, no doubt, cured of leprosy; where "they made him a supper." Lazarus was one of the guests who "sat at the table with him," "and Martha served"; helped the giver of the feast to entertain and wait upon Jesus.

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An event now took place, which is spoken of by St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John; though it is rather differently told by each, some mentioning circumstances of which the others take no notice: so much so, that some people have thought that they speak of different events; but it seems much more probable that they all allude to the same event, and therefore it will be so considered now.

The circumstance which happened at the supper given to Jesus in the house of Simon, (distinguished from others of that name by being still called the Leper, though now no longer one,) must be related according to what is generally believed.

"Mary having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard, very precious and very costly, brake the box, and poured it on his head as he sat at meat, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment." Thus did Mary show her love for the Lord. "But when his disciples saw it, there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made? Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?"

Judas Iscariot, under pretence of wishing to give the money to the poor, blamed Mary for thus wasting the ointment; and some of the other disciples seem to have held the same idea, and "they murmured against her."

A Roman penny, the money here spoken of, was worth about $7\frac{1}{2}d.$ of our money; so the cost of this box of ointment was about $9l.$: and probably some of the disciples, not understanding the meaning of Mary's action as afterwards described by Jesus, really thought it would have been well to give that sum away in charity. But this was not the case with Judas, for St. John adds, "This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein." The joint stock of money, out of which the necessaries of life were purchased for Jesus and his Apostles, was trusted to the care of Judas, who was a thief, and took money out of the common bag for his own private purposes. If so large a sum as three hundred pence were to be added to the common stock, Judas would be able easily to take some without being found out; especially if he pretended that he had given it to the poor. Let us, as the Bible bids us, beware of covetousness even in the smallest matter. This feeling indulged in the heart is a great sin; and it constantly leads to the breaking of the eighth commandment as well.

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When Mary was blamed for what she had done, the Lord defended her, saying, "Let her alone,"—do not blame her,—"why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me. For 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. For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial."

It was the custom among the Jews to anoint the bodies of the dead before burial, with perfumes and spices: this was also a custom of other nations, and the Egyptians had a manner of anointing, or embalming, the body, so that it would keep its shape, and not turn to dust, as it would otherwise do. Bodies so prepared are called mummies; and many have been found, which have been in that state for 3,000 or 4,000 years.

When Jesus said that Mary "had anointed his body to the burying," He meant, that she had done an action which was significant of His approaching death; but, of course, neither she nor the disciples understood it as such. He also declared, that so far from deserving blame, what she had done should be for ever remembered to her praise: "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."

Whilst Jesus was still in the house of Simon, much people of the Jews, knowing He was there, came not only to see Him, "but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead." Such a miracle had naturally been much talked of; and the Chief Priests, fearing the effect it might have on the people's mind, consulted whether they could not "put Lazarus also to death, because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus."

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The next day,—that is, five days before the Passover,—the people that were assembled at Jerusalem for the feast, "when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna; Blessed is the King of Israel, that cometh in the name of the Lord." The word "Hosanna" is made up of parts of two Hebrew words,

which mean "*Save now*." It was a word commonly used by the people to express their joy upon solemn occasions.

CHAPTER XXVII.—CHRIST'S ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM.

THEN Jesus sent forth two of His disciples, with directions where to find a colt, the foal of an ass, upon which He purposed to ride into Jerusalem. The disciples did as they were directed, and "cast their garments upon the colt, and they sat Jesus thereon": and He rode towards Jerusalem, accompanied by many of the people who had been with Him in Simon's house, and "that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave." These were soon met by those who, with palm branches in their hands, had come from Jerusalem. "And as they went, a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way." Casting garments, branches of trees and flowers on the ground, for Kings and Conquerors to tread upon, was a mark of honour and welcome in the Eastern nations; and it was a fitting homage to Him, Who is King of Kings, and the Conqueror of Sin and Death.

"And when He was come nigh the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples, and the multitudes that went before, and that followed, began to rejoice, and praise God with a loud voice, for all the mighty works that they had seen; and cried, saying Hosanna to the Son of David—Hosanna in the highest. Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest."

"All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken" 400 years before "by the prophet" Zechariah, saying, "Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass."

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At the Feast of Tabernacles, it had long been the custom for the Jewish people to sing Hosannas, and also to carry in their hands branches of palm or other trees, in honour of the Messiah whom they were expecting; and by receiving Jesus as they now did, the multitudes did, in fact, acknowledge Him to be that expected Messiah—at once God and man—the King spoken of by the prophets; promised by the Almighty.

No other king ever entered Jerusalem in this manner, which had been foretold by the prophets; and therefore what had now happened, ought to have convinced all the Jews that Jesus Christ was indeed the Messiah: but nothing will convince those who are obstinately determined not to believe, and even now, "some of the Pharisees from among the multitude," who chose to think it was blasphemy to give Jesus, a man, the honour due to the Messiah, "said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples." But instead of doing so, Jesus "answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should, hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out." By this answer, Jesus plainly told the Pharisees, that so far from meriting a rebuke for speaking *blasphemy*, all that the people had said was so pleasing to God, that if they were prevented from saying it, the Almighty would, even by a miracle, raise up others to glorify His name, by proclaiming this wonderful truth. Nothing, however, could overcome the obstinate unbelief of the Pharisees. They "said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him."

They could not but own, that in spite of all they had done, the people did believe Jesus to be the Messiah; but this had no other effect than to make them the more anxious to put Him to death. Mean time Jesus rode on; "And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! 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 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." The meaning of what Jesus now said is, that it would have been a happy thing for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, if while He was with them they would have believed on Him, for then He would have given them peace and happiness. And He wept in pity, whilst He foretold the utter destruction that would come upon the city, as a punishment to the Jews for refusing to believe in Him, and receive Him as the Messiah.

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Everything that Jesus foretold, came to pass exactly a few years afterwards, when the Romans laid siege to Jerusalem, and made a trench, and a wall with strong towers all round the city, so as to prevent the inhabitants getting any help. The consequence was, that the want of food caused the most dreadful suffering and misery. When at last the city was taken, the Romans did destroy it so completely, that it might truly be said, that one stone was not left upon another.

"And when Jesus was come into Jerusalem," accompanied by multitudes, waving palm branches, and singing Hosannas, "all the city was moved," or filled with astonishment, saying, "Who is this? And the multitude said, This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee. And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves, and said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves."

Very soon after our Lord's baptism, He thus cleared the temple for the first time (CH. VII.); then He blamed the people for making His Father's house a house of merchandise; now he tells them that they have made it like a den of thieves. There have always been people wicked enough to break the eighth commandment. In the land of Judæa, there were then many lawless men, who, instead of working to gain an honest living, went about the country robbing their fellow creatures, and so living on what they could get. These robbers joined together in bands, and took up their abodes in hollow places in the sides of the mountains, called dens or caves. These dens generally had a small entrance, but inside were of different sizes: they had no light but what came in through the entrance hole; but the inhabitants could burn lamps or torches to give them light, and of course they were quite sheltered from wind and rain. The robbers used to leave their hiding-places at night, and prowl about to take whatever they could find. Even if they met with cattle or sheep unguarded, they drove them away into their dens, where they kept all manner of things which they had stolen; and therefore when the court of the temple was filled with oxen and sheep, and other animals, it might well be compared to a den of thieves. Nothing like this can happen in our days; but let us remember that Jesus referred to the words of the prophet Isaiah, "Mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people": Jesus blamed the people for profaning the temple, and not making the proper use of it: we are guilty of this sin, if we do not make a proper use of our churches, and behave reverently when we are in them. Let us all be careful to make our churches houses of prayer, by joining devoutly in the prayers, and listening attentively to all that we hear there: unless we do this, we shall sin against God by not hallowing His Name; and He will be as much displeased with us, as He was with the Jews for their desecration of the temple.

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The blind and the lame came to Jesus in the temple; "and he healed them. And when the Chief Priests and Scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying Hosanna to the Son of David; they were sore displeased, and said unto Him, Hearst thou what these say?" meaning that He should stop these children from so speaking: instead of that, Jesus again plainly declared Himself to be the Messiah spoken of by the prophets, by applying to what had now taken place, the inspired words of David; for we read, that "Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?"

"And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast." The Greek language was very much spoken at this time, and the Jews called all foreigners who spoke it, Greeks: many of these persons had been converted, or turned, from the worship of idols to that of the one True God: but as they were not really Jews, they could only be admitted to worship in the Court of the Gentiles. These men wished to see Jesus, and expressed their wish to Philip—"Philip cometh and telleth Andrew; and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus."

Our Lord in His answer, declared that the time was now come, when His power and glory should be shown, not to the Jews alone, but to all nations upon earth. But He also said, that before He could be glorified, He must die; just as a corn or grain of wheat must be put into the ground and die, or rot, before it could bring forth fruit and fulfil its purpose: and then He warned His disciples, that any man who really desired to serve and follow Him, must be ready to give up everything he most values, and even to part with his life, if necessary, for the service of God.

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Jesus in his human nature must have shrunk from suffering as a man; though firmly resolved to suffer the utmost agony for our sakes. He would not, therefore, ask God to save Him from the approaching trial, because He had come into the world for the express purpose of going through it, in order to purchase the salvation of man.

CHAPTER XXVIII.—THE VOICE FROM HEAVEN.

At this time Jesus saith, "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name." By these last words Jesus expressed His willingness to give Himself up entirely to God, that God might do with Him whatever would be for His own praise and glory. This same feeling of perfect resignation and self-denial should also govern us in all things. Jesus spake these words, and "then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him."

One of the most ancient signs, or tokens, of the presence of God was a voice from heaven, uttering words that could be heard by man. The Jews called such a voice "the Bath Col," which means the "Daughter of the Voice." It was often a deep, loud sound, attended, as in this case, with thunder; and many would not now believe it to be anything more. Others, who knew that their fathers of old had been spoken to in this way, acknowledged it to be the voice of an angel.

Jesus told those around Him, that this Voice came to show them that He was the true Messiah.

Many other things spake He unto them; but although they had seen so many miracles done by Him, yet they believed not that he was the Messiah; thus fulfilling the words spoken by Isaiah the prophet. "Nevertheless, among the chief rulers also many believed on him but, because of the Pharisees, they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue. For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God."

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The fear of man bringeth a snare. Never let us be tempted, for fear of man, to say or do the least thing which we know to be displeasing to God.

In the evening, Jesus again left Jerusalem, and lodged in Bethany, with the twelve disciples.

We are now come to the last week of our Saviour's life: we call it "Passion Week," because of His sufferings and death, which are often spoken of as "His Passion." The Sunday that begins this Holy Week is often called Palm Sunday, in remembrance of Christ's riding into Jerusalem, accompanied by multitudes carrying Palm branches; but in our Prayer Book it is only called "The Sunday next before Easter."

On this first day of the week, Jesus, after He had finished speaking to the people in the temple, went out to the little village of Bethany. Now the next morning, answering to our Monday in Passion Week, Jesus and His disciples returned into the city. On the way "he hungered, and seeing a fig tree by the way side having leaves, he came to it, if haply he might find any fruit thereon; for the time of figs was not yet,"—that is, it was not yet time for the figs to have been gathered, and therefore a tree which looked so flourishing ought to have had fruit upon it. But there was none; nothing, but leaves only. "Then Jesus said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And his disciples heard it."

And they came to Jerusalem, and went into the temple. It appears that, though driven out at the time, the buyers, and sellers, and money-changers had again established themselves in their former places. Again did our Lord cast them out, reminding them that His house was to be a house of prayer only: and this time we are told, that He "would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple." Jesus remained in the temple teaching the people, who "were very attentive to hear him." "And the Scribes, and the Chief Priests, and the chief of the people heard it, and sought how they might destroy him"; but they could do nothing openly for fear of the people, who were "astonished at his doctrine," and evidently inclined at this time to believe in Him as the Messiah.

The next morning, answering to Tuesday in Passion Week, Jesus and the twelve again returned to Jerusalem; and "as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away! And Peter, calling to remembrance" (what had happened the day before), "saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away! And Jesus, answering, saith unto them, Have faith in God." Then He went on to speak to them of the necessity of having faith; and told them that, if their faith were strong, the most difficult things would become easy for them to do. He also told them to pray earnestly in faith; for that the faithful never pray in vain: but He again warned the disciples, that if they asked God to forgive their sins, they must truly forgive all who had in any way offended or hurt them; saying, "For if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father, which is in heaven, forgive your trespasses."

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The fate of the fig tree teaches two lessons. In the first place, it was a warning to the Jews, who made a great show of their religion, and were very particular in performing all the outward forms and ceremonies which could be seen by men, and lead them to believe that those who did such things must be really good and religious men. Thus they were like the fig tree, with its green leaves making a good show to the eye. But the Jews, with all their outward show, did not do the Will of God: they did not bring forth the fruit of good works, and so their whole religion was valueless, and was to be put an end to by the destruction of the temple. Here again they were like the fig tree, which, in spite of its flourishing leaves, bore no figs, and being therefore useless, was to wither away.

But from all this we may learn an important lesson for ourselves. We should each compare ourselves to this fig tree, and consider whether we bear fruit, or have only a show of leaves. Leaves would be outward observances; such things as can be seen of men. Going to Church, even reading the Bible and saying our Prayers, may be looked upon as leaves, because they can be seen and known by others: but, if under these good leaves there is no fruit of obedience, kindness, self-denial, and holiness,—in short, if we are not trying to please God by growing better and better day by day, where is the fruit?

If, in spite of our Bible and our prayers, we follow our own wills, and indulge our own naughty tempers and feelings, then we are like the barren fig tree; and in the end, like that, we shall be rejected by our Lord in heaven. Let each of us often ask our own conscience this question, Am I a good or bad fig tree? Have I only leaves, or do I bear fruit also?

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At this time Jesus taught daily in the temple; and on one occasion the Chief Priests and the Scribes and the elders of the people "spake unto him, saying, Tell us by what authority thou doest these things? And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? was it from heaven, or of men? Answer me."

This question greatly perplexed those to whom it was put. They saw plainly, that if they acknowledged that John the Baptist was sent by God, Jesus would justly say, Why then did ye not believe him, when he told you I was the Messiah? On the other hand, they were afraid to say that John had no authority from God, because all the people looked upon him as a prophet, and would be ready to stone any one who said that he was not. "And they answered and said unto Jesus, We cannot tell whence it was." They had not asked the question from any real wish to know, for they would not speak what they felt to be the truth, because it would show that they were wrong.

Under such circumstances, "Jesus answering saith unto them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things."

But our Lord did not leave them without an answer, if they would have laid it to heart; for, in the parable of the man who bid his two sons "go work to-day in my vineyard," He showed them plainly, that, in spite of all their profession of religion, they did not do what God had bade them, and therefore they would lose His favour; whilst the Gentiles, and all who repented and became the obedient sons of God, would go into the kingdom of heaven before them.

"Then began he to speak to the people another parable" of the householder; who, after planting a vineyard and doing all that was necessary to make it produce good wine, sent first his servants and then his son to receive the fruits: but instead of making the proper return, the servants were ill-used, and the son killed. The people, on being asked what the lord of the vineyard would do to such men, answered, "He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their due season." Jesus then showed them, that this parable exactly described what the Jewish nation had done; and He said, "Therefore I say unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." Jesus also spake another parable, wherein the kingdom of heaven is said to be like unto a certain king, which made a marriage feast for his son. This parable taught the same lesson; that if people will not come to God when He calls them, He will deprive them of the blessings they do not value. At the end of this parable, the king is represented as sending away into punishment a man who had not on a wedding garment. This is to warn us, that though the Lord has now given to Christians the blessings refused by the Jews, it is not enough to be called a Christian: each one of us must be really and truly a Christian in heart and life; clothed, as it were, with faith, love, obedience, and holiness, as with a wedding garment: without this, no man can enter into Christ's Church in Heaven.

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CHAPTER XXIX.—DISCOURSES ON THE TUESDAY.

IN the parable of the Marriage Feast just spoken of, we read that when the invited guests refused to come, beggars were compelled to come in from the highways; now, though this may seem to us a strange thing, it would not appear so to those who heard this parable, as it was according to the customs of the East.

Even now, the Arab princes often dine in the open air before their dwellings, and invite all that pass, even beggars, to share their meal: these guests sit down and eat, and when they have done, return thanks and go away.

Another custom of those times is also referred to in this parable: kings and great men, when they made a feast, provided garments or robes to be lent to any guests who came without a proper dress for the occasion. As every man who needed it could have a garment if he asked for it, there was no excuse for any person who sat down *without* one. The man spoken of in the parable, could have had a wedding garment if he had sought for it; and so we read that he "was speechless," had nothing to say in his own defence, and was cast from the presence of the Lord.

So it is with us; God will give faith, and love, and strength to keep His holy Word, to all who ask, and seek: therefore, if we are not covered with the garment of faith and holiness, it will be our own fault that we are not allowed to sit down with the righteous in the kingdom of Heaven.

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The righteousness of Christ is the real wedding garment of believers; and this will cover and save all, whose faith is true and lively; such as will show itself in their words and deeds.

The Pharisees and Scribes saw that these parables were spoken against them, to show them how wrong they were; and this made them the more angry, and the more desirous to destroy Jesus. Being afraid to do this openly by violence, they "took counsel (or consulted together) how they might entangle him in his talk": that is, get Him to say something which would either offend the people, or give them a pretence for accusing Him to the Roman governor of teaching the people to rebel against the authority of Cæsar.

They, therefore, sent forth certain of their own disciples, with the Herodians; spies, which should feign themselves just and good men, anxious to learn the truth by asking questions; whilst all the time, they hoped He would say something to enable them to "deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor." The Herodians here spoken of, seem to have been a party amongst the Jews, who were very favourable to the Romans; and thought they had the best right to appoint the kings and governors of Judæa. This party took its rise in the time of Herod the Great.

These Herodians, though Jews themselves, had been quite ready to join with Herod, when, to please the Romans, he set apart temples for the worship of their false gods: by such means they had got into great favour with the Romans, as also with Herod the Great and all his family.

The Pharisees and Herodians then came to Jesus, and having first declared their belief, that no fear of man would prevent His telling them plainly what was the Will of God, they said, "Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou, Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not? Shall we give or shall we not give?"

The Romans had laid a tax upon Judæa when it became a Roman province: the Jews hated this mark of subjection, and the Pharisees taught, that as the Jews were God's chosen people, they ought not to pay tax or tribute to any foreign power. The Herodians held the contrary opinion; and some of the Jews followed them. Cæsar was a common name or title given to all the Roman Emperors, who had each their own particular name besides. Augustus Cæsar was Emperor of Rome when Jesus Christ was born; and, at the time we are speaking of, Tiberius Cæsar was the Emperor. If, to the question now asked, Jesus should answer, "Do not pay tribute," the Herodians would be offended, and would get the Roman governor to punish Him. If, on the other hand, Jesus should declare that it was lawful and right to pay tribute, the greater part of the Jewish people would be very indignant, and perhaps stone Him at once: at any rate, He would lose their favour, so that they would not oppose His destruction. Thus the Pharisees felt confident that Jesus must fall into the snare. "But Jesus perceived their wickedness; and knowing their hypocrisy, said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Show me the tribute-money," that I may see it. "And they brought unto him a penny"—a Roman coin, equal to $7\frac{1}{2}d.$ of our money, having upon it the image or figure of the Emperor's head, with some words, called the superscription, round it: just as our money has the Queen's image upon it, and writing also. "And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Cæsar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's." Thus teaching, that their duty to God as His people, did not interfere with their duty to the Romans as temporal rulers. The Pharisees could not take hold of such words: "they marvelled at his answer, and held their peace, and left him, and went their way." Let us remember that with us also, our duty to God will not interfere with our duty to man: on the contrary, those who most love God, will best do their duty as Parents and Children, Kings and Subjects, Masters and Servants, Friends and Neighbours.

The Pharisees having been put to silence in the matter of the tribute-money, another party or sect amongst the Jews, who did not believe in the future resurrection of the dead, came to Jesus, hoping also to entangle him in his talk. These Jews, who were called Sadducees, asked our Lord a question, which they thought it would be impossible for him to answer: but Jesus showed them, that only their own ignorance and inattention to what was written in their Scriptures, made them find any difficulty as to the resurrection of the dead: and He told them most plainly, that all the dead should certainly rise again; and that those who were worthy to live in Heaven, should "be as the angels of God." Some of the Scribes, who were present, agreed to the truth of all that Jesus spake, and said, "Master, thou hast well said."

But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together. Then one of them, which was a Lawyer, one of the Scribes, came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, "asked him a question, tempting him"; that is, hoping that His answer might give an opportunity of finding fault with Him.

Before we speak of the question now asked, it is necessary to understand, that at this time the Scribes and Pharisees had taken up an opinion, that it was quite impossible for anybody to observe all the precepts and commandments contained in the Law of Moses; and that, therefore, every man might choose out one or two, and that if he observed these perfectly, he would be forgiven for not keeping the others. This was, of course, quite contrary to the teaching of Scripture, where we learn that all men must do their very best to keep the whole law of God, and do His Will in all things. The Pharisees having thus settled that they need only keep one Commandment, the question was, which it should be: some considered that the ordinances as to sacrifices were the most important; others thought attention to the wearing of phylacteries was the chief thing. No doubt it was much easier to attend to such outward observances, than to keep the temper in order and practise self-denial; but no outward service can please God if the heart is not right. As the Scribes and Pharisees were constantly disputing amongst themselves, as to which of the Commandments it was most important to keep, this Lawyer now asked Jesus, "Master, which is the first commandment of all?" which is the great commandment in the law? "And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first and great commandment." This answer could not be found fault with; for it agreed exactly with what Moses had said. But Jesus did not stop here. He knew that the Pharisees behaved with great unkindness to their Jewish brethren, who did not hold the same opinions as they did; and that they actually hated all their fellow creatures of a different religion: He therefore told them, that there was a second commandment, of almost equal importance to the first, and *both* must be kept. He said, "And the second is like unto it, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the prophets": meaning, that these two commandments contain all that the Law and the prophets had taught, and that any man who kept these, would indeed, keep the whole Law.

Just as in our Catechism we say, that from the Commandments of the Law we learn two things: our duty towards God, and our duty towards man: nor can they be separated; he who really does love God with heart, and mind, and soul, and strength, will try in all things to please Him, and will not willingly break the least of His commands.

He who so loves his fellow creatures, as to do them all the good he can, and treat them as he would himself wish to be treated, will certainly never injure any one in his person or his property; nor even be unkind to him, in word or deed.

The Scribe who had asked the question, "tempting him," appears to have been more honest than many of his brethren: he felt the truth of our Lord's words, and at once "said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he: and to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." Jesus meant, that this Scribe was not far from being a true believer and disciple, and, we may hope, that he did become a sincere follower of the Lord, and an inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven.

"And no man after that durst ask him any question." Seeing how all had failed to entangle Jesus in his talk, the Pharisees appear to have given up asking questions, which only gave Him an opportunity of showing His wisdom and holiness.

CHAPTER XXX.—WEDNESDAY—JUDAS COVENANTS TO BETRAY JESUS.

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WHILST the Pharisees, who had asked questions in the hope of finding a fault, were gathered together, Jesus in His turn questioned them: He "asked them, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord? for David himself said by the Holy Ghost, in the Book of Psalms, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool. David therefore calleth him Lord; if David then call him Lord, how is he his son?" The Pharisees could make no answer to this, without contradicting what David had said; or acknowledging that Christ, though in one sense the son of David, was more, and must be the Son of God spoken of by David and all the prophets. Therefore "no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions. The common people heard him gladly," however, not being so prejudiced against Him.

Jesus at this time reprov'd the Scribes and Pharisees for their pride and hypocrisy; and for their observance of outward forms only, whilst they did not even try to act according to the real meaning and spirit of the Law of Moses. Jesus also told his disciples and the multitude, that though they ought to observe and do whatever the Scribes (whose business it was to explain and teach the Law) showed them that they ought to do, they must be careful not to follow their example: "The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses's seat; all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say and do not." Other things Jesus said at this time (Matt xxiii., Mark xii., Luke xx.), and he ended with again lamenting over the misery which Jerusalem was bringing upon herself, by refusing to receive Him, the Lord of Life and Glory: and He reminded His hearers, that He would have saved them had they been willing. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." Jesus was teaching in that part of the temple where stood the chest, into which those who came to worship, put gifts of money, to be used for the service of the temple.

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"And Jesus sat over against the treasury. And he looked up and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury; and many that were rich cast in much. And there came also a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing." There was a curious law at this time amongst the Jews, forbidding any one to put into the treasury so small a sum as *one* mite: this poor widow therefore put in the smallest sum she could. Many who saw her, most likely despised her offering; and thought that such a paltry sum was not worth giving. But He who seeth the heart, judged very differently: "He called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: for all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all that she had, even all her living."

The difference was, that the rich men had given large sums, of which they would not feel the loss: but the poor widow had practised the greatest self-denial, in order to do something for the service of God. She had to work hard to gain money to buy necessary food, and by giving all she had at this time, she would be obliged to go without a meal. Without self-denial, we cannot please God: and we can all practise self-denial, though it seems very hard to do so. If we give up our own wishes, and practise self-denial, in the most trifling things, though men may not know it at all, God does: and if He sees that we do it *because* He has bid us deny ourselves, He will be pleased with us.

Our Lord now departed from the temple, and as he went out "his disciples came to him, for to show him, the buildings of the temple"; that is, to draw His attention to the strength of the walls, and the size of the stones used in building it; as if they thought it almost impossible that one stone should not be left upon another. But Jesus again assured them that the temple, as well as the city, should be utterly destroyed.

Jesus then spake of the misery that would come upon the Jews, when the destruction of their city should take place. From this, He went on to speak of the end of the world, which must surely

take place some day or other: and He warned them, that as no man could know when this event would take place, it was necessary that every one should be prepared to meet their God.

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Let us remember this: let each one of us try to live every day as if it was to be our last. Many things He spake, to enforce the duty of watching, so as to be always ready.

In order to impress more strongly upon His disciples the dreadful consequence of not being ready, when the Lord should come to judge the world, Jesus told them the parable of the Ten Virgins, five of whom were wise, and five foolish. These latter were shut out from the marriage; and Jesus showed how this parable applied to all men, by saying, "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."

Again, to show them the necessity of being found at the last day, doing the will of God, and improving the talents committed to our care, Jesus told His disciples another parable of the Servants and the Talents; greatly resembling one spoken before, as given by St. Luke, chap. xix. He likewise showed His disciples, that though here all men seem to go on much alike, so that it is often difficult to know who are really serving God with all their hearts, and who are not, there will be no difficulty in the last day, when the godly and the ungodly shall be as easily divided, "as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats": and that while the Lord would take the one to live with Him for ever, the others should go away into everlasting punishment. Jesus also declared, that one way of gaining the favour of God, was by doing acts of kindness and self-denial, to help our suffering fellow creatures.

All these discourses, which followed the last cleansing of the temple, seem to have been uttered on the Tuesday in Passion Week. "And in the day time he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out, and abode in the mount, that is called the mount of Olives;" at Bethany, as is generally believed. We have now come to the Wednesday in Passion Week, two days before the feast of the Passover, called also the feast of unleavened bread. Jesus, to prepare His disciples for what was about to happen, said unto them, "Ye know that after two days is the feast of the Passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified."

"Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover. Then assembled together the Chief Priests and the Scribes, and the elders of the people" (who had long sought to destroy Jesus), "unto the palace of the High Priest, who was called Caiaphas, and consulted how they might take Jesus by craft and put him to death," without causing any uproar among the people. If once they could contrive to deliver Him up as a prisoner to the Roman governor, there would be no possibility of His being rescued by the people.

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The Priests and elders were now offered help from an unexpected quarter. "Then entered Satan into Judas, surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve." Judas had probably taken offence at what Jesus said, when Mary anointed His feet: he was a bad man, without any real love for his Master; and instead of fighting against the sinful lusts or desires of his own heart, he indulged them, and so let the Devil enter in, and lead him to betray the Lord. "And he went his way unto the Chief Priests, and communed with them how he might betray him unto them. And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And when they heard it they were glad, and promised to give him money. And they covenanted (or agreed with him) for thirty pieces of silver." Thirty shekels or pieces of silver (worth about 3*l.* 11*s.*), was the sum which Moses had commanded to be paid by the owner of any beast, which had by accident killed the slave of another man: thus, in every respect, did Christ take upon Him the form and condition of a servant or slave.

Judas having consented to sell the life of his Master for thirty shekels, "from that time sought opportunity how he might conveniently betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude." It is a terrible thing when a man is so hardened, as to watch for an opportunity of committing a crime! That, indeed, is wilful sin. The next day, Thursday, was "the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the Passover. The disciples came and said unto Jesus, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the Passover? And He sendeth forth two of his disciples, Peter and John, saying, Go ye into the city; and behold when ye are entered into the city, there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him into the house where he entereth in; and say ye to the good man (or owner) of the house, The Master saith unto thee, My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at thy house: Where is the guest chamber, where I shall eat the Passover with my disciples? And he will show you a large upper room furnished and prepared: there make ready for us. And his disciples went forth and came into the city, and found as He had said unto them: and they made ready the Passover." What a strengthening of the Apostles' faith this must have been: He who could thus foretell all, even the most trifling events, must be God indeed. The blessed thought that God knows and governs all things, should make us trust in Him, and do our duty without any fear of the consequences.

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CHAPTER XXXI.—MODE OF CELEBRATING THE PASSOVER.

IN order to a better understanding of all that the Gospels tell us of the Last Supper, it will be well to see how the Jews at that time kept the Passover.

In the first place, on the day when the Paschal Lamb was to be killed and eaten, the Jews were

to put away out of their houses all leaven or yeast, and live for a whole week on cakes made of unleavened dough: hence the Feast of the Passover was also called the "Feast of unleavened bread."

1. When the guests were assembled in the evening to eat the Passover, the ceremonies began, by the master of the house giving to each one a cup of wine mixed with water, saying at the same time, "Blessed be He that created the fruit of the vine": then they all gave thanks and drank the wine.

2. All the guests after drinking the wine, washed their hands; and then the three things ordered by the Law of Moses, were placed on the table before the master of the house. These three things were, the Paschal Lamb roasted whole; two cakes of unleavened bread; and a dish of bitter herbs. To these were added the remains of the peace-offerings offered the day before, and some other meats; also a thick sour sauce, intended to remind the Jews of the bricks made by their forefathers in Egypt.

The master of the house, or whoever took the direction of the feast, then ate, and gave to each of the guests a small piece of lettuce; at the same time blessing God for the fruits of the earth; afterwards each person present, ate a bit of the unleavened bread dipped in the bitter herbs.

3. In the third place, all the dishes were taken off the table, and the children, who were not of age to keep the feast, were called in: the meaning of the Feast was then explained to them, in obedience to the commandment of the Lord, spoken by Moses, saying, "And it shall come to pass when ye be come to the land which the Lord will give you, and your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, Who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when He smote the Egyptians and delivered our houses."

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4. After the young people had been duly taught, the supper was, in the fourth place, again set upon the table. Each person then, in turn, lifted up the bitter herbs and the unleavened cakes, and afterwards joined in declaring, that they ate them in remembrance of the bondage in Egypt, and the deliverance from it: then they praised God, by singing the 113th and 114th Psalms; and having blessed the Lord, a second cup of wine was drunk.

5. In the fifth place, the guests again washed their hands; and then the master of the family took the two unleavened cakes, broke one of them into pieces, and placed the broken pieces on the top of the whole cake: after this, he blessed it; and each person taking one of the broken pieces with some of the bitter herbs, dipped them into the sour sauce, and ate them; they then blessed God again. Thanks were now given over the remains of the yesterday's peace-offering, and some of that eaten. The next step was to give thanks over the Paschal Lamb, of which all partook. The Passover Feast was now, in fact, finished; but the Jews made the supper last longer, by eating any other food they liked; always taking care to *finish* by swallowing a little morsel of lamb, as after partaking of that, they were not supposed to eat anything more that night.

6. In the sixth place, the hands were washed for the third time; and the master of the house said a blessing over a third cup of wine, which was then drunk by each guest. This third cup of wine was commonly called the "Cup of Blessing." A fourth cup of wine was then mixed with water; and over this, certain Psalms, from the 115th to 118th inclusive, were sung; and then a prayer concluded the whole ceremony.

This was the manner in which the Jews kept the Passover Feast, when Jesus ate it with His disciples. When Jerusalem was destroyed, the Jews who were forced to go and live in other lands, could not sacrifice the lambs in a proper manner; and therefore they used to put a bit of unleavened bread under a napkin, and keep it for a last mouthful, instead of the morsel of lamb.

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In the impossibility of continuing to carry out the ordinances of the Ceremonial Law, after the death of Jesus, we see the Hand of God, fulfilling His Word.

The Passover was a type of Christ—signifying the deliverance of His people from bondage to the Devil. When Christ had come, and once for all made atonement as the Lamb of God, a ceremony to *prefigure* His sacrifice was out of place. Another rite was instituted, "in thankful remembrance of His death." But the Jews, who would not believe that Christ was the true Passover, endeavoured, and still do endeavour, to observe that Law which He has done away with.

"And in the evening Jesus cometh with the twelve, and when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve Apostles with him." Then He told them plainly that this was the last Passover He should eat on earth; saying, "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." Then when Jesus, as Master of the family, had given the first cup to the disciples, "He 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." Jesus being the true Lamb of God, now about to be sacrificed for the deliverance of His people, would not Himself partake of things, only appointed as *signs* or *types* of what He was to accomplish by the sacrifice of Himself. When the supper, or some part of it, was ended, there arose some strife or dispute amongst the disciples, as to "which of them should be accounted the greatest."

For this Jesus gently rebuked them; and then, wishing to set them an example of humbleness and kindness, "He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel and girded

himself." that is, He took off His robe or upper garment, and then bound His other garments round him with a towel, as was usually done by those who served, or waited upon others. "After that he poureth water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. Then cometh he to Simon Peter;" but he, believing that Jesus was indeed the Messiah, could not bear the idea of His acting a servant's part, and objected, saying "Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." These words should have overcome all doubts and scruples; but in his anxiety and zeal for what he considered to be the glory of the Lord, Peter quite lost sight of his own duty, which was to be obedient in all things, and hastily exclaimed, "Thou shalt never wash my feet."

Peter was quickly recalled to a sense of his fault, for "Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." Such a declaration might well alarm Peter, who really loved his Lord, and wished to serve Him; and in his zeal he rushed into the opposite extreme, and cried out, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." But true and perfect obedience is *doing exactly*, as *we are told*, neither more nor less; and of this Peter was reminded by Jesus, who "saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit."

But these words of our Lord had a further meaning. By washing their feet, Jesus meant to teach His disciples, that as washing with water was necessary to cleanse the body, so holiness and purity were necessary to cleanse the soul: and that as through Him alone they could receive the latter, He now used that "outward and visible sign" as a type, or proof, of "the inward and spiritual grace" He would give to them. By washing the feet *only*, Jesus signified, that those who through faith and repentance were by His mercy cleansed from their sins, and redeemed from the curse by His sacrifice, would only in future need to be cleansed from such sins, as the weakness and frailty of man cause him daily to fall into: just as a guest, who after making himself clean to come to a feast, would only need, on his arrival, to wash off the dust which must settle on his bare feet during his walk.

To the words thus spoken to Peter, Jesus added, "And ye are clean, but not all": for knowing the hearts of all, He thus showed that the sin of Judas was not hid from Him: the disciples naturally would not understand these words, except Judas, whose conscience ought to have reproached him. "After Jesus had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to 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 to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him."

These words are too plain to require much comment. Washing the feet, was looked upon as the business of the lowest servant; and by taking such an office upon Himself, the Lord and Master of all, Jesus taught the disciples and all of us, that it can never be beneath us to do any kind office in our power, to help our fellow creatures. Let us ever remember, that Jesus Christ came upon earth not only to be a "sacrifice for our sins," but also "an ensample (or example) of godly life"; and that it is our duty as well as our happiness, to try in everything to follow His example where He has set us one; and in other matters, to think *how*, under the circumstances, *He would have been likely* to act, that we may do the same. This is, indeed, to follow Christ; and so following we shall enter into His kingdom in Heaven.

CHAPTER XXXII.—THE LAST SUPPER.

"AND as they sat and did eat, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you which eateth with me shall betray me: behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table." The disciples, hearing this, "began to be exceeding sorrowful, and to enquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing: and one by one, they asked him, Lord, is it I? and another said, Is it I?"

It was well for the disciples to be sorrowful, and fearful of doing wrong. When we hear of sin committed, we should never say or think, "I am sure *I* should not do this, or that"; because we do not know what we might do, if we were tempted as others have been. Let us, on the contrary, when we hear of others falling into sin, watch and pray the more earnestly, that we may never be led to do anything which we know to be wrong.

In answer to the question asked by each one of the disciples, Jesus repeated what He had said, that one of them should betray Him; and "said unto them, It is one of the twelve that dippeth with me in the dish; the same shall betray me." And then He told them that, although He came on earth on purpose to die, yet the man who sinfully betrayed Him would bring upon himself the utmost wrath of God. "The Son of man, indeed, goeth as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born. Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake." But though eleven of the disciples knew not the meaning of their Lord's words, there was one who could have had no doubt upon the subject—one who had sold himself to do evil, and was only waiting for a convenient opportunity to execute his wicked purpose. Even now he might have taken warning, and given up his guilty purpose; but no: he had listened to the Devil, and his heart was hardened

against Jesus.

According to the custom in those times, when people did not *sit* as we do to their meals, but lay upon couches, so that one guest leant upon the one next to him, John, who was next to Jesus, was leaning on Jesus's bosom. John is always spoken of as "the disciple whom Jesus loved"; showing that he was, as a man, especially dear to his Master, in consequence of which, doubtless, his place at supper was next to that of Jesus.

Simon Peter, always eager and active, now beckoned, or made signs, to John, "that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. He then, lying on Jesus's breast, saith unto him, Lord, who is it? Jesus answered, He it is to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. And after the sop Satan entered into him,"—that is, gained more entire possession of his soul; as will always be the case when we once listen to the Devil. What our Lord said to John does not appear to have been heard by any of the other disciples. Judas himself now dared to ask, "Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said,"—which was a most solemn form of saying "Yes." Jesus then said unto Judas, "That thou doest do quickly." Judas immediately left the company, and went out.

Even then the other disciples do not seem to have understood that Judas was the traitor. St. John tells us, that "no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him. For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag (or common purse), that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or that he should give something to the poor."

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There were still sacrifices needed for the remaining days of the feast.

After Judas was gone out, Jesus told the disciples that, as in His life He had glorified the Father, He was now about to glorify Him still farther by his death. Then he bade them love one another, as He had loved them: and this He called "a new commandment," because the love of His followers for one another, was to be something very different from what the Jews taught and practised.

Jesus then warned Peter, that Satan would tempt him, but that He had prayed for him that his faith might not entirely fail, although he would fall into sin: and He charged him, when he should have recovered himself, to strengthen the faith of others. Peter had not yet learned the lesson of humility, which would have made him distrust himself. He knew that he loved his Master, and therefore he fancied, that for His sake he could bear and do anything. Instead, therefore, of being filled with fear at this warning, he exclaimed, "Lord, I am ready to go with thee both into prison and to death." And Jesus said, "I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me."

The Jewish day was reckoned from one sunset to another. The Passover was always eaten in the evening; and thus a new day was beginning when Jesus spake these words.

Jesus next asked the disciples, whether they had lacked or wanted anything when He sent them to teach throughout the country, taking with them neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes. They answered, that they had wanted for nothing. "Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip; and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one. For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end,"—an end or object,—that is, everything which the prophets had spoken concerning the circumstances of our Saviour's Passion, was intended to fulfil some especial purpose, and therefore all must be exactly fulfilled. In answer to what Jesus said, the disciples "said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough."

Simon Peter appears still not to have understood that his Master's death was at hand, for "he said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards." Peter was not to die with his Lord; but he did afterwards follow Him indeed, for he was crucified some years after, in the reign of the Emperor Nero. Peter, as usual in his zeal and self-confidence, lost sight of the fact, that his duty was to believe and acquiesce without questioning and gainsaying: he needed the severe lesson he received afterwards, to teach him this. Now, in his love for his Master, "he said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake. Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow till thou has denied me thrice."

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We now come to a very important event in the life of our Saviour, namely, His instituting another Feast, or Ceremony, to take the place of the Passover. The Passover was a means of reminding the Jews of a past bodily deliverance, and also of keeping them in remembrance of the promised Messiah, who *was to come*, and deliver them from spiritual bondage.

When the Messiah had actually come and finished His work, it would no longer be right to keep the Passover, as given to Moses. Jesus therefore, in doing away with this Feast, gave to His disciples another, which was for ever to remind men of all He had done for them. This Holy Feast we call "The Lord's Supper," "The Eucharist," or giving of thanks, "The Communion" of His blessed body and blood. "The Lord's Supper" is one of the Two Sacraments which Christ hath ordained in His Church. The other is Baptism, whereby we are admitted into Christ's Church. This is only partaken of once; just as in the natural world a child can only be born once. The Lord's Supper, on the contrary, should be partaken of constantly; just as we daily eat and drink to

keep ourselves alive. But children do not partake of this Sacrament until they are old enough to understand its nature, and to fight for themselves against the world, the flesh, and the Devil.

The Four Gospels do not give us exactly the same account of what took place at the institution of the Lord's Supper. Some mention one thing, and some another; and therefore it is difficult to say *the order* in which the events took place: that is however, of little consequence, since we are sure that everything they do tell us, did happen during the Last Supper which Jesus ate with His disciples.

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"As they were eating,"—probably at that part of the Feast when the master of the family broke one of the unleavened cakes (see 5, p. 123),—"Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me."

They were to look upon this bread as the body of Christ, sacrificed for them; and in the same spirit they were to eat bread in a solemn manner, from time to time, in remembrance of all the blessings which Jesus purchased for mankind, by giving up His body, or His human life, for our redemption.

"Likewise also, after supper, he took the cup,"—probably that one called the Cup of Blessing (see 6, p. 123),—"and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it: and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament. This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you and for many, for the remission of sins."

The wine in the cup was to be taken as a memorial, or remembrance, of that New Covenant, or agreement, made between God and man, by the shedding of that precious blood wherewith the Saviour blotted out our sins.

The Old Covenant of works, made by God with the Children of Israel, was now done away with. The New Covenant of Grace was to take its place. In this New Covenant, God promised, that as Jesus bore our punishment, and washed out our sins with His atoning blood, we for His sake should be looked upon as righteous, because He was righteous: our part of this New Covenant being to repent and forsake our sins, and have such faith in Christ as will constantly show itself by our trying to please Him, and prove our love by doing His will.

CHAPTER XXXIII.—JESUS IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE.

OUR blessed Lord loved His disciples to the end; and in order that they might remember all the blessings secured to them by His death on the Cross, He appointed the "outward and visible sign," of eating bread and drinking wine, which were to figure, or represent to their minds, His body and blood thus given for them: but not given for them *only*, but for all mankind; and therefore it is just as necessary for all Christians to remember these things.

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We consequently find, that ever since that last Supper, when Jesus said, "Do this in remembrance of me," Christians *have* constantly done the same thing, that Christ then commanded His disciples to do. We, as members of Christ's Holy Church, continue to receive bread and wine in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, in token of our belief, that the body of Jesus was broken and His blood shed for us; and that we thereby hope, "that our sinful bodies may be made clean by His body, and our souls washed through His most precious blood."

When you are of an age to partake of the blessed Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, you will learn more about it: mean time do not forget that it was appointed by Jesus Christ, only a few hours before He made that sacrifice of Himself, which we commemorate, or remember, in this solemn service.

After the institution of the Lord's Supper, Jesus told His disciples (John xiv.) that though He was about to leave them, it was for their good that He should go; because then the Holy Spirit would come upon them, to teach and comfort them: and that if they believed in Him, and followed in the way that He had already pointed out, they should abide with Him in heaven. He likewise declared, that all who professed to love Him must show their love by keeping His commandments. Jesus, having spoken these things, said, "Arise, let us go hence." And when "they had sung an hymn," according to the custom at the Passover, where Psalms were sung after the fourth cup of wine, Jesus came out, and went, as he was wont, "to the Mount of Olives; and his disciples followed him."

Here again Jesus spake many things to the disciples—(John xv., xvi.). He compared Himself to a vine, and His disciples to the branches. He is the root, without which there can be no tree: as long as the branches remain part of the tree, they receive nourishment from the root, and bring forth fruit: but if the branches are cut off, and so separated from the root, they wither and die, and are of no use except to be burned. In the same way all who will be His disciples, must by faith abide in Him as their root; doing His will, copying His example, and so bringing forth the fruit of good works to the glory of God.

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Amongst other things, Jesus spake to the disciples of prayer; and promised that God would

give them whatsoever they should ask in His Name. He also warned them, that if they faithfully followed His precepts and obeyed His commands, they would in this world meet with troubles, and be cruelly treated and even killed, by those who would not believe in Him. The enemies of Jesus, those who knew not Him Who sent Him, would persecute His faithful servants for their Master's sake. Having warned His disciples that they must suffer for the sake of their faith, Jesus bid them fear nothing so long as they continued to love and serve Him: for whilst they did so, God would bless and comfort them, and finally take them to Himself in heaven. "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." Now all that Jesus said to His disciples was meant for *all* His followers in all times, even unto the end of the world.

Such promises and hopes have supported the "noble army of martyrs," who in the early ages of the Church suffered tortures, and died the most cruel death, rather than give up, or even *pretend* to give up, their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The same spirit should be in us: we are not called to martyrdom as were the holy men of old; but should the Lord allow it to be so again, should we be ready so to suffer for our religion? But let us ask ourselves another question, of more practical importance at the present time: Are we willing to give up *anything* for the sake of pleasing Jesus? Do we give up our own wishes and pleasures to please Him, Who bids us deny ourselves? Do we try to conquer our evil tempers, passions, and inclinations, because He has said, "Resist the Devil"? If we have anything like the spirit which guided the martyrs, we shall force ourselves to be attentive and industrious, when we feel careless and idle: obedient, when we feel wilful and perverse; kind and generous, when we feel selfish: gentle and patient, when we feel cross and irritable; and so on. This is no easy task; no easy life. But we must remember Christ's warning, that those who will be His faithful servants, *must* meet with difficulties and hindrances in their way. Let us then pray for the Holy Spirit, to teach, and guide, and support us; so that, our hearts being filled with faith and love, we "may never be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner, against sin, the world, and the devil, and to continue Christ's faithful soldiers and servants unto our life's end."

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When Jesus had said these things, He lifted up His eyes to Heaven, and prayed to His Father, to support Him through the coming trial; so that He might glorify the Father, by securing the salvation of men. Then Jesus prayed for the disciples who did already believe in Him, and besought that they might be kept in His faith and love, and enabled to teach others all that He had taught them.

Our Lord also prayed for all who should in after times learn true religion from the teaching or writings of the Apostles, and so become one of them, by having the same faith, the same wish to glorify God by obedience to His holy Will. For all who do thus join themselves to Him, Jesus prayed that they may be with Him in heaven. Our blessed Lord thus prayed for us, and for all His followers in every age: and He still prays for us, and intercedes for us in heaven. All Christians are now one body, of which Christ is the Head; one vine, of which Christ is the root; one flock, of which Christ is the Shepherd.

We call this body the Church of Christ; by Baptism we are taken into this Church, and made part of this body; therefore, we must try always to know and do the Will of our Head.

When Jesus had ended His prayer, He saith unto the disciples, "All ye shall 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. But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee."

By being "offended," Jesus meant that they would be afraid to own Him as their Master, and would forsake Him: but to show them that He would not punish their weakness by casting them off for ever, He told them where they might see Him again, after He should have risen from the dead.

Notwithstanding the warnings already received, Peter was still full of self-confidence, and "answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended." Why should Peter have thought himself more likely than others to do right? Why should any of us think so? Whenever we do thus depend upon ourselves to do right, we are almost sure to fall into sin, for the Devil takes advantage of our pride and self-conceit, to tempt us; and then God frequently leaves us to ourselves, that from our fall we may learn by painful experience our exceeding weakness and sinfulness. Jesus now showed Peter, that though he thought himself so safe, he would do worse than his fellow disciples; for "he saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Jesus said unto him, Verily, I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. Peter spake the more vehemently, and said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee in any wise. Likewise also said all the disciples."

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Poor Peter little knew himself! No doubt he and all the disciples felt what they now said: but if men would bear in mind their weakness and proneness to sin, they would never feel *sure* of not doing wrong; but would watch and pray, so that the Devil may get no advantage over them. "When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples" from the place on the Mount of Olives, where they were, "unto a place called Gethsemane, over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples. And Judas also knew the place, for Jesus oft-times resorted thither with his disciples." Having entered into this garden with the eleven disciples, Jesus saith unto eight of them, "Sit ye here while I go and pray yonder. And he taketh with him Peter, and James and John, the two sons of Zebedee, and when he was at the place" to which he had intended to go, "he began to be sorrowful, and sore amazed, and to be very heavy."

Now began the mysterious, and most bitter part of our blessed Lord's sufferings for sinful man. What those sufferings were, we do not exactly know: they were not bodily, but spiritual; his soul suffered such agony, as we can form little idea of: we only know that sin, the sin of man, *our sin*, caused His sufferings; and that the holy and righteous Lord now bore for our sakes, all the agony that is the fruit of sin. It seems likely that at this time the Devil and his evil spirits again attacked Jesus, and tried by every means in their power to prevail upon Him not to finish His work, even the salvation of man, but to spare *Himself*, and leave His guilty creatures to the fearful consequences of their sins. In His agony, prayer was our Lord's refuge; and feeling the necessity of being alone with God, that He might freely pour out His soul before Him, "he saith unto the three who accompanied him, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here and watch with me." Thus He asked them to help Him with their prayers; setting, in His human nature, an example for all men to follow. Then, knowing the power and malice of the Devil, Jesus added a caution to pray for themselves, that they might not be led into sin, by any temptation which should come upon them; "he saith unto them Pray, that ye enter not into temptation."

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CHAPTER XXXIV.—JESUS BETRAYED.

WHEN Jesus had cautioned Peter, James and John, to watch and pray, "he went forward a little, and was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down and prayed"; in the earnestness of His prayer, "he fell on his face on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him." It was not the death upon the cross which Jesus prayed might pass from Him: human martyrs have borne bodily sufferings and cruel deaths, supported by the grace of God; and though in His human nature Christ might well shrink from the pain of Crucifixion, He was ready to give His body for our redemption.

But his sufferings in the garden of Gethsemane, were far beyond what any human being could suffer, or than we can understand. His heavenly Father saw fit to let Him suffer for a time, all the unspeakable agony which the just anger of God can lay upon the impenitent soul. And we may well believe that this agony was a hundred-fold increased for Him, Who was thereby to redeem countless myriads of souls. And might not this terrible agony be increased, by the foreknowledge that, in spite of His tremendous sacrifice, men would reject Him as a Saviour, and persevere in sin; until by their impenitence, they too would share those horrible agonies which for a time were laid upon Him, that by enduring them, He might save all men from so terrible a condition? When we thus consider of what nature Christ's sufferings in the garden of Gethsemane were, we can fully understand the prayer, that such an hour might pass from Him. But mark His inconceivable love, as shown in the words, "if it were possible"; that is, if man's redemption could possibly be secured without his passing through such dreadful agony; if that were *not* possible, then He was willing even to undergo that awful and mysterious extremity of suffering.

Let us not pass on without taking a practical lesson from what has been said: what made our Lord undergo such agony for us? Love. Then, if He so loved us, what should be our feelings towards Him? Love. Truly, love; sincere, heartfelt love; love that will show itself. But how? Hear His own words, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." This let us ever strive to do; and so, through the mediation of Jesus, shall we escape those agonies, which for us He endured in the garden of Gethsemane.

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Jesus prostrate on the ground, prayed in the agony of His soul, and said, "Abba, Father—O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: all things are possible unto thee: if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine be done." All through this dreadful scene of agony, our blessed Lord sets us an example of perfect submission to His Father's Will, however much that Will may be contrary to our wishes and desires: this example we should do well to follow, in every time of trouble. We may pray, that God will, if He sees fit, remove from us the affliction or sorrow which we feel or fear; but, at the same time, our hearts must be perfectly submissive to His Will, and willing to continue to bear the suffering, should He not see fit to take it away from us. In this spirit our Lord in His human nature prayed to God; but though God saw fit to let Him for a time suffer all the agony which sin brings on man, He did vouchsafe to send Him some comfort, in this bitter time of trial; for "there appeared an angel unto Him from heaven, strengthening him," to complete His work.

"And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. And when he rose up from prayer, he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them sleeping from sorrow."

Had they obeyed the words of their Lord, to watch and pray, their sorrow would not at such a time have made them sleep. But they had failed to do this; and Satan, who *is* ever watchful, had doubtless taken advantage of this, and tempted them to sit thinking sorrowfully of all that was coming upon their beloved Master, instead of obeying His command, to watch and pray. Overcome with such sad thoughts, they fell into a sort of stupor or heavy sleep, and were thus found by Jesus when He returned to them. He awoke them, and "said unto them, Why sleep ye? Simon, sleepest thou? What, could ye not watch with me one hour?" Peter had but lately declared his readiness to do some great thing, to give up his life for Jesus; and now he fails in doing a little thing, merely praying for one hour. This is another proof of man's weakness, and of the danger of

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self-confidence. Again our Lord repeated the needful warning, "Watch ye, rise and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak." Our Lord, who knew the weakness of man's nature, was thus merciful to the failing of His disciples: but let us remember, that the more we are convinced of the weakness of the flesh, and how it hinders the spirit, the more earnestly must we strive to overcome it, and be led by the spirit only.

"And Jesus went away again the second time, and prayed, and spake the same words, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me except I drink it, thy will be done. And when he returned, he found them asleep again (for their eyes were heavy), neither wist they what to answer him. And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words."

"Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest; it is enough, the hour is come: behold the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners."

By this Jesus meant, that they had lost the opportunity of watching with Him; they could no longer show any kindness by praying for Him: He would no longer ask them to do this, for the time was come, when He was to be given up to His enemies. Jesus did not mean that the disciples were actually to lie still and sleep; for He added immediately, "Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand. And immediately, while he yet spake, Judas, one of the twelve, having received a band of men and officers from the Chief Priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns, and torches, and weapons." Upon reading this passage, if we think at all, it must appear strange that as the moon was at the full, it should have been necessary to take lanterns and torches, as the light of the full moon in those countries, is far too bright to need any other. But travellers tell us, that in fact the light of the full moon only made the garden of Gethsemane *darker*, for it is situated on the slope of the Mount of Olives, away from the moon; that is, the moon at the time of the Passover rises behind the Mount of Olives, and thus casts the shadow of the mountain upon the garden of Gethsemane; so that whilst all surrounding parts were lighted up, there was complete darkness amongst the trees in the garden of Gethsemane. Judas, well knowing this, had been careful to procure lanterns and torches, to render the execution of his purpose easy; and now, leading the way, he cometh, "and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the Chief Priests, and the Scribes, and the elders of the people. Now he that betrayed Him had given them a token," whereby the servants of the High Priests might surely know which was Jesus. Judas had told them, "Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; take him, hold him fast, and lead him away safely." A kiss was in those times a common form of salutation; and a sign or token of respect and regard: Judas Iscariot now made use of it for a very different purpose.

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"And as soon as he was come," with his band, into the garden, "he went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him. And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; and kissed him. And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" Jesus did not ask this question because He needed to be told; but in order to give Judas another warning against the sin he was about to commit.

The officers did not immediately lay hold upon Jesus; we can well believe that His calm and dignified behaviour, and His question to Judas, struck them with awe.

But Jesus, knowing all things that should come upon Him, now showed his readiness to do his Father's Will: for "he went forth and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he." As soon then as He had said unto them I am He they went backward, and fell to the ground: whether in fear or out of respect, we are not told; but in any case their behaviour made it clear that the Saviour's sacrifice was a voluntary act; for He could certainly, even as a man, have escaped. "Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way." Even at such a moment, Jesus took care for His disciples, that they might not suffer with Him: "that the saying might be fulfilled which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me I have lost none."

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By this time, the officers seem to have recovered from their surprise and alarm: "Then came they and laid hands on Jesus, and took him." The disciples now seem to have thought that it was time for them to use the two swords, which they had brought for the deliverance of their Master. "And behold one of them which were with Jesus, Simon Peter, having a sword, stretched out his hand and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the High Priest's and smote off his ear; the servant's name was Malchus." "And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far." These words seem to have been addressed to the Roman soldiers, who would naturally be made very angry by such an occurrence taking place; therefore he asked for their forbearance; though he at once removed the cause of complaint—"for he touched the ear of the wounded man, and healed him."

CHAPTER XXXV.—JESUS TAKEN BEFORE ANNAS AND CAIAPHAS.

AFTER He had healed Malchus, Jesus said unto 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?" Here Jesus plainly declares that He *gave* Himself to fulfil the Scriptures, which declared, that in no other way could man be redeemed from the curse of the Law. His sufferings and death were the means appointed by the Father for the redemption of man; but His sufferings and death were voluntary—no man could *take* His life unless He chose to give it. He *could* have saved Himself, but then His work would have been unfinished, and mankind for ever lost. Therefore was He willing to drink the cup which His father had given Him. "In that same hour Jesus answered and said unto the Chief Priests and captains of the temple, and to the multitudes, and to the elders, which were come to him, Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me: ye stretched forth no hands against me: but the Scriptures must be fulfilled; this is your hour and the power of darkness."

Here, again, Jesus showed that those who came against Him, could only succeed because the time was now come, when they were allowed to execute their wicked purposes, "that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled."

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Jesus Christ had now given Himself into the hands of His enemies: the disciples seeing this, and being perhaps afraid of sharing His fate, did the very thing they had lately thought impossible when their Lord had warned them of it. "Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled." "Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him, and led him away to Annas first; for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, which was the High Priest that same year."

It has already been said that the Romans had made Caiaphas High Priest instead of Annas. Annas had filled that office for eleven years, and ought to have continued in it as long as he lived: but the Romans, who had no regard to the Jewish Law, had made this change.

The Jews, however, had a great respect for Annas as their rightful High Priest; and in spite of the Romans they still considered and treated him as such; and therefore, in the first place, they took Jesus before him, that he might advise them as to what was next to be done.

As they were on their way, leading their prisoner, "there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body": this young man felt sufficient interest in Jesus to follow Him; "but when," for some reason which we are not told, "the young men" who guarded the Lord, "laid hold on him," he gave a further proof of the fear which now prevailed amongst all the disciples and followers of Jesus; for "he left the linen cloth" upon which they had laid hold, "in their hands," and so escaping, "fled from them naked."

This young man seems to have been clothed in the manner common to the poorer sort of people in those days. Even in later times travellers tell us, that in some places the Arabs only wear a large blanket or sheet, wrapped round them in a peculiar manner; and that the same thing is done in some parts of Palestine also. Annas, it would seem, sent Jesus at once to Caiaphas; no doubt fear of the Romans who had unlawfully deprived him of his dignity, prevented his exercising that authority, which by the law of God still belonged to him, and to him only: so he sent Jesus away at once. "Then they took him, and led him away to Caiaphas the High Priest. (Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people)." Jesus was then brought into the High Priest's house, where were assembled with him all the Chief Priests and Scribes; evidently waiting for the return of those whom they had sent out, under the guidance of Judas Iscariot, to take Jesus. Mean time, Peter and John had so far recovered themselves, as to venture to follow Jesus at a distance: for they really loved their Master, and were anxious to learn what would become of Him. "And Simon Peter followed Jesus afar off, unto the High Priest's palace, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the High Priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the High Priest." "That disciple" here spoken of, was John, who himself gives us the account of the matter. He was in some way known to Caiaphas, and was therefore allowed to go into the palace. "But Peter stood at the door without." John, who had been admitted into the High Priest's palace, was not one of those selfish people who care only for their own comfort: he thought of Peter standing outside, and went out and spake unto the young woman, who, according to the custom of the Hebrews, kept the door or acted as porter; and in consequence she "brought in Peter," who joined the servants and attendants: "and when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them, and warmed himself at the fire; and sat with the servants to see the end."

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Though the month Abib, which answers to our April, is very much warmer in Palestine than it is here, still the nights are often very cold; and a gentleman who travelled in Galilee tells us, that even in the month of May, an Arab chief who entertained him, had a fire lighted in a ruined building for them to sit by, because it was cold.

The fire now kindled by the attendants, though in the same hall, was no doubt at some distance from that part where Jesus was standing before the High Priest; whilst John, being known to Caiaphas, was probably standing much nearer to his beloved Master.

"The High Priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine. Jesus answered him, 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"; that is, He had said nothing in secret contrary to what He had taught in public, and therefore instead of now answering such questions, Jesus referred Caiaphas to those who, having heard Him, were able to bear witness as to what He had

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said. "Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said. When he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand (or with a rod which he held in his hand), saying, Answerest thou the High Priest so?" Jesus quietly rebuked this man, showing that if he had said or done what was wrong, the officer should have accused Him of it in a proper way, and not have struck Him, contrary to the law, which forbids any one to be treated as guilty until proved to be so. "Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?"

The Jews knew very well that they could not ask the Romans to put Jesus to death, unless they could find some fault to lay to His charge: they must get persons to witness or declare, that He had done things for which He deserved to die; and they well knew that no one could with truth do this. Therefore, "the Chief Priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus to put him to death; but found none" to answer their purpose: "yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none," whose testimony would be sufficient: "for many bear false witness against him, but their witness agreed not together." No man could be put to death unless two witnesses gave testimony as to his guilt: if witnesses speak the truth, their testimony must be the same: but naturally when witnesses tell lies, one will say one thing and one another, and therefore the words of these men who spake against Jesus, "agreed not together."

The sin of the Chief Priests and elders was very great; they *sought* for false witnesses: unhappily, there never is any difficulty in finding men who care so little for what is right, that for a bribe or reward they are ready to tell lies; but if liars are the children of the Devil, what must those be who *encourage* them, and almost force them to speak untruly? "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour," is one of the commandments: let us be very careful not to break this commandment, even unintentionally. We may not *mean* to say what is *not* true, and we may not *mean* to make mischief; but we shall certainly do both, unless we are very careful always to repeat *exactly* what we see or hear, *adding* nothing, and *leaving out nothing*. Even the manner or tone of voice in which anything is said or done, makes a difference. For instance, things may be done or said in fun, and there may be no harm in them; but if you repeat them, as if they were done or said in earnest, they may appear very wrong; and so you will cause people to be blamed, and thought ill of, when they do not deserve it.

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There is, perhaps, no commandment which we all break more frequently than the ninth—not wilfully; few, it is to be hoped, would act so wickedly as to do that; but from carelessness: by chattering about other peoples' concerns; repeating things when we are not *sure* they are true; telling tales; and so on. Our God is a God of truth: we are told that He loves truth in the inward parts, that is, in the heart; and therefore if we love Him, we shall always speak the truth from the heart, and be very careful to tell the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, even in the smallest matters. The perfect truth that God requires, forbids deceit of all kinds. We may deceive others by our actions, and even by our silence; but let us ever remember, that all deception is in the eyes of God as the sin of lying, that sin which is an abomination to the Lord.

CHAPTER XXXVI.—JESUS CONDEMNED BY CAIAPHAS.

"At the last came two false witnesses." They did not mean to speak the truth; all that they wished was to please the Priests, who, far from desiring them to speak truly, only wanted something to be said, which would give them an excuse for having Jesus put to death. The two witnesses who now came before them, furnished them with the pretence they sought for: these men "bare false witness against him, saying, We heard him say, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days. I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands."

Now this is an instance of bearing false witness, by misrepresenting the words spoken, and twisting their meaning to something which they were never intended to express. We have read that Jesus did say in reference to His own body, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews did not understand what He meant; but that did not justify these witnesses in what they now said, for Jesus had *not* said, "I *will* DESTROY this temple," nor had He said one word of "*building*." These witnesses meant to make it appear, that He had said that He would destroy the temple so dear to the Jews, and that in three days He would *build* another. "But neither so did their witness agree together." The Priests and elders were, however, too anxious to condemn Jesus, to be particular about that; for to speak disrespectfully of the temple was looked upon as blasphemy, and blasphemy was a crime to be punished with death. Blasphemy is really speaking disrespectfully of the Majesty and Power of the Almighty—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and ascribing to man that power which belongs to God alone.

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After these two false witnesses had spoken, "the High Priest arose, and stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee?"

Our Lord would make no reply to charges which even His enemies must have known to be false; and therefore He "held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the High Priest asked him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God."

To "adjure" was to call upon a person to speak the truth in the Name of God. Any one so *adjured* was looked upon as bound by the most solemn oath to speak the whole truth. When, therefore, the High Priest called upon Jesus in this solemn manner to say whether He really was the promised Messiah, the Son of God, our Lord kept silence no longer; but in an equally solemn manner answered the question, adding words spoken by the prophet Daniel—words always understood by the Jews to be a prophecy respecting the Messiah: therefore, by applying this prophecy to Himself, Jesus declared most plainly that He was indeed the Messiah. In His answer to the High Priest, as to whether He was the Christ, the Son of the Blessed God Almighty, Jesus used the Jewish form of saying that what had been stated was true. "Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said"; and then He added, "I am: 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."

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"Then the High Priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy." The High Priest had asked his solemn question without any intention of believing the answer: he must have felt sure what the answer would be, and therefore he had asked the question, that he might be able to accuse Jesus of claiming for Himself, a man, the honour due to God alone. To show his grief and horror at such a dreadful sin as blasphemy, he, according to the Jewish custom, rent his robe.

Then appealing to those around him, Caiaphas asked, "What further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye?"

There could be no doubt of the answer to such questions. The Priests, and Scribes, and elders were bent upon destroying their victim; and gladly seizing the opportunity now given them by the High Priest, "They answered and said, He is guilty of death,"—that is, He is guilty of a crime which the Law of Moses orders to be punished with death. "And they all condemned him to be guilty of death."

The Priests and elders had now accomplished their work, as far as they were concerned; but its final execution did not rest with them. Judæa was a Roman province, and as such the Jews could put no man to death without the permission of the Roman governor, who was at that time Pontius Pilate. To obtain Pilate's consent was the next step to be taken; and that the Jews determined to set about as soon as possible in the morning. It was now about midnight of the Thursday—the day on which Jesus had eaten the last Supper with His disciples. Some six or seven hours must pass before Jesus could be taken before Pilate, and this time the Jews occupied in ill using and mocking our innocent and holy Lord.

The Priests and elders having passed sentence upon Jesus, now left Him in the hands of the attendants and soldiers, who, as we have said, passed the rest of the night in ill treating Him. "And the men that held Jesus mocked him and smote him: and some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee? and the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands."

To spit upon a person, was the greatest affront and indignity that could be offered by one man to another: it signified the utmost scorn and contempt. Then, in mockery of our blessed Lord's claim to be the Messiah, the Son of God, He was blindfolded, and then desired to show His divine power, by telling the names of those who struck Him on the face. It is most painful to think of Jesus being so treated: for our sakes He bore meekly and patiently this savage treatment. He might with one word have put an end to it, and struck dead those who thus insulted Him. But these indignities were a part of the cup appointed for Him by the Father, and this cup He was ready to drink to the last drop, for the redemption of man. Should we not love the Lord in heart and in deed, for all that He has done and suffered for us?

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"And many other things blasphemously spake they against him." Thus passed the hours of this terrible night.

All this time Peter sat in some part of the Palace; "and there cometh one of the maids of the High Priest, the damsel that kept the door, unto Peter: and when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked earnestly upon him," as if trying to remember where she had seen him before. Then she said to those around, "This man was also with him"; and, referring to Peter himself to confirm her statement, she asked, "Art not thou also one of this man's disciples?" We may well believe that Peter was horrified at the treatment he had seen inflicted upon his Master; and most probably, in spite of all Jesus had said, Peter was disappointed at His not taking some signal measures to check His persecutors. This for a time weakened his faith, and made him fearful that if he confessed himself to be a disciple, he might bring upon himself similar treatment, to that which Jesus was silently and calmly undergoing. In his perplexity and fear, therefore, he committed a fearful sin; for in answer to the damsel's question, "Art not thou also one of this man's disciples?" "he saith, I am not." But the damsel was not convinced, and presently said, "And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth, of Galilee." One departure from truth is sure to lead to another: and now Peter even pretends not to understand what she can possibly mean by charging him with being one of Christ's disciples: thus "he denied him before them all, saying, Woman, I know him not. I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest."

Perhaps Peter now hoped that he had silenced his accusers, and should be left in peace; but he was shortly undeceived. "The servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples? He denied it, and said, I am not. One of the servants of the High Priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off," seems,

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however, to have recognized Peter as the person who did this act, and saith, "Did not I see thee in the garden with him?" What had been denied before was not likely to be confessed now. "Peter then denied again; and he went out into the porch; and immediately the cock crew."

These three denials,—first, to the damsel; secondly, to the servants and officers; and thirdly, to the kinsman of Malchus,—which are related in the different Gospels, all took place much at the same time, and are therefore to be looked upon as one act: thus we see how every word spoken by Jesus on the subject of Peter's denial came true. He said that before it was time for the cock to crow at all, Peter would have denied Him three times; and this he had done, and the warning voice of the cock had been heard for the first time.

If we resist the Devil, he will flee from us: if we give way to one temptation, we shall be more likely to fall again: so it was with Peter. "When he was gone out into the porch, after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not. And another maid saw him, and began to say to them that stood by, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth. This is one of them." Peter now added to his sin, "for he denied with an oath, I do not know the man,"—thus calling upon God as a witness to the truth of what he was saying. This was Peter's second denial of his Lord and Master.

About an hour afterwards, when it was nearly three o'clock in the morning, Peter seems to have been again in the hall, where the soldiers were waiting with Jesus, until it should be time for them to take Him before Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor. Here the third denial took place.

Before we go further, some little explanation is necessary. You know that in different countries, as in France, Spain, China, &c., the people speak different languages; so that without learning one another's language, the natives of different countries cannot talk to each other. But even in different parts of the same country, the people often pronounce their words in such a different manner as to make it almost a different language, so that the "dialect," or manner of speaking, in one province, would be hardly understood in another province of the same country. Even in England we have something of the same kind; and if you were to hear the people of Yorkshire or of Somersetshire talking to each other, you would not understand much of their conversation.

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CHAPTER XXXVII.—PETER'S THIRD DENIAL.

WHEN Peter had returned into the hall where Jesus still was, another man "confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was him: for he is a Galilean." The Jews, who were natives of Galilee, used a different dialect to that of the inhabitants of Judæa; and this man, having heard Peter speak, at once perceived that he was a Galilean, and doubtless the follower of Jesus. But Peter at once said, "Man, I am not": he would not even now allow that he was a Galilean; but the fact was too plain; for his manner of speaking betrayed or showed that he was certainly a native of Galilee. They that stood by could not therefore be deceived, and said again to Peter, "Surely thou also art one of them, for thou art a Galilean: and thy speech agreeth thereto, for thy speech bewrayeth (or betrayeth) thee." Peter now went still further in his denial, and added to his sin; for getting frightened and angry, he allowed himself to use language sinful in itself. "Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man: I know not this man of whom ye speak. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew; the second time the cock crew. And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter."

What a look must that have been! a look of reproach for Peter's sin; of grief for his sad fall mixed with love for His weak and erring follower. Such as it was, it went straight to Peter's heart; bringing all things to his memory, and making him feel deeply the sin he had committed against One, whom he did truly love; though under temptation, he had acted very contrary to what that love demanded from him. But the Saviour's look awakened all Peter's better feelings: "And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how that he had said unto him, Before the cock crow thou shalt deny me thrice. Before the cock crow twice thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept; he went out and wept bitterly."

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Peter's tears were tears of true repentance: we know this, because in future we find him no longer confident in himself, and boasting of his love, but humble, and looking to God for strength; whilst he devoted his life to doing his Master's work, never letting the fear of man prevent his declaring the truth, as it is in Jesus.

When we blame Peter for denying the Lord, let us remember that he sinned, *because* he trusted too much in himself, and did not watch and pray as he ought to have done. This is a warning to us, not to do as he did. But let us also remember, that having sinned, he repented truly; and showed his repentance, by his changed conduct during the rest of his life. Here is an example for us to follow.

This terrible night was over at last. "And straightway in the morning, as soon as it was day" (about four o'clock in the morning of Friday), the Chief Priests seem to have called the whole Council of the Sanhedrim together, to consult what was next to be done to secure their object: "they took counsel against Jesus to put him to death. And they led him into their council, saying, Art thou the Christ? tell us." Jesus had already answered this question before Caiaphas, and

knowing their motive in repeating it, "he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe. And if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go." Jesus would not, however, allow them to suppose that He denied being the Messiah: and He therefore repeated the words, which they chose to call blasphemy, saying, "Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God. Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am. And they said, What need we any further witnesses? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth."

"Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the Chief Priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood." Some feelings of sorrow and remorse for having given up an innocent man to be put to death, now led Judas to bring back the "reward of iniquity," and at once to confess his own sin, and bear witness to the innocence of Jesus. Perhaps he had a hope of thus saving Jesus from the fate which awaited Him: if so, Judas soon learnt, what many have learnt before and since, that it is easy to do wrong, but by no means easy to undo the wrong when done. Many of us, in a moment of passion or self-will, commit acts which embitter our whole future lives. Let the young beware, lest they bring upon themselves such life-long misery; they may truly repent and mourn, and God, for Jesu's sake, may forgive the sin; but the act itself, and its bitter consequences, can never be undone.

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The Priests and elders cared not whether Jesus was innocent or guilty, so as they could treat Him as if He *were* guilty. His holy life, His heavenly teaching, showed them their own sinfulness, and therefore it was *because* He was good, that they sought to destroy Him. Neither did they care for Judas's sufferings: they had gladly profited by his sin, and given him the reward agreed upon: now that they had got from him all that they wanted, they cared not what became of the miserable sinner. And this is often the case amongst men, who to gain something they want, persuade others to do wrong. Those who have sinned to help them, may afterwards be filled with remorse and misery; but they will meet with neither help nor pity from those who led them into sin. Like the Priests, they will say, What is that to us?

In vain did Judas look for pity from his partners in guilt; the unfeeling answer of the Priests was, "What is that to us? see thou to that." Had Judas repented truly, he would, like Peter, have gone out and wept bitterly, and sought forgiveness of his Lord; but, unable to bear the feeling of remorse which lay heavy upon his heart, he committed a crime for which there is no repentance: "he departed, and went and hanged himself, and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out." What may be the exact meaning of this passage, it is difficult to say; but it is certain that Judas perished in some remarkable and dreadful manner.

After Judas had departed from the Council, leaving the money behind, "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."

The Jews considered it unlawful to put into the treasury of the temple, any money which had been got by taking away life. The executioners, whose duty it was to put criminals to death, were not allowed to make any offering to the treasury, because the money that they gained was looked upon as the price of blood. These Priests, who were ready to break a positive commandment by putting an innocent person to death, would not break the Law in a small matter.

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The fact is, that by this time the religion of the Jews had become a mere form: they made a great fuss about observing ceremonies and customs, which required no self-denial; but they did not care to obey the Will of God, when it interfered with their own wishes and inclinations. They had had no scruple in buying the life of an innocent man, but they would not put the price of his blood into the treasury. So "they took counsel," or consulted together, as to what should be done with the silver pieces, "and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in." By "strangers" was probably meant Jews, who came from distant parts of the country, or from some of the nations through which Jews were scattered: these people had, of course, no burial-place of their own in Jerusalem, and therefore this field was bought, in order that any foreign Jews, who died in the city, might be buried there.

The potter's field lay to the S.E. of Jerusalem, on the other side of the brook Gihon. From this time, this field was called "Aceldama," a Hebrew word, meaning the Field of Blood: now the Christians in those parts call it "the holy field."

This buying of the field, was foretold 457 years before, in the time of Ezra. "Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me."

This prophecy is not, however, to be found in the book which we call by the name of Jeremiah, but in that of Zechariah (xi.), another of the prophets. The Jews had an old custom of dividing the Scriptures of the Old Testament into three parts. The First Part, called "the Law," contained the books of Moses and those of Kings and Chronicles: the Psalms formed the Second Part: and the Third Part contained the writings of the prophets. As this Third Part began with the prophecies of Jeremiah, the whole division was often called by his name; and thus any words spoken by another prophet, might be said to be in Jeremy or Jeremiah.

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The Priests and the whole Council of the Sanhedrim had condemned Jesus to death, for what they called blasphemy; and the next step was to get Pilate's permission to execute the sentence.

"And the whole multitude of them arose, and bound Jesus, and when they had bound him, they led him away from Caiaphas unto the Hall of Judgment, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor: and it was early," probably about five o'clock in the morning. "And they themselves went not into the Judgment Hall lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the Passover."

These Jews were *preparing* to eat the Passover, in the evening of that day, Friday; but Jesus and His disciples had eaten it the evening *before*; that is, on Thursday. This difference needs some explanation. We divide our year into 12 months, some of 30 days, and some of 31, whilst, as a general rule, February has only 28. The earth on which we live goes round the sun in 365 days and 6 hours, all but a few minutes. By "the day" we mean 24 hours, or what we call a day and a night. Our 12 months, therefore, contain the 365 days; but the extra hours are unaccounted for. Now in four years the 6 extra hours amount to 24—another day: and therefore every fourth year February has an additional day to provide for them. The year in which February has 29 days is called "Leap Year," because we seem to leap over a day. For instance, suppose Christmas Day to be on Saturday one year, it would naturally fall on Sunday the next year: but if it were Leap Year, it would leap over Sunday and fall upon Monday instead. Our year is called a Solar Year, because it is regulated by the course of the earth round the sun, and *Sol* is the Latin word for the Sun.

The Jews, on the contrary, divided their year according to the course of the Moon, which goes round the Earth in something more than thirty days. Theirs was a Lunar Year, because *Luna* is Latin for the moon.

The twelve months amongst the Jews had not the same fixed number of days every year, because they reckoned the month to begin when the new moon first appeared. This practice often led to mistakes, so that what ought to have been the 14th day of any month was frequently called the 15th, or the 13th. Something of this kind seems to have taken place at this time: so that whilst Jesus and His disciples ate the Passover on the evening of the right day, the 14th of Nisan or Abib (answering to the end of March with us), many of the Jews celebrated the feast on the next day, calling that the 14th, though it was, in reality, the 15th.

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CHAPTER XXXVIII.—JESUS SENT BY PILATE TO HEROD.

WHATEVER might be the cause, it is plain that the Priests and elders were preparing to keep the Passover, on the evening *after* that on which Jesus had eaten it with His disciples: and that lest they should be defiled and rendered unclean according to the Law, they would not enter the Judgment Hall, which was full of Roman soldiers. Any Jew who (in one of the many ways) became unclean, could not partake of the Feast of the Passover: and it was even held, that upon occasions of such peculiar holiness, mixing with the Gentiles or heathens, made a Jew unclean; therefore, to avoid all risk, they went not in. They did not consider that all the laws about purity and uncleanness, were only meant to show the necessity of being pure and holy in thought, word, and deed; and that their persecution of an innocent being, rendered them far more unclean in the sight of God, than any ceremonial defilement could possibly do. But it was ever so; they paid more attention to outward forms than to real holiness and goodness. Let us beware never to fall into the like fatal sin.

As the Jews would not go into the Judgment Hall, "Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man?" Instead of naming any crime of which their prisoner had been guilty, the Jews merely answered, "If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee. Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law." This was not at all what the Jews wanted, and they "therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death."

Some writers think that the Jews were *not* deprived of the power of putting to death criminals found guilty according to their law; but that at the time of this holy feast, it was *not lawful* for them to put any man to death. In any case, in all this we see the hand of God; "that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die."

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"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."

In answer to Pilate's desire to know the crime of which they accused Jesus, the Jews said not one word about blasphemy, for which alone the Sanhedrim had condemned Him to be deserving of death: they knew very well that Pilate would take no notice of such a charge as that, for he, being a heathen, would care for none of these things; and therefore, by a very false representation of what Jesus *had* said, they now tried to make Pilate believe that Jesus claimed to be king of Judæa; and that He endeavoured to pervert or turn the nation from paying any obedience to the Emperor of Rome. Such a charge as this could not be disregarded by a Roman governor; for the Romans would not tolerate anything like revolt or sedition in their conquered provinces. "Then Pilate entered into the Judgment Hall again, and called Jesus, and Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the king of the Jews? Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?" The meaning of this question was, Dost thou ask this question of thyself, from a real wish to know whether I am the Messiah so long expected by the Jews? or have others laid it to my charge as a crime, that I

have declared myself to be that Christ their king? "Pilate answered, Am I a Jew?" meaning that as he was not a Jew, he was not likely to know or care whether Jesus was the Messiah or not; and then he called upon Jesus to tell him for what crime He had been delivered up by His own countrymen, who had thus plainly shown that they did not believe Him to be their Messiah. "Thine own nation and the Chief Priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?" Jesus in his answer, showed Pilate, that, declaring Himself to be a king, could be no crime against the Roman Emperor, as He neither claimed nor sought for power upon earth: if He had done so, His followers would have fought for Him. "Jesus answered, 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?" that is, dost thou really mean that thou art a king? "Jesus answered, and said unto him, 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."

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Jesus here states again the nature of His kingdom. It was founded only upon truth. His conquests were to be only over falsehood and sin. He came into the world on purpose by His words to bring men to believe all that God had said, and to do His Will in all things; such were to be His subjects. He came to win the *hearts* of men, and rule and govern them. Such a kingdom could in no way interfere with the dominion of Cæsar, or any other earthly sovereign. On the contrary, those whose hearts are ruled by Christ, will be the most obedient subjects to the powers that be.

Pilate was evidently convinced by the words of Jesus, that He could in no way be found guilty of stirring up the people to disobey Cæsar, but before he told the Jews this, he put to our Lord the question, "What is truth?" that is, what dost thou mean by that truth, which will make every one hear Thy words. Had Pilate asked this important question with a sincere desire to *know* the truth, it would have been a happy day for him; for the truth which Jesus would have taught him, is the only thing to give real happiness in life or death. But Pilate did not even wait for an answer, for when "he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and saith unto the Chief Priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man; I find in him no fault at all." Thus did the Roman governor, a heathen, bear witness to the blamelessness of our blessed Lord; but the Jews, determined on the death of their victim, would by no means accept such a sentence. It is plain from all that follows, that though Jesus remained in the Hall, He was so placed as to be able to hear all that was said outside.

"And the Chief Priests accused him of many things: but when he was accused of the Chief Priests and elders, he answered nothing. Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? And he answered him to never a word. And Pilate asked him again, saying, Answerest thou nothing? Behold how many things they witness against thee. But Jesus yet answered nothing: insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly."

Men are in general eager enough to say all they can in their own defence, especially when conscious of their innocence: well, therefore, might Pilate be astonished at the calm and dignified conduct of one accused of so many crimes; and whom even he held to be guiltless. But our Lord's behaviour was thoroughly consistent with His character, and with His work. When He had an opportunity of declaring the great truth that he was the Son of God, the Messiah, then He spake boldly before the Priests and the Council, as well as to Pilate: but now, when the Jews were saying all manner of evil falsely against Him, He treated their charges with the silent contempt they deserved. But this seems to have increased the rage of His accusers, "and they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place."

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It was true that Jesus had taught throughout the whole land of Judæa: but the Jews wished to make Pilate believe that his object was to stir up the people to rebellion against Cæsar, and other crimes: whereas all He did was to stir up the people to believe in Him as the Messiah, and to turn to God with all their hearts, and keep His commandments. Pilate was greatly perplexed what to do; he could not but see that Jesus was innocent, and he had not strength of mind to do his duty conscientiously, without any fear of what man could do unto him: he was, therefore, too glad of an opportunity of throwing the responsibility of passing sentence upon another; and when he heard the Jews thus speaking of Galilee, "he asked whether the man were a Galilean." In Galilee our Lord had dwelt from childhood, and as a resident in that province, He was subject to the authority of Herod Antipas, appointed by the Romans to be king of Galilee. "And as soon as Pilate knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time," in order to keep the Passover Feast. Herod being acquainted with the Jewish religion and customs, would be better able to judge between Jesus and His accusers; and thus his opinion might help Pilate in deciding upon the case.

Herod Antipas (who had caused John the Baptist to be beheaded) was, we are told, exceeding glad to see Jesus: he had long been desirous to see One, of whom he had heard many things; "and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him."

It does not seem that Herod wished to see Jesus from any good motive, or from any desire to *learn* of Him, but simply out of curiosity: he was, therefore, disappointed. Jesus worked no miracle, neither would He give any account of what He had done and taught. Herod "questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing. And the Chief Priests and Scribes stood and vehemently accused him," as they had done before Pilate. Herod was probably provoked by our Lord's silence: at any rate, he allowed Him to be ill treated, and himself joined in showing

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contempt for His claims to be a king: for in ridicule, "Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate."

CHAPTER XXXIX.—JESUS CONDEMNED.

ST. LUKE tells us, that "the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves." "Enmity" means just the contrary to friendship: Pilate and Herod had quarrelled, as the different governors throughout the Roman provinces were very apt to do. The Bible does not tell us the cause of this enmity; but from other histories we learn, that some time before this, Pilate had dedicated some shields of gold to the Emperor Tiberius, and placed them in the palace called Herodium, built by Herod the Great. The Jews looked upon this as an insult to their religion, and with Herod's permission, sent messengers to Rome, to petition the Emperor to order these shields to be removed. This caused a quarrel between Herod and Pilate: but when the latter, not wishing to help the Jews in condemning Jesus, sent Him to Herod, the king, considering this as an acknowledgment of his authority, was pleased; and willing again to become friends with the Roman governor.

The Herodium was a very large palace, consisting of two separate buildings, one called Cæsareum and the other Agrippeum: it stood near the temple. It is probable that Pontius Pilate inhabited one of the buildings, and Herod the other, so that Jesus was not long gone. Pilate, seeing that Herod had pronounced no sentence against Jesus, was still more unwilling that He should die: he was, however, too much afraid of the people to act as a just Judge should have done, and set the prisoner at liberty; so he thought that, if he offered to punish Him in some way, he might satisfy the Jews, and yet save the life of his innocent prisoner: to propose to punish Him at all was unjust; but even this expedient availed nothing, as we shall see. Herod having sent Jesus back, it was necessary that Pilate should take some further steps. "And Pilate, when he had called together the Chief Priests and the rulers and the people, said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him. No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him. I will therefore chastise him, and release him."

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There was a custom amongst the Jews at this time, that at the Feast of the Passover the Jews might claim any one of the criminals then under sentence of death for their crimes. Whoever the Jews chose was to be set at liberty: this custom appears to have been introduced by some Roman governor of Judæa, in order to gain favour with the Jews; who were thus allowed to choose one amongst the prisoners to be pardoned.

"Now at that feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would; and they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas, which lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection. And the multitude, crying aloud, began to desire Pilate to do as he had ever done unto them. (For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.)"

"Therefore, when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the Passover: Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ? Will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews? For he knew that the Chief Priests had delivered him for envy."

The Roman governor saw truly that it was to gratify private passions alone, that the Chief Priests had brought Jesus before him; and, hoping that the people might be more just, he offered them a choice between Jesus and one of the greatest criminals then in prison: a man who had committed the very crime, which the Priests pretended that Christ was trying to stir up the people to commit; who, in the prosecution of his designs, had committed the murder; and who was also a robber: his evil deeds had been many; and many must have suffered from his wickedness and violence. Well might Pilate hope, that the contrast between such a man and Jesus, Whose whole life had been spent in going about doing good, would have inclined the people to demand His liberty, and leave Barabbas to the fate he had so justly deserved. But no; "the Chief Priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas and destroy Jesus. And they cried out all at once saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas."

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One reason why Pilate strove anxiously to release Jesus was, that during the night his own wife had some remarkable dreams concerning our Lord: what they were, we are not told; but they had convinced her that He was an innocent and righteous man, and that it would be a sin to allow any harm to befall Him. Therefore, "when Pilate was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man": nothing, that is, in the way of punishing or harming Him; "for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him."

"Pilate the governor therefore, willing to release Jesus, answered and spake again to them, and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas. Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do with Jesus which is called Christ? unto him whom ye call King of the Jews? And they cried out again, Crucify him; they all say unto him,

Crucify him, Crucify him, Let him be crucified." Pilate made another effort to save Jesus, by reminding the people of His innocence; and in answer to their savage cry, "Crucify him, Crucify him," he "said unto them the third time, Why? what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him and let him go. And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him. And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the Chief Priests prevailed." Pilate could stand out no longer; the people showed symptoms of breaking out into a riot, which at that moment would have been a serious matter; as there were an unusual number of Jews assembled for the Passover, and Pilate had not soldiers enough to keep order, if the people should make a disturbance. If anything like a riot had occurred, the Emperor Tiberius would probably have considered Pilate to blame; and would certainly have deprived him of his office, and most likely of his life also. Pilate had not that fear of God, which admits no fear of man; neither was his wish to save Jesus strong enough to make him risk his life to deliver Him. As a heathen, the life of one man would seem to him of little consequence; but whilst he gave way to the clamours of the Jews, he performed a symbolical action, whereby he testified that Jesus was innocent, and that he, Pilate, did not consent to His death, though forced to allow it. For "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. Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children." Fearful words in the sense in which they uttered them! meaning, that if Jesus was innocent, they were quite willing that the punishment for putting him to death should rest upon them and upon their children. Little did they foresee how dreadful would be that punishment; and how severely they and their descendants would suffer, in consequence of the crime they were wilfully committing. In one sense, we may all pray that "His blood may be on us and on our children"; even as the blood of the paschal lamb upon the door-posts turned aside the visit of the destroying angel.

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In regard to Pilate's action on this occasion, we must recollect that it was ordered by the Law of Moses, that if a man were found dead in a field, and it was not known who or what had killed him, the elders of the nearest city should sacrifice a heifer, or young cow, with particular ceremonies: after which they should wash their hands over the slain beast, and declare solemnly before God, that they had had no hand in the death of the man, and that they knew not by what means he had met his death. In imitation of this custom, Pilate now washed his hands; meaning thereby to show that, if Jesus were put to death, he was no party to His death. But even in this Pilate was mistaken; for to allow a bad action to be committed, when we can prevent it, is to incur the guilt of it. As governor, Pilate might have refused to allow Jesus to be slain, and it was his duty to do so: had a riot followed, he could have been in no way guilty in the sight of God: but Pilate, being a heathen, did not consider the matter in this light. Do not many Christians, who should know better, act upon the same principles as those which influenced the Roman governor? They know some particular act to be wrong, and yet it seems so expedient, so likely to be useful in some way or other, that they do it. Then, again, they perceive that they ought to do something which may bring trouble upon themselves, or displease some one whose favour they wish to gain, and therefore they leave such action undone.

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"Pilate, willing to content the people," and put an end to the tumult, "gave sentence that it should be as they required. And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired."

CHAPTER XL.—JESUS CONDEMNED BY PILATE.

"THEN Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him." This was a very unnecessary piece of cruelty practised by the Romans; whose custom it was to scourge, or whip with cords, every criminal condemned to death. We must now think of our blessed Lord, with His back all cut and bleeding from the stripes laid upon Him, aching and smarting all over; then we must remember that this was the punishment of *our* sins, which He bore, and that, "with his stripes we are healed." Shall not such thoughts stir us up to show our love for Him, Who, out of His wondrous love for us, bore all these tortures? "And when Pilate had scourged him, he delivered Jesus to their will, to be crucified."

"Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus, and led him away into the common hall, called Prætorium"; where fresh insults and sufferings were inflicted upon the holy Jesus, the Messiah: for "they call together the whole band of soldiers," and in mockery and ridicule for His having styled Himself a king, "they stripped him" of his own clothes, "and put on him a scarlet or purple robe," (for the same word signifies both colours,) and then made a crown or wreath, by twisting together some branches of a prickly plant. "And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand," to represent the sceptre, carried by kings. When the soldiers had thus arrayed our Lord, in ridicule of His claim to be a king, they went a step further, and in derision, "they bowed the knee before him, and worshipped him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews!" Not satisfied with this mockery, "they smote him with their hands. And they spit upon him," to show the greatest possible degree of hatred and contempt; "and took the reed, and smote him on the head"; thus driving the thorns into Him, and so increasing His sufferings. All this He bore for us; and all He asks in return is, that we should take Him for our King, so as to let Him reign in our hearts, and rule our lives. Pilate made another attempt to save the life of Jesus; he probably hoped, that if the people saw Him bleeding and

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suffering, they would feel pity, and be ashamed of so treating a man, declared to be innocent, and known to all as going about doing good. "Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!"

The Priests, however, were determined that nothing should save the life of their victim, and "therefore, when the Chief Priests and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, Crucify him." Pilate finding all his efforts vain, and being still afraid to offend the Jews, "then saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him." As if he had said, If you are determined to crucify Him, do it; but remember it is not my doing, "for I find no fault in him."

"The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God." The Jews now changed their ground of accusation, and simply named the sin of blasphemy, as the cause for which their Law required our Lord's death.

"When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid": the heathen governor had clearly seen that Jesus was no common man: if He were put to death for declaring Himself to be the Son of God, He would probably suffer for saying what was *true*; and though Pilate, as a heathen, had no knowledge of the nature and power of the Lord God Almighty, he was afraid to crucify One, whom he believed to be the Son of God. Hesitating and perplexed, Pilate "went again into the Judgment Hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. Then saith Pilate, 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 meant to tell Pilate, that no earthly Ruler or Governor could have power to put Him to death, unless it had been the Will of God, who dwells in Heaven above, that He should suffer whatever the Jews chose to do to Him. The Jews had cruelly and unjustly persecuted Him, and in spite of His acknowledged innocence, had treated Him as the worst of malefactors: and therefore Jesus told Pilate, that the sin of the Chief Priests and others in insisting upon His death, was far greater than the sin of Pilate in giving way to them, in order to prevent a tumult amongst the people.

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The words spoken by Jesus, His whole conduct and manner, so totally unlike that of a guilty person, convinced Pilate more and more, that He had *not* "spoken *blasphemy*" in declaring Himself to be the Son of God; and "from thenceforth he sought to release him."

To prevent the escape of their innocent victim, the Jews now returned to their original charge of treason and rebellion against the Roman Emperor, "and cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend; whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar." Tiberius, who at that time was Emperor of Rome, was a suspicious and cruel tyrant; and would have punished with death any governor, supposed to have spared the life of a man, who had set himself up to be a king in any of the Roman provinces. Pilate, therefore, did not dare to give the Jews any excuse for thus complaining of him to Tiberius: so "when he heard that saying, (If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend,) he brought Jesus forth," from the Judgment Hall into which the Jews would not enter, "and sat down in the judgment seat, in a place" outside, "that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. And it was the preparation of the Passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your king! But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him! Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your king? The Chief Priests answered, We have no king but Cæsar. Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified."

As St John's account of the hour at which the crucifixion took place appears to differ from that named by the other Evangelists, it may be well to explain why St. John says, "the *sixth* hour," and St. Mark "the *third*."

St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke, speak according to the Jewish mode of computing time. The Jews reckoned the day to begin at one sunset, and end at the next; so that their night came before the day, instead of after, as with us. From sunset, (about 6 o'clock of our time,) they divided the night into four equal portions or watches, of three hours each. The First from 6 o'clock P.M. to 9 o'clock; the Second from 9 P.M. to 12 o'clock, or midnight. The Third watch, called also the First Cock Crowing, ended at what we call 3 o'clock A.M.; and the Fourth and Last, called the Second Cock Crowing, at our 6 o'clock A.M. The next hour after 6 o'clock was called the 1st hour, and so on; the 3rd hour answered, therefore, to our 9 o'clock A.M.: and this was the hour at which St. Mark states that they crucified Jesus. It must be remarked, that the Jews also divided their day into four portions, calling each by the name of the hour at which it began: thus the 3rd hour, being the beginning of a portion, would include the other two hours in that portion. In this manner, the 3rd hour, our 9 o'clock, would include the 4th and 5th hours, or our 10 and 11 o'clock. Then the 6th hour, answering to our 12 o'clock mid-day, would extend to 3 o'clock, the 9th Jewish hour, and so on.

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St. John, on the other hand, reckoned the time according to the Roman and Asiatic mode, still used by us. Thus the day, as spoken of by him, began at midnight; and therefore, his 6th hour was our 6 o'clock in the morning, or 6 o'clock P.M. But the Romans also divided their time into watches of three hours each, speaking of the whole three hours under the name of the hour with which the watch began. Thus the 6th hour, or 6 o'clock A.M., would include all the time up to 9

o'clock, which according to the Romans was the 6th hour, and according to the Jews the 3rd hour.

St. John further says, that it was "*about* the sixth hour when they crucified him"; now *about* may mean a little before, or a little after, the time mentioned; and therefore, we find that all the Apostles mean the same thing; viz., that Jesus was crucified soon after 9 o'clock in the morning.

The following table may help us to understand clearly the time at which the different events happened; beginning with the Passover, which Jesus ate with His disciples:—

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OUR TIME.	JEWISH TIME.	EVENTS.
Thursday, probably about 5 o'clock.	Evening.	Jesus eats the Passover.
6 o'clock P.M.	End of Day.	
7 " "	First Night Watch.	Jesus on the Mount of Olives.
8 " "		
9 o'clock P.M.	Second Night Watch.	Jesus in Garden of Gethsemane.
10 " "		Betrayed by Judas, and taken to Annas.
11 " "		Taken before Caiaphas.
12 o'clock Midnight.	Third Watch.	Peter's First Denial.
	First Cock Crowing.	Jesus condemned by the Priests.
1 A.M. Friday.		Abused by the Attendants.
2 " "		Peter's Second Denial.
3 o'clock A.M.	Fourth Watch.	Peter's Third Denial.
	Second Cock Crowing.	
4 " "		Jesus condemned by the Sanhedrim.
5 " "		Taken before Pilate.
6 o'clock A.M.	Romans' 6th Hour.	Jesus sent to Herod.
7 " "	Jews' 1st Hour.	Returned to Pilate. Crowned with thorns.
8 " "	" 2nd Hour.	Delivered to be crucified.
9 o'clock A.M.	Jews' 3rd Hour.	Jesus crucified.

CHAPTER XLI.—JESUS CRUCIFIED.

IN reading the account of our blessed Lord's condemnation, it may seem strange to us that Pilate was ready to receive Him so early as five o'clock in the morning; though we can understand the Priests and the Sanhedrim sitting up all night, to accomplish their wicked purpose. But we must remember, that the Jews were at all times ready to make disturbances; and that as very great multitudes came into Jerusalem for the Passover, those who were in authority were obliged to be very watchful, so as to check the first symptoms of a riot: and no doubt they were doubly watchful now, remembering that when Jesus rode into the city, a few days before, all the people accompanied Him, shouting, and declaring Him to be that King, the promised Messiah. "And they took Jesus, and led him away. And after that they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him. And he, bearing his cross, went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called, in the Hebrew, Golgotha."

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It was the custom of the Jews and Romans never to put condemned persons to death within the city walls. Golgotha was a hill outside the city, set apart for executions, and was, of course, an unclean and polluted place. It is thought that the name Golgotha was given to this hill because, in shape, it resembled a head or skull; and that for the same reason, the Romans called it Calvary: the Latin word so translated, meaning the same as the Hebrew word Golgotha.

The Romans compelled those who were to undergo the terrible death by crucifixion, to carry their own cross to the appointed place. Thus we find Jesus "bearing his cross": but when we remember how our blessed Lord had passed the whole night, we shall not be surprised that He

had no strength to carry a heavy cross of wood up a hill. Most likely He fell under the load; and those who led Him out saw, that faint and weary as He was, it was impossible for this part of His sentence to be carried out, and therefore, "they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country: him they compelled to bear his cross. And on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus."

"And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him."

Many of these, doubtless, had benefited by His miracles of healing, either in themselves or in their children; and all were grieved to see such cruelty practised upon One, who had ever gone amongst them doing good.

Jesus, always mindful of others, and foreseeing the dreadful sufferings that would come upon the city in consequence of His death, "turning unto them, said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren" (that is, the women who have no children to suffer). "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?"

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This is figurative language, meaning that the calamities about to fall on Jerusalem would be so dreadful, that the Jewish women, who considered it a great misfortune to have no children, would then be thankful, and considered blessed because they had none: and that, in the impossibility of escaping from their miseries, all people would be glad if the mountains could fall and crush them.

Then Jesus reminded them, that if a green tree is quickly burnt up, a dry and withered one will be burnt much more quickly. In the Scriptures, good men are often compared to green and flourishing trees; and bad men to dry and barren ones. The meaning of our Lord was therefore, If God in His wisdom sees fit to let Me, who am holy and righteous in His sight, suffer such things as ye have seen; what think ye will He do to the wicked and unrighteous?

Jesus was not crucified alone: it seems that at this time there were two criminals sentenced to a similar death. "And there were two other, malefactors, led with him to be put to death." In reading these words, we must be very careful to pause at the comma after other, because the meaning is, "and there were two other (persons, who were) malefactors, led with him," &c.

Malefactors mean persons that have done evil. St. Matthew tells us that these men were thieves: probably some of those robbers who troubled Judæa at that time, carrying off cattle and whatever they could lay their hands upon, and often killing those who tried to defend their property. These men were justly condemned to death in punishment of their sins, and they were now led out to be crucified with the innocent and holy Jesus. The prophet Isaiah, speaking seven hundred years before of the Messiah, had said, "He was numbered with the transgressors"; "and he made his grave with the wicked." He was, indeed, "numbered," or considered to be one of the transgressors, fit only to share the fate of such. Literally was Isaiah's prophecy fulfilled, when Jesus was led out with two malefactors to die with them.

"And when they were come to the place, which is called Golgotha, they gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink. And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not." St. Matthew mentions the vinegar and gall; St. Mark, the wine and myrrh. Some people have thought that both mean the same thing; but it is most probable that two separate mixtures were offered to Christ at this time.

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The Jews always gave wine, with myrrh in it, to the criminal about to be executed, to stupefy him, and make him less able to feel pain. The first draught of vinegar and gall was probably offered to Jesus in mockery. Any one expecting the usual stupefying draught, would be disappointed at getting another instead. Jesus submitted for our sakes to every suffering and insult inflicted by His persecutors, therefore He tasted the mixture; but when the stupefying draught was offered, "he received it not"; for He would do nothing to lessen His appointed sufferings, nor to render Him less able to pray to God.

"And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left, and Jesus in the midst." "And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, And He was numbered with the transgressors."

Crucifixion was not only a most painful death, but it was also looked upon as a very shameful one; only to be awarded to the vilest criminals, in order to show contempt and hatred. Sometimes the criminal was merely bound to the cross with ropes, and there left to die of hunger and exposure. But our Saviour was actually nailed to the cross, according to the words spoken by King David, one thousand years before, "they pierced my hands and my feet."

The manner of crucifixion was as follows: the cross of wood being laid upon the ground, the poor victim was laid upon it; and his arms being stretched out along the cross bar, a great nail was driven through the hollow of each hand into the wood: the feet were then crossed over each other upon the perpendicular part of the cross, and then a very long nail was forced through both into the wood beyond. There appears to have been under the feet a small ledge of wood, just to support them. The poor victim being thus made fast to the wood, the cross was raised up, and placed upright in a hole already prepared to receive it. The torture felt by the unhappy sufferer was most intense: the ledge beneath the feet did not prevent the weight of the body hanging from the hands, nailed to the upper part of the cross. The agony of such a position was beyond all that

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we can conceive; and this agony often lasted many hours, before death put an end to suffering.

Such was the death Christ endured for us. Surely no one can think of all Jesus suffered at this time, without feeling the deepest grief, and shrinking with horror from the idea that we could have joined His enemies. And yet the Word of God tells us that, if we persist in sin, we "crucify the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."

We can all understand, that if we have taken a great deal of trouble, and put ourselves to inconvenience and even to pain, in order to do good to some person, it would be very grievous to see that person not a bit better or happier than he would have been, had we *not troubled* ourselves about him. Then let us remember that Jesus Christ suffered and died that we might be taken into heaven. But we cannot go into heaven, unless we forsake our sins and try to obey God: if, therefore, we will not take the trouble to resist the Devil, all that Jesus has done and suffered will be of no use to us. Let us take care that He has not suffered in vain: let us pray for faith; that true and lively faith which will constrain us to repent, and love, and obey.

Now let us turn our thoughts again to Jesus hanging on His cross, between those upon which the two thieves were fastened.

It was the custom of the Romans, to cause a list of the crimes for which a malefactor was condemned, to be carried before him, or fastened to the instrument of his punishment. This was called his "accusation."

In compliance with this custom, "Pilate wrote a title, and set up over his head his accusation written, and put it on the cross. And the writing was in letters of Greek, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS; and in Latin, THE KING OF THE JEWS; and in Hebrew, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin"; so that all strangers who did not understand Hebrew might also read this "accusation."

CHAPTER XLII.—CHRIST ON THE CROSS.

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THE Chief Priests were by no means satisfied with the superscription written by Pilate, for they persisted in believing that Jesus had no *right* to be called King or Messiah. "Then said the Chief Priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, the King of the Jews; but that he said, I am king of the Jews": an alteration which would have made it appear that He had been justly punished by the Romans, for claiming a power to which no one had any right in the Roman provinces.

"Pilate answered, What I have written, I have written." This was a common mode of expression, meaning that a thing was done, and could not be undone. Probably Pilate wrote this title on purpose, knowing that the Jews would not like it; for he was displeased with them for forcing him, as it were, to do what he felt to be wrong: at any rate, in this title he declared a blessed truth: even that the King of the Jews, the long-expected Messiah, the Son of God, was actually hanging on the cross, atoning for the guilt of man, and purchasing our pardon by the sacrifice of Himself. Let us remember this with such thankfulness and gratitude, as will lead us to love, so as to obey.

Whilst Jesus was hanging in agony upon the cross, He prayed for those who had so cruelly persecuted Him. He had often taught the lesson of loving our enemies, and doing them good whenever we have the opportunity; and now He set us a most wonderful example of that love which we are to show to them. "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do": well might He say of those who had delivered Him to be crucified, "they know not what they do." Little did they indeed consider the sin they were committing; still less did they know what blessings their sin would bring upon all mankind. But their ignorance was in a great degree wilful, and wilful ignorance must always be a great sin: they had, therefore, much need that Christ should pray for them, as now He did.

By law, the executioners had a right to the clothes of their victim; and accordingly we read, "Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout." "They said, therefore, among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it whose it shall be. And they parted his raiment and cast lots, that the Scripture might be fulfilled which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things, therefore, the soldiers did:" according as David had spoken in the 22nd Psalm.

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Thus having finished the work of crucifixion, the soldiers, "sitting down" at the foot of the cross, "watched him there. And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God." Had Jesus, indeed, been the worst of criminals, mocking or deriding Him thus, whilst He hung in agony upon the cross, would have been a most cowardly and brutal act: but these insults were borne patiently by One, who with a word could have silenced these mocking tongues, and have confounded all, by coming down from the cross, and leaving man's redemption for ever unfinished. Blessed be God, that no taunts or mockings could so move Him, Who suffered all for our sakes.

We cannot wonder, that following the example of the Jewish priests and rulers, the heathen "soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar," or a light wine drunk by the common people, "and saying, If thou be the King of the Jews, save thyself. And they that passed by reviled him, and railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself, and come down from the cross. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the Chief Priests mocking him, with the Scribes and elders, said 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. Let Christ, the King of Israel, descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe."

Would they have believed, if Jesus had indeed come down from the cross? No; their hearts were hardened in wilful unbelief, and their words were empty mockery. One great truth, however, the Chief Priests unknowingly proclaimed, when in mockery they cried out, "he saved others, himself he cannot save": truly the choice lay between the two; Jesus could not save Himself and us. For our salvation an atonement must be made: the only effectual atonement was the death of Jesus, He might have saved Himself from this, and left us to perish. Blessed be God for the love, that endured to the end, and thus saved us.

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We are told, that even "they that were crucified with him, reviled him"; joining in the abuse now heaped upon him; but without provoking one word of reproof or complaint. No doubt the behaviour of our Lord at this time must have gained the admiration of many, and convinced them that He who now hung upon the cross was no mere man. The Lord certainly saw fit to touch the heart of one of those who were crucified with him, for while "one of the malefactors which were hanged," continued to rail "on him, saying, If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us," the other, answering, rebuked him, "saying, Dost not thou 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." Here was true repentance; an acknowledgment of the justice of the punishment inflicted, coupled with a declaration of the innocence of Him, whom the dying thief now believed to be indeed the Son of God, the promised Messiah. In Christ's agony and humiliation, the penitent malefactor looked to Him as the King of the Jews, the Saviour of mankind; and in the strength of his new-born faith, "he said unto Jesus, Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom": he felt the true nature of Christ's kingdom: and Jesus, who knows the hearts of all "said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." What blessed words for the poor penitent thief to hear! May each one of us, when we are dying, have the comfort of believing, This day shall I be in the kingdom of the Lord: but unless our actions during life have shown that we do belong to His kingdom on earth, we cannot feel this comfort.

"Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene." Mary's sorrow at witnessing the suffering of her Son, must indeed have been, as if a sword had pierced through her own soul, as Simeon had foretold, when three and thirty years before she had carried the Holy Babe into the temple, to do for Him according to the law. Mary, the wife of Cleophas or Alphæus, was the mother of James called the Less, to distinguish him from James the brother of John, the son of Zebedee. The Apostles had, as we have seen, fled away; but John, who had followed Jesus to the High Priest's palace, now stood with the women beside the cross. Even in the midst of all His agony, Jesus could think of others: He felt for the misery and desolation of His mother, and was anxious to provide for her future comfort; thus He set a double example, showing children that they should never cease to love and honour their parents; and teaching us all, never to let our own troubles or sorrows, whatever they may be, make us unmindful of the sufferings of others.

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"When Jesus, therefore, saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to his disciple, Behold thy mother!" By these words, He bade His mother look for comfort to His beloved disciple; bidding him treat her for the future as if she were his own mother. Faithfully was this last commandment obeyed, "And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home."

Jesus had now been hanging on the cross for three hours, suffering the extreme of bodily agony; but the worst was not yet over. It was the sixth hour, or twelve o'clock,—mid-day, as we call it,—when an event took place, which must have greatly alarmed all men. Without any apparent cause, "the sun was darkened"; "when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour." During these three hours of darkness, we have reason to believe that Jesus was allowed to feel the full weight of God's wrath against sin. All the misery deserved by sinful man was in some wonderful and mysterious way laid upon Him, so that in some incomprehensible manner, He, holy as He was, tasted the bitterness of that death from which by His agonies He delivered man. What His sufferings really were, we know not. God grant we never may! But for the time He felt as if His Father had cast Him off for ever. What a dreadful thing must sin be, since it could not be forgiven without such terrible agony, as for three hours was endured in silence by our blessed Lord; and at length wrung from Him that heart-rending cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Let us, for whose redemption He thus felt the wrath of God, watch and pray, that His sufferings may not have been in vain for any one of us.

THREE hours of agony beyond what we can imagine passed slowly away; and then, "at the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—the very words which stand, at the beginning of the 22nd Psalm, wherein David foretells many things that would happen at this time. "Some of them that stood by," not understanding Hebrew, "when they heard the words spoken by Jesus, said, Behold, he calleth Elias. After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished," and that His release was at hand, "that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and straightway one" of the by-standers, more humane than the others, "ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it on a reed," with which he raised it high enough "to put it to his mouth, and (so) gave him to drink. The rest said, Let be; let us see whether Elias will come to take him down."

The common drink of the Roman soldiers was "posea," a poor kind of wine, often called vinegar, but not like what we mean by vinegar. This "posea" was now offered to Jesus. "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished." All was now accomplished; every prediction uttered by the Prophets concerning the Messiah, had been fulfilled; the Redemption of man was completed. Let the cost of that Redemption make us give ourselves to our Redeemer, to be His faithful followers and servants.

"Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost,"—he yielded up his life, according to his own words, "I lay down my life for the sheep. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself." The sacrifice was voluntary, otherwise it could have availed us nothing. Jesus died: His spirit departed from the body; and His last words prove that the mysterious suffering had passed away, that He again felt the comfort of His Father's love, and that He was no longer forsaken.

The Almighty God now again bore testimony to the Divine nature of Him who had just yielded up his human life: heaven and earth alike testified that this was indeed the Son of God. During the time of His deepest agony, "the sun was darkened"; now that He had given up the ghost, "the earth did quake, and the rocks rent, and the graves were opened. And behold the veil of the temple was rent in twain, in the midst, from the top to the bottom."

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The veil which divided the Holy of Holies from the rest of the temple, was a thick curtain, something like a worked carpet. The tearing of this down the middle was a very significant action, showing that the death of Jesus had done away with all the ceremonial observances established by the Law of Moses. A new Covenant, the Covenant of Grace, was now to replace the old Covenant of Works.

The Holy of Holies was looked upon by the Jews as a type of heaven; and only the High Priest was allowed to enter into it. Christ died to open the way into heaven to all mankind, whether Jews or Gentiles; thus the veil was rent, to show that through the mediation of Jesus, all might have access to God the Father.

"Now when the centurion which stood over against him, watching Jesus, and they that were with him, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, and that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God."

The Roman centurion had witnessed many executions, and the wonderful events attendant upon this one had convinced him of the truth of all that Jesus had said; "and he glorified God, saying, Certainly, this was a righteous man." The very people, who had been persuaded by the Priests to ask for the release of Barabbas and the crucifixion of Jesus, now shared the feelings of the centurion; for we read that "all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts," in token of remorse and grief, "and returned."

"And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee," "among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses, and Salome" "the mother of Zebedee's children," "and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem," "stood afar off, beholding these things."

The ninth hour, after which our Saviour breathed His last, answers to our 3 o'clock P.M., and a new day, according to the Jewish mode of reckoning, would begin at 6 o'clock P.M. As Jesus was crucified on Friday morning, the day now about to begin, was the Sabbath; and being the Sabbath in the Passover week, it was a particularly solemn, or "high day," to be observed with special reverence. On the morrow after that Sabbath, the Jewish people, according to the ordinances of the Mosaical Law, were accustomed to assemble in the temple, bringing with them, as a thank-offering to the Lord, a sheaf of corn, the "first fruits" of the harvest, which began at this season of the year. At the same time, particular sacrifices were to be offered, all in thanksgiving to Him who giveth us the fruits of the earth in due season.

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Crucifixion, as we have said, was often a lingering death: and sometimes, to hasten the end, the legs of the poor wretches hanging upon the cross were broken. The beginning of the Passover Sabbath was now fast approaching: it was not lawful, according to the Jewish Law, for any criminal who had been hanged, to be left hanging all night; that is, beyond the close of the day of their execution. The bodies of criminals who had been executed, were usually buried without any form or ceremonies; but sometimes, at the earnest entreaty of the family, they were allowed to

take the body, and bury it with funeral honours.

The Jewish priests and rulers were very particular in observing all outward rites and ceremonies, even when they had just been guilty of a fearful sin; and "therefore, because it was the preparation," the time for preparing for the coming Sabbath, "that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day (for that sabbath day was an high day)" the Jews "besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water": this water, proved that the heart had been actually pierced, so that none could doubt that Jesus was really and truly dead. It was very necessary that the fact of His death should be clearly established, so that men might afterwards have no doubt as to His "Resurrection from the dead." Amongst those who saw the water and blood flowing from the wound made by the spear, was the beloved disciple, St. John; for in his Gospel, he tells us, "And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe." In this treatment of the body of Jesus by the Roman soldiers, two prophecies concerning our Saviour, the true Paschal Lamb, were fulfilled. "For these things were done, that the Scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken," and "They shall look on him whom they pierced."

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"And after this, when the evening was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, there came a rich man of Arimathæa, a city of the Jews: named Joseph, an honourable counsellor," who "had not consented to the counsel and deed of them" in putting Jesus to death. "He was a good man, and a just: who also himself waited for the kingdom of God: being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews." Anxious to save the sacred body of Him in Whom he believed, from further injury or insult, this man "came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus: and besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus."

Arimathæa, supposed to be the same as Rama, where Samuel dwelt in the time of Saul, lay to the N.W. of Jerusalem, on the way to Joppa. Joseph, as a man of wealth and influence, must have been known to the Roman governor, who would be willing to oblige him, especially in such a matter, since he himself was convinced that Jesus was no malefactor. His only hesitation arose from his doubt as to whether Jesus was at that time dead; "Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead. And when he knew it of the centurion, Pilate gave him leave; and commanded the body to be delivered to Joseph." Joseph having obtained Pilate's leave to remove the body of Jesus, "bought fine linen" to wrap it in, according to custom. "He came therefore," and with the help of others, "took the body of Jesus" down from the cross.

"And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth: there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury." This was all that the time allowed to be done then, in the way of embalming.

"Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new sepulchre, and Joseph laid the body in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock, wherein was man never yet laid." It was a custom in those days, for the rich, with whom Christ was to be in his death (as Isaiah had said), to form their tombs, by having a sort of small room cut out of the solid rock; leaving a narrow door, which was the only possible way by which any one could go in or out. This door or entrance was always closed by a large stone. Within the room or cave, was a sepulchre or sepulchres, in which the body was laid. In such a sepulchre "they laid Jesus therefore, because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand: and the sabbath drew on." And they rolled a great stone to the door "of the sepulchre, and departed."

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CHAPTER XLIV.—JESUS RISES FROM THE SEPULCHRE.

"AND Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of Joses, and the women also which came with him from Galilee, followed after" Joseph and Nicodemus, "and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid." And they returned and prepared spices and ointments, in order that the process of embalming, hastily begun by Joseph and Nicodemus, might be properly finished after the Sabbath should be past. Having made their preparations, they "rested the sabbath day, according to the commandment."

By comparing the accounts of all that happened after Jesus was laid in the tomb, we find that though the greater number of the women went away, as has been said, two of them remained watching the spot which now contained the body of Him whom they so loved and revered: for we read, "And there was Mary Magdalene and the other Mary (the mother of James and Joses) sitting over against the sepulchre." There they stayed, probably till the Sabbath had begun, when, of course, it was too late for them to prepare their share of spices, without breaking the fourth commandment.

"Now the next day that followed the day of the preparation" (this seems to mean in the

beginning of the Sabbath, soon after 6 o'clock on Friday evening, just after the burial of our Lord), "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 sepulchre 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 said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch."

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Thus did the Lord make these Priests and Pharisees bear witness to Christ's resurrection. It was little likely that the Apostles would make any attempt to carry off the body, and still less likely that they could succeed in any such an attempt; but what was now done rendered it *impossible*; for there was no way of carrying the body out of the sepulchre but through the door, which was closed by a heavy stone, and was now watched by a guard of soldiers, who would not allow any one even to touch the stone, which could not be moved without making much noise. It was essential that there should never be any doubt as to the fact of Christ's having risen from the dead, and therefore His very enemies were made to furnish the strongest proofs of His resurrection. Thinking they had made the sepulchre sure, they went away to rest on the Sabbath. But

Vain the stone, the watch, the seal,
Christ has burst the gates of Hell;
Death in vain forbids His rise,
Christ hath opened Paradise.

Jesus laid in the grave all through the Sabbath, from 6 o'clock on Friday evening to 6 o'clock on Saturday evening. The Sabbath was now past; the first day in the week, called by us Sunday, was begun. "And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of Joses, and Salome," who had not had time to make any preparations before the Sabbath, set out from their homes to go to the sepulchre; and they "had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him." But while they were on their way, "behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men."

The time and circumstances of Jesus's rising from the dead, are veiled in mystery. He had evidently left the sepulchre before the stone was rolled away. All that we know is, that Christ rose, and was the "first fruits of them that slept"; and He rose on the day when the first fruits of the harvest were presented in thankfulness to the Lord God Almighty. His resurrection secured ours; and, as a sign that it did so, "many bodies of the saints which slept arose out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the city, and appeared unto many." The graves were opened when Jesus gave up His life on the cross: when He arose, the bodies which lay in them arose also, testifying to His triumph over death and the grave.

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Wonderful indeed were all the events which took place at this time! In their several accounts of what happened after our Saviour had risen, some of the Evangelists mention one thing, and some another; but as clever men, who have considered the subject, show us how all the events mentioned must have followed one another, we shall keep to their account.

We have said that before the earthquake took place, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, accompanied by Salome, who had joined them, set out to go to the sepulchre: knowing that it was closed by a great stone, they naturally, as they drew near, "at the rising of the sun, said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?" Of the watch set there, they probably knew nothing. But on coming close, this difficulty was at an end, "for when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great." Very probably Mary Magdalene was the first who observed this fact, for St. John speaks especially of her, and says, "The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre."

Here you must understand, that the Hebrew sepulchres had two divisions, or chambers. The inner division, or chamber, in which the body was laid, was separated from the outer division by a door, closed, as we have heard, by a large stone. The outer chamber, or porch, had an open door, or entrance.

As soon as Mary Magdalene and her companions came near, they could see, through the open entrance of the outer chamber, that the door of the inner chamber was also open, and that the great stone, which they had seen placed there after Jesus was laid in the tomb, had been taken away: but they did not see either the stone itself or the angel sitting upon it, on the right-hand side of the door; as this could not be seen without going into the porch, or outer chamber. As soon, then, as Mary Magdalene saw, through the open entrance of the porch, that the stone was rolled away from the door of the inner chamber, or sepulchre, she, concluding that some persons, either friends or enemies, had opened it, and carried away the body of Jesus, "runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him."

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After Mary Magdalene had left them, the other Mary and Salome went into the outer division, and, "entering into the sepulchre" (that is, into the porch), "they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. And the angel answered, and said unto the women, Fear not ye; be not affrighted; for I know that ye seek Jesus of

Nazareth, which was crucified: He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay; behold the place where they laid him." Having thus assured these women that the Lord was indeed risen from the dead, the angel bade them make the good tidings known to others, saying, "But go your way quickly, tell his disciples and Peter that he is risen from the dead, and that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you; lo, I have told you. And they departed quickly from the sepulchre, with fear, and fled; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they anything to any man."

These women were so confused and overpowered with surprise, fear, and joy, that they scarcely knew what to say or do: so they told no man what they had seen or heard as they went along, but "with great joy did run to bring his disciples word" of what the angel had said.

It must have been a great comfort to Peter to hear that he had been particularly mentioned by name, as it showed that Jesus had not cast him off, but still looked upon him as a disciple, notwithstanding his sin in denying his Lord and Master.

It seems that when the disciples saw their Lord condemned and crucified, they must have forgotten all that He had told them as to His rising again; and, instead of going early to the sepulchre on the third day, they appear to have remained at home, mourning and lamenting His death. Now, however, Mary Magdalene's tidings must have brought their Lord's words to remembrance. "Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple (John), and came to the sepulchre. So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in." The clothes in which the body had been wrapped were there; but the body itself was gone. No angel was now to be seen, nor did the disciples know that one had been seen at all; for Mary Magdalene had left the sepulchre before her two companions went into the porch of the sepulchre.

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"Then cometh Simon Peter, following John, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, and the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself." This circumstance was very important. If the body of Jesus had been *stolen away*, either by friends or enemies, they would have carried it away as it was, and not waited to unwind the linen clothes, and more especially not to have folded the napkin up and laid it in a separate place. The astonishment of Peter when he saw the burial clothes thus lying in order caused John also to go into the sepulchre: "and he saw and believed." "For as yet they knew not the Scripture, that he must rise again from the dead."

CHAPTER XLV.—CHRIST APPEARS TO MARY MAGDALENE.

THE Apostles appear to have come to the sepulchre, without any idea that the Lord had risen from the dead. They had not understood rightly what the prophets had said of the death and rising again of the Messiah; nor had the words of the Lord, though He had told them plainly that He should die and rise again the third day, prepared them for what had happened.

When John examined the tomb, he saw that the body of Jesus must, in some miraculous way, have slipped out of the linen clothes, leaving them lying in such perfect order: "he saw, and believed" that Jesus was indeed risen. "For as yet they knew not the Scripture, that he must rise again from the dead." Up to this time they had not rightly understood this Scripture; and John's faith now rested on what he had *seen*, not, as it should have done, upon the Word of God. Peter and John, having satisfied themselves that the body of Jesus was no longer in the sepulchre, "went away again unto their own home," before Mary Magdalene, who had followed them, reached the sepulchre for the second time: she arriving after they had left, would naturally be disappointed at not hearing their opinion, as to the disappearance of the body of Jesus. She was grieved that any one should have carried Him away; and this, added to the recollection of what she had witnessed in the sufferings and death of Jesus, so disturbed Mary, that she "stood without at the sepulchre weeping. And as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the (inner) sepulchre, and seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." So little did Mary expect the Lord to rise again to life, that even the sight of angels sitting by His open tomb, did not convince her that the body had not been removed to another place. She was soon to know the truth; for "when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing." But it pleased the Lord to appear to her in such a form, that at first she knew not that it was Jesus. This was the first appearance of Jesus Christ after His resurrection; for, as St. Mark tells us, "Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils." "Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing Him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary." This one word, spoken in the tone she had been accustomed to hear, removed all doubts and fears: now she sees and knows that it is indeed Jesus restored to life, who stands by her. We can imagine with what surprise and joy "she turned herself" quickly towards her Lord, "and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master." From what follows, we may suppose that in her exceeding gladness, Mary would have laid hold upon the Lord to detain Him; for "Jesus

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saith unto her, 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."

By these words, He seems to have meant that the time was not quite come for Him to ascend into heaven; and that Mary need not therefore hold Him, as if she was afraid of not seeing Him again; but, on the contrary, that she should at once go and remind His disciples of all that He had before told them, about His going to His Father, and not leaving them comfortless; because if He left them, He would send the Holy Ghost to teach and guide them. The message thus sent by Jesus, should remind us all, that the Lord God Almighty is indeed our God; a kind and loving Father to *all* who believe in His beloved Son, so as to love and obey Him.

Mary Magdalene set out immediately to tell "the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things unto her." On her way it seems that she fell in with the other Mary and Salome, who had fled from the sepulchre at the sight of the angel. The three women now went on together. "And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail." "All hail" signified Welcome; it was a common mode of expressing pleasure at meeting. Mary and Salome, who had heard from Mary Magdalene that the Lord was indeed alive again, were neither astonished nor frightened at His appearance; but, filled with joy and love, they fell at His feet; "they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him." "Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid; go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there they shall see me." The action of holding His feet, showed fear that the Lord would at once disappear; but He bids them have no fears, for that, on the contrary, He would meet His disciples in Galilee. But before that, He appeared also to His Apostles.

Whilst the women were on their way to tell the disciples all they had seen and heard, "behold some of the watch came into the city, and showed unto the Chief Priests all the things that were done." We have heard how, when the angel of the Lord descended, those who were guarding the sepulchre were so terrified, that they "became as dead men,"—unable to move, or know what to do. When they came to themselves, they would see that the sepulchre was empty; whilst they well knew that no human power could have removed the body. They went therefore, and told those who had set them to watch, how vain all their precautions had been. The Chief Priests immediately called the Council together: "and when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel," or consulted amongst themselves what they had best do to prevent their countrymen from believing in the resurrection of Christ, "they gave large money unto the soldiers, saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day."

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Great indeed was the wilful unbelief of the Jews, if they could for one moment believe such an absurd story, as the Priests and elders had bribed the soldiers to tell. Amongst the Romans, death was the punishment for any soldier who went to sleep whilst upon guard: yet, in spite of this, men were required to believe, that sixty soldiers, and their commander, were all so fast asleep, that the noise which must have been made by moving the stone, did not even awake one of them. Besides, if they had all been asleep, how could they have known that the disciples had been there?

The Chief Priests and elders knew that this story was false; and we may be quite sure that Pilate and those in authority did not believe it, or the soldiers would not have escaped punishment: but the Romans did not care what the Jews believed on the subject: and the soldiers, being heathens, and therefore careless about speaking the truth, took the money offered by the Council, and in return told what they knew to be a lie. Even up to this day, the Jews, of whom there are many thousands scattered in different parts of the world, believe the story invented by the Chief Priests; and instead of acknowledging Jesus as the Messiah, still look for Christ's coming. It seems to us quite impossible that any one should disbelieve in Jesus Christ being the promised Messiah; but unhappily it is so. Let us pray to God that He will take from the Jews all blindness and hardness of heart, and bring them into the Christian Church.

Now let us return in thought to the sepulchre, where, after the departure of Mary Magdalene, and of the other Mary and Salome, another party of women arrived. These were the women which came with Him from Galilee, and who, after seeing where the body of Jesus was laid, went away immediately to prepare spices and ointments, and then rested on the sabbath day. "Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others," that is, some other women came, "with them." These women had had a longer way to come than Mary Magdalene and her companions, and therefore, although they set out as soon as the Sabbath was past, they did not reach the sepulchre until some time after them: although it was still early. "And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre." This circumstance would naturally cause them no surprise, as they would conclude that the disciples or others had reached the sepulchre before them, and were already engaged in the work of embalming the body, in which they were come to assist.

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But their surprise was to come; for "they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments: and as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, 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." The sudden appearance "of two men in shining garments," alarmed the women; who at once knew them to be angels. Then

the angels reproved these women for the want of faith, which had made them expect to find amongst the dead, One whom they ought to have known must be alive, if they had remembered and believed what He Himself had formerly told them. When the women heard the words of the angels, they remembered the words of Jesus, "and returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest." But the eleven had already heard these wonderful tidings from Mary Magdalene and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the Apostles, as they mourned and wept for the death of their Lord.

CHAPTER XLVI.—JESUS APPEARS TO THE DISCIPLES.

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THE testimony of so many different witnesses had not yet convinced the Apostles: when they had heard that "Jesus was alive, and had been seen of Mary Magdalene, they believed not. And when the other women came with their testimony," their words seemed to the Apostles as "idle tales, and they believed them not."

Still all that they heard was not without some effect; for Peter was anxious to visit the sepulchre again: "Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves." But he saw nothing more; "and he departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass." We learn from the Scriptures that Peter was the first of the Apostles who did see the Lord after His resurrection; but how and when this meeting took place, we are not told; and it is most likely that it took place now, whilst Peter was returning from his second visit to the sepulchre, "wondering in himself at that which was come to pass." What joy it must have been to Peter, to see that his Lord and Master was indeed alive, and to be able to receive forgiveness for the sin he had committed, in denying all knowledge of Him. What passed between our Lord and Peter on this occasion, is not written down in either of the Gospels; but we may be sure that Jesus spake kindly and lovingly to Peter. It is no wonder to find that ever afterwards, Peter devoted himself heartily to the service of God. After this interview with Peter, Jesus appeared to two of the disciples, who were not also Apostles: "he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country." To Peter, Jesus probably appeared in His own person, so as to be recognized at once: on the occasion of which we are now to speak, He concealed Himself under the form of a "stranger." St. Luke tells us, that two of the disciples went that same day, (the first day of the week,) to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs; that is, about seven miles and a half, for eight furlongs make a mile. And, very naturally, "they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went 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 with another, and are sad?" Jesus asked not such questions for His own information, but to enable Him to show the truth to the disciples, who were surprised that any person, even a stranger, should be ignorant of the wonderful events which had happened. "And 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: and how the Chief Priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not." In this account of the matter, given by these two to a stranger, as they supposed, we see the state of doubt and perplexity in which all the disciples were: a little more faith would have set their minds at rest: but it is evident that though, whilst He lived they had believed Jesus to be the true Messiah, who should redeem Israel, His death and burial had so far shaken their belief, that they could not at once feel sure that He had risen from the dead, though they could not altogether reject that idea.

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When these two disciples had ended their account, they must have been somewhat surprised at being reproached for their unwillingness to believe all that their Prophets had spoken concerning the Messiah; for Jesus, still in His character of a stranger, "said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken"! And then He reminded them, that the Scriptures had expressly said, that Christ must suffer death on earth, before He could enter into glory in heaven: saying, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" that is, ought not these very things which trouble you to have happened just as they have done, to fulfil the Scriptures, and to show that this was indeed the promised Messiah.

When Jesus had shown the two disciples that want of faith alone caused their perplexity, He graciously went on, "and beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded (or explained) unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." No wonder these disciples, whose faith must have been strengthened by the explanations of their unknown companion, were unwilling so soon to part with one so learned in the Scriptures; and,

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as it was near evening, they urged Him to go in and abide with them for the night. At their earnest entreaty, "he went in to tarry with them." Emmaus, where our Lord now was, was a village about seven or eight miles to the west of Jerusalem; the dwelling-place, probably, of the two disciples whose guest He was. "And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them." Jesus probably did what He had done at the last Passover Supper, when He appointed Bread and Wine to be taken and received, in "continual remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and of the benefits which we receive thereby."

At any rate, by this act, Jesus made Himself known to Cleopas and his companion: "their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. 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 had felt great interest in the conversation and teaching of the stranger, and now they seem to feel that all he had said should have shown them that One Who thus taught could be no other than the Lord Himself. Their next thought was to tell these great and glad tidings to the rest of the disciples; and though it was drawing towards night, and they had already had a long walk, "they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem,"—setting us a good example not to let any personal inconvenience prevent us from doing anything that we feel it is our duty to do. When they reached Jerusalem, they "found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon." Peter had by this time related how the Lord had spoken to him, and his testimony had convinced his fellow disciples that their Lord had indeed risen from the dead. Cleopas and his companion now bore witness to the same fact, and "told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread." But some of the disciples do not seem to have been convinced even yet, for St. Mark says of these two, "they went and told it unto the residue, neither believed they them."

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"Then the same day at evening," (nearly 6 o'clock,) still being the first day of the week, "when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus: as they thus spake, Jesus stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you." Notwithstanding all that had already past, it seems that the greater part, at least, of the disciples could not believe that this was really and truly the Lord, in the same body as He had borne before His death: "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 shewed them his hands and his feet, and his side. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord."

Doubts, however, still lingered in the minds of some, and these our Lord graciously condescended to remove; for "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 an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so I send you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained."

"Remit" here means *forgive*; sins remitted are sins forgiven. To "retain" means just the contrary—not forgiven sins; "retained" means sins that are not forgiven, of which the guilt still rests upon those who have committed them. Jesus did not, of course, mean that His Apostles, or any human being, had power to forgive or remit the smallest sin committed against God; none can forgive sin, but God only. But our Lord meant, that when, by the teaching of the Apostles, poor sinners should be brought to believe the Gospel and repent, they, the Apostles, might safely declare unto them the blessed truth, that their sins are forgiven, and done away with, for the sake of all that Jesus Christ has done for us.

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But in the same way, the Apostles must warn all who will not believe and repent, that their sins cannot be forgiven; but that their guilt remains, and must hereafter meet with due punishment.

CHAPTER XLVII.—UNBELIEF OF THOMAS.

"BUT Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came." As soon as they met again, "the other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord." Thomas, however, was so convinced that it was impossible for Jesus to appear again in His own body, that he declared that he would not believe, unless he actually *saw* that it was the very same body which had been crucified: therefore, "he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print," or hole made by "the nails, and thrust my hand into" the wound made by the spear in "his side, I will not believe."

This want of faith was wrong: Thomas knew that the other Apostles would not say anything that they did not believe to be true; and it was impossible that all the ten, should have merely *fancied* that they had seen and talked with their beloved Lord and Master.

Thomas was now left for one whole week in his unbelief; and a good many of the disciples,

who had not themselves seen Jesus, took his view of the matter: though the ten Apostles, and a great number of the disciples, were convinced that Christ was indeed risen.

"And after eight days again," that is, on the first day of the next week, "the disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut," so that He could not possibly have come into the room that way, "and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you."

The disciples were probably at supper, for St. Mark says, "he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen." To "upbraid" means to reproach: all had deserved reproach for their slowness and unwillingness to believe the testimony of others, but to Thomas such upbraiding was principally addressed: but whilst he reproved, Jesus also showed mercy: for "then saith He to Thomas, 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." Thomas had now received the proofs which he had demanded; he saw and was convinced that Jesus had indeed, according to the Scriptures, risen in his own human body from the grave. "And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they, that have not seen, and yet have believed." These are comfortable words for all Christians who believe without seeing: and we may indeed thank God for the unwillingness of this Apostle to believe, as it afforded a still further testimony to the reality of the Resurrection.

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It seems that the next appearance of Jesus Christ was to a large number of His disciples at once. We read, "Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them." Here many other disciples must have joined them; for another part of Scripture tells us, that "he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once." "And when they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted." It appears probable that at first, Jesus showed Himself at a great distance, so that some could still hardly believe that He was the Lord. "But Jesus came and spake unto them." We may imagine how all doubts were removed at once, and with what joyful gladness the disciples acknowledged Him now, as the long-expected Messiah. "After these things, Jesus showed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias." It seems that the Apostles had so little idea of the nature of the work they were from henceforth to do, that they had returned to their usual occupation of fishermen. "There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples. Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing. But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore; but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat?" meaning, have ye now taken any fish. To this question, put, as they supposed, by a man, the disciples "answered him, No. And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find." It seems probable that the disciples now began to have some suspicions as to the true nature of Him, who gave them this direction, since no mere man could have foretold the result of their casting the net in one particular spot. "They cast, therefore, and now they were not able to draw it, for the multitude of fishes." This completely convinced the disciples; "therefore, that disciple whom Jesus loved, saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now, when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea," eager to swim quickly to the land on which his beloved Master stood. The word "naked," in this place, only means that Peter had not his outer garments on—only the inner one he wore whilst fishing; and this he girt on, bound close round him, that it might be no hindrance whilst he swam. "And the other disciples came in a little ship (or boat), for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits (about 120 yards), 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. Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught. Simon Peter went up (to help), and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken. Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine." The word here translated *dine*, means rather breakfast, the first meal of the day, for it was now early morning.

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"And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise."

St. John, in his account of this meeting of Jesus and His disciples at the sea of Tiberias, says, "This is now the third time that Jesus showed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead." It is the third appearance mentioned by St. John; and it was the third time that Jesus had appeared to the Apostles, when all or most of them were together; and this is probably what St. John meant. The first of these appearances, was to the ten on the day of His Resurrection, when Thomas was not with them; the second took place on the first day of the next week, when all the eleven were assembled; and the third, was the one of which we have just been speaking at the sea of Tiberias. Of Jesus appearing to Mary Magdalene and the other women, to Peter alone, to the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, and to "above five hundred brethren at once," John makes no mention. St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, speaking of the appearing of Jesus after the Resurrection, says, "He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: after that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once: after that, he was seen of James, then of all the Apostles." Now none of the Gospels gives an account of any special appearance to James: we may therefore conclude that we are not told of every appearance vouchsafed to His disciples, during the time that Jesus remained on earth after His Resurrection; though enough are related, to prove the reality of that blessed fact.

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We may remark, that "Cephas" is a Greek word, meaning the same as Peter, that is, a rock, or stone; and that as St. Paul was writing to the inhabitants of a city of Greece, he called Simon Peter by his Greek name: by "the twelve," the body of the Apostles is meant, though at that time there were, in fact, only eleven of them.

When the Apostles had eaten their meal of fish and bread, to which they had been invited by the Lord, a remarkable conversation took place. We read, "So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?"—that is, dost thou love me more than these other of my disciples love me? You will remember how before the Crucifixion, Peter, in his self-confidence, declared, that though all the other disciples should forsake Jesus, he never would, but would die for Him if necessary: but his grievous fall had shown him his own weakness; and now, so far from boasting of his greater love, he humbly replied, "Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs." By lambs and sheep, our Saviour meant all his people, young and old: all, who should believe in Him, and so belong to His Church, or flock, as it is often called.

This mode of speaking of the people of God, as of a Flock, consisting of sheep and lambs, is very common throughout the Scripture. David pleading for his people, who were suffering from pestilence in consequence of his sin in numbering them, says, "But these sheep, what have they done?" The same idea is often repeated in the Psalms, and in the Prophets; and in our Liturgy, or Church Service, we confess that we "have erred and strayed like lost sheep."

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Peter would well understand this figurative manner of speaking. The question was repeated: "Jesus saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep." Three times had Peter denied his Lord; three times now had he been asked, Lovest thou me? Well might he be grieved at the remembrance of that sin, which could have cast a doubt upon the love he bore his divine Master: deeply did he feel the rebuke which he had deserved. Humbly, without making any professions, did he appeal to Him, who knows all hearts, to judge whether he loved Him. Peter's love for Jesus was both strong and sincere, and his whole future life bore witness to its strength and sincerity, until he did indeed lay down his life for his Master's sake. Let us take Peter for our example, and try, by every action of our lives, to show that we do love and wish to please our God and Saviour.

After this Jesus said to Peter, "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. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me." About thirty years after this time, in the reign of the Emperor Nero, Peter was crucified at Rome by the heathens, because he tried to make them Christians; he stretched out his arms on the cross, and another bound him and carried him to execution. Faithfully did Peter obey his Master's command, "Follow me"; for he went about teaching after His example, until He died by the same death. But in his death, Peter gave a further proof of humility; for considering himself unworthy even to die in the same way as Jesus had done, he begged to be crucified with his head downwards; and this request was granted. Death for the sake of our religion is called martyrdom, and those who so suffer, are martyrs.

CHAPTER XLVIII.—JESUS TAKEN INTO HEAVEN.

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WE are not told that Peter made any remark upon what Jesus told him, "signifying by what death he should glorify God:" we only read, "Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved, following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?" This you will remember was John, one of the sons of Zebedee; the same John who alone gives us any account of what passed on this occasion. "Peter, seeing him, saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do?" Jesus, instead of satisfying Peter's curiosity, gave him an answer, which should teach us all, that we must not seek curiously to know things hidden from us; and that the great point is, for every man to follow Christ by faith and practice, and not to concern himself too much about others; any further than by setting a good example, and using what influence he may have over others, for a good purpose.

In answer to Peter's question, "Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die," but should *tarry*, or remain alive upon earth, until the Saviour should come again to judge the world. There was no ground for the disciples to form such a mistaken notion; for as St. John truly says, "yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?"

Jesus then appeared again to His Apostles at Jerusalem, and gave them His last directions as to their conduct, when He should have left them to return to His Father in heaven. "Being assembled together with them, (he) commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence." In

these words, Jesus reminded the disciples of His frequent promises to send upon them the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, to be their guide; and He bade them wait in Jerusalem, until this promise should be fulfilled. "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 see how exactly His death and resurrection had accomplished everything prophesied of the Messiah. "And (he) said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved 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. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."

Such were our Lord's last directions to the Apostles whom He was about to leave; and either immediately after this conversation, or a few days later, "he led them out as far as to Bethany," where He purposed to take His final leave of them on earth. The Bethany here meant, was not the actual village of that name, which was about two miles from Jerusalem, but a part of Mount Olivet, or the Mount of Olives, nearer to the city. The Mount Olivet began about 5 furlongs (little more than half a mile) from Jerusalem: the first tract or part of the Mount was called Bethphage, and in this tract was the village bearing that name: another portion of the Mount went by the name of Bethany, and in that tract was the village of Bethany. Jesus led his Apostles to the spot where the tract of Bethany joined that of Bethphage. "When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"

The Apostles had not yet a clear idea of the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom, nor of the time which was to elapse, before it should be established upon earth; and they seem even to have thought that now, when by His rising from the dead He had proved Himself to be the Messiah, the King of the Jews, He would at once restore them to their former state of prosperity, and make Judæa again an independent kingdom. Jesus reproved them for asking such a question, and "said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own hand." There are, indeed, many things said of future blessings in store for the Children of Israel; but *how* or *when* God will give them, is one of the secret things, which are at present hidden from us. After reproving His disciples for undue curiosity as to future events, Jesus calls their attention back to matters more nearly concerning themselves; namely, to the work which they were now to do, in bearing witness of all that He had done, and in teaching men everywhere the blessed truths of the Gospel; and for this important and arduous task, Jesus again promises them that divine help, without which man can do nothing good. Therefore, he said unto them, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

"And he said unto them, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 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. Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

By being baptized, those who heard the Gospel preached, showed their faith in Christ, and their determination to follow His precepts and commands: and by Baptism, God gave them grace and strength to do so. By Baptism, we are now received into Christ's Church—we become Christians. In the time of the Apostles, of course, the grown-up people were baptized: when they had heard the Gospel preached, and believed that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, they would repent of all their sins, and try to serve and obey Him; and then they would be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; to show that they *did* mean to dedicate, or give themselves up, to the service of God: and He, in return, would pour out upon them His Holy Spirit, to enable them to do so.

But God, who is a merciful Father, does not require His creatures to wait for the blessings of Baptism, until they are old enough to understand and value them; and therefore amongst Christian nations, Infants are baptized long before they can either believe or repent, and so they become the children of God—lambs of His flock; and receive His blessing before they have sense to know anything about it. When they are old enough, they must learn to know what great blessings were given to them by Baptism, and what solemn promises were made for them—promises which they are bound to keep, if they would partake of the benefits, and live with Jesus hereafter in heaven. In our own strength, no one can keep these promises entirely; but we must continually *strive hard* to do so, and above all pray without ceasing, that we may be strengthened to do it.

After Jesus had given His Apostles commands to preach the Gospel to every creature, and to baptize all who were willing, He told them, as we have read, that they should have power to work miracles, in order to prove to all men that they really were the chosen messengers of God, giving His messages to His people: for if they were able to cast devils out of the bodies of men, to heal the sick, to speak languages which they had never learned, and to take up venomous serpents, or drink poison without suffering any harm, it would be quite plain that God was with them; since only by His special grace could a man do any of these things.

"And when he had spoken these things, he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and a cloud received him out of their sight, and (he was) carried up into heaven." "So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God."

"And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven, as he went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, 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."

From the question asked by these angels, it would seem that even now the Apostles could hardly believe that their beloved Lord was gone from their sight for ever, upon the earth. They are therefore reminded, that their "gazing up" is useless; but that a day shall come when He shall return to earth: but then it will be as a judge, to pass sentence of happiness or misery upon every living creature. We know not how soon that awful day may come; let us therefore watch and pray, that we may find mercy before our judge—the Saviour of all who so believe in Him, as to love Him and keep His commandments.

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The words of the angels recalled the disciples' minds to earth, and to the work which their Master had left them to do. "And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem, from the mount called Olivet, with great joy. And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God."

"And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." Not immediately, however; but in these words St. Mark, as it were, sums up the future history of the Apostles; stating how they at once set to work to fulfil the commandments given to them by Jesus Christ.

Here, then, the History of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ must end; and we cannot do better than close it with the words of St. John himself, speaking of our Lord's miracles: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, ye might have life through his name."

St. John ends his account of His Master's life and death with the following words: "This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true. And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen."

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PART II.

CHAPTER I.—THE GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST.

AFTER the Four Gospels, there is in the New Testament a book called "The Acts of the Apostles," which gives us an account of the principal acts, or doings, of some of the Apostles, after the Lord was taken from them. This Book of Acts was written by St. Luke, who also wrote one of the Four Gospels; and it is the only Scriptural account we have of what the Apostles said and did, though we gather a few more particulars from the Epistles, or letters written by the Apostles themselves, to the brethren in different places.

The Book of Acts furnishes us with much that has been said of the Ascension, or "*going up into heaven,*" of Jesus Christ. We have already heard that the Apostles returned to Jerusalem with "joy," which might seem strange when one they so dearly loved had just been taken from them. But they had indeed cause for joy: they had seen their Lord suffer and die, to purchase pardon for sinners; they had seen Him come to life again, thus showing that He had indeed made a sufficient atonement for all: and now they had beheld Him received up into heaven, proving that, for His sake, all His true disciples might follow Him: "where I am, there shall ye be also." Great therefore was their joy, and they showed it in the most fitting manner, by being "continually in the temple, praising and blessing God."

The first thing we have an account of after their return from Mount Olivet to Jerusalem is, that, "when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew (called also Nathanael), and

Matthew, James the son of Alphæus (known to us as the Less), and Simon Zelotes, and Judas (or Jude) the brother of James." The word "Zelotes" means full of zeal, or eagerness; and this Simon was probably so called, because he was eager in doing the work of God. St. Matthew speaks of him as "Simon the Canaanite"; and it is supposed that he was a native of the city of Cana, in Galilee. Here we find the eleven Apostles all together: and they "continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and with Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren": waiting for the promised outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

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During this time, Peter proposed, that from amongst the disciples who had accompanied them all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among them, they should choose one to take the place of Judas Iscariot, and be with them a witness of the Resurrection of Christ; thus making the number of the Apostles twelve, as it had been at first, by the Lord's appointment. Peter's suggestion was at once followed. "And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias," both of whom appeared to be in every way fit for the office they were to fill; and then, not trusting in their own judgment, "they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, that he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles."

The mode of deciding doubtful matters by lot had been appointed by the Law of Moses; and was, at the time we are speaking of, a solemn way of seeking the Will of God, who directed the lot as He saw fit.

Matthias, now chosen to be an Apostle, was probably one of the seventy, whom our Lord during His life sent out by twos to teach the people, and work miracles, in order to prepare the way for Him. It is believed that Matthias first went about teaching in Judæa, and that he afterwards travelled eastward, where he met with cruel treatment from the barbarous nations of Asia. With great labour and suffering, he did convert many of the heathens to Christianity; but at last he was put to death for the sake of Jesus. But these things did not, of course, happen until many years after Matthias was chosen to fill up the number of the Apostles.

Jesus had remained on earth for forty days from the day of His resurrection; and during that time He showed himself at different times to His disciples. The day on which He rose from the grave we call "Easter Day," from an old word, meaning "to rise." The Apostles kept a feast every year afterwards on that day, in memory of this glorious event; and our Church teaches us also to observe Easter as a season of especial joy.

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In consequence of Christ having risen on the First Day of the week, the disciples, and all Christians since their time, have observed that day as a day of holy rest, and called it the Lord's Day: this is Sunday, which amongst us is dedicated to the special service of God, instead of the Seventh Day, or Jews' Sabbath, our Saturday.

Forty days after Easter Day, Jesus went up, or "ascended," into heaven; and our Church keeps that day holy, and calls it "The Ascension Day," because "ascension" means going up.

For ten days after the Ascension, the disciples, who had seen their Lord ascend, remained quietly at Jerusalem, praising God for all that had been done, and praying continually both in private and in public. Another great feast of the Jews was now drawing near: this feast is spoken of under different names in the Old Testament, and we must now say something about it.

In the Law of Moses, the Jews were, as has already been said, commanded to offer up a sheaf of corn on the day after the Sabbath which followed the Feast of the Passover; that is, on the first day of the week, after the Passover week. This sheaf was offered up as a thank-offering at the beginning of harvest, for they began to cut the barley (the first corn crop) immediately after the Passover.

Seven weeks after this beginning of harvest, the Jews were to keep one of the three great feasts, ordained by the Mosaical, or Levitical Law. This great feast was called "The Feast of Weeks," because it was observed seven weeks after that of the Passover: seven weeks were called "a week of weeks," because seven days make a week, and there were seven times seven days in the Feast of Weeks. It was also called "The Day of First Fruits," because it was then the time to begin to gather in the other crops and productions of the ground; and in thankfulness for all these fruits of the earth, a new meat offering was offered unto the Lord.

The Jewish Rabbis also called this great feast, "The Day of the Giving of the Law," because the Law was given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai, fifty days after the Children of Israel ate the first Passover in Egypt; and this feast, as we have said, was kept on the fiftieth day after the Feast of the Passover. In the New Testament this feast day is called "The Day of Pentecost": because in Greek, "Pentecost" means fiftieth, and as we have said, the Jews were to number fifty days from the morrow after the Passover Sabbath, and then to keep this great feast.

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As Jesus rose on the morrow after the Passover Sabbath, our Easter Day (or Easter Sunday), the fiftieth day, would again be on the first day of the week, Sunday with us: seven weeks or fifty days from the blessed day on which our Lord rose from the grave, and ten days after His Ascension.

This Day of Pentecost, distinguished already as a day of rejoicing and thanksgiving for many blessings, temporal and spiritual, and called "The Feast of Weeks," "of First Fruits," and of "The

Giving of the Law," was now chosen by God as the day on which the promised gift of the Holy Spirit was to be poured out upon the Apostles, to their great spiritual benefit, as well as to that of all who were to look to their teaching, for the knowledge of what Jesus Christ has done for sinners.

We read in the Book of Acts, "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." Fire was looked upon by the Jews as a sign of the presence of God. And those upon whom these tongues of fire descended, were at once "filled with the Holy Ghost": a visible and miraculous sign immediately followed, for they "began to speak with other tongues," that is, in strange and foreign languages, which they had never learnt, "as the Spirit gave them utterance."

Thus were accomplished the promises of Jesus, to send the Comforter upon His Apostles, and that they should be baptized with the Holy Ghost.

The power of speaking strange languages was a most valuable gift, enabling the Apostles to obey the command "to teach all nations," which they could not have done had they not been able to make themselves understood by all men.

One miracle had, as a punishment, confounded the language of men, so that they ceased to have intercourse with each other: now another miracle mercifully removed this barrier, so that all nations might hear from the Apostles the glad tidings of salvation—the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

At the time when the Holy Ghost descended so miraculously upon the Apostles, "there were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven." By "devout men," is meant worshippers of the one true God: these were mostly Jews, either from having been born so, or from having turned from idolatry to follow the religion of the Jews. These Jews were scattered over the face of the world; and wherever they went, they endeavoured to make proselytes: the Feast of the Passover would naturally bring numbers of them to Jerusalem, to add to those who dwelt in the city. "Now when this," that had happened to the Apostles, "was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded (or astonished beyond measure), because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed, and marvelled, 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? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, (or Persians), and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judæa, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God."

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Most of the countries here mentioned are parts of what we call Asia: but in the New Testament, when Asia is spoken of, it seems to mean only the parts about Lydia; that part of Asia, in short, known to us as Asia Minor, which borders on the Archipelago, or Ægean Sea. Libya, as well as Egypt, was a part of Africa. One of the kings of Egypt, Ptolemy Lagus, the father of that Ptolemy who employed seventy-two learned men to translate the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek, did place a good many captive Jews in Cyrene, and other parts of Libya. The descendants of these people, and the proselytes they had made, were amongst the number of Jews gathered together to the city of Jerusalem at this time.

CHAPTER II.—THE LAME MAN HEALED BY PETER AND JOHN.

WHEN the multitude of Jews from all parts of the earth, heard twelve poor ignorant men of Galilee, able to speak easily in many different languages, which they had most probably never even heard spoken before, "they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?" The great truths of the Gospel thus proclaimed, must indeed have startled them, for they could not but perceive that God was with these men in a very remarkable manner. Some of them, unwilling to believe the words spoken by the Apostles, tried to make out that they had been drinking so much wine, that they did not know what they were talking about, and ought not, therefore, to be listened to. "Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine,"—as if being drunk, could make any man speak a real language, of which, in his sober moments, he knew nothing.

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It was of the greatest importance that all men should clearly understand that the Apostles were really and truly the messengers of God, and that the Holy Spirit had been wonderfully given to them, to enable them to teach all nations: and therefore, when the accusation of being drunk was brought against them, they stood up, and Peter, no longer timid and fearful as to what man might do to him, lifted up his voice, and spake boldly to the assembled multitude. It is most probable that all this took place in some part of the temple.

Peter began by declaring to the people, that he and his fellows were not drunk, reminding them that it was only the third hour of the day. The third hour, nine o'clock in the morning with

us, was the time appointed for service in the temple, and the pious and devout Jews did not eat nor drink *anything* before they attended it. Then Peter told his hearers, that what they had now seen, was only the fulfilment of the prophecies, that the Lord would pour out His Spirit upon all flesh. Then he went on, and spake to them of many solemn things, and of the death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth; and how David, whom all the Jews acknowledged to be a prophet, had declared beforehand those things which had happened unto Jesus. Peter also told the people, that "this Jesus, being by the right hand of God exalted" into heaven, "and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear": and he ended his discourse with these plain and fearless words, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

These words seem to have had a great effect on the people, for "when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart," that is, their consciences told them that they had greatly sinned in putting Jesus to death; and now, feeling their need of help and guidance, they "said unto Peter and to the rest of the Apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" The answer was ready: "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. For the promise is unto you and to your children, to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation,"—that is, separate yourselves from the unbelieving and sinful multitude, and so save yourselves from the wrath of God, which will rest upon all impenitent sinners.

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The success of Peter's words, proving the reality of the power given to them by the Holy Spirit, must have been a great encouragement to the Apostles to continue their labours, in humble confidence that the same help would be ever with them. We read, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them," to the company of disciples, "about three thousand souls"—a large number. Nor was it a momentary feeling that actuated them, for we read, "And they continued stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers"; that is, they continued to listen to the blessed truths taught by the Apostles of the forgiveness of sins for Jesus Christ's sake, partaking with them of the Lord's Supper in remembrance of His death, and joining in earnest prayer for grace, to enable them to serve God acceptably. "And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the Apostles." Those who saw such miracles performed, were more and more convinced that the Apostles were the messengers of God; and they would naturally fear to offend the Almighty God, Whose power was thus shown, and of Whose goodness the Apostles spake.

"And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Those who now became Christians, devoted themselves and all their possessions to the service of God: content with food for the supply of their daily wants, their whole object was to do the work of God with "singleness of heart"; that is, with a heart wholly filled with love towards Him, and to their fellow creatures for His sake,—a heart whose single purpose it was to do the Will of God. No wonder that those who acted in such a manner, found favour with all the people, and that their example was followed, so that many were daily added to the Church, or body of believers in Jesus Christ.

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We read just now, that those who believed had all things common, and sold their possessions so as to make one common fund, out of which the daily wants of each were supplied. Thus those who had goods and riches gave them up; and those who had none were supplied out of their abundance.

This giving up of all private property by the rich, so that the poor believers might be supported, was necessary at that time: for the poorer class of people on becoming Christians, would get neither employment nor help from their Jewish brethren; nor would they receive any part of those sacrifices offered in the temple, which were devoted to the relief of the poor. But however desirable this arrangement was then, it was not *commanded*; it was a sacrifice made willingly by the rich, for the benefit of the poorer brethren. In these days, to have everything in common would be impossible; but though we are not called upon to do this, we *are* called upon and *commanded* to help others; and to deny ourselves, and sacrifice our own wishes, that we may be able to do good to our fellow creatures; and thus show our love for Jesus, Who says, "If any man seeth his brother have need and shutteth up his compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" And again, "To do good and to distribute forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." Many other passages of Scripture teach us the same lesson, and it is summed up as it were in the command, "Do unto all men as ye would they should do unto you."

The next act we hear of as done by the Apostles is, that "Peter and John went up together into the temple, at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour." There were three fixed times for public prayer in the temple: the third hour (or 9 o'clock in the morning), when the morning sacrifices were offered; the sixth hour, that is, 12 o'clock or noon; and the ninth hour, 3 o'clock in the afternoon, when the evening sacrifices were offered. The gates of the temple were the favourite resorts of cripples, who caused themselves to be carried to them, that they might beg for money from those who were continually passing and re-passing. Peter and John, going up to prayer in the middle of the day, saw a poor man who had been lame ever since he was born, and "whom

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they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple." When this man begged of the Apostles they said unto him, "Look on us." The man readily gave heed unto them, and did as they told him, "expecting to receive something of them"; and so he did, though not of the kind he expected. "Then Peter said, 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. 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." When the people saw this man, whom they had long known as a helpless cripple, "walking, and praising God," they were naturally full of wonder and amazement. "And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them, in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering."

This porch was, you must remember, a sort of colonnade or piazza, built over the same spot on which that built by Solomon in the first temple, had stood. When Peter saw such a number of people assembled, he spake to them, and said, "Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?" And then he told them, that this cripple was made whole, because he had faith in Jesus Christ, who was truly the Son of God the promised Messiah, though they had refused to believe in Him, and had forced Pilate to crucify Him. But that, although they had preferred a murderer, and had killed Him Who was the Prince of Life, God had raised Him from the dead; as all the Apostles could bear witness, and that in His name and by His power alone, was this miracle worked. Peter then went on to say, that they did not know what they were about when they persecuted Jesus even unto death; and that if now, they would repent, and believe all that the Apostles could tell them of Jesus Christ, their sins should be "blotted out." And he reminded them, that Moses, and all the prophets since his time, had spoken of the coming of Christ; and that to them, as the descendants of the Children of Israel with whom the first covenant was made, God had now sent His son Jesus Christ, to bless them, in turning away every one from his iniquities. Peter and John were not long left to preach undisturbed to the people: for "as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide." The captain of the temple was one of the Priests, who directed and looked after all the guards and watches of the Priests and Levites, who were appointed to keep the temple from being in any way profaned. Before the death of Jesus, the Scribes and Pharisees were His chief enemies; but now that His disciples declared and taught that He had risen from the dead, the Sadducees became the most violent opposers of the Apostles, who taught the doctrine of the Resurrection.

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CHAPTER III.—ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA.

ALTHOUGH the Priests and the Sadducees did for the time put a stop to Peter's discourse, they could not undo the effect which it produced; for we read, "Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand."

The next day Peter and John were taken before the Sanhedrim, where Annas, the High Priest, and Caiaphas, with many others, were assembled. "And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?" Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, immediately told the members of the Council, that the lame man was healed solely and entirely by the name or power of the very Jesus of Nazareth, Whom they had crucified, Whom God had raised again from the dead. And further he told them, that Jesus, Whom they had rejected, was the corner stone as it were, the foundation of Christ's Church; and that none who would not believe in Him could be saved; saying also, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

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The boldness of the Apostles in thus speaking, greatly astonished their hearers; especially as they "perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men." Unlearned and ignorant according to the ideas of the world, but full of the best knowledge and wisdom; for by the Holy Spirit, they had been taught those things which make men wise unto salvation. All the learning in the world, although very useful and desirable, will be of no value in the day of death; but the wisdom which is from above, will then prove an inestimable treasure. Many who are ignorant of everything but what the Bible teaches them, will then be found more *truly wise*, than those who have spent their lives in acquiring knowledge, without searching the Scriptures.

The Priests and elders might well marvel; they knew the Apostles to be unlearned fishermen, and they despised them as being Galileans; "and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it." They saw that Peter and John were two of those who had always followed Jesus whilst He was on earth, and now it was certain that they had worked a great miracle: they could not deny this, for there, by the side of the two Apostles, stood the very man whom they had healed: a man well known to all at Jerusalem, as having never been able to stand upon his feet since he was born. The Priests and elders could not say the man was *not* healed; and therefore, as they were determined *not* to acknowledge the power of Jesus, they were in difficulty as to what they could do to the Apostles. "But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, saying, What shall we do to these men? for that

indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them, is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it. But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name."

It is sad to hear of rulers who were only anxious to prevent the people from believing in the truth! How truly did they bring upon themselves the sentence pronounced by our Lord, when he said, "Woe unto you lawyers, for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered."

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Having made up their minds what to do, the members of the Council sent again for the Apostles: "And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." The Jews, who professed to obey the Law given to Moses by God, could not possibly say that it was right to obey man rather than God; and the sudden and complete cure of this man, who was above forty years old, had given such a proof that the Apostles acted under the immediate direction of the Almighty, that the Priests knew not what to say or do.

"So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done. And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the Chief Priests and elders had said unto them." And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God, and praised Him Who had done such great things, and had accomplished every word that David and the prophets had spoken concerning the Messiah, the holy child Jesus, against whom "both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done."

And then the disciples prayed the Lord to grant them grace to speak the truth boldly, undismayed by the fear of man; and to continue those signs and wonders, which proved them to be acting by his special direction.

They were comforted and encouraged by an immediate answer to their prayers: for "when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. And with great power gave the Apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all." They had well and fearlessly used the grace already given to them, and therefore the Lord increased the gift, and strengthened them still further for their work.

"And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul": united together in perfect love and harmony; believing the same truths, and having the same object in all they did; namely, that of bringing all men to serve and obey the Lord. Even as to worldly matters, as we have said, the same unity or oneness of feeling prevailed, "neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the Apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need."

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At this time the Church of Christ, that is, the company of believers, was joined by a man who afterwards took a great share in the work of the Apostles: we read, "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 Joses had either been born in the isle of Cyprus, which lies in the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea, or he had lived there so long, that it was quite like his native country. As a Levite, he could never at any time have had any inheritance of land in Judæa; but of course a Levite might *buy* land in foreign countries, or even in Judæa itself, particularly now, when the distinction into tribes was almost lost. Joses had land probably in Cyprus, and being convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, he determined to join the company of believers, and devote his future life to the service of God and man, by preaching the Gospel to others. He therefore gave up all that he possessed, and was henceforth content to receive merely what was necessary for his food and raiment, like the poorest disciple. His joining them, was a great comfort and encouragement to the Apostles in their work, and they therefore surnamed him Barnabas, which means the Son of Consolation. By the name of Barnabas, he is always spoken of in Scripture.

Soon after Barnabas had joined the Apostles, a fearful punishment fell upon a man named Ananias, and his wife Sapphira, who also sold some land, and then brought part of the money they had received for it, pretending that they had brought the whole. When Ananias laid "a certain part at the Apostles' feet," he *acted* a lie, though he did not speak one; and for the lie in his heart, Peter reprovèd him, reminding him that he was not obliged to sell his land, and that after he had sold it, he could have done as he pleased with the money; but that to pretend he had brought the whole price, when he had only given a part, was a grievous sin; for, said Peter, "thou hast not lied unto man, but unto God." Immediately the wrath of God was shown in an awful manner. "Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and gave up the ghost: and the young men arose, wound him up" in grave clothes, "and carried him out, and buried him," "and great fear came upon all them that heard these things." We must observe also, that Ananias showed a great want of faith: had he believed that the Apostles were really filled with the Holy Ghost, he could not have expected to hide the truth from them: in lying to the Apostles he had lied unto God; but in fact all lies *are* a sin against God.

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About three hours after the burial of Ananias, his wife Sapphira, not knowing as yet what was done, came in. What she said we are not told; but we read, "And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much?" Her answer was a lie, for "she said, Yea, for so much;" not, however, stating how *much more* they had received for the land. "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." Well might fear come upon all who heard of these two, struck dead in their sin! Let us also fear, lest we likewise fall into the same condemnation; for though liars may not now be struck dead with the lie on their lips, we know that the Devil is the father of lies, and that "all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, prepared for the Devil and his angels." When we read such awful words, let us remember that we may be guilty in the sight of God, without telling a direct falsehood. All deceit and hypocrisy; holding our tongues when we ought to speak the truth; and telling *part* of the truth; are as displeasing in the sight of God as direct lies. We must speak and do the truth from our hearts; never attempting in any way to deceive others, or even to allow them to believe what we know is not true.

The Apostles, in spite of the threats of the Sanhedrim, continued to preach to the people in Solomon's porch, doing many signs and wonders among the people, who "magnified," or thought much of them; "and of the rest durst no man join himself to them." After such a warning as that given in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, no one who was not really and truly willing to devote himself entirely to the service of God, would dare to pretend to do so.

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CHAPTER IV.—APPOINTMENT OF DEACONS.

THE Apostles continued to teach the people, "and believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women. Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one."

The Priests and elders were much displeased at the Apostles having such influence over the people, who, witnessing the miracles worked by them in the name of Jesus, naturally believed in them, and in Him whose servants they were.

"Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation, and laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison." In the morning the High Priest called the Council together, "and sent to the prison to have them brought" up for trial. But the officers sent, returned, "saying, The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors; but when we had opened, we found no man within." And so indeed it was; for after the Apostles were shut up in prison, "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." Thus, whilst the keepers did not even know that their prisoners were gone, they were fearlessly preaching the Gospel in the temple, in obedience to the Lord's command.

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When the members of the Council heard that the Apostles were no longer in the prison, they could not help feeling that a miracle had been worked for their deliverance; and they dreaded the consequence of this fresh proof that the Lord was with them. Greatly perplexed, the High Priest, and the captain of the temple, and the Chief Priests, debated amongst themselves, and "doubted of them whereunto this would grow." Whilst the Priests and elders were thus considering the matter, "came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people."

This proof of the determination of the Apostles to obey God rather than man, without fear of the consequences, must have added to the perplexity of the Council, and increased their difficulty as to how they should deal with these men, whom the people loved, and were ready to defend against all who should attempt to hurt them. Wishing again to speak to the Apostles, they gave orders accordingly. "Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned." Nor was there any occasion to use violence, for the Apostles had no idea of resisting: they were ready to bear witness to the Lord Jesus before the Council, as well as in every other place. "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,"—that is, to make the people treat them as if they were guilty of murder, for having put Jesus to death. Peter and the other Apostles repeated their declaration, that they must obey God rather than men; and then they plainly told the Priests and elders that they had indeed killed Jesus Christ, the Messiah; and that the God of Israel had raised Him from the dead, to be the Saviour of all who would believe and repent: and

they further said, that God had appointed them to bear witness of all things which Jesus had said and done; and that the Holy Ghost, by whose help they worked miracles, was also a witness to the truth of all that they taught to the people. "When they heard that, they were cut to the heart"; but it was not a right sort of grief; for, instead of believing the Apostles' words, and so turning to the Lord, they "took counsel to slay them," that they might no longer preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

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One of the members of the Sanhedrim was a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a very learned man, much looked up to by all the Jews for his great wisdom. This man stood up, and having commanded the Apostles to be taken away for a short time, he spake to the other members of the Council, "and said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men." Then he reminded them, that on two former occasions, when false teachers had for a time led many of the people even to rebel against their rulers, it had ended in the false teachers being slain, and their followers dispersed, so that no evil consequences had arisen. He therefore advised that the Apostles should be left alone; "for," said he, "if this counsel or this work be of men" (an invention of men only), "it will come to nought: but if it be God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God." Gamaliel evidently began to think that what the Apostles said might be true, and that therefore, in persecuting them, the Jews might be fighting against God. To fight against God is to resist His will, to try to prevent what He wills from being done. This is folly as well as sin; for the Will of God must be done, and we "cannot overthrow it." Let us try to bring our Wills into subjection and agreement with the Will of God: where His Will contradicts our hopes and wishes, let us yield at once, and pray that we may at all times be able to say from our hearts, "Father, not my Will, but Thine be done." Those who through life resist, and fight against the Will of God, will be forced at last to submit to it, to their eternal misery.

The other members of the Council agreed to follow the advice of Gamaliel; but they did not do so without making another attempt to frighten the Apostles from continuing their work. "And when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go." These commands had, of course, no more effect upon the Apostles than the former threats. "And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name." They felt it an honour to suffer for the sake of Him, Who had suffered so much for them, and were only strengthened in their determination to show their love, by faithfully doing the work which their beloved Master had given them to do. "And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ."

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We have seen that the Believers, or Disciples, forming the Church of Christ, had at this time all things in common; and, as their numbers increased, it became impossible for the Apostles to divide the money to every person according to their need, without neglecting the more important work of preaching the Gospel to every creature. They had not time to do both things properly. We read: "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." We must remember that "Grecians" were not the inhabitants of Greece, as the word might seem to signify. The Hebrews here spoken of were of course Jews, natives of Judæa, now become believers in Christ, or Christians. But, as has been already said, there were Jews established in all lands, who had been born, and always lived, there. Numbers of these had also become Christians, and had now joined the Apostles' company at Jerusalem. These persons were called "Grecians," "Hellenists," or "Hellenistic Jews," because in the countries to which they belonged the Grecian language was spoken. These "Grecians," living amongst foreigners, had lost all knowledge of the Hebrew language, in which the Old Testament was originally written; so that they made use of the Greek translation of the Scriptures. *Hebrews*, then, were Jews of Judæa, who had become Christians; *Grecians* were Jews born in foreign lands, who had become Christians. The natives of Greece were called Greeks.

It seems that the Grecians thought their poor were not so well attended to as those of the Hebrews, and so they were dissatisfied, and a murmuring arose. The Apostles considered amongst themselves how to remedy this matter; then, calling the multitude of the disciples together, they explained that it was not reasonable to expect them to leave their special work of teaching, to attend to worldly matters; and they said, "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. And the saying pleased the whole multitude." Such a wise and sensible arrangement could not fail to meet with approval; and it was immediately put in execution. Of the seven men thus chosen (called by us Deacons), there are only two, of whose particular acts we read in Scripture. These are, a man named Philip, and Stephen, of whom it is especially said, that he was "a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost." These men, chosen from amongst themselves by the "multitude of disciples," were then "set before the Apostles," who approved of the choice; "and when they had prayed" for a blessing upon the step now taken, "they laid their hands on them," thus consecrating, or solemnly appointing, the Deacons to their work, and passing on to them by this significant action some of their own power and authority; for, although these seven men were to take care of the poor, and see that the common funds were properly distributed, they were also to help in preaching, and even to baptize those whom they should convert.

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The *word* "deacon" is not in the Book of Acts; but in the Epistles, Deacons are spoken of as persons appointed to help the Apostles, and serve under them. In the Church now, when a young

man is first admitted to be what is called a clergyman, he is said to be a deacon: afterwards he becomes a priest; but every man must be a deacon *before* he can be a priest. The new arrangement now made as to deacons, appears to have answered well, for we read that "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,"—that is, they came to believe the things spoken by the Apostles, and to acknowledge Jesus to be the Messiah; and then they were obedient, and *did* those things which the Gospel required.

Faith must always produce obedience. If it does not, it is not true faith, acceptable to God; nor will it avail us anything. Let us ever remember, that faith is a root from which must spring all manner of good works, the fruits of faith. If it does not produce these fruits, it is of no more value than the root of an apple-tree, when the tree bears no apples.

CHAPTER V.—THE FIRST MARTYR, STEPHEN.

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"AND Stephen," (the Deacon,) "full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people." His success among the people stirred up enemies against him.

Every considerable synagogue among the Jews, had an academy or school belonging to it, where young persons were instructed by the Rabbis: and it would seem that Stephen visited different synagogues, and tried to convince the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. "Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians (Jews from parts of Africa), and of them of Cilicia and of (other parts of) Asia, disputing with Stephen," and trying to contradict him; but as Stephen spake as the Holy Spirit guided him, "they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake." When these Rabbis found that they could bring no proofs against the truth of what Stephen taught, "they suborned (or bribed) men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God"—an accusation as false as the similar one brought against our blessed Lord Himself. By this false charge, the people and the elders and the scribes were stirred up against Stephen, and they "came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council." Stephen now stood before the Sanhedrim, and the Rabbis "set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law: for we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us." Stephen had, no doubt, taught that the ceremonial part of the law, given to keep the people in mind of the promised Messiah, need no longer be observed, since the Messiah *had* come in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. Probably, too, he had warned the Jews, that the temple, and even Jerusalem itself, would shortly be destroyed, because the inhabitants refused to acknowledge Jesus to be the Messiah. We have seen before, how easy it is to give to true and good words a false and bad meaning, if people are wickedly bent upon doing so. The Lord God Almighty now seems to have given a remarkable sign, that this man now accused of blasphemy, a sin directly against God Himself, was, on the contrary, one of His favoured servants, and under His peculiar care and protection: for we read that, "all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." To compare in this way the face of a man to that of an angel, was a Jewish way of saying, that there was something more than commonly pleasing and majestic in the countenance of such a man; and most likely the Lord now gave to Stephen's face, some particularly bright and holy look, so as to fill all who beheld it with surprise. The false witnesses, having made their accusation, "Then said the high priest, Are these things so?" Instead of answering as to the accusations of blasphemy, Stephen endeavoured to show his hearers how mistaken they were in their ideas of the Messiah; and how differently they would act, if they would consider all that had been told to Abraham and the rest of their forefathers, by God Himself. To this end, Stephen reminded them of how God had called Abraham out of his own land to be the father of the Children of Israel, giving him many precious promises, and establishing with him and his seed the Covenant of Circumcision in token of their being His peculiar people. Then Stephen spake of Isaac and of Jacob, and of the twelve patriarchs; and of how Joseph had been sold into Egypt, and was in time followed by his Father and Brothers and their descendants; who remained in Egypt four hundred years, according to what the Lord had told Abraham. Then Stephen spake of the cruel treatment endured by the Children of Israel; and how, in His own appointed time, God had wonderfully preserved the infant Moses to be the deliverer of His chosen people. He reminded them of the unwillingness of the Hebrews to listen to Moses, although appointed by God for this very purpose; and then he said, "This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush. He brought them out, after that he had shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness forty years."

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All these things were well known to the Jews, who held Moses in great reverence: and Stephen now reminds them, that it was this very Moses himself who prophesied concerning the expected Messiah, "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear." Then proceeding with his history, Stephen shortly noticed the giving of the Law; the idolatry and other sins of the Children of Israel, which caused them to wander for forty years in the wilderness, and caused the Almighty even then to warn them of a future punishment for forsaking Him, "I will carry you away beyond Babylon." Stephen then spake of "the tabernacle of witness," set up in the wilderness by the command of God, as a sign or token of the Covenant

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made between Him and His people. This tabernacle, he reminded them, had been brought by their fathers under the leading of Joshua, (for the word Jesus here used means Joshua,) into that land which had hitherto been "the possession of the Gentiles"; and that, about four hundred years after, David, "who found favour before God," "desired to find," or build, a more suitable tabernacle for the God of Jacob. "But Solomon built Him an house."

Having thus mentioned the temple, Stephen took occasion to remind them, that though it had pleased the Lord to manifest His glory in the temple, and promise in a certain way to be present there, yet "the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet (Isaiah), 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?" Stephen spake with proper respect of the temple, whilst he tried to show the Jews that they now thought too *much* of the temple, which was only a building set up in honour of the Lord God Almighty; and too *little* of Him, in Whose honour and for Whose worship it had been set up.

It seems probable that when Stephen spake of the temple, the Council interrupted him, and showed their determination not to listen to his teaching: for he now changed his tone entirely, and severely reproached them, saying, "Ye stiffnecked (or obstinate) 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 shewed before of the coming of the Just One (the Messiah); of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers." Stephen also charged them with not having kept the Law which was given to them by God Himself, through the disposition or ministry of angels; in that they had not received Jesus, Who was the *object* of that law. This plain speaking made the members of the Council, and all who were present, quite furious against Stephen. "When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth." Their rage had no effect on Stephen: supported by the Holy Spirit, by whose inspiration he had spoken, he had no fear of death: all his hope and trust were in heaven. Stephen was destined to be the first martyr; and now to strengthen his faith, and the faith of those who were still to remain and do their work on earth, it pleased the Lord to show to Stephen a glorious vision, as a proof that their crucified Master was really, as He had said, at the right hand of God in Heaven; and that having done everything exactly as He had predicted, He would most assuredly also fulfil the gracious promise, to "be with them always even unto the end." Stephen, as we read, "being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly 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." These words, so full of comfort and encouragement to his fellow labourers, raised the fury of the unbelieving Jews to the highest pitch: "Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears," that they might hear no more of what they considered blasphemy. Nor was this all; without waiting for a trial, they at once "ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him." "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." Like his blessed Master, he prayed for them that did the wrong—setting us an example that we should forgive injuries, and pray for them which despitefully use us and persecute us. When Stephen "had said this, he fell asleep." The death of a faithful follower of Christ is but a sleep, from which he will awaken in the presence of the Lord. Thus died the first martyr; "and devout men," that is, true believers, "carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him"; as well they might, when they thought of their own loss.

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In reading this history, let us remember that this same Jesus, Whom Stephen saw at the right hand of God, still liveth there, to make intercession for us.

When Stephen was stoned, "the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul."

Those persons, upon whose witness or testimony any man was executed, were, by the law, required to cast the first stone; thus, as it were, taking upon themselves the guilt of murder, if they had become *false* witness. The witnesses who had accused Stephen of blasphemy, prepared to do their part by taking off their long upper robes, so as to have freer use of their arms: the garments thus taken off, were placed under the charge of some one who had also been active in getting the victim condemned.

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Saul was a young man, neither poor nor ignorant: he was a Jew, born at Tarsus, a city in Cilicia; and under the care of Gamaliel, (who had advised that the Apostles should be let alone,) he had been strictly brought up as a Pharisee, and was filled with an intense hatred of all who believed in Jesus. He "was consenting unto the death of Stephen," anxious for it. Nor was he satisfied with one victim: for he took an active part in "the great persecution of the church," which arose in Jerusalem at this time. The violent behaviour of the Jews, scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judæa and Samaria, "all the disciples except the Apostles." How it happened, that the Apostles were allowed to remain in peace at Jerusalem, we do not know; but it was needful that they should for the present remain there, to direct and govern the affairs of the Church, and bring more believers into it; and therefore the Lord protected them in Jerusalem, that the Gospel might first be fully preached to the Jews, as had been appointed.

Mean time, by driving so many disciples out of Jerusalem, the Jewish rulers did the very thing they wished to prevent: for wherever these disciples went, they did not cease to speak of the Messiah; thus spreading the knowledge of the Gospel over the country, and bringing many believers into the Church.

Saul mean time was active against the truth: hunting out believers in their own houses, that they might be punished: "he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison."

CHAPTER VI.—CONVERSION OF SAUL.

THE deacon Philip, having left Jerusalem in consequence of the persecution after the martyrdom of Stephen, "went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And there was great joy in that city."

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There was, however, in Samaria at that time, a man named Simon Magus, who pretended himself to be the expected Messiah. The Scripture says of him, that he used sorcery and bewitched the people. We know that before the coming of the Lord Jesus, evil spirits had a power which He took from them, of getting possession of the bodies of men: and as has been said before, it seems that bad men had sometimes dealings with evil spirits, by whose help they did things which otherwise they could not have done. But any one who did seek to have dealings with evil spirits, was guilty of a very great sin: such unlawful deeds were strictly forbidden by the Law; those who were guilty of them, were called magicians, sorcerers, wizards, witches, &c., and were, by the command of God, to be put to death. Simon had for some time deceived the people of Samaria by his arts; but when Philip preached to them of Jesus Christ and His kingdom, they believed his words, and "were baptized, both men and women." Simon himself also believed that Jesus of Nazareth was the true Messiah, and he likewise was baptized in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, though he was still far from understanding the true nature of the religion taught by Philip. "When he was baptized, he continued with Philip," and "wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done." The account of all that had been done by Philip at Samaria, soon reached Jerusalem; and the Apostles sent Peter and John to finish the work so well begun, for although Philip had taught and baptized the people, he had no power like the Apostles, to bestow the gift of the Holy Spirit.

When Peter and John were come down, they prayed for the converts "that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (for as yet he was fallen upon none of them; only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus). Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost."

Simon now showed how little he understood of the things of God; for when he "saw that through laying on of the Apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost."

Peter reproved Simon very severely for having thought it possible that the gifts of God could be bought with money; and told him, that although he had received the outward form of Baptism, it was quite plain that he was no true believer in Jesus Christ, but was still in bondage to Satan. He then called upon him to repent truly of all his wickedness, and especially of the fearful sin of which he was now guilty, and pray to God, Who could alone forgive the thought of his heart.

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Peter's words alarmed Simon, who now besought Peter's help, "and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me."

When Peter and John had testified to the truth of all that Philip had taught, they returned to Jerusalem; and as they went, they "preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans."

After these things had passed, Philip was directed by God to go into a desert part of Judæa, lying between Joppa and Gaza, to meet an officer belonging to Candace, the queen of a country called Ethiopia. This man, who held the important office of treasurer, had become a Jew, and was a sincere worshipper of God as far as his knowledge went. He had taken a long journey in order to worship God in the temple, after the manner of the Jews: and now returning homewards, he was sitting in his chariot studying the Scriptures. "Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot." Philip obeyed, and heard him read that part of the prophecy of Isaiah which saith, "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: in his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth." Philip asked him, "Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me?"

Being earnest in his desire to learn, this officer was rejoiced to meet with some one who seemed likely to give him the guidance he needed; and so "he desired," or entreated "Philip, that he would come up and sit with him" in his chariot, and explain the passage of Scripture which he had just read.

"And the eunuch (or officer) answered Philip, and said, I pray thee of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself or of some other man? Then Philip," guided by the Holy Spirit, "opened his mouth, and began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus": showing him that these words were spoken of the promised Messiah; and that Jesus of Nazareth, whom the Jews had so lately crucified, was indeed the Messiah spoken of by the Prophets: and he doubtless

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spake of Baptism, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, as the appointed means of admission into the Church of Christ: for "as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." This was enough. "And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him." Philip had now done the work which he had been sent to do. "And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip," who was thus conveyed in some miraculous way to a place called Azotus, "so that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing," that he had been instructed in the Gospel, and admitted into the Church of Christ by Baptism. This Ethiopian officer was a true convert, and no doubt his future life proved him to be so.

Philip mean time found himself in a miraculous manner at Azotus, and from thence journeyed northward, and "preached in all the cities, till he came to Cæsarea," where his home was.

The next event recorded in the Book of Acts, is the wonderful conversion of Saul, who was suddenly, by the mercy of the Lord, changed from being an enemy to all the followers of Jesus, into a true believer, and an active and zealous preacher of the truth as it is in Jesus.

We have already heard of Saul as a persecutor, making havoc of the Church at Jerusalem, after the death of Stephen. We now learn from the Book of Acts, that, "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord," he "went unto the High Priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues," giving him authority "that if he found any of this way," any believers in Jesus, "whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem." The High Priest was no doubt too glad to give this power to one who would execute it zealously; and Saul set out on his journey, which turned out very differently from what he expected and intended.

For when "he came near Damascus, suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Saul's answer to this question, shows that he was even now convinced that the voice was none other than the voice of God; for 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." This seems to have been a Jewish expression, meaning that it was useless for any persons to resist an authority and power, which they could have no hope of overcoming, for that they would only hurt and injure themselves; just as any person kicking against thorns, would tear and injure himself, instead of harming the thorns. Saul's heart was indeed touched and changed by the Holy Spirit, and willing to obey the commands of Him whose followers he had so cruelly persecuted; "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." "And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man": the excessive brightness of the vision he had seen, had deprived him of his sight, and he arose from the earth blind and helpless. "And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man." They had heard and seen something of what Saul had done; enough to make them unable to speak from astonishment and awe: they had heard a voice, but did not understand the words spoken, and seeing no man, they were perplexed as to whence the voice came. Now, however, seeing their master was blind, "they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink." We can well imagine how Saul passed these three days in meditation and earnest prayer to the Lord, who had so mercifully called him to be a true believer. His continued blindness did not shake his faith, or lessen his love; on the contrary, they increased more and more; and soon he had his reward, for the Lord showed him in a vision that his sight should be restored to him. There was residing in Damascus at this time a certain disciple, one of the believers in Jesus, "named Ananias: and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord,"—which meant, Here I am, ready to obey Thee, and do whatever Thou shalt bid me do. "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." This direction rather startled Ananias, who well knew Saul of Tarsus to be the bitter enemy of Jesus Christ, and of all who believed in Him: therefore, "Ananias answered, 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 upon thy name." But the Lord forbade Ananias to make any further objections, since it was his duty simply to believe and obey; and He said unto him, "Go thy way," do as I command thee. At the same time, the Lord in His mercy encouraged Ananias, by making known His purpose concerning Saul; saying, "for he is a chosen vessel unto me (that is, a messenger), to bear my name," or to bear witness of the things belonging unto God, "before the Gentiles, and kings, and the Children of Israel: for I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake."

Ananias hesitated no longer, but went to the house pointed out to him, "and putting his hands on him, said, Brother Saul, receive thy sight: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized." After this, Saul at once joined the Church, or company of believers at Damascus, and "straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God." All that heard him preach were greatly amazed, knowing with what a very different purpose Saul had come to Damascus. From other parts of Scripture we learn, that Saul did not at this time stay long in Damascus, but went away into Arabia, where he stayed quietly for three years; no doubt studying

the Scriptures, and preparing for the great work he was to do amongst the Gentiles. After that, he returned to Damascus, about Anno Domini 38; that is, thirty-eight years from the year in which Jesus Christ was born.

CHAPTER VII.—SAUL JOINS THE CHURCH AT JERUSALEM.

SYRIA, of which Damascus was the capital, had become a Roman province about sixty-three years before the birth of Christ. Whilst Saul was in Arabia, Aretas, the king of that country, went into the land of Judæa, to fight against Herod Antipas, who had married the daughter of Aretas, and then treated her very ill. Herod was defeated in a battle, and then he applied for help to the Emperor Tiberius, as supreme ruler of Judæa. Tiberius commanded his general Vitellius to chastise Aretas for his attack upon Herod, and bring him to Rome, alive or dead. Whilst Vitellius was at Jerusalem preparing to execute this order, Tiberius died; and Vitellius marched his army into winter quarters. Aretas took advantage of this, and attacked the city of Damascus, which he took, and kept possession of for some time. Saul, as has been said, returned to Damascus whilst Aretas still held possession of it. By his preaching, he confounded the Jews which were at Damascus; for strengthened more and more by the Holy Spirit, he spake of Jesus of Nazareth, "proving that this is very Christ." Not knowing how to answer him, and fearing the effect of such preaching, the Jews, after many days were fulfilled, "took counsel to kill him." From another part of Scripture we learn, that the governor set over the city of Damascus by Aretas, took part with the Jews, and caused the gates to be watched night and day, to kill Saul, should he attempt to leave the city, before the Jews had accomplished their purpose. But all these plots were, by the mercy of God, made known in some way to Saul. The disciples of course knew that the Lord could work a miracle, to save one who was chosen to be a preacher of the Gospel; but they also knew that it is the duty of man in all cases, to take proper means for his own safety: and trusting that the Lord would bless their efforts, "they took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket." Saul being thus outside the walls, without passing through the gates, journeyed on to Jerusalem.

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At that time, people living in one city, knew very little of what was going on in others at a distance; and the war between Herod and Aretas, would naturally have cut off even the usual communication between Jerusalem and Damascus. If the Chief Priests and other members of the Sanhedrim, had heard any rumour of Saul's wonderful conversion, they would of course try to keep such a matter secret. These things account for the fact, that the Apostles in Jerusalem had never heard of the change that had taken place in Saul, whom they remembered as consenting to the death of Stephen, and then going to Damascus to persecute the believers. Three years had now passed since that time, and the Apostles probably thought that during that period, Saul had been actively employed in trying to prevent the spreading of the Gospel.

"And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed (or attempted) to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple." Barnabas, however, in some way had become acquainted with the circumstances concerning Saul: he therefore "took him, and brought him to the Apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus." This was sufficient; on the testimony of Barnabas, the Apostles gladly received Saul as a fellow labourer, and from that time "he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem. And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus," especially endeavouring to convince the Grecians, or foreign Jews. But instead of listening to Saul, "they went about to slay him"; which, when the "brethren knew, they brought him down to Cæsarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus," his native place in Cilicia. The removal of Saul at this time, seems to have had a good effect; for we read, "then had the churches rest throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied."

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Leaving the history of Saul for awhile, the Book of Acts gives us some account of Peter's labours: he went from place to place, spreading the knowledge of the Gospel everywhere. At Lydda, a very large village not far from Joppa, "he found a certain man named Æneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy. And Peter said unto him, Æneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately," the palsy leaving him and his strength returning, as Peter spake these words.

The news of what had happened at Lydda soon reached Joppa; and the disciples who dwelt there, sent unto Peter, desiring that he would not delay to come to them. The cause of their sending for the Apostle, was the death of a certain disciple, a woman "named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did": her kindness and charity had made her to be loved by all, and her death therefore caused great grief to those who had benefited by her kindness. Peter obeyed the summons of the messengers; he "arose and went with them. When he was come" to Joppa, "they brought him into the upper chamber," where they had laid the body: "and all the widows stood by, weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them." But Peter put them all out of the chamber, and then "kneeled down, and prayed." After this, turning to the body, he 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, presented her alive.

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And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord," in Whose name, and by Whose power, Peter had worked this great miracle.

It has been said of this Tabitha, that "by interpretation her name was Dorcas." This good woman was a *Grecian*, or foreign Jewess, and as such, her name was Tabitha, which means an "antelope"—a very graceful animal of the deer kind, having very beautiful eyes. It was a common practice amongst the Arabs, and other nations of Asia, to give to female children the names of such animals as were particularly admired. The Jews, instead of calling Tabitha by what was *to them & foreign* name, called her Dorcas; because that word, in their language, meant antelope. Therefore, Dorcas was the Jewish interpretation of Tabitha.

Peter did not leave Joppa again immediately after the restoration of Dorcas; on the contrary, "he tarried many days in Joppa, with one Simon a tanner."

The Gospel had by this time been preached freely to the Jews in Jerusalem, and throughout Judæa, Samaria, and Galilee; and the time was now come for it to be preached to the Gentiles also. Peter was accordingly chosen by God to begin this work, about A.D. 40. We are told, "There was a certain man in Cæsarea 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 alway." The Italian band, was a company of a thousand Roman soldiers, acting probably as a guard to the Roman governor of Judæa, whose usual residence was at Cæsarea, a city of great importance.

Cornelius was one of the centurions, or captains, of the Italian band: he was a Gentile, who had already given up idolatry, and become a sincere worshipper of the God of Israel: but as he had not observed all the forms and ceremonies required by the Law, the Jews did not look upon him as one of themselves. Such persons were called "Proselytes of the Gate"; and although they were allowed to dwell among the Jews, they were looked upon as unclean.

Cornelius had brought all his household to worship the One True God: he was constant in prayer; and he showed his love for God, by charity to man for His sake.

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Such a devout man was well pleasing to the Lord, Who now called him to a "knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus." Cornelius being engaged in prayer about the ninth hour of the day, one of the times especially appointed for prayer in the temple, saw in a vision an angel of God, who told him that by his prayers and his alms (signs of faith and obedience), he had found favour with God. The angel then bade him send to Joppa for Simon Peter, saying also, "he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do." We may be sure that Cornelius received this divine message with joy and thankfulness, and he immediately sent "two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually"—men upon whom he could thoroughly depend, to Joppa, to fetch Peter. On the morrow, as these messengers drew near to Joppa, the Lord, by means of a vision, prepared Peter to receive them. About the sixth hour Peter went up upon the house-top to pray, where he would be quiet and undisturbed. "And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance," or kind of fainting fit. In this state he had a vision; and "saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet, knit (or fastened together) at the four corners, and let down to the earth." In this vessel, which is compared to a large sheet, were "all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air"—many of these creatures being unclean, according to the Jewish Law. "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." Although Peter was a true follower of Jesus Christ, he had not yet got over his Jewish prejudices; but like the rest of his countrymen, looked upon the Gentiles as unclean, and thought that it was as great a sin for a Jew to keep company with a Gentile, as it would be for him to eat any of the unclean animals, which the Lord forbade him to touch. The vision now sent to Peter, plainly showed him that Jesus did not wish his followers to observe any longer the ceremonial Law; and above all, that in preaching the Gospel, no distinction was to be made between Jew and Gentile. No man was to be looked upon as unclean, since it was the Will of God that *all* should come to the knowledge of the truth, and be joined together in one body, the Church.

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This vision greatly astonished Peter, and perplexed him: but while he "doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean," the whole matter was made plain to him. By this time "the men which were sent from Cornelius" had reached Joppa, and having made inquiry for the house of Simon the tanner, they now "stood before the gate, and called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there:" and "while Peter thought on the vision," trying to discover what it might mean, "the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down," to hear wherefore they are come, and "go with them," as they will ask thee, "doubting nothing"—having no doubts or fears upon the subject, but feeling sure that you are doing right by going with them,—"for I have sent them."

CHAPTER VIII.—PETER AND CORNELIUS.

HAVING received the direct commands of God by the Holy Spirit, "Peter" at once "went down to the

men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom you 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. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him. And the morrow after they entered into Cæsarea." Cornelius, knowing at about what time his messengers might be expected back, had called his friends together to receive Peter, whom he was anxiously expecting to come with his servants. "And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends. And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him." Thus did the centurion show his joy and gratitude after the manner of the Gentiles, who often did pay to their fellow creatures that degree of reverence and worship due to God alone; and Cornelius, looking upon Peter as the especial servant of God sent to him by the interposition of an angel, might naturally on his appearance fall into this error. Peter, however, at once checked such an expression of the centurion's feeling; teaching him, that the worship due to God must never be given to any man under any circumstances; so, when Cornelius fell at his feet, "Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man. And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together. And he said unto them, 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 shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean. Therefore came I to you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for." Having thus given an account of himself, Peter very naturally added, "I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?" Cornelius at once gave to Peter an account of the vision that had been vouchsafed to him, and in consequence of which he had sent for him; and added, "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."

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Peter, as a Jew, had been brought up to believe that the favour of God was confined to the descendants of Abraham; but he now openly expresses his conviction, that no such line of separation existed, saying, "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:" a doctrine very displeasing to the unbelieving Jews, but most comforting to the Gentiles, who were no longer shut out from the favour of God, now that all distinction between Jew and Gentile was done away with by the preaching of the Gospel. Peter then spake to Cornelius and his friends of Jesus; of His Life, Death, Resurrection, and of the commandment which He had given to His Apostles "to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead;" and Peter ended his discourse by repeating the great Gospel truth, "that through faith in Jesus all may receive remission or pardon of their sins."

Even while Peter was speaking, the Lord gave a signal proof that there was indeed, in His sight, no difference between Jew and Gentile, amongst those who believed the Gospel, and became followers of Jesus; for "the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word," that is, the Gospel as now preached by Peter; and the Spirit enabled "them to speak with tongues," that is, to speak foreign languages, as in the case of the Apostles on the Day of Pentecost: for this instance of mercy they did magnify and praise the Lord.

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"And they of the circumcision," the Jews who had become believers, and had now accompanied Peter from Joppa to Cæsarea, "were astonished, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the Holy Ghost," in this plain and unmistakeable manner.

"Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" Peter justly felt, that these Gentiles, who had so evidently been made partakers of "the inward and spiritual grace of Baptism," might be safely allowed to receive "the outward visible sign." "And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days" at Cæsarea, that he might yet further instruct them in the doctrines of the Gospel.

Peter no doubt complied with this request, and we may be sure that he dwelt on the necessity of holiness in all the followers of Jesus, and exhorted his hearers to constant and earnest prayer to Him, from Whom come all good gifts, and without Whose help man can do no good thing.

"The Apostles and brethren that were in Judæa, heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God," without at the same time hearing under what circumstances Peter had gone amongst them to preach it.

"And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision,"—that is, those Jews who, although they had become disciples, still thought that the Law of Moses was to be obeyed in all its ceremonies, and that the Gospel should be preached to Jews only,—blamed, or "contended with Peter, saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them." Peter, instead of being angry, that he, one of the Apostles appointed by Christ, should be thus called to account by those whose duty it was to learn of him, quietly "rehearsed (or repeated) the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them," beginning with his own vision at Joppa, and ending with the baptism of Cornelius and his friends, in consequence of the pouring out of the Holy Ghost upon them; saying, in regard to this subject, "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?"

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"When they heard these things, they held their peace," ceased to blame Peter, seeing that he

had only done as God directed him: and being now convinced that it was indeed the Will of the Lord that the Gospel should be preached to all nations, they "glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."

All who believe in Jesus Christ themselves, will always rejoice when others are brought to do so too: Christians will ever show their love for Jesus, by doing all in their power to bring others to know and love Him: and whatever else we may be able to do, let us always remember to pray for them, and to ask God to let "His knowledge cover the earth as the waters cover the sea."

One thing more we should remark, as it teaches us a useful lesson in our dealings with our fellow creatures; and that is, how often disputes and quarrels would be avoided, if we followed Peter's example; and, instead of being angry when we are unjustly blamed, were to take it patiently, and then quietly explain all the circumstances which have caused the misunderstanding. But instead of that, amongst us, whether children or grown-up people, if one makes a false accusation, or casts undeserved blame upon another, that other too often feels provoked and angry, and answers sharply; one sharp cross answer leads to others; and so on, until there is a regular quarrel, whereby both parties sin against God: and all this might have been prevented by a few quiet gentle words of explanation. Let us remember, "that a soft answer turneth away wrath," and that the "beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water,"—we cannot tell where it will stop.

The Lord bids us live peaceably with all men: let us try to do so, striving never to provoke others, nor to be provoked by them.

We have seen that, after Stephen's death, most of the disciples left Jerusalem, and "they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen, travelled as far as the country of Phenice," or Phœnicia, to the N.W. of Judæa, and to the isle of Cyprus, and to the town of Antioch in Syria, which lay about twelve miles from the sea, having the river Orontes running through it. To all these distant parts the disciples travelled, "preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only," who happened to be in those different places. "And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians," the Jews born in foreign lands, preaching the Lord Jesus. The people of Cyprus, and of Cyrene on the coast of Africa, spake the Greek language; and therefore, could make themselves understood by the Grecians, who knew nothing of Hebrew, the language in which the other disciples preached. "And the hand of the Lord was with" all them that preached; and "a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord."

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"Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch," to ascertain the truth of what the Apostles had heard, and to confirm the faith of those who had turned to the Lord. Barnabas was now numbered with the Apostles, and exercised like authority; "for he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith." When he came to Antioch, and had seen how by the grace of God so many were truly converted, he "exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord": that is, that they would continue steadfast in the faith, and determine to devote themselves entirely, body and soul, heart and mind, to the service of the Lord. The preaching of such a man could not fail to have its effect; for he was full of the Holy Ghost; and so we read that "much people was added unto the Lord."

CHAPTER IX.—PETER DELIVERED FROM PRISON.

BARNABAS, finding that there was plenty of work to be done at Antioch, "departed to Tarsus, for to seek Saul," that he might come and help him. "And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church" (that is, joined in the assemblies of the believers), "and taught much people,"—converting, we may be sure, Gentiles as well as Jews. Scripture tells us here, "And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." Some people have thought that this name, in which we glory, was given to the disciples by their enemies, in scorn of them as followers of Christ; but it is far more likely that it was given them by Saul and Barnabas, under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

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Up to this time, the Jewish converts were called amongst themselves "disciples," "believers," "saints"; and all together, "the Church." Their enemies called them "Nazarenes," "Galileans," or the "men of this way." Now that there were so many of them, it was quite necessary that they should be distinguished by some peculiar name; and what name could be more appropriate, than one which marked them as the followers and disciples of Jesus Christ—believers in the Messiah, the Anointed, through Whom alone they, and all mankind, could receive pardon of their sins? Let us, whilst we glory in the name of Christians, take care that we are not so in name *only*. All who are joined to Christ, or made part of His body the Church, by Baptism, are now called Christians. The cross is the sign, or symbol, of the Christian faith. In Baptism, the figure of the cross is made on the forehead of the person baptized, to signify that he, or she, is now entered as a faithful soldier and servant of Christ; and that this service is to be continued as long as life lasts.

This shows us what each one of us should be,—"a faithful soldier," fighting against all the enemies of our Lord, which are the Devil and his evil angels, our own bad passions and desires, and every kind of sin: and "a faithful servant," studying to know his Master's Will, that he may do

it thoroughly, whatever suffering or trouble it may bring upon himself. Let us seriously consider whether we are such Christians, really and truly trying to serve and please God. If we are *not*, the name of Christian will be of no use to us. Jesus Himself says, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." Let each one of us pray earnestly to God, that for the sake of His blessed Son, Jesus Christ, He will give us the help of the Holy Spirit, so that we may become true Christians in the sight of Him, by Whom all our thoughts, words, and actions are known.

In order to understand perfectly all that the Bible tells us, it is necessary to mention a few circumstances connected with the history of the Jews, which are not written in the Scriptures, but are told us by a man called Josephus, himself a Jew, who lived at this time, and has left us an account of all that he saw and heard amongst his countrymen. We have already heard that Herod the Great, who slew the infants of Bethlehem, had many descendants, who all bore the same name, and several of whom are spoken of in Scripture. Some account has already been given of them. Aristobulus, one of the unfortunate sons of Herod the Great and Mariamne, left two sons: one named Herod Agrippa, called also the Elder, to distinguish him from his own son, named also Herod Agrippa; and another son, also called Herod, who became King of Chalcis. Herod Agrippa the Elder lived for some years quietly at Rome, as a private person, and was in favour with Tiberius, who became Emperor of Rome A.D. 14. But some persons having accused Herod, whether truly or falsely we cannot say, of wishing for the Emperor's death, he was put into prison, where he remained until Tiberius died, about four years after the Crucifixion of Jesus. Caligula, who became Emperor at the death of Tiberius, A.D. 37, made Herod Agrippa king over Iturea and some neighbouring parts of the country.

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Pontius Pilate had ceased before this to be Governor, or Procurator, of Judæa. A riot, or disturbance, had taken place amongst the people of Samaria. Pilate put a stop to it; but he afterwards treated the people with such extreme severity, that the Roman Emperor deprived him of his government, which he had held for about ten years. Pilate was banished to Vienne, a place in Gaul (as France was then called), and there he killed himself.

About the same time that Pilate was deprived of his office, Herod Antipas was also deprived of his. Herod Antipas, the second son of Herod the Great, was the tetrarch, or governor of Galilee, who put John the Baptist to death, and who, with his men of war, mocked and ill treated our blessed Lord, Who was sent to him by Pilate. A few years after the death of Jesus, Herod wished to make himself king of Judæa; and he was in consequence deprived of his government, and banished into Spain, also a Roman province, where he died miserably. So soon did punishment fall upon these two bad men, who had sinned against the Lord Jesus Christ.

Caligula, who made Herod Agrippa king over some parts of Syria and Palestine, was anxious to be looked upon and treated as a god; and of course his heathen subjects did not much care whether he were so considered or not. But although the Jews had refused to believe in the Messiah, they had, ever since the return from the Captivity, a horror of worshipping anything but the Lord God Almighty, the God of Abraham. When, therefore, Caligula ordered that a gilt statue of himself, as a god, should be set up in the temple, all Judæa was filled with horror; and for several weeks the people ceased from following their usual occupations, and the country towards Mount Carmel was crowded with people in mourning. The Roman governor of Syria, charged to set up this statue, seeing the distress of the people, kindly listened to their entreaties, that he would wait a little before he executed this dreadful order. The Jews then applied to Herod Agrippa the Elder, who happened to be in Rome; and he, with great difficulty, persuaded Caligula not to insist upon setting up this statue.

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When Claudius became Emperor, A.D. 41, he added the provinces of Judæa and Samaria to Herod's dominions, so that he governed the whole land of Palestine, bearing the title of king.

The trouble that the Jews were in under Caligula, prevented their thinking so much of persecuting the Christians; and thus the Church of Christ had a little rest, and went on increasing. But now that Herod Agrippa had become King of Judæa, it was different; for he, seeing the number of Christians increasing in a most extraordinary manner, was fearful that they might rebel, and refuse to obey him as their king: therefore we read, "Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also." Herod was anxious to gain favour with his Jewish subjects; and there was no more certain way of doing so, than by persecuting the Christians. Having therefore killed one of the sons of Zebedee, he determined to take Peter, who was one of the chief amongst the Apostles. "Then were the days of unleavened bread"—that is, the Feast of the Passover was now drawing near; and the preparation for that Holy Sacrifice had already begun, by the putting away of leaven out of every Jewish house, according to the Law of Moses. "And when Herod had apprehended Peter, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people," with the intention, no doubt, of slaying him, as he had already slain James. Four soldiers formed a quaternion; four quaternions therefore were sixteen men, who were especially appointed to guard Peter. "Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him": and the prayers of the saints were more effectual than all the precautions taken by Herod.

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It was customary with the Romans to fasten a prisoner to his keeper by a light chain, which went round the wrist of each; thus rendering it impossible for the prisoner to move without the knowledge of his keeper. For greater security, Peter was thus bound to two of the soldiers.

During the night before the day on which "Herod would have brought Peter forth, he was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison. And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side," (to awaken him,) "and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands," (without disturbing the keepers). "And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me." Peter did as he was told; but all this time he was not aware that he was really free, but thought he was merely dreaming: he "wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision. When they were past the first and the second ward," (different parts of the prison, without being perceived by any of those who kept the doors,) "they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him." His miraculous work being now accomplished, the angel left Peter to go on his own way. The departure of his heavenly guide seems to have aroused Peter to the reality of what had happened; he no longer thought he had seen a vision. "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. And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark." This Mark, whose name was also John, was the writer of the Gospel bearing his name: his mother was sister to Barnabas, and her house was no doubt a place, where the Christian brethren often met for the purpose of prayer; and now, although it was not yet daylight, "many were gathered together praying." Probably they had spent the night in prayer for the deliverance of Peter. "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."

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The faith of the brethren was not strong enough to make them at once believe in such a wonderful answer to their prayers. They knew that Peter was securely shut up in prison; and so, when Rhoda suddenly announced that he was standing at the door, they said unto her, "Thou art mad"; thinking that she did not know what she was saying: and when she insisted "that it was even so," they could not then believe that it really was Peter himself, but said, "It is his angel," or spirit. "But Peter continued knocking"; thus showing that it was no spirit, but a real living being: "and when they had opened the door, they were astonished." Peter would not allow them to express their astonishment, but "beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace," (that is, making a sign unto them not to speak,) he "declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison." When he had finished the wonderful recital, he said, "Go, shew these things unto James, and to the brethren."

Though in many respects all the Apostles were upon an equality, it was necessary that some one of them should have the particular direction of the affairs of the Church at Jerusalem; and James seems to have held this office. The other Apostles therefore gave him an account of their labours, and of anything remarkable which took place. This James, called "the Less," to distinguish him from James the son of Zebedee, is sometimes spoken of as "the Lord's brother," though there is every reason to believe that he was not his brother, but the nephew of His mother Mary. In those times, such near kinsmen as first cousins—that is, the children of brothers and sisters—were often called brethren. If the mother of Jesus had had any other children, it would not have been necessary for our Lord to commend her to the care of His beloved disciple John, whom He bade her to look upon as a son.

James is always considered as the first Bishop: he was Bishop of the Church in Jerusalem; and he remained in that city, whilst the other Apostles travelled from place to place, preaching the Gospel to all people. Peter was anxious that James, and all the brethren, should know what had happened to him, that they might bless God for answering their prayers in such a wonderful manner, and that their faith might be strengthened, by seeing how able and willing the Lord is to preserve His servants, and defend them from all enemies, as long as He has any work for them to do upon earth.

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CHAPTER X.—SAUL AND BARNABAS CALLED TO PREACH TO THE GENTILES.

AFTER giving his message for James, "Peter departed, and went unto another place," where Herod's officers would be less likely to look for him, than in a house where the Christians were in the habit of meeting.

Nor did Peter remain in Jerusalem, where he would at any moment be liable to be discovered: what he did is not quite certain, but there is good reason to believe that he went to Rome, and preached the Gospel to Jews and Gentiles; so as to found, or begin, the establishment of a Christian Church in that city. It is also believed that Mark went with Peter, and that he then wrote his Gospel, for the use of the Christian converts at Rome.

When Herod found that Peter had actually escaped out of prison, he caused all the keepers of the prison to be put to death.

After this, he "went down from Judæa to Cæsarea, and there abode."

From other writings we learn, that Herod went to Cæsarea at this time, for the purpose of celebrating a festival in honour of Claudius Cæsar, who had become Emperor of Rome a year or two before, in A.D. 41. We also learn that the people of Tyre and Sidon had in some way or other offended Herod, who was intending to make war upon them. The idea of war greatly alarmed the inhabitants of Phœnicia, because they got the chief part of their wheat and honey, and other provisions, from the land of Judæa; and of course if there were a war, such supplies would be stopped, and a famine would be the consequence. We read in the Scripture, that "Herod was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon: but they came with one accord to him, and, having made Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend, desired peace; because their country was nourished by the king's country." Herod, at the request of Blastus, consented to receive the messengers sent from Tyre and Sidon. "And upon a set day," a day appointed for the purpose, "Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration" (or long speech) "unto them." What Herod said, we do not know; but Josephus tells us that he wore on this occasion a magnificent robe of silver tissue, and that the sun shining upon it, made it look so dazlingly bright and beautiful, that the people cried out, Forgive us for having only paid honour to you as a mortal king: from this time we shall look upon you as being far superior to mortals! Instead of reproving them for thus setting up a mortal man as being equal to God, Herod was pleased with this speech; but he had soon cause to repent of his pride and folly: for before he left the theatre, or public building in which such assemblies took place, he was seized with most dreadful pains in his stomach, so that in his agony he exclaimed, "I whom ye have called a god am now going to die a miserable death." The king was then carried to his palace, where he died after five days of fearful suffering: a warning to all, who allow others to treat them as if they were beings superior to their fellow-men.

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None of this is told us in the Bible: all that we read on this subject in the Book of Acts, is, that Herod "made an oration. And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost."

Herod died about A.D. 44, lamented by the Jews, whose favour he had gained by his persecution of the Christians: the Roman soldiers, on the contrary, rejoiced at his death, and spake against him, which made the Jews very angry. This bad feeling now raised between the Roman soldiers and the Jews, was one cause of the troubles and disturbances which soon followed: for from this time until Jerusalem was destroyed, twenty-six years later, the land of Judæa never enjoyed any real rest or quiet. How could the blessing of God, which can alone give peace and happiness, rest upon a people who had so fearfully sinned against God, by their rejection of the Messiah, His Son Jesus Christ.

Herod Agrippa the Elder, of whose death we have just spoken, left three children: a son, bearing his own name of Herod Agrippa; and two daughters, Bernice and Drusilla, both mentioned in Scripture.

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Herod Agrippa the Second, or Younger, was only seventeen years old when his father died; and his dominions were therefore placed under the care of a Roman governor; but afterwards he was allowed to rule over a part of them, and to take the title of king: and upon the death of his uncle, Herod king of Chalcis, the Emperor Claudius allowed this Herod Agrippa to succeed to his kingdom. Nero, who became Emperor of Rome, A.D. 54, added to the dominions already possessed by Herod Agrippa the Second, in the land of Judæa. We shall hear of him again in the Book of Acts. Both Drusilla and Bernice were bad women: Drusilla married Azizus, king of the Emesians; but Felix, a Roman, who afterwards became governor or procurator of Judæa, persuaded her to leave her husband, and become his wife. Of this Felix we shall hear more by and by, after he became the governor of Judæa.

We must now go back to the history of Saul and Barnabas, whom we left at Antioch preaching the Gospel, and bringing into the Church many converts, who were then called Christians.

Whilst Barnabas and Saul were still at Antioch, preaching the Gospel of Jesus, there "came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified (or foretold) by (the direction of) the Spirit that there should be great dearth (or famine) throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar," who was at that time Emperor of Rome. The word here translated "world," sometimes means the Roman Empire, and sometimes only the land of Judæa. In this case, it appears to mean Judæa only; for the dearth seems to have been confined to that country: and Josephus, speaking of this dearth in the reign of Claudius, tells us, that large quantities of corn were sent up to Jerusalem from the neighbouring provinces, which could not have been the case if the dearth had been felt in them also. On the announcement of the distress about to come upon their brethren in Judæa, "the disciples" at Antioch, "every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judæa." By this we learn, that the custom of having all things in common had not been followed at Antioch. Most probably by this time it had been given up altogether; for now that the numbers of Christians had so largely increased on all sides, the plan of having all things in common would be no longer desirable, or even practicable. Each Christian of Antioch determined then to give what he could for the relief of their fellow Christians in Judæa; "which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul," who immediately set out from Antioch, to take the money thus collected to the elders of the Church at Jerusalem. These two Apostles stayed in Jerusalem for some months; probably about a year. We learn from another part

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of the Book of Acts, that during this stay at Jerusalem, Saul had a very remarkable vision. He was praying in the temple, when by the power of God he fell into a trance. Whilst he was in this state, his bodily senses suspended as it were, and his mind more alive to spiritual things, Jesus Christ appeared to him, and said, "Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me." It surprised Saul to be told that the Jews of Jerusalem would not believe him: they knew how he had formerly persecuted the Christians, and therefore his change of opinions would, he thought, have great weight in convincing them of the truth of what he now taught them: therefore he answered, and said, "Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed in thee: and when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I was also standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him."

To man, these things might seem to make Saul the most fit person to convince his countrymen, but not so with God, Who had chosen Saul especially to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. In answer to his pleading, therefore, Jesus now gave this positive command, "Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles." This was enough, and from henceforth Saul became a distinguished preacher to the Gentiles. "And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministry," (that is, the work which they came to do,) "and took with them John, whose surname was Mark," who had before this accompanied Peter to Rome.

Barnabas and Saul therefore went back to Antioch, but they did not long remain there.

"Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers," who joined with Barnabas and Saul in preaching the Gospel. "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." In what way the Holy Ghost spake, we are not told; but in some way or other the Lord made known His Will to His faithful servants, whilst they were engaged in the performance of their religious duties. The work unto which Barnabas and Saul were now called, was that of preaching the Gospel, not to Jews only, or even to Proselytes of the Gate, but also to the idolatrous Gentiles, so as to bring them to leave their false religion and become Christians. Although the appointment of Barnabas and Saul to this work was direct from God, yet outward forms were to be observed in dedicating them to it, and solemn prayers offered up for their success. In this matter, no doubt the prophets and teachers acted by the direction of the same Spirit which had bade them separate, or set apart the two Apostles for this particular work. "And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away."

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Barnabas and Saul now set out on their first journey, about A.D. 45. "So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia," a port at the mouth of the river Orontes, a little to the west of Antioch; "and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. And when they were at Salamis," a city in the eastern part of the island, "they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews"; for though they had a positive commission to preach to the Gentiles, they were not to neglect the Jews, but preach the Gospel first to them, if they would but listen to it. "And they had also John (or Mark) to their minister,"—to help in their ministry or work.

CHAPTER XI.—SAUL'S NAME CHANGED TO PAUL.

HAVING preached the Word at Salamis, Barnabas and Saul, with Mark, journeyed on, proclaiming their good tidings in every village. "And when they had gone through the isle," they came unto Paphos, the chief city, situated on the western coast of Cyprus. Here the "deputy of the country," that is, the magistrate or governor appointed by the Roman Emperor, resided: this deputy, whose name was Sergius Paulus, was himself a Roman and a heathen; but he was "a prudent man," that is, a man of good sense and understanding; therefore, when he heard of Barnabas and Saul teaching new and wonderful doctrines, he was anxious to hear and judge for himself as to their truth: he therefore "called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God." But Sergius Paulus had with him, as his friend and adviser, a Jew, whose name was Bar-jesus: he was also called Elymas, because he was looked upon as a sorcerer or magician, and the word "Elymas" means something of that sort. This man, who pretended to be a prophet, and to have power to work miracles, did not at all wish that Christianity should spread; and seeing that the Roman governor was inclined to believe what the Apostles taught, he contradicted them, "withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith." For this conduct Saul reprov'd him severely, pronouncing upon him a heavy punishment: we read, "Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on 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." He saw that the Apostles were far superior to Elymas, who could not save himself; and he at once believed all that they taught, convinced that God was indeed with them.

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We have read, "then Saul, who also is called Paul"; and we find that from this time he is never again spoken of in Scripture by the name of Saul. As the Bible does not tell us *why* his name was changed, we cannot be sure; but there are several reasons which may have caused the change.

First, Sergius Paulus was the first idolatrous Gentile mentioned as having become a Christian, and it is very probable that the Apostle had the name of Paul (which is the same as Paulus) given to him, in remembrance of this act of mercy shown to the Gentiles by God. Then, again, the Jews, particularly those who like Paul were not born in the land of Judæa, often had a Roman as well as a Hebrew name given to them; and they called themselves by either, according to the custom of the people amongst whom they went. Some persons think that the Apostle now chose the name of Paul, which means "little" or "weak," instead of that of Saul, meaning "beloved" or "desirable." Paul was now humble; he felt that he was weak, and that whatever he might be able to do, could be done only by the power of the Holy Ghost, directing and helping him. But whatever the cause may be, it is certain that from this time he is always called Paul—a name much more pleasing to the Gentiles, amongst whom he was appointed to teach, than the Hebrew appellation of Saul. The remaining chapters of the Book of Acts give us the account of the Five Journeys made by this Apostle, in order to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles: of the other Apostles we hear but little. We generally speak of the Apostles and Evangelists as *St. Peter*, *St. John*, *St. Paul*, *St. Matthew*, *St. Luke*, &c. "Saint" means good and holy; and we may well call the Apostles so, to distinguish them from other men; for they were holy men, inspired and guided in a peculiar way by the Holy Ghost, and we should, therefore, speak of them and think of them with reverence; remembering, that by their preaching and writings, we, and all mankind, have learnt the blessed tidings of salvation through Jesus Christ. St. Paul was now on his first journey, in company with St. Barnabas; and St. Mark was with them. From Paphos they sailed to Perga, in Pamphylia, a country in the southern part of Asia Minor. The Scripture tells us that here John, or St. Mark as we call him, "departing from them, returned to Jerusalem." Why he did this, we are not told; but from what we read in other parts of Scripture, we are sure that he did wrong. He was a young man, and probably he was discouraged by the idea of all the difficulties and hardships which the Apostles must meet with. After the departure of St. Mark, St. Paul and St. Barnabas travelled northward into the province of Pisidia, where there was also a town called Antioch, built, like Antioch in Syria, by Seleucus Nicanor, who was king of Syria after the death of Alexander the Great. Seleucus gave the name of Antioch to these cities, in memory of his father Antiochus. When the Apostles came to Antioch in Pisidia, they "went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. And after the reading of the law and of 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." We have already learnt that the Jews were required to set up a synagogue, in any place where ten men could meet for public worship; and that every synagogue had its rulers: men respectable both from age and character, who directed the services, and had some authority over other members of the congregation. On the Sabbath morning, two lessons were appointed to be read: one out of the Law, or Books of Moses; the other from the writings of the Prophets: on week-day mornings, the Law only was read. After these Lessons had been read, it was customary for some Teacher or Rabbi to preach or speak to the people: and if any strange teacher or learned man happened to be present, he was often called upon by the rulers of the synagogue, to perform this part of the service. Even if the rulers of the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia, knew nothing before this of the Apostles, they would see at once that they were Rabbis or Teachers, because they "sat down," which was customary for all belonging to this class: probably, too, they sat down in the seats expressly set apart for the Doctors and Teachers.

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Being invited by the rulers of the synagogue to "say on," if they had "any word of exhortation for the people," the Apostles gladly seized the opportunity of speaking to them of Jesus, and exhorting them to believe in Him. "Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand," to draw the attention of the congregation, "said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience," that is, listen to my words. By the "men of Israel," St. Paul meant Jews born of Jewish parents, the real descendants of Abraham: by "ye that fear God," he meant proselytes from the Gentiles who had adopted the Jewish religion, though they were not Jews by birth. Both equally needed to be taught the Gospel, and St. Paul, calling upon both to listen, spake of the bringing of the Children of Israel out of Egypt; of the mercy of God shown to them in their wanderings, in spite of all their sins; and of their final settlement in the land of Canaan. He then mentioned their government by Judges, until, at the wish of the people, God gave them a king in the person of Saul, who was succeeded by David, a man favoured by the Lord. St. Paul then went on to explain that God had, according to His promise, raised up from David's seed or descendants, a Saviour in the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom John the Baptist had borne testimony; but that the Jews and their rulers had put Him to death: thus fulfilling the prophecies, though, if they had attended to their meaning, they would have understood that Jesus was indeed the promised Messiah. St. Paul then proceeded to show that God had fulfilled all His promises, as written in the Psalms or elsewhere, by raising Jesus from the dead; adding, "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." None could be justified, or accounted righteous by the law, because none could keep all its commandments and ordinances; but those who believed in Jesus as their Saviour, would for His sake, be *looked* upon as righteous. Having thus preached to the congregation the great Gospel truth of remission of sins, St. Paul warned his hearers not to disregard his words, lest the sentence pronounced by one of their prophets, "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish," should fall upon them.

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The words of St. Paul made an impression upon some part of his hearers; for when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles, that is, the Jewish proselytes from the Gentiles, besought that these words might be preached to them again. Many of the Jews and religious proselytes also followed Paul and Barnabas, when the congregation was broken up, and were persuaded by the Apostles to hold fast the blessed truths, which by the grace of God they had

learnt.

The fame of St. Paul's preaching, mean time, spread rapidly, "And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy," fearing lest the Gospel, which they rejected, should be believed by others; and therefore they "spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming." Then Paul and Barnabas plainly told these Jews, that they had begun by preaching the word of God to them, because such was the Will of God; but, as they wilfully refused the salvation thus offered to them, they should now, in obedience to the same God, turn to the Gentiles, and bring the heathens into the Church of Christ, Who was to "be for salvation unto the ends of the earth." The Gentiles, the idolatrous Gentiles, who now for the first time forsook their idols, as well as those who had already turned from idolatry to worship the God of the Jews, were very glad when they heard this, "and glorified the word of the Lord"; and many of them believed. This made the Jews very angry, and they "stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts." The devout and honourable women were female proselytes of rank, who had great influence over the lower classes in the city. By their false accusations, the unbelieving Jews managed to stir up the higher class of citizens and the rulers of the city, to persecute the Apostles and drive them out of their country. "But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium," a town to the S.E. of Antioch, in the province of Lycaonia. We must remember, that when Jesus first gave commandment to His Apostles to go and preach to the Jews, He told them that when they left any house or city, where the people refused to hear them, they were to shake off the dust of their feet, to show that they would have nothing more to do with them: just as the Jews, who looked upon the dust of heathen lands to be polluted, shook it off their garments, to signify that they had nothing to do with such idolaters. But the disciples, who were left at Antioch, "were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost." They rejoiced in the knowledge of those blessed truths which they had learnt from the Apostles; and the Holy Ghost was abundantly shed upon the members of the infant Church at Antioch, encouraging and assisting them to increase in faith and righteousness of life.

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CHAPTER XII.—ST. PAUL'S FIRST APOSTOLIC JOURNEY.

"AND it came to pass in Iconium, that Paul and Barnabas went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed. But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren." Still the Apostles abode there for a long time, speaking boldly; the Lord bearing testimony to the truth of what they taught, by the miracles He enabled them to work.

"But the multitude of the city was divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the Apostles." The result was, that the Apostles were in danger of being stoned, by the joint attack of the heathens, and the Jews and their rulers. But being aware of their danger, "they fled unto Lystra," a town to the S.E. of Iconium, "and there they preached the Gospel."

At Lystra there was a certain man who had been lame from his birth, and had never walked, being "impotent in his feet." "The same heard Paul speak," and believed. Paul, "perceiving that he had faith to be healed, said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet." The people, seeing such a wonderful cure effected at the bidding of the Apostle, immediately thought that he and Barnabas were two of their imaginary gods; and cried out, "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. And they called Barnabas, Jupiter," who was their chief god; "and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker." Mercurius, or as we call him Mercury, was the god of eloquence; supposed to enable people to speak well: he was considered to be a constant attendant upon Jupiter. "Then the priest of Jupiter, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people," to the gods whom they supposed had honoured them with a visit. Oxen and bulls were sacrificed to Jupiter; garlands of flowers were placed on their heads, and the priests also wore garlands. Every heathen city was placed under the protection of some particular deity, called its tutelary god; whose temple or statue was set up before the city gate. The tutelary god of Lystra was Jupiter, the statue of "which was before the city."

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The Apostles were dreadfully distressed at the idea of such things being done in their honour; and "they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, and saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you"; and then they went on to tell them, that they were come on purpose to teach all people to give up worshipping idols and believing in vain gods, and to turn instead to the One only God, who made all things, and caused the fruits of the earth to grow for the food of man; and Who, though in times past he had suffered all nations to walk in their own ways, had now sent His messengers, the Apostles, to teach men better things.

With difficulty the Apostles prevented the people from doing sacrifice unto them.

These people, who had been ready to worship the Apostles as gods, were soon led into a contrary extreme: for certain Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, who probably told the people of Lystra, that Paul and Barnabas were only magicians and sorcerers; and that though they had by their wicked arts healed one cripple, they were just as likely to do harm to their fellow creatures as good. These men, "persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew him out of

the city, supposing he had been dead. Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city." The Lord had work for him to do, and now restored him to life. What had now happened, was a warning to Paul to remain no longer at Lystra; "and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe," another city of Lycaonia, not far from Lystra. "And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many," they, trusting in the protection of God, went again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, to strengthen the faith of those whom they had already converted to Christianity; "confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith"; and showing them that those who would enter into the kingdom of heaven, must expect many troubles upon earth. The Apostles then appointed elders to look after and direct the affairs of every Church, or body of Christians in those towns, and with prayer and fasting, they commended them to the protection and blessing of "the Lord, on whom they believed."

St. Paul and his company then journeyed through Pisidia and Pamphylia: "and when they had preached the word in Perga," the chief city in Pamphylia, "they went down into Attalia," a seaport to the S. W. of Perga, "and thence sailed to Antioch," in Syria. This ended St. Paul's first Apostolic Journey, which had occupied rather more than one year. At Antioch they had been appointed to their work; and the protection and grace of God had been prayed for to enable them to perform it. They had now accomplished their work, and therefore they "gathered the church together," and told all that they had done, or rather "all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles"—that is, how, by their preaching, God had given to the idolatrous Gentiles an opportunity of becoming true believers, and members of the Church,—an opportunity of which great numbers had gladly taken advantage.

No doubt all the believers in Antioch rejoiced greatly when they heard of the success which had attended the Apostles' preaching; for all who know and love God themselves, are anxious that others should do so also.

St. Paul and St. Barnabas abode for some time with the disciples at Antioch: probably for about two years. Towards the end of this period, the Christians at Antioch were disturbed by the mistaken teaching of certain men who came down from Judæa. These men, who were Jews, had belonged to the sect of the Pharisees, and though now converted to be Christians, they could not yet believe that all the ceremonial part of the Law of Moses was to be entirely done away with: therefore, when they were come to Antioch, they "taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved."

Such teaching, so very different from that of the Apostles, caused great distress in Antioch, where most of the believers had either been proselytes of the gate, only worshipping the Lord God of Israel, but not observing any of the ceremonies commanded by the Law of Moses; or else idolaters, until they became Christians. All these converts had been truly taught by St. Paul and St. Barnabas, that if they believed in Jesus so as to obey His word, that was quite sufficient; and that they would be as acceptable in the sight of God, as if they had been Jews from their birth, keeping the whole Law perfectly. The Christians of Antioch therefore might well be frightened and distressed, at being now told that they could not obtain the salvation promised by the Gospel, unless they kept all the ordinances of the Mosaic Law: in short, that if they wished to be saved, they must be Jews as well as Christians. The Apostles of course opposed these Jewish teachers, and tried to convince them that the Gospel was all-sufficient; and that Christ's disciples had but to follow their Master's teaching. They do not seem, however, to have succeeded, and the perplexity of the Christians continued. "When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the Apostles and elders about this question"—that is, to ask James and the elders of their Church, to decide, whether the Jewish teachers or the Apostles were to be believed.

Just before this time, we learn from other histories, that there had been great troubles amongst the Jews in Judæa. A famine had afflicted the country,—probably that which Agabus had foretold. This had been followed by riots. In the year 48 (A.D.), a Roman soldier, who cared nothing for the religion of the Jews, and did not look upon the temple as a holy place, profaned it in some way, and thus made the Jews very angry. A great tumult was immediately raised, and several thousand Jews were crushed or trampled to death, in the narrow ways leading to the temple; and other disturbances followed.

These things are not mentioned in the Bible, but it is well to note them, as they show us how the punishment of the Jews as a nation, was continually felt, from the time when they filled up the measure of their guilt, by crucifying their Messiah.

It was in the year 49 (A.D.), that St. Paul and St. Barnabas left Antioch for Jerusalem, in order to consult the Church there, as to the necessity of keeping the Law of Moses.

We read in the Book of Acts, that "being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren. And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the Apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them. But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses." This last passage is not very clearly put: the last verse is what the Apostles *said* as to the reason of their coming to Jerusalem.

The meaning of the whole passage is, that St. Paul and St. Barnabas explained to the Church

all that it had pleased God to do by means of their preaching, and how great numbers of the Gentiles had become Christians, and were serving God faithfully: but that certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, had disturbed them by saying, that it was needful that they should be circumcised like the Jews, and keep all the ceremonies and ordinances commanded by the Law of Moses.

James and the other elders of the Church, having heard all that St. Paul and St. Barnabas had to say, saw that it was very necessary to settle a question, which was of the greatest importance to the converts from the Gentiles. And they "came together for to consider of this matter," and decide upon what message should be sent back to Antioch.

When the Apostles and elders of the Church began to talk over the matter, there was much difference of opinion amongst the brethren: some being inclined to agree with the Pharisees, that the Law of Moses ought to be observed; others thinking that the Gospel was to be *instead* of the Law, and not added to it.

This gave rise to a great deal of discussion and argument; each side advancing their own opinions, and trying to persuade the other party to agree with them. This went on for some time, till at last, St. Peter, who was present, stood up, and gave his opinion upon the matter.

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CHAPTER XIII.—DECISION OF THE CHURCH AS TO OBSERVING THE MOSAICAL LAW.

"AND when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and," alluding to the affair of Cornelius, "said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe." He then reminded them, that the Holy Ghost had been visibly poured out upon those Gentile converts, showing that in the eyes of Him Who seeth the heart, they were as acceptable as the Jewish converts; and that therefore it could not be necessary for them to observe the ceremonial part of the Law, which Jesus came to do away with. The Jews themselves had never kept the Law so perfectly as to deserve the favour of God; and now that Jesus had delivered them from the observance of that Law, why should the Gentiles be required to observe it. "Now therefore," Peter asks, "why tempt ye God," why provoke ye Him to anger in opposing His Will, "to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they."

Such words from St. Peter, who was well known to have been formerly of a different opinion, could not fail to produce an effect upon his hearers, who now listened quietly and patiently to what was told them by St. Paul and St. Barnabas. "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."

When these two Apostles had ended their history, and "held their peace," James, the ruler and director of the Church, declared it to be his opinion, that it was most certainly the Will of God, that the Gentiles should be received into the Christian Church *without* being required to keep the Law, as the Jewish teachers had insisted; and that this had been the intention of the Lord from the beginning, and had been accordingly foretold by the prophets. "Wherefore," said he, "my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: but that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day."

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This speech of St. James requires a little explanation. The Law of Moses required that animals used for food should be killed in a particular way; and a Jew was to be considered as unclean, if he ate any meat not prepared in this manner. Much of the meat eaten by the Gentiles, was the flesh of animals offered in sacrifice to their false gods, or idols: to eat of such food polluted a Jew,—that is, made him unclean. Now, an idol was in reality nothing, nor did it signify how food was prepared, if it was eaten with thankfulness. But at that time there were very many Jewish converts who had long kept the Law of Moses, and held that to eat of meat offered to idols, or of the flesh of animals "strangled," instead of being killed as the Law required, did pollute a man, and render him unclean. St. James therefore considered, that for the present, it would be better for the Gentile converts to abstain from animal food, prepared in a different way from what the Jews thought lawful, that they might not offend them; and that they might, moreover, show that they had given up offering any sacrifices to idols. St. James therefore thought it well, in excusing them from most of the observances of the Law, to caution the Gentile converts not only to keep themselves free from all manner of sin, but also to avoid every appearance of idolatry. The reason which St. James gives for this decision is, that as the Law of Moses was read every Sabbath day, and revered by all the Jewish converts, it was better not to disregard such ordinances, though in themselves they were matters of indifference. What St. James said was approved of by the other members of the Church.

"Then pleased it the Apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: and they wrote letters by them," bidding the Gentile converts at

Antioch not to be troubled by the teaching of the Jewish teachers, saying, "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. Fare ye well."

In this letter, St. Paul and St. Barnabas are spoken of as "beloved," "men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ": and the Christians of Antioch are told, that Judas and Silas have been sent, in order that they might explain more fully what had been written on the subject, about which St. James and the Church at Jerusalem had been consulted. Sending these two brethren was a very wise measure. Had St. Paul and St. Barnabas returned alone, the Jewish teachers might have raised a question, as to how far they, being interested in the matter, could be trusted to deliver any messages correctly; but Judas and Silas, having nothing to do with the affair, must be regarded as unprejudiced witnesses as to what they had heard in Jerusalem.

Judas and Silas are both called Prophets. "The Prophets" appear to have been a class of teachers who were inspired to foretell future events, as well as to preach the Gospel; but they had not so much power and authority as the Apostles. Then, again, there were other teachers, who were not Prophets. God gave different gifts and powers to different men, according to the work He appointed for them to do. It is the same now: we have not all the same power, but each one of us should try to do *all we can* to serve God, and do good to our fellow creatures.

The letters being written, and delivered to Judas and Silas, the Apostles were dismissed, and "came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle: which when" the Christian brethren "had read, they rejoiced for the consolation" it had given them, in the assurance that they were by no means called upon to keep the whole Law of Moses.

Judas and Silas made themselves very useful at Antioch; for they "exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them" in the faith. "And after they had tarried there a space, they were let go in peace from the brethren unto the Apostles" in Jerusalem. But one only availed himself of this permission: for "it pleased Silas to abide there still," and therefore he remained in Antioch with St. Paul and St. Barnabas, "teaching and preaching the word of the Lord." Many other teachers also helped them; and thus another year passed away.

We next read that, "some days after, Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do." This was a very good thought: another visit from the Apostles would be a great comfort to the Christians of Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, and other places; and especially to the elders of those Churches, who would be glad to have their advice on many subjects. St. Barnabas was very willing to go; but now a dispute arose, which caused the separation of these two Apostles; for "Barnabas determined to take with them Mark," his nephew; "but Paul thought not good to take with them" one who had left them on their first journey as soon as they landed in Pamphylia; "and went not with them to the work," of preaching to the Gentiles in Asia Minor.

Differences of opinion will arise amongst the best of men, and so far there was nothing wrong in the conduct of the Apostles: but, alas! instead of seeking counsel from God, and settling the matter peaceably, Scripture tells us that "the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other." It is sad to hear of these two holy men parting from each other in anger; but it is a warning to us to keep a strict watch over all *our* words, that we may not fall into that strife, which is so displeasing in the eyes of God. Let us always remember that no dispute or quarrel, can be carried on unless both parties give way to sinful feelings. Differences must arise; and even if we feel it our duty not to give up our own design, we can, by gentleness, forbearance, and self-denial, prevent any "sharp contention," even though we may thus be obliged to offend our adversary. Where no principle of right is concerned, we should give up our own wishes for the sake of "living peaceably with all men," as the Gospel enjoins us to do.

St. Paul was afraid to trust St. Mark: he had failed once; and perhaps the Apostle was too stern in his condemnation of his fault, and too unwilling to believe in his repentance. St. Barnabas, on the other hand, from his nearer connexion with St. Mark, felt that he might now be trusted; and he was probably angry with St. Paul for not also believing this. A little calm and quiet talk might perhaps have settled the matter; or, at any rate, might have led to an amicable separation, instead of "a sharp contention," which parted them asunder.

However it was, this unhappy dispute was overruled for the good of the Church; because by going separately, these two zealous Apostles could visit many more places than they could have done, had they continued to journey together. We must remember also, that though these Apostles were for the moment angry with each other, these feelings did not last; and, some years afterwards, we find St. Mark the companion of St. Paul.

At the time of which we are now speaking, however, "Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus." How long he stayed there, or where he went afterwards, we are not told; but we may be sure that, wherever he went, his words strengthened the faith of believers, whilst he laboured to bring fresh converts into the Church.

"And Paul chose Silas" to accompany him on his Second Apostolic Journey, "and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God. And he went through Syria and" the neighbouring province of "Cilicia, confirming the churches." He then went northward into Lycaonia; and at either Derbe or Lystra he found a young man, called Timotheus, or Timothy, one of the believers, who was well spoken of by other Christians in those parts, because they saw that

in all things he tried to obey Jesus, and follow His example. The mother of Timothy was called Eunice, and his grandmother Lois. Both these women were Jewesses, but had become Christians many years before. Eunice then married the father of Timothy, by birth a Greek, but then a proselyte of the gate, worshipping the God of Israel, but not observing the Law of Moses. As soon as the little Timothy was old enough to learn, his mother Eunice had carefully taught him the things of God, and instructed him in the faith of Jesus Christ: so that now, by the blessing of God, he was a true Christian.

Many children are taught nothing while they are young, and know no more of God and Jesus Christ than if they were heathens. We must pity and pray for them; and children who have the blessing of being early taught these things, should show their thankfulness, by trying to *learn* and *do* all that the Gospel teaches. No teaching can *make* a child *love* and *serve* God; but no one can love or serve Him unless they learn how to do so. Therefore children should pay the greatest attention to all that is taught from the Bible and Prayer Book, praying to God that the Holy Spirit may help them to do whatever they see to be right.

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CHAPTER XIV.—PAUL AND SILAS AT PHILIPPI.

TIMOTHY had paid attention to the teaching of his mother, praying for grace to perceive and know what things he ought to do; and striving earnestly to fulfil the same: and now, St. Paul, seeing that such a young man would be most useful in preaching both to Jews and Gentiles, "would have him to go forth with him" on his journey: and he "took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek."

As the son of a Jewess, Timothy would be supposed to have been circumcised; and the Jews, finding that this was not the case, and knowing that his father had been a heathen, would probably have been unwilling to listen to him; and thus his usefulness would have been sadly interfered with. Circumcision, in Timothy's case, was *unnecessary*, but there was nothing *wrong* in it; and therefore, to avoid giving offence to the Jews, St. Paul acted as we have heard. Taking Timothy with him, St. Paul now continued his journey. "And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the Apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem," that is, the decrees concerning the observance of the Law of Moses by the Gentiles. And so were the Churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.

After preaching the Gospel in Phrygia and Galatia, St. Paul and his companions would have gone into other parts of Asia Minor, but the Spirit of God made it known to them, that they were not to do so: they went therefore to Troas, a sea-port quite in the northern part of the Archipelago. Here St. Paul's little band of followers was increased, for St. Luke joined them; and from this time, in relating what happened, St. Luke writes "we" and "us," showing that he was one of those concerned in the events he describes. Besides writing the Book of Acts, St. Luke wrote the Gospel which bears his name. We know nothing of St. Luke, except that he was a Jew and a physician: he was probably a native of Antioch, in Syria. St. Luke tells us that, at Troas, St. Paul saw in a vision a man of Macedonia, who stood and prayed him, saying, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us." St. Paul, rightly looking upon this as a call from God, immediately embarked on board a ship, and sailing by the island of Samothracia, landed at Neapolis, a sea-port of Thracia. Macedonia had once been a separate kingdom, but the Romans, who had in the Apostles' time got possession of all that country called Greece, had divided the whole into two great parts: one of these contained Macedonia, Thessaly, and Epirus, but went by the name of Macedonia: the other division, called Achaia, contained the rest of Greece, including the Peloponnesus.

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From Neapolis St. Paul proceeded to Philippi, which was "the chief city of that part of Macedonia," and a Roman colony: that is, it was peopled or inhabited by the descendants of Romans, who had been placed there by Julius Cæsar and by the Emperor Augustus. The place had got the name of Philippi long before, from Philip then king of Macedonia, who repaired the buildings of the city, and added many handsome new ones. Philip was the father of Alexander the Great, a famous king, of whom we read much in ancient history. Both Philip and Alexander lived and died more than 300 years before Jesus Christ was born.

St. Paul and his companions remained some time at Philippi; and St. Luke says, "on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither."

Besides the synagogues, or buildings for public worship, the Jews had also, in every place where they took up their residence, smaller buildings or oratories, to which people might constantly resort for the purposes of prayer. These oratories were generally built in the fields, or by the side of a stream. To one of these oratories, close to the city of Philippi, St. Paul and his companions went, that they might speak of the Lord Jesus Christ, to those who went there to worship the Lord God of Israel. Amongst their first converts was "a certain woman named Lydia," a native of the city of Thyatira, in Asia Minor, but resident in Philippi for the purposes of trade. Scripture says, she was a "seller of purple": what this may mean, we do not exactly know; but it probably means, that she sold some fine materials for female dress. At any rate, she had become a "proselyte of the gate," and worshipped God: and the Lord "opened her heart," so "that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul," with a sincere desire to learn; and in

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consequence became a real convert to Christianity, inducing all the members of her family to follow her example. "And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there." Eager to show her sincerity by *doing* something for the service of God, she now anxiously sought to be of use to the messengers of Jesus for their Lord's sake; and entreated them to take up their abode in her house.

St. Luke adds, "And she constrained us"—that is, so urged and entreated, as to force them to do as she wished. We now read, "And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying."

This damsel seems to have been a slave, who, being possessed by an evil spirit, spake in a mysterious way, foretelling future events: and as the heathens were great believers in such things, many of them consulted this unfortunate girl, and gave her money for exercising her powers. This money went to her masters, to whom she thus brought much gain. The Lord now chose this damsel, to give a proof that He can constrain even evil spirits to bear testimony to the truth of Christ's religion; for St. Luke says, "The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation."

The damsel at Philippi, though under the influence of the evil spirit, was constrained by a higher power to bear evidence to the truth of doctrines, calculated to overthrow the empire of Satan. "And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved" to see her under the dominion of an evil spirit, "turned, and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour": thus putting an end to all future soothsaying. "And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone," they were greatly enraged, and "caught Paul and Silas and drew them into the market-place unto the rulers, and brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, and teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans." Such an accusation was sure to gain immediate attention from the magistrates, or governors of the city, as the Roman Emperors were very severe in any cases of rebellion or opposition, in their distant provinces: and though there was at that time no express law against Christianity, there was a law requiring all persons to worship the gods of the country; and Christianity was, of course, opposed to all idolatrous practices. Covetousness, or a sinful love of money, is, we are told, the root of much evil: the masters of the damsel cared not how much St. Paul preached the Gospel, as long as it did not interfere with their gains; but as soon as it did, they raised an outcry against the Apostles. Now let us remember that covetousness, or an eager desire for our own gain, whether of riches, honours, or pleasures, is just as great a sin now, as it was when the Scriptures were first written; and let us try never to let any thoughts of our own advantage or gain, lead us to *do* or *allow* what we know to be wrong; or *prevent* our doing what we feel is right. These men succeeded in their persecution of Paul and Silas, for "the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates," without further consideration, "rent off their clothes," preparatory to their being scourged, "and commanded to beat them. And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely." The jailor, having received so special a charge, determined to keep it: and therefore "thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks"—a machine fixed to the floor, having round holes just to go round the ankles, so that when it was shut upon them, it was quite impossible for the poor prisoners to move. Now imagine the sufferings of St. Paul and his companion: bleeding and smarting from the severe wounds made by the scourge, and their feet so confined, that they could get no ease by any change of posture! We might expect to find them lamenting over their terrible sufferings, or, at least, praying to God to deliver them. But the Scripture tells us, "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God": their faith was great; they rejoiced to suffer for the sake of Jesus, and they praised God for all His wondrous works: they sang from their hearts with loud voice, and the other "prisoners heard them." No doubt such joyful songs, from the lips of those whom they knew to be in pain, surprised their fellow prisoners, who had soon a greater cause for astonishment. The prayers and praises of Paul and Silas went up to God: "And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled." The jailor knew full well, that if the prisoners under his charge had escaped from prison, he would surely be put to death by the Roman magistrates; and, to avoid the disgrace of such a death, he was about to kill himself. Being a heathen, he did not know, as Christians do, that it is a fearful sin to put an end to our own lives: and therefore, rather than be punished for a fault of which he was not guilty, he prepared to kill himself. "But Paul," knowing his intention, "cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling." Having thus convinced himself that his prisoners were indeed still in the prison, the jailor felt at once that the Apostles were certainly holy men, the messengers of God. No doubt he knew that for preaching the Gospel they had been cast into prison, and the wonderful things which he had now seen, convinced him that all they had said was true: therefore he "fell down" on his knees "before Paul and Silas, and brought them out" of prison, "and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." What blessed words! and then they doubtless explained to him that the faith here spoken of, meant such a belief in Jesus, as would lead to repentance for all sin so displeasing to Him, and make men strive to do all in their power to please Him: for to believe the Gospel, means to do all that the Gospel teaches. Such, no doubt, was the Apostles' teaching, as "they spake unto him the

word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house." The jailor showed his gratitude to the Apostles by doing all he could for their relief and comfort: for "he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes." "And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house." Convinced and truly converted from the errors of idolatry to a belief of the truth as it is in Jesus, the jailor of Philippi with his family were at once admitted as members of the Christian Church; he "was baptized, he and all his, straightway."

CHAPTER XV.—ST. PAUL LEAVES PHILIPPI.

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It would seem that the magistrates of Philippi, upon thinking calmly over the matter, felt that they had acted hastily and unjustly, in commanding two men to be scourged and put into prison, without a trial; for we read, "And when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants," officers under their command, to the jailor, "saying, Let those men go." The keeper of the prison, well pleased to receive such an order, told this to Paul, saying, "The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore depart, and go in peace. But Paul said unto" the serjeants who stood by, "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."

Now in order to understand all this, we must remember that the Romans, who thought themselves greatly superior to any other people in the world, were very jealous of their power and privileges as citizens of Rome. Thus, if a Roman citizen was ill treated, the Roman Government would severely punish any one who had dared to ill treat him. All persons whose parents were natives and citizens of Rome, were looked upon as *free-born* citizens; and enjoyed from their birth, all the rights and privileges given by the Roman Government to her subjects.

Persons not born of Roman citizens, if they had done good service, either by fighting for Rome, or in any other way, were often rewarded by receiving the *Freedom of the City*; that is, by being looked upon and treated as Roman citizens, and having an equal share in all the privileges and benefits, granted to such Romans as *were* free-born.

St. Paul was not a native of Rome, nor were his parents; for they were Jews, settled at Tarsus, in Cilicia: probably some of his ancestors, his grandfather or great-grandfather, had served in the Roman armies, and been rewarded for some great service, by receiving the freedom of the city: after which, all his descendants would be looked upon as free-born citizens of Rome.

The Roman Emperors sometimes allowed strangers to *buy* the privileges: the Emperor Claudius did so: and for a large sum of money allowed people to have *for themselves* the privileges of a Roman citizen—a great advantage in those days, as the rulers of every Roman province were bound to protect every Roman citizen in it, and not suffer any one to be ill treated. To scourge and imprison a Roman citizen, without having first *proved* him to have been guilty of some great crime, was an offence which the Roman Government punished most severely; and therefore, we find that when the serjeants went back, and "told these words unto the magistrates, they feared, when they heard that they were Romans. And they came and besought them" not to report the treatment they had received, "and brought them out" of prison, "and desired (or entreated) them to depart out of the city."

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We may be quite sure that St. Paul neither valued nor used the privileges of a Roman, further than they could serve to the glory of God. In this case, many of the people who had seen him and Silas beaten and cast into prison, would naturally think that they must have done something wrong: this would prevent the people from listening to what they taught. It was necessary, therefore, that St. Paul should show clearly that he had *not* deserved any punishment; and that the magistrates themselves acknowledged, that they had sinned in treating him in such a manner. St. Paul, by his conduct, plainly proved his innocence of all offence. "And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed."

Of course the brethren were very sorry to lose St. Paul; but now that he had established a Church at Philippi, they could go on without him, whilst his teaching was much wanted in other places: and consequently, he and Silas journeyed on to the south-west. "Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia," preaching the Gospel no doubt, though we hear nothing as to their success, they went to Thessalonica, an important city of Macedonia, and one in which many Jews resided; for there was a synagogue there. "And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them" in their synagogue, "and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures": showing that those holy writings, prophesied both the sufferings and the rising again of Christ the Messiah; and then plainly telling them, "this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ," the promised Messiah, of whom your Scriptures speak.

"And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few." As usual, the Jews were more bitter against the Gospel than the Gentiles; and we read that "the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort,"—men of no principle, ready at any time to do any mischief which came in their way: by the help of these men, the Jews "gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted (or attacked) the house of Jason," where

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they supposed the Apostles to be, "and sought to bring them out to the people," who, in their excited state, would probably have put them to death without further inquiry.

Jason was one of those who had become a Christian, and he appears to have shown hospitality to the Apostles, and lodged them in his house; though the mob did not find them there, when they assaulted the house. "And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These (men) 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. And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things." But the rulers could find no cause to punish Jason or the other brethren that were dragged with him before the judgment seat, so "they let them go," "when they had taken security of them." What this "security" was, we do not know; probably some promise not to entertain the Apostles, nor to rebel against the Roman Emperor.

By "turning the world upside down," the accusers of Jason meant, that what the Apostles taught was so different to anything ever heard of before, that it would quite alter everything, and make the world no longer like the same place. This, let us remember, is exactly what the Gospel was meant to do.

It was not considered advisable for the Apostles to remain longer at Thessalonica, where the people were too much enraged to listen to them; and therefore, "the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea."

There was a synagogue of the Jews also at Berea, whither, when it was neither useful nor safe for them to remain at Thessalonica, Paul and Silas were sent; "who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more noble (more liberal-minded and unprejudiced) than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, (listened willingly to the teaching of the Apostles,) and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so": they compared the teaching of St. Paul with the written word of the Old Testament, in order to see whether they were justified in believing all he taught them. The consequence of this was, that many of the Jews believed; "also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few." But when the unbelieving Jews of Thessalonica, heard that the people of Berea were listening to St. Paul and becoming Christians, some of them came down on purpose to try and put an end to his preaching. They easily found plenty of unbelieving Jews and Gentiles ready for mischief, and stirred them up to make a riot: the brethren now acted as those at Thessalonica had done, and fearing for the Apostle's safety, immediately "sent away Paul to go as it were to the sea: but Silas and Timotheus abode," still in Berea.

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Two or three of the brethren went with St. Paul to guard him from danger. We read, "And they that conducted Paul brought him unto Athens," either by sea or by land; "and receiving a commandment," that is, a message, from him "unto Silas and Timotheus," bidding them "for to come to him with all speed, they departed" to return unto Berea; leaving St. Paul alone at Athens.

Athens was the chief city of Achaia, the other province which, with Macedonia, formed what the Romans then called "Greece." Athens long before this had been a powerful and famous city: it was founded, or begun to be built, by a king called Cecrops, who came over from Asia during the time that the Israelites were in bondage in Egypt, before Moses was born. In the course of time Athens became, as we have said, a great and powerful city; full of beautiful temples and other buildings: some of these are even standing now; and a great many ruins are to be seen, all showing how magnificent the city must once have been.

In St. Paul's time, Athens, like most other cities and countries in the known world, was under the dominion of the Romans; and the Athenians, or inhabitants of the city, were quite devoted to the worship of false gods: we are told that there were more idols to be seen at Athens, than could be found in any other place.

Now while St. Paul waited at Athens, for Silas and Timotheus to join him, "his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry." Grieved at the state of the Athenians, the Apostle felt eager to try and teach them better things: "his spirit was stirred in him; therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons," proselytes of the gate, "and in the market daily with them that met with him"; who must have been for the most part Gentiles, or heathen idolaters. The market, as has been explained, was a public place, where people met for business of all kinds; and to talk to each other upon any subjects of importance.

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There were at this time in Athens, a great many wise and clever men, fond of learning: such men were called "Philosophers." These philosophers held different opinions; some believing one thing, some another; and as they each wished to bring people over to join them, they constantly spake in the market-place, explaining their doctrines, and persuading men to believe in them.

Two chief sects (or parties) of these philosophers, were the Epicureans and the Stoics. The Epicureans thought that the gods were only so in name, and that there was no Divine Power whatever to rule over the world; therefore they held, that the wisest thing was, for every man to do exactly what he liked best, and only to think of his own pleasure, as long as he lived.

The Stoics believed, that there were gods who ruled all things in the world so completely, that man became a mere machine, not answerable for his own conduct; so that he could never be said to do right or wrong: thus they taught, that the only real wisdom was to learn to bear with *indifference* whatever the gods caused to happen to them, whether it was what men call good or

evil, happiness or misery.

Both these "systems of philosophy" (or sets of opinions), were equally contrary to all that St. Paul was appointed to teach. We read, "Then certain of the Epicureans, and of the Stoics, encountered him." But when they had heard, his teaching, "some said, What will this babbler say?"—mocking the Apostle as if he had been talking nonsense, without any meaning, just from a love of "babbling," or talking foolishly. Others said, "He seemeth to be a setter-forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection." So little did all their wisdom help them to understand spiritual things, that they fancied the resurrection of which St. Paul spake, was some *female deity* called by that name, instead of understanding it to be an action done by Jesus, whom St. Paul preached. The God of whom St. Paul spake, was indeed a strange God unto the Athenian philosophers! but instead of ill using the preacher, they, like sensible men, determined to hear more on the subject.

CHAPTER XVI.—ST. PAUL BEFORE THE AREOPAGUS.

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WE have said that the Philosophers of Athens were desirous to hear more of St. Paul's doctrines. "And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, 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."

The Areopagus was a Court of Justice, the chief court in Athens; and one of its duties was, to pay particular attention to all matters relating to religion, or the worship of the gods. The members of this Court met in a building erected upon a certain hill dedicated to Mars, the God of War; and thence called Mars' Hill. St. Paul was now brought before this Court, that he might give an account of the new doctrines which he had begun to teach in Athens. The Athenians were so fond of learning, that whenever they heard anything which they did not understand, they were anxious to inquire into it, and see what it did mean. To a certain degree this was right, for we should all try to get as much knowledge as we can, as to good and useful things. But the Athenians were too curious; for St. Luke tells us, that "all the Athenians and strangers which were" in the city, "spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing": and from other writers we learn, that the Athenians went from place to place in order to meet others, and hear if there was anything new.

Now this love of change and novelty, or "new things," is a great fault, and one which often leads us into sin.

If we are always wishing for some *new* occupation or business, we shall never do anything well: if we are longing and seeking for *new* amusements, we shall not enjoy what we have: if children are always wishing for *new* toys, they will cease to care about the old ones. Therefore all this desire for novelty and change will lead to indolence, discontent, covetousness, and many other evil passions. Let us remember that people who cultivate a contented spirit, are always happy with whatever they have: discontented people are never happy; whatever they have, they will still be wishing for something else: for it is quite impossible for anybody to have everything he wishes for.

But we must go back to St. Paul, standing before the Court of Areopagus, and desired there to give an account of his doctrines. The Apostle, glad to have such an opportunity of preaching the Gospel before the chief men in Athens, now stood up, and spake gently and kindly. He began by telling them, that as he had gone about their city looking at the different images to which they bowed down, and at the different altars set up for the worship of those whom they called gods, he had found one, bearing an inscription "TO THE UNKNOWN GOD." This showed that they were "too superstitious," for to worship a God of whom they knew nothing, was superstition rather than religion. This ignorance, therefore, St. Paul now proposed to remove, so that the Unknown God might no longer be so to them: "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you."

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Before we proceed with what St. Paul said to the Athenians on this subject, we will see how they came to dedicate an altar to "the Unknown God."

Some time before this, there had been a plague or pestilence in Athens; that is, a bad illness, which spread from one person to another, until thousands of people died of it. In vain did the Athenians pray to all their false gods to stop it: such prayers of course *could* have no effect, and the pestilence went on killing the people. At last a number of sheep were taken to Mars' Hill, and there set at liberty, to go wherever they pleased, followed by men, appointed to watch them. Whenever one of these sheep laid down, it was immediately sacrificed to "the propitious god." "Propitious" means favourable, kind, willing to grant a request, or supply a want. The sheep were thus sacrificed to that one amongst the gods, who would be kind enough to put an end to the pestilence. Soon afterwards it did please the Almighty to remove this terrible plague: the Athenians of course attributed their deliverance to one of their gods; but as they could not tell which one of them had been "the propitious god," they set up this altar to "the Unknown God," who had come to their help in the time of trouble.

We know very well that the Lord God Almighty can alone take away disease and sickness, or

any other trouble; and therefore, though the Athenians did not mean it so, they had really dedicated this altar to the One True God, of Whom St. Paul spake. Well therefore did St. Paul, when speaking to them of the Unknown God, say, "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you."

St. Paul then told the Athenians, that He whom they worshipped as the Unknown God, was the Lord Who had made the world and all things in it: that He gave life and breath and all things to His creatures, and did not require to be worshipped with sacrifices and gifts, as though He needed anything at the hands of man. St. Paul said, also, that God had made men, in order that they might love and serve Him as their Father: and he reminded them, that one of their own poets had said, "For we are also his offspring." The poet here meant, was one called Aratus: he was born in Cilicia, but had probably lived and studied in Athens, so that the Athenians considered him as one of their own poets, and were well acquainted with his poem 'On the Heavenly Bodies'; from which St. Paul quoted a line.

St. Paul proceeded to explain, that the Lord God Almighty, their "Unknown God," was a very different Being to idols of gold, or silver, or stone, made or "graven by art and man's device." And he told the Athenians, that although the Lord God had hitherto forbore to punish those, who in ignorance worshipped idols, that time was now past; for now, said the Apostle, He "commandeth all men everywhere to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained"; meaning the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall come to judge the quick and dead: and as a proof that God would do this, St. Paul mentioned that Jesus Christ Himself had already risen from the grave, saying, "whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."

When the Athenians heard St. Paul speaking "of the resurrection of the dead," it seemed to them so impossible that a dead man should ever come back to life, that they quite laughed at his words: "some mocked; and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter. So Paul departed from among them"; apparently without having made any impression upon his hearers: but it was not so, for in spite of the unbelief and ridicule of many, we read, "Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite," that is, a member of the court of Areopagus, "and a woman named Damaris, and others with them." "After these things, Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth"; another city of Achaia, in that part of Greece which used to be called the Peloponnesus, or rather on the isthmus which joined the Peloponnesus to the rest of Greece, and took its name from this town. The situation of Corinth, with sea on both sides, made it an important place for trade; because ships could easily come there from different countries, to sell the merchandise they brought with them, and buy such things as they wanted to take home. By means of their trade, the inhabitants of Corinth had become very rich; their city was flourishing; and many learned men resided in it, when St. Paul now came there about A.D. 51. A little before this time, the Roman Emperor Claudius, had for some reason or other, banished the Jews from Rome. We do not know the reason, but it seems likely that it was because there had been a famine in Rome, which the people foolishly thought was the fault of the Jews, whom they hated; and so to satisfy the people, and prevent any disturbance, Claudius commanded all Jews to leave the city.

Among the Jews thus obliged to leave Rome, was a man named Aquila, born in Pontus, a country to the N.E. of Galatia, on the Black Sea: he was therefore one of the Jews called "Grecians," because, though his parents were Jews, he was not born in the land of Judæa. When he was obliged to leave Rome, Aquila and his wife Priscilla settled in Corinth, where they greatly helped St. Paul. Whether they had become believers before they left Rome or afterwards, we do not know; but they were Christians when St. Paul came to Corinth, and were probably known in some way to the Apostle, for he "came unto them. And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tent-makers."

The Jews had a saying, that "Every man who does not teach his son some trade, teaches him to be a thief"—in which there is a great deal of truth; for if a man has learnt no trade by which he can support himself honestly, there is great danger of his being tempted to obtain a living by dishonest means. It was therefore the custom amongst the Jews, even of the higher classes, who like St. Paul had been well educated as to letters, to teach their sons some "craft" or occupation, whereby they could, if ever it became necessary, earn money to provide themselves with food and clothes, and such things as are needful.

St. Paul had learnt the trade of tent-making; and he now abode with Aquila and Priscilla, working with them for his daily bread, whilst every sabbath he "reasoned in the synagogue, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks": trying, that is, to bring them to believe in Jesus Christ.

At Corinth, St. Paul was joined by Silas and Timotheus, who had remained at Berea when he was so suddenly sent to Athens: they had afterwards returned to Thessalonica, from whence they now came to Corinth, and gave St. Paul an account of what they had been doing since he left them. In consequence of what he now heard from Silas and Timotheus, St. Paul wrote an Epistle or letter to the Thessalonians, who had become Christians.

In this letter, St. Paul tells the Thessalonians, how thankful he is to hear that those who had become Christians, were trying to do all that the Gospel taught them they ought to do: and then he assures them, that he prays to God to give them more and more faith, and to make them love Jesus better and better. Then the Apostle warned them not to listen to any teachers, who might try to teach them anything different to what he, and Silas, and Timothy, had already taught them. St. Paul also told the Thessalonian Christians, that they must endeavour to be good and holy; and

he gave them many particular directions for their conduct, one of which is, "Pray without ceasing." The Apostle ends his letter with a prayer, that God will keep them free from all sin both in body and soul. This letter of St. Paul's is to be found in the Bible, where it is called, "The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Thessalonians."

CHAPTER XVII.—ST. PAUL FINISHES HIS SECOND APOSTOLIC JOURNEY.

AFTER Timothy and Silas had joined St. Paul, he spake still more plainly and decidedly to the Jews at Corinth, wishing to make them follow the example of their brethren at Thessalonica: but when he tried to convince them that Jesus was indeed the Messiah, they would not listen to him, but "opposed themselves, and blasphemed." Then "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." St. Paul meant by this, that if by their own obstinacy they *would* provoke the Lord to punish them, he was not to blame, for he had tried to teach them what was right: and that from henceforth he would preach only to the Gentiles in Corinth, and have nothing more to say to the Jews; and he shook his raiment, as a sign that he would have nothing more to do with them. When St. Paul had thus spoken to the Jews in their synagogue, "he departed thence," ceasing to preach in the synagogue, "and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshipped God" as a proselyte of the gate, "whose house joined hard to the synagogue." Most probably he had in his house some large room, in which it was convenient for St. Paul to preach: and here he converted many. "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."

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St. Paul was at this time greatly encouraged by a vision. We read, "Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city,"—many, that is, who, from hearing St. Paul, would become true Christians. Thus encouraged, he continued in Corinth "a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them."

During the eighteen months which St. Paul spent in Corinth, he appears to have written "The Epistle to the Galatians," which was probably written before that to the Thessalonians. St. Paul had, as we have heard, preached in Galatia before he went into Macedonia. It seems, however, that the Galatians had not continued steadfast in the faith; and the Apostle now writes kindly, to express his surprise at their having fallen away from the Gospel they had once received; warning them seriously not to believe any doctrines contrary to those which he had taught them: for that he had been chosen by the Lord in a miraculous manner to be an Apostle, and the doctrines which he taught to others he had received from God Himself. He also reminds the Galatians, that no man could obtain salvation by the works of the Law, since none could do them perfectly, and that it is through faith in Jesus only, that all men, whether Jews or Gentiles, can be saved. Before closing his Epistle, St. Paul gives a list of the works of the flesh, or sinful nature of man, and of the works of the Spirit. This list we shall do well to study, and also to take as addressed to ourselves the Apostle's exhortation, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh": remembering always, that "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."

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From Corinth, at this time, St. Paul also wrote his Second Epistle to the Thessalonians; expressing his thankfulness that in the midst of persecutions they were increasing in faith; and he encourages them to persevere, by reminding them of that day when Christ shall come to judge the world, and reward the faithful with everlasting life. He then begged those to whom he wrote, to pray that the Gospel preached by him might be received by others as it had been by them; and he prays for them, that the Lord will "direct their hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ."

St. Paul was not allowed to rest undisturbed at Corinth, for when Gallio was deputy-governor, or pro-consul, of Achaia, "the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul; and brought him to the judgment seat, saying, This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law,"—meaning their own law, the Law of Moses. St. Paul was going to speak in answer to this charge, but Gallio interrupted him, and told the Jews that if they had any wickedness, or crime, to accuse St. Paul of, he must of course listen to the charge; and adding, "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." Gallio, a heathen, despised both Jews and Christians, and cared nothing about the Law of Moses, whether it were observed or not; therefore he would not listen to the Jews: "and he drave them from the judgment seat."

"Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment seat." Why the Greeks beat this Jew, we are not told. Some think that Sosthenes was favourable to St. Paul, and that on this account the Jews stirred up the heathens to treat him in this way. But it seems more likely that Sosthenes was one of the most bitter enemies of the Apostle, and had been particularly anxious to get him punished; and that the Greeks thought that beating him severely, would be the most likely way of putting a stop to any future disturbance from the Jews.

However that might be, "Gallio cared for none of those things": though, as governor and judge of a province, he was neglecting his duty by allowing *any* man to be treated in such a way. Soon after this, St. Paul left Corinth for a time.

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When St. Paul left Corinth, soon after the affair with Gallio, it would seem that he went to the island of Crete, or Candia, and there left one of his companions, called Titus, to direct the affairs of the Christian Church in that country. We know nothing of Titus, except that his parents were Gentiles, and that he was converted to Christianity by St. Paul, who would not allow him to be circumcised, lest it should be thought a proof of the *necessity* of circumcision, which the Church had declared to be *unnecessary* for those heathens who embraced the Gospel. Titus was highly esteemed by St. Paul, who speaks of him as his "partner" and "fellow helper"; showing that he greatly helped him in his work.

We do not exactly know where St. Paul went to from Crete: there is reason to believe that in trying to return to Corinth he encountered a storm, and was driven by the wind to the western coast of Greece, and there shipwrecked, and forced to take refuge in the city of Nicopolis. Here the Apostle determined to spend the winter, that he might preach the Gospel to the inhabitants of Illyricum—a country to the north, forming the eastern shore of the Adriatic Sea. From Nicopolis he appears to have written the Epistle to Titus, giving him directions as to his own conduct, and telling him what sort of men he must choose to help him in teaching the people of Crete. St. Paul also told Titus to be very careful to teach all who became Christians, that they must try to be good, and lead holy lives, following in all things the example of the Lord Jesus Christ.

From Nicopolis, in due time, St. Paul went back to Corinth. In the Book of Acts we read nothing of this little journey of St. Paul's. St. Luke does not of course tell us everything that the Apostle did, and he speaks as if he had remained at Corinth all the time. Speaking of St. Paul's final departure from Corinth, St. Luke says, "And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow." This vow must either have been a vow of Nazaritism, already mentioned (vol. ii. p. 108), which St. Paul had on some occasion taken in order to please the Jews; or some other vow, which he had made in acknowledgment of the goodness and mercy of God. Cenchrea was a small sea-port, not far from Corinth; and from thence St. Paul and his company, with Aquila and Priscilla, sailed to Syria; and then proceeded to Ephesus, a large town in Lydia. Ephesus was particularly celebrated for its beautiful and magnificent temple, erected in honour of the heathen goddess Diana, and set apart for her worship. This Diana, one of the pretended deities of the heathen, was supposed to rule all things belonging to the chase—to be the goddess of hunting. The moon was looked upon as a sign, or symbol, of Diana; and under this form she was also worshipped.

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St. Paul, as usual, preached in the synagogue at Ephesus, and "reasoned with the Jews," who seem to have listened willingly, and even wished him to stay on. But "when they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not; but bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast" (of the Passover) "that cometh, in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus. And when he had landed at Cæsarea, and gone up, and saluted the church" at Jerusalem, and kept the Passover, "he went down to Antioch," A.D. 54; thus ending his Second Apostolic Journey, which had occupied about four years.

St. Luke has mentioned the places at which St. Paul made any long stay during this time; but as we have already seen, he does not notice all his short visits to other places. In the same way, St. Luke tells us all the most remarkable events that took place during these four years; but of course he cannot tell us *everything* that the Apostle did or said: just as the Gospels, though they tell us all things needful for us to know, do not relate every word that Jesus said, or every miracle that He worked; because, as St. John remarks, "if they should be written every one of them, the world itself could not contain the books that should be written."

After St. Paul had spent some time at Antioch, he began his Third Apostolic Journey: "he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples,"—that is, he went again to all those places where he had before established Churches, or companies of believers, to see how they were going on, and to encourage them to persevere in their endeavours to serve the Lord faithfully. But in the mean time the Church at Ephesus was not left without a teacher; for Aquila and Priscilla remained there, and were no doubt of great use in reminding others of all that St. Paul had taught them: and of one good work done by them St. Luke gives us an account; for we read, "And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John."

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Alexandria was a famous city, built by Alexander the Great, in the north of Egypt, and celebrated for the many learned men who lived in it. Apollos had there studied the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and being "eloquent," able to speak well, he taught them diligently in Ephesus. But he seems to have heard only of the Baptism of John, and to have known only that men were to receive the baptism of repentance, of which John spake, to prepare them for believing in the Messiah, of Whom John was the messenger, or forerunner. But Apollos does not seem to have understood that the Messiah had come, or to have known of His promise, to give the Holy Spirit to those who would believe in Him and be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Apollos was fervent in spirit, full of zeal; and so, as far as he knew, he taught diligently. "And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue." When Aquila and

Priscilla heard him, "they took him unto them," probably to reside in their house, "and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly,"—that is, they explained all that he was ignorant of; they spake to him of Jesus and of His Baptism, and showed him that the sins of all who believed, and were baptized, would be forgiven. Apollos listened gladly to the words of Aquila and Priscilla, and then wished to go into Greece, to teach others the things he had learnt. And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the members of the Church at Ephesus wrote to those of Corinth, to receive him into their company.

At Corinth, Apollos, by his earnestness and faith, "helped them much which had believed through grace": nor was this all, "for he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ."

CHAPTER XVIII.—ST. PAUL AND THE SONS OF SCEVA.

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WE have said that St. Paul began his Third Apostolic Journey by going again through Galatia and Phrygia: then, having passed through the "upper coasts" of Asia Minor, he came again to Ephesus, after Apollos had gone to Corinth. At Ephesus St. Paul now found certain disciples, about twelve men, who had been taught by Apollos, before Aquila and Priscilla had expounded to him the way of God more perfectly: to these men St. Paul said, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism." Then St. Paul explained to them that John the Baptist came to call all men to repentance, and that his baptism was only meant to prepare the way for that of Jesus, and to lead all men to believe in Him, and be baptized in the way which He should appoint. "When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied." St. Paul, anxious to convert the Jews, spake boldly in the synagogue for three months, "disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God." But, as usual, many of the Jews were determined not to believe; and not only rejected the truth themselves, but spake evil of it, and abused it to the multitude, so as to try and prevent their believing it either. St. Paul, seeing this, would teach no longer in the synagogue; and "departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus"; that is, he assembled all who were willing to listen to him, in a large room or "school"—a name given to those buildings or rooms used for instruction in any kind of knowledge. In the school of Tyrannus, who was a teacher of some science, and probably a convert, St. Paul now preached to all who would come and listen. "And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: so that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them." They were healed by merely touching those articles which the Apostle had touched. Such a wonderful exercise of miraculous power must have drawn many to listen to the teaching of one, who did such things; and no doubt many, who so listened, became true Christians.

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We must now say something of the unhappy state of the province of Judæa at this time, of which the Bible gives no account. A Roman named Felix had been made governor of Judæa A.D. 51, whilst St. Paul was at Corinth: Felix treated the Jews cruelly, and ill-used them to such a degree, as to drive them into open rebellion; and this, of course, led to severe punishments and fresh cruelties. The whole country was in a sadly disturbed state: robbers infested every part of it; men came forward pretending to be the Messiah, for the Jews, who disbelieved in Jesus Christ, still expected the coming of the promised Messiah; murders and executions took place constantly: the High Priest was murdered at the very altar, and many persons were killed in the temple. In short, as Josephus writes, "God seemed to have abandoned Jerusalem as a detested city, and to have sent the Romans, to punish the Jews for their sin in rejecting and crucifying the Lord Jesus Christ."

During this dreadful time of trouble, a Jew from Egypt came to Jerusalem, and having persuaded many of the unhappy inhabitants of Judæa to believe the lies he told them, he led an immense number of them to the top of the Mount of Olives, promising that the Lord would there work a great miracle, and deliver them and their country from the hands of the Romans. Of course nothing of the kind took place. Many of these wretched dupes were slain by the Roman soldiers, and the rest fled away, in order to save their lives.

The land of Judæa was indeed in a sad state; the sufferings of the Jews were terrible; but they had deserved them. Often and often had they been entreated to repent and believe in Jesus, but they would not; and now the mercy of God was forced to give place to His just anger.

Let this be a warning to us Christians, never to force the Lord to take away His mercy from us. If, by our obstinate impenitence and continuance in sin, we force Him to punish us *as we deserve*, we must perish miserably for ever. But God sees our hearts, and if we are really sorry for our sins, and are earnestly trying to conquer ourselves and resist our evil passions and desires, He will have mercy upon us, and not be extreme to mark what is done amiss.

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We have seen that St. Paul remained for two years in Ephesus, converting many by his preaching and his miracles. His success as usual raised the envy and anger of the unbelieving

Jews, who were anxious to draw the people away from the Apostle, by making them believe that they could work miracles as well as St. Paul. The means they took we shall shortly hear.

The Gentile inhabitants of Ephesus were much given to the study of all the arts of magic, and were considered to be very clever in the practice of them. We have already spoken of sorcery, witchcraft, and magic: how far the professors of them were allowed to appear to do wonderful things by these means, we do not know; but we do know, that any attempt to have such communications with evil spirits was sinful in the sight of God, and that the Jews were especially forbidden to practice any such arts, or to hold communication with those who did so. In spite of this, many of the Jews did follow these sinful studies.

St. Luke says, "Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus," using that Sacred Name as they would have used any of their magical spells or words. "Vagabond" means wandering; and we generally use the word to describe idle, worthless people, who go about begging or stealing, instead of working honestly to gain their own living. "Exorcists" was only a name given to those who professed to cast out evil spirits by the arts of sorcery.

"And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so." The spiritual state of the Jews must indeed have been sad, when the sons of a priest could be found thus wilfully practising arts, upon which the sentence of death was pronounced by the Law! These men, seeing that when St. Paul spake to the evil spirits in the name of Jesus, they immediately left the bodies of those whom they had possessed, wickedly determined to use that Holy Name, in order to heal a man in whom was an evil spirit. And they said, "We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth" to come out of this man. "And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?" The devils were forced to acknowledge the power of Jesus, and that for His sake they must obey His servant Paul; but they plainly told these Jews that they were in no way subject to them: and they gave a strong proof of this, for "the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded." Such an event as this showed clearly that all power belonged to God alone, and that all magical arts were useless, as well as sinful. "And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified,"—more thought of, and treated with greater respect.

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And many that believed, who had, before they became Christians, practised magical arts, now convinced of their extreme sinfulness and folly, "came and confessed, and shewed their deeds,"—expressing their repentance for these former sins.

Nor was this all: "many of them also which (still) used curious arts" saw the wickedness of such practices; and warned by what had happened, showed their repentance by their acts; for they "brought their books together, and burned them before all men." This was a great proof of their earnestness to put an end to the use of magical arts in others, as well as in themselves; for they did not attempt to sell these books to others, but destroyed them. The books were very valuable, for "they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver"—all this money these men were willing to sacrifice, in order to please God. This is a *warning* as well as an example to us, who are too often unwilling to deny ourselves in anything, or make the least sacrifice in order to please or obey our Lord.

"So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed,"—that is, the blessed truths of the Gospel spread on every side, so that the numbers of Christians increased daily.

St. Paul, who had now been nearly three years in Ephesus, began to think of continuing his journey; and "purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome." Just at this time, St. Paul heard an unsatisfactory account of what was going on at Corinth. We have seen that the Apostle had passed eighteen months in Corinth, forming a Church there; and that Apollos had afterwards preached the Gospel in that city with great success: but very soon afterwards, false teachers rose up—that is, persons, who were not sufficiently instructed themselves, fancied that they were able to teach others. But, as they did not themselves understand the whole truth, they could not teach it to others; and therefore their imperfect teaching created great confusion, and unsettled the minds of many believers. Some of these "false teachers" were converts from the Gentiles, who, having been converted by Apollos, now called themselves his disciples; though they mixed up with the truths he had taught them, many of the doctrines and opinions of their philosophers. Some of these teachers on the other hand, were converts from amongst the Jews, who would not give up the idea that it was necessary to keep the whole Law of Moses, observing all the forms and ceremonies ordained by it. These Jewish Christians called themselves followers of Cephas, the Greek word for Peter. These two sets of teachers, both teaching doctrines contrary to the truths of the Gospel as delivered to the Corinthians by St. Paul, made two parties in the Church, so that there were constant disputes and great confusion. Mean time also, many of the native Corinthians, who had joined the Church, began to return to the sinful ways and practices they had followed when they were heathens.

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This was the account that now reached St. Paul at Ephesus; and greatly did it grieve him.

So he at once sent into Macedonia two of his company, Timotheus and Erastus, that they might pass on to Corinth, and try to put an end to all these evil doings: he himself remained at Ephesus a little longer.

CHAPTER XIX.—ST. PAUL AT EPHEBUS.

WE have said that St. Paul sent Timotheus and Erastus to Corinth: Timotheus, or Timothy, has already been spoken of: of Erastus we know nothing, but his name is mentioned in two of St. Paul's Epistles.

After Timothy and Erastus had left Ephesus, St. Paul received a letter, written by those members of the Christian Church who had kept steadily in the right way, and not been led astray by either of the false teachers. This letter told St. Paul how much the Church was disturbed by their mistaken teachers, and begged for his advice and direction. In answer to this letter, St. Paul wrote a long one, called "The First Epistle to the Corinthians." In this letter, St. Paul blames the Corinthians for their disputes and differences of opinion; reminding them that he, the Apostle and messenger of the Lord, had taught them what was right; and that therefore they should have kept fast to what they had learnt from him. He tells them, that as they have all believed in one Lord Jesus Christ, they should live together in peace, believing and doing the same things. Then addressing the teachers who had done the mischief, St. Paul warns them, that if they wilfully continue to teach false doctrines, God will certainly punish them: and he exhorts all the members of the Corinthian Church to listen to Timothy, whom he had sent on purpose that he might show them the whole truth. The Apostle then gives the Corinthian brethren many directions as to their personal conduct, in order that they might lead holy lives on earth, such as would be pleasing to God, and tend also to their own happiness.

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In the Twelfth Chapter of this Epistle, St. Paul gives a beautiful description of charity, that is, of love to God, and of love to man for His sake; and he shows that those whose hearts are really full of this charity, or love, will be gentle and humble, not thinking much of themselves, or of their own comfort or pleasure; but being ready to give up to others, striving to be kind to all, even to those who are unkind to them. In another part of this Epistle, St. Paul speaks of the resurrection of Jesus, and of the consequent certainty that all men shall in like manner rise from the dead, though now they may not understand how such a thing can be: and he therefore entreats the Corinthian brethren, to keep steadily in the faith taught by the Gospel, doing the work of the Lord always; remembering, that those who do serve Him here in faith and love, will live with Him for ever hereafter.

St. Paul ends his letter, by saying that he shall not come to Corinth at present; but that he hopes to pass the winter with them.

It was spring when St. Paul wrote this letter, for he tells the Corinthians, "I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost": and the Feast of Pentecost took place about the month of May; so that there were now a good many months before winter, when St. Paul hoped, with the permission of the Lord, to tarry awhile at Corinth.

Before St. Paul left Ephesus, a great tumult took place in that city; for, as St. Luke says, "there arose no small stir about that way,"—that is, the people were stirred up against the doctrines of Christianity, so as to make a tumult in the city. "For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen."

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We have said, that the temple of Diana, at Ephesus, was a most beautiful and magnificent building, and people came from all parts to see this wonderful temple, and to worship before an image of Diana, which was supposed by all the heathens to have been sent down direct from heaven. Those who came from far distant places to worship in this famous temple, were glad to carry away some remembrance of the goddess; and strangers who only came out of curiosity, also bought the "shrines," or little models of the temple, which the silversmiths at Ephesus made: these "shrines" had a small image of Diana within them. By these means, the craftsmen, or workers in silver, gained a great deal of money; and the more they sold, the better it was for them.

St. Paul had of course taught all who listened to him, that Diana was no goddess, only an imaginary being, and that it was very sinful to worship or honour her in any way: those who believed him therefore, would not buy these silver shrines, and consequently the silversmiths found their trade very much fallen off. This great loss of money, caused Demetrius, one of the chief silversmiths, to call together all the craftsmen and workmen of the like occupation. When they were assembled, he said to them, "Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands: so that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth." This speech was well calculated to stir up the bad passions of all who heard it; the craftsmen would be angry at the idea of losing their wealth, whilst all the Gentiles at Ephesus, would be indignant that their favourite goddess and her splendid temple should be less thought of, and thus bring fewer people to Ephesus, to admire and worship. This decrease in the number of strangers attracted to Ephesus, would of course cause less money to be spent in the city, which would be a great loss to the inhabitants generally. When, therefore, those to whom Demetrius spake, "heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians."

What Demetrius had said to the craftsmen whom he had called together, spread quickly throughout the city: "and the whole city was filled with confusion"—the people were now ready for any mischief; and meeting with two of St. Paul's companions, Gaius and Aristarchus, they caught them, and "rushed with one accord into the theatre"—a large building, in which public shows and games took place, and which was also used for assemblies of the people, when any important occasion brought them together. When St. Paul understood what had happened, he would have gone also into the theatre to speak to the people; but the disciples, fearing that they might do the Apostle some mischief, suffered him not to go in. "And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends," knowing that in the present excited state of the people, St. Paul's life would be in danger amongst them, "sent unto him, desiring him that he would not adventure himself into the theatre."

The persons here spoken of as chiefs of Asia, were the rulers of the provinces into which Asia Minor was divided: they were called "Asiarchs," and were chosen from amongst the men of wealth and rank in the different provinces. Their office was to direct all religious ceremonies and solemnities; and to celebrate at their own expense, public games in the theatre, in honour of the heathen gods. It seems probable that at this very time, public shows and games were going on in the city of Ephesus; and that some of the Asiarchs who were his friends, feared that if St. Paul now went into the theatre, the people might lay hold of him, and throw him to the wild beasts, whose fights with one another were generally a part of all the public games. In after times, very many Christians were cruelly given to be killed by wild beasts, because they would not give up their religion, and bow down to the false gods of the heathen. The tumult and disturbance in the theatre at Ephesus became worse and worse. St. Luke tells us, "Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together."

The greater number of those who were now assembled, and were loudest in their cries against St. Paul, did not even know what had caused this tumultuous meeting. They copied the example of others, without attempting to find out whether they were right or wrong. This is too often the case amongst ourselves; but we should be careful not to join in blaming any person, merely because others do so, without taking the trouble to find out whether they deserve blame or not. The Jews, seeing the rage of the people in the theatre, did their best to turn it all upon the Christians, and to show that they had taken no part in teaching men to despise the goddess Diana: and they now put forward a Jew named Alexander, that he might explain this to the assembly. "And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defence unto the people. But when they knew that he was a Jew," and therefore no worshipper of Diana, they refused to hear him, "and all with one voice (for) about the space of two hours cried out," over and over again, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians."

The town-clerk, or principal magistrate of the city, succeeded at last in stopping this senseless outcry and tumult; and so far appeased the people, as to get them to listen to him. They were perhaps the more inclined to do this, as they must have been tired of repeating this cry for two hours, without knowing why.

As soon as the town-clerk was allowed to speak, he reminded the people, that as it was well known to all men, that the Ephesians were worshippers of the great goddess Diana, they need not be troubled by anything St. Paul said; more especially as the image of Diana had come down from heaven, and could not therefore be one of those idols, made by the hands of men, against which the Apostle had spoken. Then he went on to show them, that they had done wrong in seizing Gaius and Aristarchus, whom they could not accuse of any crime whatever: they were neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of the goddess, and could not justly be taken before the magistrates; but if Demetrius and his fellow workmen had injury to complain of, there were proper courts of law, where such complaints would be heard and judged. But he also told them, that if they wished to inquire into the doctrines taught by St. Paul and his companions, it must be done in a very different manner: a proper assembly must be called, of people who had authority to judge of such questions; and then the matter must be brought before them: and he ended by telling them, that they were in danger of being punished for the uproar and confusion they had made, for there was no cause for it, and therefore they would not be able to give a satisfactory answer to the Roman governor, if he should call them to account for what had happened.

When the town-clerk had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly. "And after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto him the disciples," to take leave of them, "and embraced them, and departed for to go into Macedonia."

From another part of the Bible, we learn that Timothy was now left at Ephesus, to direct the affairs of the Church in that city. We are not told what places St. Paul now visited in Macedonia, but no doubt he went wherever he had been before, as well as to other places. From one of these places in Macedonia, St. Paul wrote the First Epistle to Timothy; directing him how to answer the Jewish teachers, who tried to bring false doctrines into the Church at Ephesus. After giving Timothy much advice as to what he was to teach to others, St. Paul ends his letter by begging him to keep steadfast in the faith of the Gospel; to avoid and flee from all sins; and to follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness, that so he might, for Jesus Christ's sake, receive eternal life.

CHAPTER XX.—ST. PAUL'S JOURNEY TO MILETUS.

DURING the time that St. Paul was journeying about in Macedonia, he suffered much both from the unbelieving Jews and the infidels; for he says himself, in one of his Epistles (2 Cor. vii.), "when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears." But in the midst of his troubles, the Apostle had one great comfort, for Titus came to him from Corinth, and brought him a very satisfactory account of the state of the Church in that city.

A short time afterwards, he sent Titus back to Corinth, and by him he sent his "Second Epistle to the Corinthians." Some of the teachers, who had been reproofed for disturbing the faith of the believers by their mistaken teaching, had, in their anger at the reproof, spoken ill of St. Paul himself. In this letter, therefore, St. Paul shows the Corinthians that all he has done or said has been according to the Will of God, and that therefore they may safely believe him rather than any teachers, whose doctrines do not agree with what he had taught them. Many other things he wrote; above all, entreating the members of the Corinthian Church to keep steadily in the Faith of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to strive to please God in all things, by living in peace and holiness.

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This Epistle St. Paul sent to Corinth by Titus, remaining himself a little longer in Macedonia. "And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece, and there abode three months." We are told nothing of what St Paul did during these three months, but no doubt he visited Corinth amongst other places; and we are quite sure that wherever he went he was doing the work of the Lord. It seems that St Paul proposed to go by sea from Achaia to Syria; but the Jews, who were as usual greatly vexed at the success of his preaching, laid some plot to take or kill him, at the port from which he must sail. Hearing in some way of this plot, St. Paul "purposed," or determined, to return through Macedonia, and so disappoint the malice of his enemies. Accordingly he went into Macedonia, where he was joined by several of the brethren from different cities in that province. And they "accompanied him into Asia," together with some others who had come with him from that country.

St. Paul appears to have merely passed through Macedonia at this time, sending most of his company on before, for St. Luke says of them, "These going before tarried for us at Troas,"—that is, they crossed over into Asia, and waited at Troas until the Apostle should join them there.

St. Luke and one or two others stayed with St. Paul, and we read, "And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days." Whilst St. Paul was on his way through Macedonia at this time, he wrote a long letter, called "The Epistle to the Romans," about the year 58 (A.D.). In our Bibles, this Epistle stands first of all; but the Epistles are not *chronologically* arranged; that is, they are not arranged according to the order in which they were written. If they had been chronologically arranged, "The Epistle to the Galatians," written A.D. 51, would have stood first; then "The First Epistle to the Thessalonians," also written A.D. 51; and next, "The Second Epistle to the Thessalonians," A.D. 52; and that to "Titus," A.D. 53. After these, the next in order would have been, "The First Epistle to the Corinthians," A.D. 57, and "The First Epistle to Timothy," in the same year; and "The Second Epistle to the Corinthians," A.D. 58, just before St. Paul wrote that of which we are speaking, to "The Romans."

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In this letter, St. Paul speaks both to the Jews and Gentiles; trying to persuade both, that the only possible way of salvation for all mankind was through Faith in Jesus Christ. He tells the Gentiles that their learning and wisdom will not save them; and that even all their moral virtues, such as truth, honesty, charity, and such like, will be of no use without Faith: they must first believe in Jesus Christ, and then do all these things, *because* they are pleasing to Him. To the Jews, the Apostle writes, that all their obedience to the Law of Moses cannot save them, or give them eternal life; that the Law was only given to prepare the way for Christ, Who had now made known that the only way of salvation was through Faith in Him, and consequent obedience to His holy Word. St. Paul also explained clearly, that Adam's sin had made all men sinners; and that therefore all men deserved the wrath of God; but that Christ, by His sufferings and death, had undone the evil brought upon all mankind by Adam, and purchased for them forgiveness and justification. Much more St. Paul taught in this Epistle, and we have it to teach us now. The Epistles are of the greatest use to us, for they explain and teach much, that is not even mentioned in the Gospels.

From Troas, St. Paul determined to go on foot to Assos, another sea-port town a little to the south; but at the same time he purposed to send most, if not all, his companions to that place by sea. During the seven days spent by St. Paul at Troas, he of course preached the Gospel diligently; and, on the last occasion of his speaking to the people, a very remarkable event took place, of which we must now read the account given us by St. Luke in the Book of Acts.

"And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow."

The "breaking of bread" here spoken of, was the partaking of the Bread and Wine which, on the night before His death, our blessed Lord commanded to be received constantly by all His faithful followers, in remembrance of His Body given, and His Blood shed, for our redemption. This receiving of Bread and Wine we call "The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper." The early Christians met to partake of the Lord's Supper on the First Day of every week, the day on which Jesus rose from the dead. On the night before St. Paul intended to leave Troas, the disciples met

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together to partake with him, for the last time, of the Lord's Supper, and to listen to his farewell counsels. Much had the Apostle to say, and his hearers were anxious to learn of him, so that he continued his speech until midnight. "And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together." This upper chamber was, on what we should call the third story, and, like all Eastern houses, would have large windows opening even with the floor. "Many lights," and a number of people, naturally made the room very hot, so that the windows were wide open. "And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead." The terrible death of this young man would, of course, create much confusion and distress amongst the assembled Christians. "And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him." The Apostle did not ask God to bring Eutychus at once to life, but he told the brethren that his life would come back, and that they need not therefore grieve and distress themselves about him. Those to whom St. Paul now spake had faith in God, Whose servant he was, and therefore believed his words, and were content to wait the Lord's time; and so they returned to the upper chamber, leaving the lifeless body of Eutychus for a time, while St. Paul continued his preaching. "When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed," and went at once on his way to Assos. The Apostle grudged no labour done for the Lord; on the eve of a journey he gave up his night's rest to preach the Gospel: Eutychus, who might probably never have another opportunity of learning from him, had fallen asleep instead of listening to the words of salvation. After St. Paul's departure from amongst the brethren, the miracle which he had foretold came to pass; for "they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted." Comforted as to Eutychus himself, and comforted in this additional proof, that St. Paul's words were indeed the words of one under the especial direction and blessing of God Almighty, the Lord of Life and Death. St. Luke now says, "And we went before to ship, and sailed unto Assos, there intending to take in Paul: for so had he appointed, minding himself to go afoot. And when he met with us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene." This was the chief town in Lesbos, one of the islands of the Archipelago: the whole island is now called Metelin. St. Paul did not stop at Mitylene, for we read that he and his company passed the island of Chios next day, then that of Samos, and landed at Trogyllium, a town of Asia Minor, to the S.W. of Ephesus; and next day they came to Miletus, still lower on the coast, but directly to the south of Ephesus, from whence it was no great distance. St. Paul knew that if he went to Ephesus, he should find it difficult to get away again so soon as he wished; and therefore he "had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost." But although he could not spare time to visit Ephesus, he would not be so near without seeing some of the elders of the Church, especially as he had something he wished particularly to say to them. The chief ruler of the Church under St. Paul was now journeying with him; for Timotheus, or Timothy, was Bishop of Ephesus, and during his absence had left the care of the Church to a certain number of elders, or chief men amongst the believers. From Miletus, therefore, St. Paul "sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church. And when they were come to him," St. Paul spake to them. He reminded them, that he had freely preached unto them the Gospel of Jesus Christ, in spite of all difficulties and dangers; keeping back nothing that was profitable for them to know; "testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." He then told them that now, by the direction of the Holy Spirit, he was going up to Jerusalem, not knowing what would happen to him there; except that the Holy Ghost had made known unto him, that in every city bonds and afflictions awaited him. But St. Paul then declared, that the prospect of imprisonments and persecutions did not trouble him, for that he was quite ready to give up his life also, if so he could best finish the work which the Lord had given him to do: in the faithful service of God he should finish his course, or end his life, with joy. The Apostle then spake words grievous for the Ephesians to hear; saying, "And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men; for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." St. Paul had thoroughly done his duty to the Ephesians, in showing them the way of salvation; and if any of them failed to obtain it, such failure could in no way be laid to him: he was "pure from the blood," the *spiritual death*, of all men.

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CHAPTER XXI.—ST. PAUL GOES UP TO JERUSALEM.

AFTER reminding the elders of Ephesus of what he had done for them and their countrymen, St. Paul exhorted them to take heed unto themselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers, so as in all things to set a good example to others; and to feed the Church, or nourish and strengthen the souls of the brethren, with the blessed truths of the Gospel, the pure Word of Him Who had purchased the Church with his own blood. He told them, that he was the more anxious to exhort them to do this, because he knew that, after his departing, wicked men, whom he likens to "grievous wolves," would enter in among them, not sparing the flock, but leading the brethren astray to the destruction of their souls. And not only this, but also of their own selves men should arise teaching false doctrines, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Having thus warned them, St. Paul undertreated them to "watch," remembering that for three years he had not ceased to warn them of these things. Again the Apostle commended the Ephesians to the grace of God, which was able to give them an

inheritance "among all them which are sanctified": and ended by reminding them that he had "coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel"; but that he had maintained himself by working with his own hands, setting them an example that they also should "remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." "And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all." St. Paul knew well that without the blessing and help of God no good thing can be done; and thus did he set an example to all men for ever, to ask His aid in all their works.

"And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship," in which he was about to sail from Miletus; anxious not to lose sight of him before it was absolutely necessary. It was natural and right that the elders of Ephesus should be deeply grieved, at hearing that they would never again in this world, see one who had been so much with them, and from whom they had learnt so much. But had they duly considered his words, they would not have sorrowed most of all on this account, but for the troubles which were to fall upon their Church from false and wicked teachers, who would lead many to forsake the Gospel, and thus destroy them for ever.

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Having taken a final leave of the elders of Ephesus, St. Paul and his company sailed to the island of Coos, or Cos; then to another called Rhodes; and from thence to the coast of Asia Minor, where they landed at Patara, a sea-port of Lycia. Here they found a ship about to sail into Phœnicia, and going on board, they passed near the isle of Cyprus, and finally landed at Tyre, "for there the ship was to unlade her burden." Finding disciples at Tyre, St. Paul stayed with them seven days, teaching and exhorting them. St. Luke tells us that some of these disciples "said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem." This means that the Holy Spirit had made known to these disciples, that great troubles and dangers awaited the Apostle at Jerusalem; and therefore they tried to persuade him that he should not go up at all. St. Paul, however, knew that it was his duty to go to Jerusalem at this time, and therefore no fear of personal suffering would keep him away: he was ready to undergo whatever God saw fit to send. St. Luke then says, "And when we had accomplished those days, we departed, and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed."

The brethren at Tyre were grieved to part with St. Paul, particularly foreseeing that sufferings awaited him at Jerusalem. They accompanied him to the sea-shore, where the ship waited for him. Their last act sets us an example of what we should do in all times of sorrow and anxiety. They would not part without praying to God; so they all knelt down where they were, and prayed earnestly from their hearts. The Lord will hear all such real prayers, wherever we say them, or whether we are kneeling or not; but if we kneel down and repeat words without caring or thinking about what we are saying, that is not such prayer as the Lord our God has promised to hear. When St. Paul and his companions had prayed with the Christians of Tyre, and taken leave of them, they "took ship,"—that is, embarked on board the ship, whilst the others "returned home again."

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From Tyre St. Paul sailed to Ptolemais, and landing there, stayed one day with the brethren. Ptolemais was a celebrated sea-port of Syria, to the north of Mount Carmel. In the Old Testament, Ptolemais is called Accho. It was situated in that part of the Land of Canaan given to the Tribe of Asher; and it was one of those cities out of which the Children of Israel did not drive the idolatrous inhabitants, as the Lord had commanded them to do. You will remember the sin and trouble that came upon the Land of Israel, in consequence of the disobedience of several of the tribes, who, instead of entirely driving out the Canaanites, let them continue to live amongst them; by which they were afterwards led into sin, and suffered much misery in consequence.

The town of Accho was enlarged and beautified, after the death of Alexander the Great, by the first of the Egyptian kings, called Ptolemy; and the name of the city was in consequence changed to Ptolemais. We now call it Acre, and you will find Acre often spoken of in history.

St. Luke now says, "And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Cæsarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him." We have heard of Philip as one of the seven deacons, (of whom Stephen was another,) chosen to help the Apostles, by distributing food and money to the believers, when they had all things in common; and we have also heard of his being sent by the Spirit into the desert between Jerusalem and Gaza, to teach the officer of Candace, queen of Ethiopia; after which he returned to his home in Cæsarea. This Philip must not be confounded with the Apostle of the same name, a native "of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter," unto whom our Lord said, "Follow me." We do not call the deacon Philip an "evangelist," because we only give that name to those four men who, by the inspiration of God, wrote their several accounts of Christ's life and death; but St. Luke might well call Philip so, because he preached the Gospel in every place to which he was sent; and one who spreads the knowledge of the Gospel by preaching it, was as much an "evangelist" as he who spread it by his writing.

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Philip had four unmarried daughters, to whom God had, in a miraculous way, given His Holy Spirit, so that they "did prophesy." This was a fulfilment of the ancient promise recorded by the prophet Joel, that in the days of the Messiah the Spirit should be poured out upon their sons and daughters, servants and handmaidens, so that they should prophesy.

St. Paul stayed many days with Philip. We hear nothing of the work he then did there; but St. Luke says, "And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judæa a certain prophet,

named Agabus. And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles." We have heard already of Agabus, as one of the prophets who went from Jerusalem to Antioch, and foretold the dearth, or famine, in consequence of which the Christians of Antioch made a collection for the poorer brethren at Jerusalem, and "sent it up by the hands of Barnabas and Saul," as St. Paul was at that time called. Agabus, inspired by the Holy Spirit, now bore his testimony to the dangers which threatened the Apostle at Jerusalem. The consequence of this was, that St. Paul's companions themselves, and "they of that place," (the brethren at Cæsarea,) "besought him not to go up to Jerusalem"; and so avoid the dangers which threatened him in that city.

Here we see that even our friends may tempt us to sin, and that we must be careful not to yield to their entreaties when they would make us do wrong. When we know what our duty is, we must not be prevented from doing it, either by love to our friends or fear of our enemies. It is often very hard and difficult to do right, when those we love, ask and beg us not to do it. In this way, children are often led to do wrong. Let us all, whether we are old or young, take care not to give way to such temptations; and, above all, let us never so tempt others to do wrong: let us never ask any one to do what is wrong, but, on the contrary, do all we can to persuade all to do what is right and pleasing in the sight of God. St. Paul knew that it was his duty to go up to Jerusalem; and therefore when those about him entreated him not to go, he answered, "What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

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Though the Apostle was firmly resolved to do his duty, and quite ready to lay down his life for Christ's sake, if called upon to do so, it grieved him to give pain to his friends; and therefore he reminds them, that all their sorrow and weeping would but distress him more and more—break his heart, as he expressed it, without in any way changing his settled purpose to go up to Jerusalem.

When St. Paul had thus declared his unalterable determination, those who had tried to persuade him not to carry it out, did what they should have done at first: they left the whole matter in the hands of God, for "when he would not be persuaded," they "ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done." Thus St. Paul's example had a good effect upon the brethren.

St. Luke then says, "And after those days we took up our carriages, and went to Jerusalem." The word "carriages" here does not mean conveyances to take people from one place to another, but rather such things as they *carried* with them—their baggage, in short. Some of the disciples from Cæsarea went with the Apostles. Amongst them was an old disciple, a native of Cyprus, called Mnason, who appears at this time to have had a house in Jerusalem, where St. Paul and his company were to lodge. St. Luke tells us, "And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present. And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry. And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord."

CHAPTER XXII.—TUMULT AT JERUSALEM.

ST. JAMES, and the elders of the Church at Jerusalem, glorified God, upon hearing of the conversion of so many Gentiles by the teaching of St. Paul, and then they "said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law: and they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come."

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The elders feared, that St. Paul's coming to Jerusalem might cause a disturbance amongst the Jewish converts; who, though Christians, revered the Law, and could not bear that it should be neglected. They had heard exaggerated accounts of what the Apostle had taught; for he had never said that it was *wrong* to observe and do the things commanded by Moses, and that therefore they *ought not* to do them. He had only said, that it was not *necessary* to keep the ceremonial Law; and that it was *useless* to do so, because no man could obtain eternal life by any such outward acts. St. Paul's great object was to make the Jews understand, that the Law given by Moses, was only meant to be binding until the Messiah came; and that as Jesus had now visited his people, the ceremonial part of the Law was done away with. God no longer required it to be observed: therefore, if the Jews chose still to observe it, they must not imagine that by doing so they would now find favour with God: the only way to gain his favour was by believing in Jesus Christ, and trying, out of love for Him, to obey all the commands and precepts of the Gospel: all who thus strove to please God, would find favour in His sight, whether they kept the ceremonial Law or not. The Jewish converts at Jerusalem, not clearly understanding what St. Paul had taught, were set against him; and as they would be sure to meet together to discuss the matter, as soon as they heard of his arrival, the elders now said to one another, "What is it therefore?"—that is, what can be done to quiet the fears of these Jewish brethren. The plan that the Apostles and elders now proposed, was one that would show the Jews, that St. Paul did not think it *wrong* to observe the forms of the Law, though he taught that it was not *necessary* to do

so. What this plan was, we shall hear from what they now said to St. Paul, "Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them; them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law."

To understand this speech, we must remember that even in the time of Moses, the Children of Israel were in the habit of showing their piety, and their wish to serve God, by devoting themselves for a time to the performance of special acts of worship; separating themselves from their brethren, for the observance of certain forms and ceremonies. A person who thus separated himself for a time from others by a particular profession of religion, was called a Nazarite; and the Lord Himself gave Moses directions, as to the outward forms and ceremonies to be observed by every one, who should vow the vow of a Nazarite. To take the vow of a Nazarite was a *voluntary* act; that is, it was at the choice of any person to take it: but once taken, the person who had thus devoted himself to the special service of God, was neither to drink wine, nor any of the drinks made from fruits or honey: he was to drink water only, that his head might be cool and clear, and better able to attend to his religious studies and exercises. Then he was not to shave his head, nor to cut his hair; neither was he to do any of the things usually done upon the death of a relation, because such mourning for the dead would render him unclean.

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Some persons vowed themselves to be Nazarites for life; others only for a certain number of years, months, or even days: and at the end of the time, the Nazarite was to bring certain offerings unto the priest to be presented to the Lord: then he was to shave his head at the door of the tabernacle, and burn the hair in the fire which consumed the peace offerings. After all the appointed ceremonies had been gone through, the Nazarite was free from his vow, and might return to live like other people. You will, I hope, remember Samson, who was a Nazarite from his birth; and who fell into great trouble, because his vow was broken, when his hair was cut off by Delilah.

Now at the time when St. Paul came to Jerusalem, there were four men there, who had taken the vows of a Nazarite for a short time: their time was nearly out, and the elders proposed that St. Paul should join them in abstaining (or keeping) from such things, as they were forbidden to do; and that he should "be at charges with them," that is, pay for the sacrifices they must offer, before they could shave their heads, and be free from their vows. The Jews looked upon it as an act of piety, for any person to pay the expenses of those who had taken the vow of a Nazarite.

We have now seen what the elders advised St. Paul to do, in order to show the Jews that he was no *enemy* to the Law of Moses, and did not think it *wrong* to observe its forms, if people liked to do so, though it was unnecessary. And they added, "As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication": thus repeating that decision of the Church, with which the teaching of St. Paul agreed.

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"Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them." All this was done for the sake of peace, and to make the Jews more willing to listen to St. Paul. Some people think it was not right nor wise to act in this manner, because it might lead man to believe, that the Law *ought* to be observed in all its ceremonies, and that St. Paul's practice did not quite agree with his preaching. At any rate it had not the effect of satisfying the Jews; on the contrary, it caused a serious disturbance. "When the seven days were almost ended," some unbelieving Jews of Asia, who had persecuted St. Paul in their own country, and were now come to Jerusalem for the same purpose, "when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him, crying out, Men of Israel, help: this is the man, that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place." They declared that St. Paul, by his teaching, was taking away from the Jews all their privileges as the chosen people of God, and putting the heathen on an equality with them; that he taught men not to respect the law, nor to reverence the temple; and that he did not reverence it himself, but had polluted and defiled it; for, said they, he "brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place." This they said, because they had seen an Ephesian convert, named Trophimus, in the city with St. Paul, and "supposed that Paul had brought (him) into the temple"; which of course he had not done: because, though he knew that the entrance of a true Christian into the temple would not be displeasing to God, he knew that it would greatly offend the Jews, if any one who had been a Gentile, went any further than the outer court of the temple, set apart for the Gentiles: and he did not wish to offend or vex the Jews needlessly. We should never do anything to vex or grieve others, unless it is our *duty* to do it. Our duty we must do, whatever be the consequence.

The Jews, who now tried to stir up the people against St. Paul, succeeded to their utmost wish in raising a disturbance, for "all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut. And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar." The band here spoken of, was the Roman garrison, or party of soldiers, posted in Jerusalem, to keep the city in order, and prevent any kind of disturbance or riot amongst the Jews. The chief captain of this band, at the time we are speaking of, was a Roman named Claudius Lysias; "who," upon hearing of the uproar, "immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them." They had not far to go, for the place in which they were posted was the castle of Antonia, close to the north-west corner of the temple. This castle, or strong tower, had been built by Herod the

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Great: it was so high, that from the upper part, the soldiers on watch could see what was going on in the two outer courts of the temple: they would therefore have seen St. Paul dragged out of the temple by an angry mob, and they would at once have taken these tidings to their captain, who went down with all haste, and arrived in time to save the Apostle's life; for the Jews feared the Roman soldiers, and when they saw them, "they left beating of Paul"—that is, ceased to beat him.

"Then the chief captain came near, and took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains"; for as he naturally concluded that St. Paul must have committed some crime, to make the Jews treat him in this way, his first care was to secure him, that he might not run away, and thus escape the punishment he deserved. We may be quite sure that the Apostle would have made no attempt to escape; but that the Romans could not know. When Claudius Lysias had secured his prisoner, he "demanded who he was, and what he had done." To this question, no reasonable answer could be given; for as St. Paul had not committed any crime, no intelligible accusation could be brought against him: and therefore, "some cried one thing, some another, among the multitude": so that Claudius Lysias could make out nothing for certain; "and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle." The Jews, unwilling to lose their victim, pressed after the soldiers who were leading him away, eager to kill him. "And when he came upon the stairs," leading up into the castle, "so it was, that he was borne," or carried, by "the soldiers for the violence of the people. For the multitude followed after, crying, Away with him." On the top of the stairs, the Apostle was out of reach of his furious enemies; "and as Paul was to be led into the castle, he said unto the chief captain, May I speak unto thee?" These words were spoken in Greek, to the astonishment of Claudius Lysias, who imagined that his prisoner must be a certain Egyptian, or rather a Jew who had come from Egypt to Jerusalem, about two years before this time. Giving out that he was a great prophet sent by God, this man persuaded great numbers of people to go with him to the Mount of Olives, promising, that they should see the walls of the city fall down at his command: but he intended, with the help of these people, to force his way into the city, and destroy the Roman guards. This attempt was, however, prevented by Felix, the governor of Judæa: many of these foolish people were killed, and the leader himself fled into the wilderness, accompanied by a great number of men, that "were murderers," or had committed other crimes which made them liable to punishment. Josephus the historian tells us, that these murderers were persons who, under pretence of religion, came up to Jerusalem with daggers or short swords, concealed under their cloaks, ready to do any act of violence. They were employed by Felix to murder Jonathan the High Priest; and for this crime they of course received no punishment. They afterwards made it a practice, to come up to Jerusalem for all the feasts; and then, either by hiring themselves out as assassins to those who wished to get rid of an enemy, or by killing those against whom they had any grudge, they committed numerous murders, even in the temple itself. The number of these murderers became very considerable, and the Roman Government wished to destroy them.

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CHAPTER XXIII.—ST. PAUL BROUGHT BEFORE THE SANHEDRIM.

WHEN St. Paul said in Greek to the Chief captain, "May I speak unto thee?" he said, in answer, "Canst thou speak Greek? Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers? But Paul said, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and, I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people." Claudius Lysias readily granted this request. "And when he had given him licence, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people"; signifying that he had something to say, if they would only be quiet and listen to him. The people were now willing to hear him. "And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue, saying, Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you." It would seem that many of those who had been crying out against St. Paul, had no idea that he was himself a Jew, and able to speak to them in their own beloved language; for "when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence." St. Paul then told the people that he himself was born a Jew, and had been brought up in Jerusalem by their famous teacher Gamaliel, who had taught him the very strictest observance of the Law of Moses; and that he himself had been so zealous for the Law, that he had at one time cruelly persecuted the Christians, as the High Priest and all the elders of the Jews could bear witness. Then he went on to give an account of all that had happened to him on his way to Damascus, and how he had in consequence become himself a believer in Jesus Christ. He also told the people, that when he was afterwards in Jerusalem, the Lord had appeared to him in a vision, and given him a positive command to go and preach to the Gentiles, saying, "Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles." Hitherto, the assembled multitude had listened quietly to what the Apostle said, "they gave him audience unto this word"; but when they heard him plainly declare, that it was the will of God that the Gentiles should share His favour, which they thought belonged only to themselves, they were filled with rage, and would hear no more: they "lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live": and they cast off their upper garments, that they might be ready to stone him, and threw dust up into the air, to show their hatred and contempt.

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The Arabs in these days have a custom like this; for when any person, who is speaking in

public, says anything they disapprove of, they throw dust into the air, to show that they have no respect for the speaker and do not believe what he is saying. St. Paul was now in great danger of being torn in pieces, if the people, who stood raging and shouting round the stairs on which he stood, could catch hold of him. Claudius Lysias saw that the only hope of stopping the uproar, was to take St. Paul out of sight of the enraged multitude. "And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air, the chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle." But he was as far as ever from knowing what the Jews accused St. Paul of: he did not understand Hebrew, and therefore he had no idea of what had been said; but he naturally thought, that it must be something very wrong to put the people into such a rage. Seeing therefore, that there was no other chance of learning the truth, he now determined to have St. Paul beaten, according to the custom of the Romans, who treated prisoners in this way, in order to make them confess what crimes they had committed. Claudius Lysias therefore, after having had the Apostle brought into the castle, "bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him. And as they bound him with thongs" to a pillar, as was usual in such cases, "Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?" The privileges of a Roman, that is, of a Roman citizen, have been explained. The centurion, who commanded the party of soldiers about to scourge the prisoner, was fully aware of the danger of so treating one, who had in any way obtained the freedom of Rome; and therefore, when he heard such words spoken by his prisoner, he at once "went, and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest; for this man is a Roman." Such a startling piece of intelligence, at once brought Claudius to the spot where the prisoner stood bound with thongs to a pillar, with the soldiers round ready to scourge him. "Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea. And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born. Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him" by this torture: and not only did the chief captain give up all idea of scourging St. Paul, but he "also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him."

Even binding a Roman citizen was unlawful, and for doing this Claudius Lysias was liable to be punished. Nero, who had become Emperor of Rome about four years before this time, on the death of Claudius, A.D. 54, was a harsh and cruel tyrant; and though he would not have cared whether St. Paul was tortured or not, he would have been very angry if any of the laws concerning the Roman privileges had been broken; and therefore Claudius Lysias had good reason to fear, that if St. Paul complained of the treatment which he, a free-born citizen of Rome, had received, the Emperor would cause him to be punished. If he had known more of the precepts taught by Jesus, he would have felt sure that St. Paul would have no wish to revenge himself in such a manner. The Apostle made use of his rights as a Roman citizen to save himself from a cruel punishment; because, if he had been scourged, it might have led men to think that he must have been guilty of some crime to deserve such a punishment; and it was necessary that the teachers of the holy Word of God should appear blameless before all men.

The chief captain now took other measures for finding out what St. Paul was accused of; and he summoned the Sanhedrim to meet, that they might in a lawful manner examine and judge the prisoner, and so ascertain whether there was any reason for the rage of the people against him. We read, "On the morrow, because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him from his bands, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down, and set him before them. And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day."

Now that the Apostle was called upon to defend himself, he rightly wished all men to understand, that he was no criminal deserving of anger or punishment; but a man who had always tried to do what he believed to be his duty in the sight of God: most truly could he say that he had done this; for even when he persecuted the followers of Jesus, it was under the mistaken idea that it was his duty to do so. But the Jews were angry at his saying this, "and the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth. Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law? And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest? Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people."

The Apostle meant, that if he had known, or looked upon Ananias as the High Priest, he would not have rebuked him in such words; because a ruler of the people must be treated with respect, on account of his office: but Ananias deserved the rebuke, for the Law commanded all who ruled, or judged others, to do no unrighteousness or injustice themselves; and Ananias broke the Law, and was guilty of very great injustice in ordering St. Paul to be smitten in this way, before he had been proved to be guilty of any crime. We must mention here that, in fact, Ananias was *not* the High Priest at this time. He had been High Priest at the time of the famine, when Barnabas and Saul took help to the poor brethren at Jerusalem; but after that, there had been some disturbance between the Jews and Samaritans, and the Romans, thinking Ananias to blame, deprived him of his sacred office, and sent him as a prisoner to Rome: and though he was afterwards allowed to return to Jerusalem, he was not restored to the office of High Priest, to which another man, named Jonathan, had been appointed. This Jonathan had been killed by the "murderers" hired by Felix the Roman governor, and no other High Priest had as yet been appointed; therefore there was, in fact, *no* High Priest to be president, or head, of the Sanhedrim. Under these circumstances, Ananias set himself up as chief of the Council, and behaved in the unjust manner related. St. Paul had only been a very few days in Jerusalem, and did not perhaps know that

Ananias had taken the office of High Priest upon himself; or if he did know it, what he said would be a just rebuke to him for having done so.

One other matter requires a few words, that is, the "whited wall," to which St. Paul compared Ananias. We shall remember that our Saviour said, "Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but are within full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Even so ye also appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity." In the same manner St. Paul applied the comparison of the "whited wall" of a sepulchre to Ananias, who pretended to judge and rebuke another, whilst his own heart was full of all evil passions and iniquity.

Let us remember, that each such passage of Scripture has a lesson for us: all who only think of what men will say, and try to *appear* good in the eyes of their fellow creatures, without trying to love and serve God with all their heart, and to do His will whatever men may think of them, are no more pleasing in the eyes of our Lord, than were the Pharisees, whom Jesus compared to "whited sepulchres."

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Now we must return to the Council of the Sanhedrim, and hear what the Apostle said in his defence. St. Luke says, "But when Paul perceived that the one part (of his hearers) were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question"—meaning that he was persecuted and called to account, because he had taught that the dead would rise again. "And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and Sadducees: and the multitude was divided. For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit; but the Pharisees confess both. And there arose a great cry: and the scribes that were of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God." These scribes spake well: but unhappily they did not speak in sincerity, but only out of contradiction and spite to the Sadducees, whom they hated. They were quite as much opposed to St. Paul's preaching to the Gentiles, as any other class of persons could be; and therefore it was hypocrisy to pretend to believe that an angel had bid him do so. St. Paul, moreover, had said nothing of any angel speaking to him; but had plainly declared that Jesus Christ had spoken to him: and this of course the Pharisees could not allow, because they would not acknowledge Jesus Christ to be the Messiah. They were, in fact, fighting against God—the very thing which they pretended to be afraid of doing.

The Sadducees were very angry, and the whole Council became a scene of the greatest confusion and violence; so that Claudius Lysias feared for his prisoner's life; and being answerable for his safety, he sent his soldiers to bring him back into the castle, where he would be out of danger.

CHAPTER XXIV.—ST. PAUL SENT TO CÆSAREA.

We read in the Book of Acts, "And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring him into the castle."

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In the midst of the troubles and dangers with which he was now surrounded, the faithful servant of God was not left without comfort and encouragement; for we read, that "the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome. And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul."

These men belonged to a party amongst the Jews, who were particularly strict in the observance of all the forms and ceremonies of the Law; and for their *zeal* or eagerness in this matter, they were called Zealots. These Zealots, quite overlooking the Moral Law, which commanded "Thou shalt not kill," taught, that it was right to kill any man who did not observe the whole of the Ceremonial Law: they therefore made a practice of murdering, whenever they had an opportunity, all whom they looked upon as enemies of the Law, without waiting for any trial to decide whether or not they deserved punishment.

The Chief Priest and elders, instead of trying to prevent such wickedness, too often approved of the practices of the Zealots; as by their means they got rid of many whom they feared and hated, and who certainly could not justly have been found guilty of any crime, for which they could have been put to death. These Jewish Zealots had bound themselves by a curse to kill St. Paul; that is, they expressed a wish that God would bring evil upon them, if they did not kill St. Paul, before they ate or drank anything. Any such oaths are very sinful at all times, even if the act we bind ourselves to do is a good and righteous one, because it may not please God that we should do it: man proposes, but God disposes; and we must be content with striving to do what is right and useful, and leave the issue in His hands.

The Zealots, though they wickedly bound themselves by such an oath, knew that there was no risk in any case of their being starved to death, because any of their Rabbis could absolve, or set

them free from such oaths, whenever they did not find it convenient to keep them.

There were more than forty of the Zealots which made this conspiracy against St. Paul; and they, knowing that the Chief Priests and elders would be only too glad to have the Apostle silenced in any way, went to them to get their help in the execution of this wicked plot. They told the Priests and elders how they had bound themselves by a curse to kill St. Paul: and then said, "Now therefore ye with the council signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you to-morrow, as though ye would inquire something more perfectly concerning him; and we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him."

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This was a plan very likely to succeed: Claudius Lysias would have thought it very natural that the Sanhedrim should wish to examine St. Paul quietly, which could not be done in the tumult and excitement of the day before. He would, therefore, have sent his prisoner down with a small guard of soldiers, sufficient to prevent his escaping: these, the Zealots who would be lying in wait, could easily overpower by their greater number, and thus they would have no difficulty in murdering the Apostle. It is sad to think that priests and rulers, whose duty it was to teach the people what was right, and to see that every man was treated justly, should have agreed thus to entrap and slay a man who had been guilty of no crime: but so it was, for they consented to do their part in the proposed scheme.

The enemies of St. Paul must now have thought his destruction certain: but they forgot that if the Lord was on the Apostle's side, all their plots would come to nothing. And so it proved: for the Lord, Who had work for His faithful servant to do, caused this plot to become in some way known to a young man, the son of St. Paul's sister. We know nothing of this young man; whether he was still a Jew, or had, as is more probable, become a Christian: all we are told is, "And when Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait, he went and entered into the castle, and told Paul."

We have now another example as to the duty of using all human means, whilst humbly depending upon the blessing of God, without which all our efforts are unavailing. St. Paul had the promise of God, that he should live to preach the Gospel in Rome; therefore he was well assured that the Zealots could not harm him. He also knew that the Almighty could work a miracle for his deliverance; but he knew that to depend upon such a display of Divine power, would be tempting God, not trusting in Him. St. Paul felt, that the Lord, Who most generally brings about events through human actions, had now given him the means of saving his own life; and that it was his duty to make use of them, in order to defeat the wicked plot contrived by the Zealots and the Council.

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When St. Paul had heard from his sister's son the plot laid for his destruction, he "called one of the centurions unto him, and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain: for he hath a certain thing to tell him. So" the centurion "took him, and brought him to the chief captain, and said, Paul the prisoner called me unto him, and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say unto thee. Then the chief captain took him by the hand, and went with him aside privately, and asked him, What is that thou hast to tell me?" Then the young man told him all that was proposed, and begged him not to yield to the request of the Council. Having heard what he had to say, "the chief captain then let the young man depart, and charged him, See thou tell no man that thou hast shewed these things to me." Claudius Lysias immediately took measures to save St. Paul, without giving any cause or pretence for a disturbance, by refusing what would appear to be a reasonable request from the Sanhedrim: and he determined at once to send his prisoner out of the city, so that when asked to produce him before the Council, he could truly say, that it was no longer in his power to do so. We read that "he called unto him two centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Cæsarea, and horsemen three-score and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night; and provide them beasts, that they may set Paul on, and bring him safe unto Felix the governor," whose residence was at Cæsarea. At the same time Claudius Lysias wrote a letter to be given to Felix, by those who conducted St. Paul to Cæsarea. "And he wrote a letter after this manner: Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix sendeth greeting. This man was taken of the Jews, and should have been killed of them: then came I with an army, and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman. And when I would have known the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him forth into their council: whom I perceived to be accused of questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds. And when it was told me how that the Jews laid wait for the man, I sent straightway to thee, and gave commandment to his accusers also to say before thee what they had against him. Farewell."

Now this letter was not quite a truthful account of what had happened: Claudius Lysias told the story most favourably for himself, by making it appear that he rescued St. Paul because he was a Roman citizen; whereas he did not know that fact, till he was on the point of scourging the prisoner—a circumstance of which he makes no mention. In relating anything, either by word of mouth or by letter, we should be very careful to state exactly what happened, whether it is favourable to ourselves or not. Saying that he had given commandment to the accusers to go down to Cæsarea with their complaints, was different; because by the time the letter reached Felix, the command would be given. Of course he could say nothing to the Jews that evening, as it was needful to send the Apostle away secretly; but we may be sure that the next day, when the Council demanded that St. Paul should be brought before them for further examination, this advice was given to them. The third hour of the night was about nine o'clock in the evening, and "then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought him by night to Antipatris," a city about thirty-eight miles from Jerusalem, and twenty-seven from Cæsarea. It had been rebuilt, like many other cities, by Herod the Great, who called it Antipatris, after his

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father Antipater.

Here St. Paul was quite out of reach of the Zealots who had banded to kill him, and so large a guard was therefore quite unnecessary: so that "on the morrow" the soldiers "left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle" of Antonia. The horsemen went on, "who, when they came to Cæsarea, and delivered the epistle to the governor, presented Paul also before him. And when the governor had read the letter, he asked of what province" the prisoner was. And when he understood that he was of Cilicia, "I will hear thee, said he, when thine accusers are also come. And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's judgment hall." Herod's judgment hall, in which Felix commanded the Apostle to be kept till his accusers should come down, was a large building erected by Herod the Great as a palace for himself: part of it was afterwards made into a residence for the Roman governor of Judæa; and part of it was used as a prison for prisoners, not charged with any great or serious crime. Here, then, St. Paul was kept for five days. "And after five days Ananias the high priest descended," or went down to Cæsarea, "with the elders, and with a certain orator named Tertullus, who informed the governor against Paul."

An orator was a person who was able to make a good speech upon any subject set before him. Many men made a business of this; that is, a man who was able to speak well, would speak for others, who were not able to do so, on condition of being paid for his services. Thus, if any man were accused of a crime, he would get one of these public orators to speak for him at the time of trial, and try to persuade the Judge that he was innocent, whether he really were so or not. The same sort of thing is done amongst us, by barristers—men who have made it their business to study the laws of their country, in order to advise and help others who are ignorant in such matters. The Jewish priests and rulers were so very anxious that Felix should believe St. Paul to be in the wrong, and condemn him accordingly, that they had engaged an orator named Tertullus, to come and speak for them, and make the best of their case; so as to persuade Felix to condemn St. Paul, and thus gratify their malice.

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CHAPTER XXV.—ST. PAUL ACCUSED BEFORE FELIX.

TERTULLUS "informed the governor against Paul,"—that is, he came to Cæsarea for the express purpose of informing the governor of the many and serious accusations, which the Jews brought against the prisoner. The accusers being now come, Felix sat to judge the matter, and hear what each party had to say. "And when he was called forth, Tertullus," in the name of the Jewish priests and rulers, "began to accuse" Paul, "saying, Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence, we accept it always, and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness. Notwithstanding, that I be not further tedious unto thee, I pray thee that thou wouldest hear us of thy clemency a few words."

Now Felix was a harsh and tyrannical governor; and though he had done good service in freeing the country from the robbers which had infested it, and in punishing impostors (like the Egyptian), he had caused the High Priest to be murdered, and had often driven the Jews into rebellion by his barbarous and unjust acts. In short, his whole conduct created such disturbances in the land, and made him so hateful to the Jewish people, that within two years of this time, they petitioned the Roman Government for his removal; and Porcius Festus was appointed governor instead of him. When therefore Tertullus, as the mouthpiece of the Jews, spake in this way of the peace and quiet they enjoyed under his excellent government, they were not expressing their real true opinions, but were only saying what they thought would please Felix, and make him more willing to do what they wished. Tertullus having thus prepared the way, went on to bring his accusations against St. Paul, saying, "For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes: who also hath gone about to profane the temple: whom we took, and would have judged according to our law. But the chief captain Lysias came upon us, and with great violence took him away out of our hands, commanding his accusers to come unto thee: by examining of whom thyself mayest take knowledge of all these things, whereof we accuse him."

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This speech was full of falsehood, inasmuch as it so misrepresented what had happened, as to lead Felix to think that the prisoner before him had proved himself a dangerous enemy to the Roman Government, and that the chief captain had violently and unnecessarily interfered with the peaceable exercise of the Council's rights, of examining into those matters of which St. Paul was accused. The Jews, however, assented, saying that these things which Tertullus had spoken were true.

When Tertullus had thus informed Felix, the latter called upon St. Paul to answer to these charges. Felix having now been governor of Judæa for four or five years, knew something of the religion, laws, and customs of the Jews, and was therefore the better able to judge in these matters. "Then Paul, after that the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, answered, Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself: because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship. And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city: neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me."

In these few words, the Apostle contradicted absolutely the charges brought against him by

his enemies. Felix, he knew, would understand his wish of going to Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Pentecost, and that, as he had only been in the city for twelve days, he could not have done much to stir up the people to rebellion. Having thus declared the falseness of the charges brought against him, the Apostle went on to notice what was in fact the real cause of all the persecution against him; and boldly said, "But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets: and have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men. Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings. Whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult. Who ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they had ought against me. Or else let these same here say, if they have found any evil doing in me, while I stood before the council, except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day."

We cannot read this beautiful speech without wishing that each one of us could say from our hearts, that we too are endeavouring so to live and act, that our consciences may not reproach us with any wilful sin. It was customary for the Jews, in whatever countries they might happen to dwell, to send alms and offerings from time to time to Jerusalem; and St. Paul had now, according to that custom, brought contributions from the foreign Jews. We should notice the close of St. Paul's speech, when he challenges the priests and rulers to say, whether any fault whatever had been proved against him during his examination before the Sanhedrim, unless they looked upon his having said, "that the Jews persecuted him because he had preached the resurrection of the dead," as a crime. St. Paul's accusers seem to have answered nothing; they were unable to contradict him, for he had spoken nothing but the truth, and had plainly shown that he was no "pestilent fellow," nor mover of sedition among the people.

"And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of that way, he deferred them, and said, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter. And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let him have liberty, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come unto him." Felix, living at Cæsarea, where Cornelius, a Roman centurion, had been so wonderfully converted, and where Philip the deacon, and many other Christians resided, must have heard a good deal about the doctrines of "that way" of worshipping the Lord; and he had certainly found, that the Christians were better subjects, and altogether better men, than the Jews. He would not therefore be inclined to condemn St. Paul *because* he was a Christian; and, listening carefully to the accusations and defence just made before him, he saw at once that the prisoner had not committed any crime whatever, and that the whole affair arose from the hatred, which the Jews bore to the followers of Jesus Christ. Instead, however, of boldly pronouncing sentence one way or the other, he tried to pacify the Jews by putting off the trial till Claudius Lysias, whom they had accused of illegal violence, could come down; and mean time he entrusted St. Paul to the care of a centurion, with orders not to treat him as a prisoner. It must have been a bitter disappointment to the Jews, to see the man whom they persecuted thus kindly treated.

We may also see the protecting hand of God overruling these events. Had St. Paul been set at liberty, the Jews would doubtless have tried to take his life; but under the watchful care of the centurion, he was safe from their malice.

Whether Claudius Lysias ever did come down to Cæsarea, we are not told; but it is quite clear that St. Paul was neither declared guilty of any offence deserving punishment, nor set at liberty, which, as an innocent man, he ought to have been.

St. Luke next tells us, "And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ." It has already been said that Drusilla was one of the daughters of Herod Agrippa, who died miserably at Cæsarea, as a punishment for allowing himself to be treated as a god. Drusilla had been married to another man, but Felix had persuaded her to leave her husband, and become his wife. This was a great sin in both Felix and Drusilla. After the trial of St. Paul, the governor appears to have left Cæsarea for a while; and when he came back, bringing Drusilla with him, they both wished to hear more of the doctrines of Christianity, and therefore they sent for St. Paul, that he might talk to them "concerning the faith in Christ." St. Paul was always ready to speak the truth boldly in the service of his heavenly Master; and knowing that Felix was an unjust and unrighteous ruler, and a man who at all times thought only of pleasing and indulging himself, without caring what injury or suffering he inflicted upon others, he took this opportunity of showing the sinfulness of such conduct, and that those who persisted in it would be punished hereafter, when Jesus Christ should come to judge the world. "And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled"; for his conscience told him, that he was guilty of the very sins for which the Apostle declared that the wrath of God would fall upon the impenitent. Well would it have been for him, if the fear which made him tremble, had made him at once anxiously inquire in true penitence, What must I do to be saved? But, unhappily, he took another course, too often followed amongst ourselves: he did not *like to hear* such things, and so he tried to put them away, and answered, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee."

Even in worldly matters, it is a good maxim, never to put off till to-morrow what ought to be done to-day. Infinitely more does it apply to spiritual things; to repentance, to abstaining from what we feel to be wrong, to making the sacrifice we know we ought to make, to doing the duty

which we perceive we ought to do. Never let us put off such things, and thus quench the Spirit of God speaking in our hearts. If we wilfully let one opportunity slip, we may never have another given to us. There is no "season" so "convenient" for doing right as the moment in which we feel what *is* right. Felix stifled the voice of conscience, which answered to St. Paul's teaching; and we have no reason to believe that the convenient season ever came, for, though he often talked with him after this, we hear of no good results from such meetings; nor could any good results be expected, from a course in which covetousness had so great a share; for one of the governor's motives for keeping the Apostle still in some sort as a prisoner, was the hope that he or his friends would purchase his liberty, by giving money. But Felix ought to have felt, that St. Paul would never offer a bribe, which it was very wrong for any Judge to take. However that may be, we read, "He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him: wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him."

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CHAPTER XXVI.—ST. PAUL BEFORE FESTUS.

"BUT after two years, Porcius Festus came into Felix' room: and Felix, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound." Felix might now at least have let the Apostle go, for he could no longer hope for any advantage by leaving him still a prisoner. This governor had never tried to please the Jews by a just and kind government: then he preferred pleasing himself: now, that it does not interfere with his own gratification, he was willing to do the Jews a pleasure, by committing another sin, in the detention of an innocent man, whom he well knew ought to have been set free long ago. The Bible says truly, that "the fear of man bringeth a snare," and the same may be said of the wish to please him, when we cannot do so without doing wrong or neglecting our duty.

Felix gained nothing by thus sacrificing St. Paul, for the Jews of Cæsarea followed him to Rome, and there made such complaints of him to the Emperor Nero, that it was with great difficulty that Felix saved himself from severe punishment. The new governor of Judæa, when he "was come into the province," made in the first instance a very short stay at Cæsarea, and "after three days" went up to Jerusalem. Of course in this short time, he had not had leisure to hear anything concerning St. Paul. The Jews of Jerusalem, therefore, gladly seized this opportunity to try and prejudice Festus against St. Paul. "Then the high priest and the chief of the Jews informed him against Paul, and besought him, and desired favour against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem," to be there tried. But they had another end in view; even the same which the Zealots, with the approbation of the Sanhedrim, had hoped to accomplish on a former occasion. The high priest and the elders, knowing well that St. Paul could not be found guilty of any crime, only besought Festus to have him brought to Jerusalem, because they were determined to get rid of him, by "laying wait in the way to kill him." But their wicked scheme was again defeated, for "Festus answered, that Paul should be kept at Cæsarea, and that he himself would depart shortly thither. Let them therefore, said he, which among you are able, go down with me, and accuse this man, if there be any wickedness in him."

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And when Festus had been about ten days in Jerusalem, "he went down unto Cæsarea; and the next day sitting on the judgment seat, commanded Paul to be brought. And when he was come" before the judgment seat, "the Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove. While he answered for himself, Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Cæsar, have I offended anything at all." Festus quite saw that St. Paul had been guilty of no offence towards the Roman Government, but that the whole matter concerned the doctrines and customs of the Jewish Law; and that he, as the Roman governor, had no cause to keep him prisoner, or trouble him any further. "But Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, answered Paul, and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?" The Sanhedrim was the proper Court to try questions concerning the Jewish Law. Festus knew nothing of the plots to kill St. Paul, for he was a just man, and would not have countenanced such wickedness. He could not order St. Paul to be tried by the Sanhedrim, for the authority of that Court was not recognized by the Romans; but probably with the view of convincing the Jews that St. Paul had not offended against their Law, he proposed that the Apostle should go up to Jerusalem to answer their charges.

"Then said Paul, I stand at Cæsar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest. For if I be an offender, or have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Cæsar." As a freeman of Rome, St. Paul could only be tried for any crime, by a Court composed of Judges appointed by Cæsar; hence called "Cæsar's judgment seat." Again, he declared that he was innocent of any offence against the Jews, but that he had no wish to escape a lawful trial, or any just punishment; but that if he were not found guilty of any crime, no person had any right to put him in the power of men so well known to be his enemies as the Jews were. He ended by making use of another privilege belonging to a Roman citizen, that of appealing unto Cæsar: after which he could only be tried at Rome, by persons appointed especially for that purpose by the Emperor himself. A freeman of Rome who had been tried anywhere and found guilty, could then appeal to Cæsar, if he thought his sentence unjust. Or before trial, if he suspected that his judge was not acting according to law, he could thus appeal to the Emperor. An appeal to Cæsar was highly respected by every

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person in authority, and any magistrate who, after such an appeal, dared to punish a prisoner, would himself be liable to severe punishment. This, and all the privileges of a Roman citizen, were so much respected, that many years after this time, when the Christians were persecuted by order of the Emperor Trajan, a Roman called Pliny, whose duty it was to have all Christians put to death, wrote a letter to the Emperor, in which, after speaking of the numbers he had executed because they would not give up their religion, he says, "There are others, guilty of similar folly, but finding them to be Roman citizens, I have determined to send them to Rome." Perhaps these poor creatures had appealed to Cæsar; at any rate, Pliny, respecting their privileges, thought it safest to send them to Rome, though there could be no doubt that the Emperor would immediately order them to be put to death.

It was usual for a Roman President, or Judge, to have a small Council of some of the chief Romans in the province, whose advice he could ask in any doubtful matter. Festus had such a Council; for we read, "Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Hast thou appealed unto Cæsar? unto Cæsar shalt thou go." Thus did the Lord overrule events to fulfil his words, "thou must bear witness also at Rome." Before St. Paul could be sent off from Cæsarea, he was again called upon to defend himself and declare his doctrines. St. Luke says, "And after certain days king Agrippa and Bernice came unto Cæsarea to salute Festus." This Agrippa and Bernice were both the children of Herod Agrippa, and therefore Drusilla was their sister. The Emperor Claudius had made Agrippa king of some of the Roman Provinces in Asia, and had also given him some dominions in Judæa, which had been added to by the present Emperor Nero. It was probably to look after these dominions that Agrippa was now come into the country, bringing his sister Bernice with him; and it was very natural that they should go to Cæsarea to visit the governor. Festus, who was evidently rather puzzled about St. Paul, as he could see no reason for the accusations of the Jews, was glad to have an opportunity of talking over the matter with one, who being himself a Jew, would know the laws and customs of his own people, as well as those of the Romans. Therefore, when Agrippa and Bernice had been at Cæsarea "many days, Festus declared Paul's cause unto the king, saying, There is a certain man left in bonds by Felix: about whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, desiring to have judgment against him. To whom I answered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have licence to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him. Therefore, when they were come hither, without any delay on the morrow I sat on the judgment seat, and commanded the man to be brought forth. Against whom when the accusers stood up, they brought none accusation of such things as I supposed: but had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive. And because I doubted of such manner of questions, I asked him whether he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these matters. But when Paul had appealed to be reserved unto the hearing of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I might send him to Cæsar."

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By "their superstition," Festus meant the religion of the Jews: for the heathen always thus spake of it, and said, that "Moses was the inventor of the Jews' superstition." The heathens saw that the Jews believed in an Almighty power, of which they knew nothing, and did certain things to obtain favour from the God they worshipped: this they called Superstition, and no doubt they looked upon the Christian religion in much the same light.

The term "Superstition," might much more properly be applied to the belief and practice of the Romans themselves, with all their omens and auguries, supposed to reveal the will of their imaginary gods; and their sacrifices and ceremonies, in order to gain their favour.

At the time of which we are now speaking, the Jews *had* indeed introduced many superstitions into their religion; for they thought to please God by outward forms and ceremonies, whilst they committed all manner of sins, and rejected the Messiah.

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The Christians were ready to give up all earthly joys and comforts, and to suffer death, rather than act contrary to the religion which they professed; and this the heathens looked upon as "foolishness."

Festus evidently thought that both Jews and Christians were very foolish, to dispute upon such a subject as the life or death of Jesus; for he neither knew nor cared about the doctrines of Christianity, and the need of a Saviour. Little did the Roman governor conceive, that the question concerning the Resurrection of Jesus Christ was one of the greatest importance to all mankind, when he thus slightly spake of "one Jesus," "whom Paul affirmed to be alive." Had St. Paul been accused of crimes, as the governor supposed would have been the case, he would have known how to act: but when the accusations were only about such matters as to the Romans were "foolishness," Festus was perplexed and doubtful, as to the course which he ought to take; for as these questions had caused disturbances in the country, they could not be allowed to pass unnoticed by a Roman governor. And probably it was as much to relieve himself from his perplexity as to please the Jews, that he proposed to the Apostle to go up to Jerusalem.

All the Roman Emperors had the title of Cæsar, and they also all took that of Augustus: but each one had his own particular name or names besides: the "Augustus Cæsar" here spoken of, was the Emperor Nero. Agrippa listened with interest to all that Festus told him of St. Paul, and then said, "I would also hear the man myself"—a desire which Festus was too happy to gratify. "To-morrow, said he, thou shalt hear him."

CHAPTER XXVII.—ST. PAUL BEFORE AGRIPPA.

"AND on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp, and was entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains, and principal men of the city, at Festus' commandment Paul was brought forth." This "place of hearing" was probably some large apartment in the palace where Festus lived, set apart for the governor to receive, and give audience to, all persons who came to him on business. This we must remember was no *trial* of St. Paul; he could now have no further trial till he reached Rome: there were now no Jews present to make accusations against him; it was, in fact, only a private examination of St. Paul's opinions, for the gratification of king Agrippa. If the Apostle had now refused to speak, he could not have been held guilty of disobedience; but he was always ready and willing to give an account of the faith which was in him, and probably he was particularly glad to have an opportunity of speaking of "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified," before Agrippa, who, as a Jew, had learnt from the prophets to expect the Messiah.

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When all was ready, Festus opened the business, and explained the matter to the assembly; who, with the exception of king Agrippa, and perhaps a few of his attendants, were all heathens.

"And Festus said, King Agrippa, and all men which are here present with us, ye see this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jerusalem, and also here, crying that he ought not to live any longer. But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himself hath appealed to Augustus, I have determined to send him. Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my lord." (That is, no crimes or offences to give, as a reason for his being tried at all.) "Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and especially before thee, O king Agrippa, that, after examination had, I might have somewhat to write. For it seemeth to me unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes laid against him. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself: I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews: especially because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently." Agrippa having been brought up in Jerusalem, when his father Herod Agrippa lived there as king of Judæa by permission of the Emperor Caligula, had been well instructed in the Jewish law and customs; and at this time the Emperor Nero had entrusted to him the government of the temple, and the care of its treasury: he was also allowed to nominate the High Priest. St. Paul, conscious of his own innocence, was glad to speak before one so well able to judge of the truth of his words. Having bespoken a patient hearing from the king, the Apostle continued, "My manner of life from my youth, which was at first among mine own nation at Jerusalem" (where he was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel), "know all the Jews; which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews."

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The "promise" here spoken of, was that made by God Himself to Abraham and the patriarchs, and repeated more plainly by the prophets, that the Messiah should come upon earth, and by His rising from the dead, prove the truth of the promise of a future life for all men. This promise had always been believed, and its fulfilment looked for, by all true Israelites. So far, then, there was no difference of opinion. But the Apostle had been convinced, by unmistakable signs, that the promise was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. For declaring that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, the hope of Israel, for whom the twelve tribes had ever been looking, and that He had risen from the dead according to the promise, St. Paul was "accused" and persecuted by the Jews: some denying that there could be any resurrection at all; others, who allowed that, denying that Jesus Christ had risen. Agrippa as a Jew ought to have learnt from all the wonderful things that had been done for his forefathers, that with God nothing was impossible; whilst his study of the Jewish Scriptures should have taught him, that the Resurrection was more than a possibility. St. Paul now, therefore, speaking to him as a Jew, asks, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?"

The doctrine of the Resurrection—or rather the great Truth that Jesus Christ had really risen from the dead—was the one especial point of St. Paul's teaching: because all by whom that was once acknowledged, could not fail to see, that He was indeed the promised Messiah, worthy of all the love and service His creatures could give Him.

Having spoken of the Resurrection, St. Paul went on to show Agrippa, that what he now taught upon the subject was the more worthy of belief, inasmuch as he himself had not been easily persuaded of this truth, or inclined to join those who believed it. On the contrary, he says, "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." Then, after telling Agrippa how in consequence of this idea, he persecuted the followers of Jesus, he described the wonderful manner in which he had been brought to see that He *was* the promised Messiah; and he mentioned the peculiar charge given unto him by God, to go unto the Gentiles, "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith." "Whereupon," continued the Apostle, "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: but shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judæa, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do

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works meet for repentance. For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me. Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first who should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles." Strange indeed did these things sound in the ears of the heathen governor; and without pausing to consider whether they might not indeed be true, "Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad." Firm and respectful was the reply to this charge, that he knew not what he was saying: for he said, "I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness. For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner." Agrippa, who could bear witness to the things spoken by Moses and the prophets, must also have heard of the many wonderful acts done by Jesus during His life; of the events attending His death; and of the works since performed by His Apostles; and therefore St. Paul refers to him, as able to bear witness that the words which had so astonished Festus, were not the words of madness, but of sober truth.

Having thus replied to Festus, St. Paul, turning to Agrippa, said, "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets?" As a Jew, the king must necessarily be a believer in all the Scriptures of the Old Testament; therefore, without waiting for an answer, the Apostle added, "I know that thou believest." He said no more, but his meaning was easy to understand. Any one, who believing in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, would carefully and honestly compare all that was written concerning the Messiah with the Birth, Life, and Death of Jesus, must perceive that He was indeed the promised Messiah, the Anointed, the Christ.

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It is clear by the answer, that the king did so understand the question. "Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." He could not deny the truth of what the Apostle had said; his reason, if he would have followed its teaching to the end, would have convinced him that the Gospel preached by St. Paul was the gift of God; the continuation and ending, as it were, of the Law of Moses; that it involved no *change* of religion, but its completion or *perfect state*, for that the Law had been given to prepare the way for the Gospel. Just as St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians, wrote, "the Law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ."

It is probable that Agrippa felt much of this; why then did he not become entirely, not *almost*, a Christian? Because he was not willing to renounce the Devil and all his works, and the sinful lusts of the flesh. His life and actions were very far from the purity and holiness necessary in a real true Christian; he could not make up his mind to endeavour to lead a new life, consistent with the profession of Christianity; and therefore, though almost persuaded, he stopped there.

To be *almost* a Christian, is to be in a condition most displeasing to the Lord; and yet there are many now, who professing to be members of the Church of Christ, are, it is to be feared, in this sad state. Let us watch and pray, that such may not be our case—remembering, that if we are not daily striving with all our might, to keep our part of the Baptismal Covenant, whatever it may cost us to do so, we are no more than *almost* Christians, who will never be received as good and faithful servants by our heavenly Master.

Agrippa was not ready to live a life of self-denial, and therefore he could only say, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds."

St. Paul could not offer a better prayer for his hearers, nor for all mankind who have ever lived upon earth, than that they should be true and sincere Christians, like him in every respect, except in that of being prisoners. The "bonds" here spoken of were the light chains upon his hands, by which, as we have said, prisoners amongst the Romans were usually bound to the soldier who had charge of them. St. Paul bore no ill-will to those who had unjustly kept him so long a prisoner; he only desired their good, expressing, in the words we have just read, his solemn wish that they might become true Christians.

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CHAPTER XXVIII.—ST. PAUL BEGINS HIS FOURTH VOYAGE.

ST. PAUL'S solemn prayer for all who had listened to his words closed the examination. "And when he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them: and when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds." All who had heard St. Paul speak, saw at once that he had been guilty of no offence against the Roman Government: and Agrippa, who understood the Jewish law, pronounced that there was no reason on that account either, to keep him a prisoner. "Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Cæsar." Having done so, no prisoner could be set at liberty, without the express command of the Emperor.

Agrippa's opinion would incline the unprejudiced Jews not to believe all that the priests and elders had said against St. Paul; and it would make Festus write a favourable report of his case to Rome. Probably it was owing to what Agrippa now said, that St. Paul met with kind treatment,

both on the voyage to Italy and after his arrival in Rome.

Nothing now remained but to send St. Paul to Cæsar; and of this voyage, St. Luke, who appears never to have quitted him, gives us a full account, saying, "And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto one named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band." Although the garrison of Cæsarea was at this time composed of Syrian soldiers, there was also a small body of Roman soldiers, called the Augustan Band, as belonging particularly to the Emperor. Under a centurion of this band, St. Paul was now to begin his fourth and last journey, A.D. 60.

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This journey differed from the three former, inasmuch as they had been undertaken voluntarily, (by direction of the Holy Spirit,) for the accomplishment of the work given him to do. This fourth journey, though it would equally serve to the great work of spreading the Gospel, was to be made as a prisoner.

In those days, a voyage was a more serious affair than it is now. It was not easy to find a ship sailing direct from any port in Asia to Italy, and accordingly we read, "And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia; one Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us." Adramyttium was a sea-port of Mysia, quite out of the way of any person wishing to go to Italy; but, as the ship was to touch at many ports in Asia Minor on her way home, it was probable that at one of these ports some vessel might be found which was going into Italy, and could take Julius and his company on board. The Aristarchus here mentioned had become a Christian when St. Paul preached the Gospel in Macedonia, and had then gone with the Apostle to Jerusalem, and helped him in his great work. *Why* he was now a prisoner, we are not told; but it was no doubt for preaching the Gospel that he was now a fellow prisoner of St. Paul. St. Luke, after mentioning the launching at Cæsarea, says, "And the next day we touched at Sidon. And Julius courteously entreated Paul," (that is, treated him kindly,) "and gave him liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself." There were at this time many Christians in Phœnicia; and it must have been a great comfort both to them and to St. Paul, to meet and talk and pray together.

Then we read, "And when we had launched from thence, we sailed under Cyprus, because the winds were contrary." The wind blowing pretty strongly from the south-west, the ship, instead of passing to the south of the island, which would have been the shortest way into the Archipelago, sailed to the north, where it would be sheltered from the wind by the island itself. Thus coming to Myra, a sea-port of Lycia, Julius disembarked his company, as it was useless for those who wished to go into Italy, to continue any longer in a ship bound for Adramyttium, which would take them greatly out of their way.

At Myra, the centurion found a ship which had come from the opposite port of Alexandria, in Egypt, and was now going on to Italy. St. Luke says, "and he put us therein." Much corn was taken from Egypt into Italy. It was brought from different parts of the country to Alexandria, and there put on board ships, which landed it at Puteoli, in the south-eastern part of Italy; and from thence it was taken to other places as it was wanted. It was one of these vessels, laden with corn, in which Julius now embarked his prisoners.

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St. Luke says, "And when we had sailed slowly many days, and scarce were come over against Cnidus, the wind not suffering us, we sailed under Crete, over against Salmone; and, hardly passing it, came unto a place which is called the Fair Havens, nigh whereunto was the city of Lasea." Cnidus stood on a point of high land at the south-west corner of Asia Minor; and from thence the master of the vessel meant to steer directly westward, passing to the north of the isle of Crete; but the wind being contrary, the vessel was many days in going from Myra as far as Cnidus, and then it was obliged to go to the south of Crete, passing by Salmone, a promontory, or cape, on the eastern end of the island. This they had much difficulty in passing; and then they took refuge in a port, called the Fair Havens, near to which was a city called Lasea.

It was now a time of year when sailing was considered dangerous, on account of high winds, called the Equinoctial Gales, which generally begin to blow in September. At this time of the year, on the 10th of their month Tisri, answering to our 25th of September, the Jews, by the appointment of God, kept the great "Fast of Expiation," according to the Law of Moses. On this day, no work was to be done; the people were to spend their time in confessing their sins, and praying for true repentance, and consequent forgiveness. They were further to afflict their souls by fasting, and by abstaining from every kind of pleasure or amusement.

In the early times of the Jewish history, this fast was so strictly kept, that no Jew would upon it wash his face, nor put on his shoes, nor even read any part of the Scriptures which gave him pleasure. The Law commanded that this day should be kept entirely as a day of mourning and sorrow; whilst the priests were to offer certain sacrifices as an atonement, or expiation, for all the sins of the people, that they might be looked upon as clean from all their sins. All that was commanded to be done on this solemn fast-day, was to be a type, or sign, of the great future sacrifice to be made by Jesus Christ; Who by His death, made a sufficient expiation and atonement for the sins of the whole world, and thus took away from all His faithful people the dreadful consequences of sin, which *no* sacrifice of beasts ever could have done.

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The "Fast of Expiation" took place, as we have said, on the 25th of September; and after that time, the ancients considered a sea-voyage dangerous, on account of the tempestuous winds which blew at that season: they therefore generally laid up their ships for the winter. St. Paul had had considerable experience in the dangers of the sea, for he had often been in "perils of the

sea," of which St. Luke makes no mention. In the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, written, as we have heard, about two years before this last voyage, St. Paul, speaking of the dangers and sufferings he had undergone whilst preaching the Gospel, says, amongst other things, "thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep." St. Paul therefore was well aware of the danger of sailing at this season of the year; and probably the Holy Spirit had made known unto him, that danger awaited the ship if she now continued her voyage. This explanation is necessary for the right understanding of what we shall now read, as told us by St. Luke. The ship, we must remember, had with much difficulty arrived safely at the "Fair Havens" in Crete.

"Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished them, and said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives. Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul. And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to depart thence also, if by any means they might attain to Phenice, and there to winter; which is an haven of Crete, and lieth toward the south-west and north-west." That is, Phenice was on the south-west coast of the island, to the north-west of Lasea and the Fair Havens.

A change in the weather at this time, confirmed those who were anxious to reach Phenice, in their opinion that it might be done. "And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, loosing thence, they sailed close by Crete." By keeping close to the shore, they hoped to accomplish their purpose. "But not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon." The word "Euroclydon" is made up from two Greek words, one of which means a wave, and the other the south-east wind. It was a violent wind which blew furiously generally from the south-east, and made the waves exceedingly rough, and very dangerous for small vessels. The same kind of wind is now known in the Mediterranean Sea as a "Levanter," because it generally blows from the east, and the Levant is the eastern part of that sea. Sometimes it blows for a short time from some other quarter, which makes it all the more dangerous, because the sudden change of a very violent wind is apt to capsize, or overset, a ship, not prepared for such a change.

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This terrible wind now came on, blowing furiously from the east. The rudder—that is, the machine by which a ship is guided on its course—was useless in such a storm, and the vessel became quite unmanageable. St. Luke says, "And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let her drive." The ship, thus left to the mercy of the wind, was driven straight to an island, called Clauda. We read, "And running under a certain island which is called Clauda, we had much work to come by the boat: which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship." Most ships have a small boat, which is usually drawn after them by a rope fastened to the stern, or hind part, of the vessel; but, fearing that the violence of the wind and waves would wash the boat quite away, the sailors, though with great difficulty, managed to draw it up on the ship's deck, ready for use in case of need. "Undergirding," was passing strong ropes under the ship, and bringing the ends from each side upon deck, where they were fastened together; so as to support and hold in their places, all the planks and timbers of which the ship was built. Sheltered a little from the storm under the north side of the island of Clauda, the seamen were able to accomplish this work, after which they could do no more.

CHAPTER XXIX.—THE SHIP RUNS AGROUND.

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ST. LUKE having mentioned the undergirding of the ship, adds, "and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven."

The ship being unable to resist the wind blowing strongly from the north-east, must of necessity be carried into the Gulf of Syrtis Minor, on the African coast; but before reaching it, the vessel would have to pass a dangerous bank of sand on the coast of Africa. This bank was of great extent, and any ship that was carried upon it would gradually sink, and sink into the sand, until it was quite buried. The sailors, fearing such a fate for their ship, took down all the sails, so that the wind might have less power over it. In this condition the ship was at the mercy of the wind and waves; and was driven here and there, without power to help herself. All on board the ship were now in a dreadful situation: exposed to the fury of a wind which blew them sometimes one way and sometimes another. In order to make the ship lighter, so that it might more easily rise to the top of the waves, the seamen first threw overboard the cargo of wheat carried by the ship, and then even the very ropes and sails belonging to it. But the storm continued, the sky was dark with clouds, and as there was no possibility of help, all gave themselves up for lost, and expected to be swallowed up in this tempestuous sea. Under such circumstances, all regular habits were at an end; no one thought of taking food, and consequently the strength of all was rapidly becoming less and less. St. Luke's account is, "And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next day they lightened the ship; and the third day we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship. And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away. But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the

angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Cæsar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me. Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island."

St. Paul's words and his steadfast faith, must have been a comfort to his fellow voyagers; and if any of the heathens were then inclined to believe in the God Whose servant he was, their faith would be confirmed by all that took place afterwards.

We next read in the Book of Acts, "But when the fourteenth night was come," (think of being fourteen days in such an awful position!) "as we were driven up and down in Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country; and sounded, and found it twenty fathoms: and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms. Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day."

The ancients seem to have given the name of "Adria," to that part of the Mediterranean Sea between Greece and the south of Italy, extending up into what we call the Adriatic Sea; here, by the force of the wind and the currents, the ship was driven backwards and forwards, even as far as the islands off the coast of Dalmatia.

"Sounding" means measuring how deep the sea is: this is done by means of a piece of lead fastened to a very long string, called "the line," which has marks upon it, to show the number of feet. The lead of course sinks straight down into the water: if it touches the bottom of the sea, it is immediately drawn up, and by observing how much of the line is wet, they can tell how deep the sea is in any particular spot. As every ship has a good portion of it *below* the water, she requires a certain depth of water to keep her from touching the bottom. The sea generally becomes less deep near the shore, and thus when the shipmen found that the depth of the sea had diminished from twenty to fifteen fathoms, it was high time to wait for daylight to see where they were; lest during the night the ship should run upon some land, or rock, or sandbank, and so be lost. A fathom is seven feet, so that twenty fathoms were 140 feet, and fifteen 105 feet.

In order to understand what follows, we must remember that although *now* anchors are always let down from the *pro*w, or fore part of the ship, it was the custom of the ancients to let them down from the *stern*, or hind part of their vessels. Some of the large Egyptian ships do even now carry their anchors at the stern, and not at the prow. The vessel in which St. Paul was, was anchored from the stern by four anchors, to wait for daylight.

It seems that some of the shipmen, or sailors, seeing the dangerous condition of the ship, thought they should be safer out of it; and so without any consideration for others, made up their minds to steal away secretly during the night, taking the boat with them; under pretence that their only object in now leaving the ship, was to make its position more secure, by letting down some anchors from the prow also. St. Luke says, "And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, when they had let down the boat into the sea, under colour as though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship, Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved. Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off."

Of course the Lord could equally have saved the passengers, whether the sailors remained in the ship or not; but it was His Will that all should be delivered in one way; and perhaps this was intended to be a test of faith and obedience. The Roman soldiers certainly had faith in St. Paul as the servant of a Mighty God, to Whom all things are possible, and Whose promise would be assuredly fulfilled: therefore they at once took effectual means to prevent any one leaving the ship, by cutting the ropes which still held the boat, and letting it drift away.

According to the opinion of man, they did a very foolish act in getting rid of a boat, which might be of the greatest use to them. At Crete they had "believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul"; but they had had good reason to change their opinion, and to believe that the Apostle was indeed guided by his God; and their faith made them obedient. "And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing. Wherefore I pray you to take some meat: for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you"; meaning, that no one would suffer the slightest injury, but that it was necessary for them to take some food, that they might have strength for all that they would be called upon to do. To his precept, the Apostle added example; for "when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat." Even at such a moment, St. Paul did not forget to give God thanks for his food. The whole company in the ship would thus see how constantly he thought of God, and endeavoured to do Him honour; and heathens though they were, his example must have taught them to think with reverence of the God of the Christians. Mean time the calm and firm trust displayed by the whole conduct of the Apostle, gave comfort and encouragement to all. "Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took some meat." St. Luke tells us how many people there were on board the ship: for he says, "And we were all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls," or 276 persons. "And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea." This wheat was probably the remainder of their provisions for the voyage, for the cargo seems to have been thrown overboard before: but perhaps the owner of the vessel had tried to keep some of the cargo, in hope of still carrying it to Italy: but now, finding that hope was vain, he consented to let it be cast out, so as to lighten the

ship, and render her more likely to go safely on shore. Whilst, under all circumstances, we put our whole trust in God, Who alone can bless any of our efforts with success, we must never forget that it is our duty to *use* all our efforts, and make use of every means which the Lord places within our reach.

"And when it was day, they knew not the land," the shore which they saw was that of a strange land; "but they discovered a certain creek with a shore," a narrow arm of the sea, with a shore on each side; into this creek "they were minded," that is, they wished "to thrust in the ship," as it would then be easier for those on board to get to shore.

"And when they had taken up the anchors," or rather cut the ropes which held the ship to them, "they committed themselves unto the sea," that is, left the ship to be carried along by the wind and waves, "and loosed the rudder bands," which appear to have been ropes used to fasten the rudder, so as to steer the ship in any particular direction; "and hoised up the mainsail," to give the wind more power to move the ship, and so "made toward shore."

The wind now seemed likely to take them into the creek; but at the entrance of it, there appears to have been a headland or bank of earth, which caused a strong current from two sides, so that two seas might be said to meet. As they could not guide the ship to go round either end of this barrier, the wind drove it directly upon it. St. Luke's account is, "And falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the forepart stuck fast and remained unmoveable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves." It was now evident that the ship must go to pieces in a few minutes, and that to remain in it would be certain death.

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CHAPTER XXX.—THE SHIP'S COMPANY SAVED.

IN the hopeless condition of the ship, gradually breaking up from the violence of the waves which beat upon the hind part, whilst the fore part was held fast on the bank, all possibility of guarding the prisoners was at an end. "And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape." They probably feared, that even under such peculiar circumstances, if any of the prisoners under their charge escaped, they would be blamed and punished by the Roman Government; which treated with great severity any fault or carelessness committed by soldiers, or others trusted with the charge of criminals. But the centurion, "willing to save Paul," to whom he must have felt that their safety was owing, "kept them from their purpose; and commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves first into the sea, and get to land: and the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship"; in short, anything which would float on the top of the water, and so keep them from sinking, whilst the wind and the waves would drive them to the shore. "And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land." There have been many wonderful escapes of shipwrecked persons, but that 276 people, many of whom could not swim, should all have got safe to the shore in such a storm, must be looked upon as the miraculous fulfilment of the Lord's promise to St. Paul, that there should be no loss of any man's life. "And when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita."

In the map we find the island of Melita, or Meleda, in the Adriatic Sea, on the coast of Dalmatia; and this is most probably the island upon which St. Paul and his companions were shipwrecked: but in maps where the journeys of this Apostle are traced out by lines, you will not see any line running out to this Melita; but you will observe that they go to Melita, or Malta, to the south of Sicily, because many people have imagined that *that* was the island on which the ship was wrecked. Now when we have read St. Luke's account of what happened when St. Paul landed at Melita, we shall see the reasons why the island must have been Melita, or Meleda, on the Dalmatian coast, and not Melita, or Malta, in the Mediterranean Sea. St. Luke says, "And the barbarous people shewed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold. And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand." A viper is a very dangerous kind of serpent, as the venom or poison from its bite will kill a man; these creatures become stupid in cold wet weather, and lie *torpid*, or as if they were asleep: one of them lying thus amongst the sticks, was picked up with them by St. Paul; but as soon as it felt the heat it came to life, and darting out upon the Apostle's hand, bit it. "And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live."

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These people having no idea of true religion, fancied that the gods punished crimes upon earth only; and that as St. Paul had not been drowned, they had caused the viper to sting him, that he might die as he deserved. "And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm. Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god."

Now we must remember, that the shipwreck took place as the vessel was driven up and down in Adria, that part of the sea close to Meleda. The inhabitants of that island were, as St. Luke calls them, "barbarous" and "barbarians," in the sense of being uncivilized, unacquainted even with the comforts and conveniences of life.

The inhabitants of Malta, on the contrary, were a civilized people: they had good towns and fine buildings: the people were rich and prosperous, and acquainted with the arts and science of civilized life: the finest linen was made there; and ships came from all parts for the purposes of trade.

Then, again, Meleda *is* cold and damp, with plenty of trees all over it, even down to the water's edge; and there are many serpents in the island.

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Malta, on the contrary, is warm and dry; there are but few trees in the island, and none near the shore: and besides, there are no serpents there.

Now all these are good reasons for our believing that St. Paul was shipwrecked on the island of Melita, or Meleda, in the Adriatic Sea, and not upon the Melita, or Malta, which lies to the south of Sicily.

St. Luke next tells us, that "in the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us three days courteously": by which time some arrangement could be made for the future entertainment of the shipwrecked strangers, who would have to remain for some months in the island. The father of Publius lay ill at this time of a painful and dangerous illness; "to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him. So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed: who also honoured us with many honours; and when we departed, they laded us with such things as were necessary." These people were truly grateful for all the benefits they received from the Apostle; and besides honouring or treating him with respect, whilst he lived amongst them, they furnished the provisions needful for himself and his companions, when at last they quitted Melita.

We may be quite sure, though we are told nothing on the subject, that during the three months passed in this island by St. Paul, he preached the Gospel faithfully and earnestly: and we may well hope and believe, that some of these barbarous people became true followers of the blessed Jesus, of Whose power they had seen such a wonderful instance, in the preservation of St. Paul and his companions. Another ship from Alexandria had passed the winter at Meleda: perhaps she had come up the Adriatic to bring corn from Egypt to the countries on the borders of that sea, and when the storm came on, had wisely determined to remain where she was for the winter; or perhaps she had only been on her way to Rome, and had turned out of her course to take shelter, as soon as the storm arose and made sailing dangerous. However that may be, this ship, which was called "The Castor and Pollux" had passed the winter at Meleda.

We all know that ships and boats always have a name painted upon the stern, to distinguish them from one another. Many large ships have also a figure or image as well: thus a ship called "The Lord Nelson," would have fastened to the *fore* part, or prow, an image or figure of Lord Nelson cut out in wood and painted. This sort of thing is called the "figure-head." The ancients, instead of putting a figure, painted the picture of one, on the fore part of their vessels, and this was called "the sign." Castor and Pollux were two of the imaginary gods or heroes of the ancients: they were twin brothers, and were supposed to take particular care of sailors. A picture of Castor and Pollux was painted on this ship of Alexandria.

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St. Luke says, "And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux." Their voyage was undisturbed now, and they soon reached the island of Sicily, "and landing at Syracuse," then the capital of the island, "tarried there three days. And from thence," St. Luke says, "we fetched a compass, and came to Rhegium," a town in Italy, almost opposite to that of Messina, another considerable town in Sicily, and just at the entrance of the Straits of Messina. At Rhegium they appear to have intended to wait for a favourable wind; for we read, "and after one day the south wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli." Here the voyage ended: at Puteoli the ship would land whatever cargo she carried, and then return to Alexandria. St. Paul and his companions must go by land to Rome, about one hundred miles to the north-west of Puteoli. Puteoli was not only a great place of trade for corn, but also for merchandise of all kinds, which was brought there from different countries, to be exchanged for the productions of Italy. This exchange is, as we have already said, called "commerce."

With so many people from all parts coming to Puteoli, it was impossible that the Christian religion should not have been brought into the place by some of them; and it appears that there were at this time a certain number of Christians at Puteoli: for St. Luke says, "where we found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven days." They were naturally glad of such an opportunity of conversing with the Apostle, and wished to keep him with them for seven days; and it seems that he was allowed to remain with them, which speaks well for the kindness of Julius, the centurion under whose care he was placed, and who had all along evidently favoured St. Paul. They then "went toward Rome. And from thence," St. Luke says, "when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii Forum, and the Three Taverns." Rome was at this time the most important city in the world: people came there from all countries; so we are not surprised to find that there were great numbers of Christians there. When the news reached them that St. Paul, whom many of them had probably known in other countries, was not only landed in Italy, but was actually approaching Rome from Puteoli, great numbers went out to meet and welcome him. Some of them went as far as Appii Forum, a place about fifty miles from Rome; others met him at the "Three Taverns," about thirty miles from Rome. The sight of so many true Christians was a great joy to the Apostle, who was anxious that all men everywhere should repent and turn to God. St. Luke says, "Whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage."

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Thanked God for all that had been done in the conversion of the heathen; whilst he was encouraged to hope for a still further spread of the Gospel, whatever might be his own fate.

CHAPTER XXXI.—ST. PAUL A PRISONER AT ROME.

THE centurion Julius had now finished his work, he had brought St. Paul from Cæsarea to Rome, as he had been ordered to do. On the way, he had seen wonderful things, which must have convinced him that the prisoner whom he was now to deliver into the charge of others, was a good and holy man, under the especial protection of his God; and he had moreover seen that this God was great and powerful, and able to command the wind and waves, as none of the gods worshipped by the heathen, could do. Whether he, or any other of St. Paul's fellow voyagers, became Christians, we are not told.

St. Luke tells us, "And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him." It was probably owing to what Festus had written after Agrippa's interview with his prisoner, that he was now allowed to live in a hired house of his own, with merely one soldier to guard him; instead of being shut up in prison, as he would have been, had he been supposed to have broken any of the Roman laws. According to custom, he was probably linked by a small chain to this soldier, but he was not prevented from seeing anybody who came to him; and he soon made use of this liberty, for "it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans, who, when they had examined me, would have let me go, because there was no cause of death in me. But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Cæsar; not that I had ought to accuse my nation of. For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain."

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St. Paul was anxious that the Jews at Rome should not be prevented from listening to his teaching, by the idea that he was a prisoner on account of any crimes he had committed; and as they might, perhaps, have heard some account of all that had happened at Jerusalem, he took the earliest opportunity of explaining, that he had done nothing contrary to the religion taught by Moses; and that, in fact, the only reason for which he was a prisoner was, that he had preached of the coming of the Messiah, and of the future resurrection of all men,—matters taught by all the prophets, and so firmly believed by the Children of Israel in all ages, that the doctrine might truly be called "The hope of Israel"; for upon it, depended all their hope of obtaining favour and mercy from the Almighty. The Jews of Rome, however, had heard nothing of the treatment which St. Paul had received from their brethren in Jerusalem, "And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judæa concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee. But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that everywhere it is spoken against."

These Jews were not prejudiced against St. Paul, but were willing to listen to all he had to say. They knew that the Christians, "this sect," as they called them, were much spoken against, and that while some thought their doctrines were true and right, others said they were false and mischievous,—likely to make men *wicked* instead of good,—and ought not, therefore, to be attended to at all.

Under these circumstances, the Jews at Rome were anxious to hear from St. Paul's own mouth, a true account of the doctrines which he taught. The Apostle was only too glad of having such an opportunity of explaining the truths of the Gospel to the Jews.

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"And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening,"—that is, he showed them from what had been said both by Moses and the prophets, that Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the Messiah, promised to faithful Abraham, as the Son or Seed in Whom all nations of the earth should be blessed. For one whole day, from morning till evening, did the Apostle argue with these Jews, trying to persuade them to become followers of Jesus: with some he succeeded; with some he failed: for St. Luke says, "And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not. And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word." This "one word" of which St. Luke speaks, was a quotation from the writings of the prophet Isaiah, showing them, that by their obstinate refusal to believe the Word of God, they put themselves amongst the number of those, who would be left in their own wilful blindness: and that the Gospel, or words of Salvation, would be preached to the Gentiles, and that they would be far more willing to receive it, than the Jews had ever been. The Apostle's speech, or "one word," addressed to these unbelieving Jews, was, "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: for the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that

they will hear it."

We have read the words which St. Paul spake to the unbelieving Jews, "And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves." Whether their "reasoning," or talking together, led to the conversion of any of them, we do not know. Nor are we told of any trial of St. Paul taking place, either before the Emperor himself, or by persons appointed by him: all that we do know is, that "Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him." This shows that St. Paul enjoyed a great deal of liberty, although he was still considered as a prisoner, and could not leave Rome.

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During these two years, St. Paul, besides preaching to all who would hear him, wrote Epistles to the Ephesians; Philippians, or inhabitants of Philippi; to the Colossians, or people of Colossé, in Asia Minor; and one to Philemon, a rich man of Colossé. In these Epistles he speaks of himself as a "prisoner," and mentions his "bonds."

You will remember all that happened at Ephesus, and how long St. Paul remained there at one time; and how on another occasion he sent for the elders to Miletus, and took leave of them, knowing that he should see them again no more. That was three years before the time of which we are now speaking: but St. Paul had not forgotten them, and therefore, in the year 61 (A.D.), he, being a prisoner at Rome, wrote an Epistle, or Letter, to the Christians at Ephesus. In this Epistle, the Apostle speaks to the Ephesians of the great mercy shown by God to the Gentiles (amongst whom they themselves were), in allowing them to share the blessings of the Gospel, without being required to keep the Law of Moses. In return for such great mercy, St. Paul entreats the Ephesians to show their gratitude by their conduct, and to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they were called. "Vocation" means calling, profession, employment, state, or condition: they were *called* to be Christians; their *profession* was that they were His servants; their *employment* ought to be doing the Will of God: by the atonement of Jesus, they had been brought into a state or condition for obtaining salvation, and now they must try to walk worthy of their vocation: leading in all things such a life as was expected from the followers of the Holy Jesus, who are bound to follow His example to the extent of their powers. What St. Paul said on this subject, equally applies to us; for our vocation is the same as that of the Ephesians, and we must strive hard to work worthy of it, that is, to be good Christians. In this Epistle, many particular rules are given for the conduct of Christians; one of which is, "Children, obey your parents." St. Paul had, as we have read, established during his second journey a Church, or company of believers, at Philippi, in Macedonia. We shall remember how Lydia showed her gratitude to St. Paul, and how the imprisonment of him and Silas, led to the conversion of the jailor, who became a true believer in Jesus.

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During his Third Journey, St. Paul again went into Macedonia, after the riot at Ephesus, and then he visited Philippi once more. The Philippians, grateful to God for the gift of the holy Gospel received through St. Paul, were anxious to do whatever they could for the Apostle; and whilst he was preaching at Thessalonica, the chief town in their part of the country, the Christians of Philippi, who were but a small company, twice sent money to St. Paul, that the success of his teaching might be in no way hindered, by his having to depend upon the Thessalonians for the supply of his temporal wants. They did the same thing again whilst St. Paul was at Corinth; and now, hearing that he was in confinement at Rome, they feared that he might be badly off for food and other necessary things. A collection was therefore made amongst the Christians at Philippi, and the sum thus collected was sent to Rome by Epaphroditus, one of their Pastors, or Ministers.

St Paul was truly thankful for this timely supply; for before Epaphroditus came, he really had been in great want of necessaries: he could not work at his trade of tent-making now he was a prisoner, and he did not think it advisable to ask assistance from the Christians at Rome.

Epaphroditus stayed at Rome for several months; and during the time he became extremely ill. After he got well again, St. Paul sent him back to Philippi: and by him, he sent an Epistle, which he had written to thank the Philippians for their thoughtful care of him in his time of need. In this Epistle, also, the Apostle begs the Christians of Philippi not to listen to false teachers, who tried to draw them away from the truth as he had taught it to them; but to try to obey the Lord in all things, and continue to love each other. As usual in all his Epistles, St. Paul gives the Philippians much good advice and many holy precepts: he also speaks much of Jesus Christ, and of the necessity of loving Him, and following His example.

CHAPTER XXXII.—ST. PAUL SET AT LIBERTY.

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THE Epistle to the Colossians was also written by St. Paul whilst he was a prisoner at Rome: probably about the end of the year 62 (A.D.). Colossé was a city of Phrygia, where St. Paul had founded a Church; that is, converted a certain number to be believers or Christians, during his First or Second Journey, when he was travelling throughout Asia Minor. The believers of Colossé, having heard of the Apostle's imprisonment at Rome, sent one of their ministers, named Epaphras, to see how he was treated; and also to give him an account of how the Church at Colossé was going on. After hearing all that Epaphras could tell him, St. Paul wrote an Epistle, which he sent to the Colossians by Tychicus, of whom he speaks as a "beloved brother," that is, a

faithful fellow Christian. Tychicus was accompanied to Colossé by Onesimus, of whom we shall say more presently.

In this Epistle to the Colossians, St. Paul proves, that man's only hope of salvation rests upon the atonement made by Jesus Christ; and he shows, therefore, how wrong the Jews were to insist upon the observance of the Law of Moses, as if that could save them. He also warned the Colossians not to be led away by the errors of the philosophers, or wise men, who taught doctrines *not* taught by the Gospel. He exhorts them to show their faith in Christ by holiness of life, and the due performance of every duty to their fellow creatures; and entreats them to "continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving." St. Paul ends this letter, by telling the Colossians that they will hear everything concerning him from Tychicus and Onesimus, by whom he had sent the Epistle.

Onesimus, who is here spoken of, had been the slave of a rich man of Colossé, named Philemon, who had been converted to Christianity by St Paul. Onesimus ran away from his master, to whom he belonged, and thus robbed him of his services; and some think he also robbed Philemon of money. Onesimus fled to Rome; and there God inclined this runaway slave to listen to the teaching of St. Paul, and, in consequence, he became a Christian and was baptized: after this, the Apostle kept Onesimus with him for some time, that he might see whether his conduct showed that he was really and truly a Christian. He soon saw that this was the case; and indeed Onesimus gave a strong proof of the change in his heart and feelings, by wishing to go back to Colossé, and give himself up again as a slave to Philemon, in order to make up for the injury he had done him by running away. In doing this, Onesimus ran some risk; for the laws of Phrygia allowed a master to punish a runaway slave very severely, and even put him to death if he pleased: but he felt that it was his duty to go back, and make amends for the wrong he had done; and therefore he went, trusting in God to save him, or to enable him to bear whatever punishment might be inflicted. St. Paul felt a great interest in Onesimus, whom he speaks of as his son, because he had converted him to the new life of a Christian; and therefore he wrote to Philemon, earnestly begging of him not only to pardon Onesimus for any wrong he had done him, but also now to receive him, not as a servant, but as a fellow Christian, "a brother beloved." We are not told in the Scriptures any more on this subject, but there can be no doubt that Philemon did all that St. Paul requested.

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There is reason to believe that Onesimus became a preacher of the Gospel: some people think that he was afterwards Bishop of Ephesus, and that he finally suffered martyrdom at Rome: but this is not certain. St. Paul was not the only Apostle who wrote Epistles, though he wrote twice as many as all the other Apostles put together.

During this time, when St. Paul was a prisoner in Rome, St. James wrote the Epistle which bears his name. St. James was, we must remember, head or Bishop of the Church at Jerusalem; and from Jerusalem he wrote his Epistle, not to the inhabitants of any particular place, but to the Jewish Christians in general; that is, to those Christians who had been Jews before, wherever they might now be residing. In this Epistle, St. James warns those to whom he wrote, not to be led away to follow any of the bad practices which were but too common in those days; and he also explained to them, that they were mistaken as to the meaning of some of the doctrines taught by St. Paul, who had never preached anything that was not quite according to the Will of God. St. James also gave many precepts for the conduct of Christians, and for the due performance of their various duties—encouraging them to try, by showing that the Lord had promised success to those who do really try. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you." "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up." These are texts full of encouragement to all Christians, to the end of time. And equally necessary for us now, as for the believers to whom St. James wrote, are, "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." "Speak not evil one of another." "Grudge not one against another"; and all the other warnings and precepts contained in this short, but beautiful Epistle, written by St. James.

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Some time in the course of the year 62 (A.D.), St. Paul was set completely at liberty, so that he might go wherever he pleased: but he did not immediately quit Rome, but remained there till he had completed two years; "preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him." The Roman Emperor Nero had not made any law to forbid the Christian religion being preached and followed; the Jews did not therefore, dare to persecute St. Paul at Rome; for by his being set at liberty, the Roman Government had shown that they considered him an innocent man, unjustly accused by his fellow countrymen. It seems that one reason why St. Paul now remained in Italy was, that he expected Timothy to join him in Rome, and then set out with him on another voyage. Whilst St. Paul was thus waiting for Timothy, he wrote his Epistle to the Hebrews. The object of this Epistle was to convince the Hebrews or Jews, of the truth of the Gospel; and in it, he pointed out that everything which he had told them of Christ's human and divine nature, of His Atonement and Intercession, agreed perfectly with all that the Scriptures of the Old Testament, the writings of Moses and the Prophets, had said of the Messiah. He showed them that the Gospel was far superior to the Law; for that, in fact, the Law had only been given to prepare the way for the Messiah, and to lead men to believe in Him and to serve Him.

The Bible gives us no further account of St. Paul's travels, but we have reason to believe, that after Timothy had joined him at Rome, they went to Spain and Britain, and to other western countries, preaching the Gospel everywhere, and converting great numbers of his hearers. After this voyage to the West, St. Paul appears to have visited Jerusalem again; and then to have gone

through Syria and other parts of Asia Minor, and so on even into Macedonia; this we gather from one of his Epistles, in which he says, that at Miletum he had been obliged to leave one of his companions, called Trophimus, who was too ill to go on any further, and that at Troas he had left a cloak and some parchments. Parchment is the skin of sheep, prepared in a particular manner, so as to be fit to write upon. Very soon after St. Paul left Jerusalem, to make this Fifth and last Journey, St. James was killed at Jerusalem by the unbelieving Jews. Festus, the Roman governor, died; and before his successor, Albinus, could get to Judæa, the Jews raised a tumult, and St. James is said to have been thrown down from some part of the temple, and then knocked on the head with a club or heavy stick. Albinus, when he did come, proved himself to be a very bad ruler; for he was so extremely fond of money, that in order to get it, he was not only guilty of great oppression, but he allowed the people to commit all sorts of wickedness without being punished, if they would only give him a sufficient sum of money. He was not governor for long, but was succeeded by Gessius Florus, about A.D. 64.

This Gessius Florus was one of the worst of men, and the Jews suffered dreadfully under his government, for he pillaged whole provinces; encouraged the banditti, on condition that they gave him part of their plunder; he robbed the sacred treasury, and even tried to excite the Jews to open rebellion, in order that, in the confusion, no complaints of his conduct might be carried to Rome. Awful indeed were the evils which now began to fall upon the unhappy Jews, who had provoked the wrath of God by their rejection of the Messiah. In consequence of the sad state of Judæa, many of the inhabitants sought refuge in foreign countries; those who remained applied to Cestius Gallus, the governor of Syria, and earnestly begged that he would deliver them from the cruel tyranny of Florus. Gallus, instead of inquiring into Florus's conduct, sent the Jews away, merely telling them their governor should behave better for the future, which, however, he did not do.

In the year 65 (A.D.), there was a fire at Rome, which burnt a great many houses, and did much damage in the city; the Emperor Nero himself was greatly suspected of having caused it, in order to have an excuse for persecuting the Christians: he delighted in the sufferings and miseries of others, and would have no pity for the poor creatures who would lose all their property in such a fire. At any rate, Nero chose to accuse the Christians of having set fire to the city, and on this pretence they were now treated with the greatest cruelty; tortured first, and then put to death in many barbarous ways. When this persecution began, it is probable that St. Paul was in the island of Crete; but, on hearing of the sufferings of the Christians at Rome, he immediately went there, to strengthen and encourage the brethren to bear any torture, and even death itself, rather than give up their religion. He comforted them by reminding them of the love of Christ, and by assuring them that His blessing would rest upon them, whether they lived or died. St Paul was not long allowed to carry on this good work, for he was himself imprisoned on account of his religion; and he saw plainly that he should soon be called upon to give up his life for the sake of his divine Master; but this prospect did not disturb him; he was ready and willing to go, and be with Christ.

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CHAPTER XXXIII.—MARTYRDOM OF ST. PAUL AND ST. PETER.

ST. PAUL, feeling that he was about to be taken away from earth, wrote to take leave of Timothy, whom he had loved as his own son. This letter, which is called "The Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to Timothy," gave him such advice as the Apostle thought might be useful to him.

The First Epistle to Timothy has already been mentioned, as having been written nine years before, when St. Paul went into Macedonia, after the riot at Ephesus, where he had left Timothy to direct the affairs of the Church.

In this Second Epistle, St Paul entreats Timothy to keep steadfastly in the faith of the Gospel, in spite of every danger. In this Epistle the Apostle declares his willingness to die; his conscience told him that ever since he became a follower of Jesus, he had tried to please his heavenly Master; and therefore he felt, that he should enjoy in heaven that happiness which God has promised to all who truly love and serve Him. St. Paul's own words are, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

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We must all try to fight a good fight against the Devil, and all our own sinful tempers and wishes: we too must keep the faith, doing all those things which the Gospel bids Christians do: then when we have finished our course, and done the work given us to do, we, like St. Paul, may hope, that for the sake of Jesus Christ, we shall be looked upon as righteous, and as such, be received into everlasting happiness.

Very soon after writing this Second Epistle to Timothy, St. Paul suffered martyrdom by command of Nero, because he would not renounce his faith, and bow down to the false gods of the heathen. Being a freeman of Rome, St. Paul was put to death by having his head cut off with a sword, instead of being given to be devoured by wild beasts, as the Christians usually were. The

Apostle died in the month of June, A.D. 66. Slaves and persons guilty of great crimes, were often condemned to fight with wild beasts, who of course tore them to pieces: this was a most cruel barbarous way of putting even the greatest criminals to death; and yet to such a fate were Christians condemned, because they would not "deny the Lord Who bought them!"

It is dreadful to think that the people delighted in witnessing such dreadful fights, which took place in the amphitheatres. These amphitheatres were buildings without roofs; each consisting of a large space enclosed by walls of moderate height, called the arena; and rows of seats outside the wall of the arena, rising up like steps to the outward wall of the building. From these seats, which were always crowded, the spectators could see whatever was going on in the arena.

About the time that St. Paul suffered martyrdom at Rome, strange and awful sights were seen at Jerusalem: the Almighty thus warning His once-favoured people, that as they had forsaken Him, so He had given them up; and that all the evils foretold by Jesus Christ, were now about to fall upon their devoted city.

The cruel and unjust conduct of their Governor Florus, and the consequent anger of the people, threatened to produce a war in Judæa; and in addition to this there were famines and earthquakes, and fearful sights in the heavens. Just before the Passover, when a multitude of people were assembled at Jerusalem to keep it, on a sudden, in the middle of the night, such a brilliant light shone round the temple and the altar, that it seemed to be day. A few days afterwards, just before the sun set, chariots and troops of soldiers were seen passing through the clouds, fighting with each other. Then the eastern gate of the temple, which was of solid brass, and so heavy that twenty men could hardly open or shut it, flew open of itself one night, although it was fastened with strong bars and bolts. At the Feast of Pentecost, when the Priests were going into the inner temple by night to attend to their duties, they heard voices saying, "Let us depart hence"; and immediately there was a noise as of a multitude of people, rushing forth out of the temple.

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These and other wonderful signs must have filled the Jews with alarm; whilst real troubles were daily increasing upon them.

There had long been a dispute between the Syrians and the Jews, as to which of them had the best right to the city of Cæsarea Philippi, built on the borders of the two countries. In the time of Felix, the two parties were preparing to fight for the possession of it; but the governor stopped them for a time, and sent the chiefs of both nations to Rome, to plead their cause before the Emperor. Nothing had then been decided; but now, in the year A.D. 66, Nero declared that the town of Cæsarea Philippi should belong to the Syrians. This decision was very displeasing to the Jews, and led to a dreadful war, which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem a few years later. But before we go on with this subject, we must go back a little, and say a few words about St. Peter.

The Book of Acts tells us nothing more of the Apostle St. Peter after the Council held by St. James and the Church at Jerusalem, when "Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them," were sent up from Antioch "to Jerusalem, unto the Apostles and elders," to inquire whether it was needful for the Gentiles who became Christians, to be also "circumcised after the manner of Moses," and "to keep the law." When there had been much disputation on the subject, St. Peter spake out boldly; reminding the assembly of the conversion of Cornelius, and telling them that after what God had then done, it would be quite wrong to require the Gentiles to be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses. This speech decided the matter; and St. James then gave sentence, that the Ceremonial Law was not binding upon the Gentile converts.

Soon after this, St. Peter and St. Paul were together at Antioch; and there, St. Peter, in his eagerness to please the Jews, withdrew himself from the Gentiles, as thus countenancing the idea that being uncircumcised, they were not fit company for the Jews. St. Paul blamed him, and showed him that he was doing wrong, since he himself knew, that in the sight of God there would be no difference between Jew and Gentile, circumcision or uncircumcision, when once they became believers in Jesus Christ. This happened A.D. 49.

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Where St. Peter spent the next seventeen years, we do not know; but wherever he was, we may be quite sure that he zealously preached the Gospel, and endeavoured to bring all men to believe in Jesus Christ. It is most likely that St. Peter came to Rome just before or after St. Paul's martyrdom, in the year 66 (A.D.); and he then wrote his First Epistle. This Epistle was not written to the inhabitants of any particular place, but generally, to all the Jewish Christians, who had been forced by persecution to leave their own land and take refuge in heathen countries; and also to those Gentiles who had become Christians, and were now living in many different countries. In his Epistle, St. Peter entreats all to whom he writes, to keep steady to their religion, and suffer anything rather than give it up. He also shows them how necessary it is that they should lead holy and blameless lives, not only for their own sake, that they might obtain the blessing of God, but also to show all men, that Christians were in every respect better than any other men. St. Peter speaks of writing from "Babylon"; but by Babylon, he means the city of Rome, which in figurative language he calls Babylon, because in the idolatry and wickedness of its inhabitants, it resembled that ancient city. Besides this, the real Babylon was the place where the Jews, then the Church of God, suffered much during their long captivity; and now the Christian Church was suffering fearful things at Rome. St. Peter might well then use the figurative language so common amongst the Jews at that time, and speak of wicked, persecuting Rome, as "Babylon." It was prudent moreover to do so, for had the Christians spoken openly and plainly of Rome, they would have provoked the anger of the Romans; and though the Christians suffered patiently all

that was laid upon them, they never provoked persecution unnecessarily. St. Peter did not long escape persecution; and with the prospect of a cruel death before him, he wrote his Second Epistle to the Jewish and Gentile Christians in all countries, to warn them not to listen to the doctrines of false teachers, but to keep firm in the faith of the holy Gospel, which he and the other Apostles had taught. In this Letter, he gives many directions for living a holy life; and reminds those to whom he writes, that the Lord Jesus Christ will one day come to judge the world, and that all who believe this, must try to be then found blameless, without spot of sin. This applies just as well to each one of us, as it did to those to whom St. Peter originally wrote: let us therefore watch and pray, that we may, as he says at the end of this Epistle, "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

Very soon after he had written this Second Epistle, the death which St. Peter had expected came upon him. He who had once denied his Lord from fear, now boldly refused to give up his religion to purchase safety: he was therefore sentenced to be crucified, according to what the Lord had foretold to him long before; saying, "When thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not." From histories of that time, we learn that St. Peter, not thinking himself worthy to die in the same manner as his blessed Lord and Master, begged that he might be fastened to the cross with his head downward: this must greatly have increased his sufferings for the time they lasted, though it probably caused him to die sooner. St. Peter was thus crucified at Rome with his head downward, A.D. 68, when Nero had been Emperor for fourteen years; and, as we believe, about two years after St. Paul's death; though some people think that St. Peter was put to death first. We cannot, of course be quite sure; but it is most probable as we have said, that St. Paul was beheaded A.D. 66, and that St. Peter was crucified A.D. 68. Nero died very soon after the crucifixion of St. Peter, and in the short space of one year, three different Emperors, Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, succeeded each other.

We must now return to Jerusalem.

CHAPTER XXXIV.—VESPASIAN SENT INTO JUDÆA.

THE decree of the Emperor giving Cæsarea Philippi to Syria, was no sooner known, than the Jews in all parts of Judæa took up arms. Agrippa happened at this time to be in Jerusalem, and he did his best to show the Jews the extreme folly of trying to fight against such a powerful people as the Romans, and begged and entreated of them not to rebel, and so bring misery upon themselves. Instead of listening to this wise and kind advice, the Jews were so enraged with Agrippa for giving it, that he was obliged to leave the city at once, to save himself from their violence. War now raged on every side, and fearful acts of cruelty were perpetrated by both parties. Thousands and thousands of Jews were massacred at Cæsarea, at Ptolemais, and even at Alexandria; and at Jerusalem, the soldiers of Florus put 3,500 to death in one day. The Jews acted in the same manner as far as they could, and murdered great numbers both of Syrians and Romans. Upon this general revolt of the Jews, Cestius Gallus the governor of Syria, marched with a large army into Judæa and Galilee; burning all the towns and villages in his way, and killing the inhabitants.

Near Jerusalem he was met by a great number of Jews, who attacked him with such fury, that his whole army was in the greatest danger. Agrippa, who with a body of troops had joined Gallus, now again attempted to stop further bloodshed, and sent two of his officers to speak to his countrymen, the Jews, and propose terms of peace. The enraged Jews, however, killed one of the officers, whilst the other escaped wounded: Gallus then advanced with his whole army, defeated the rebellious Jews, and took possession of the lower parts of Jerusalem. Had he at once attacked the upper part of the city, and laid siege to the forts, it is probable that he would have taken the whole, and then the war must have ended. But, as a writer of that time says, "it seems as if God, being angry with the Jews, had determined that they should expiate their sin by the most severe suffering, and would not therefore allow the war to end so soon."

Some say, Gallus was advised to retire by some of his own officers, who had been bribed to do so by Florus. However that maybe, Gallus suddenly went away with his army: his retreat gave the Jews fresh hopes, and they pursued him even to his camp at Gibeon, about six miles from Jerusalem: here, the Jews attacked the Syrians with the greatest fury, and killed more than 5,000 of them; whilst Gallus escaped by night.

Leaving the history of this terrible war for a few minutes, we must speak of another Epistle to be found in the New Testament, where it is called "The General Epistle of Jude." The writer of this Epistle was, the "Judas (not Iscariot)" mentioned by St. John; whom St. Luke tells us (ch. vi.) was the brother of James; and he appears to have been the same person whom St. Mark (ch. iii.) calls "Thaddeus," and of whom St. Matthew (ch. x.) speaks as "Lebbeus, whose surname was Thaddeus."

In the Gospels, therefore, we have four names for this Apostle, Jude, Judas, Thaddeus, and Lebbeus. The Book of Acts makes no mention of him. From other histories we have reason to believe, that this Apostle was a husbandman, or cultivator of the earth, and not a fisherman, as so many of the twelve were. After Jude became an Apostle, he, of course, followed the Lord as long as he lived; and then we have reason to believe that he went eastward, and preached the Gospel

in Mesopotamia and other countries. He then returned to Syria, from whence he wrote his Epistle, about the same time as St. Peter wrote his First Epistle from Rome, that is, A.D. 66; just when Nero gave that decree concerning Cæsarea, that led to the war of which we have been speaking. St. Jude's Epistle is very short, and was written to warn the Christians in general not to listen to false teachers; but to take care to believe only such truths as had been taught by Jesus Christ and His Apostles. After writing this Epistle, it is supposed that St. Jude travelled again eastward, and preached the Gospel in Persia, where he suffered martyrdom.

To return to the Jews: their defeat of Gallus made them more obstinate in their determination not to submit to the Romans, and they accordingly made very great preparations for carrying on the war with vigour. At this time all the Christians quitted Jerusalem. They remembered how Jesus had told His disciples, that when they should see Jerusalem surrounded with armies, and "the abomination of desolation," they would know that the destruction of the city was near at hand, and that they must leave it, and take refuge in the mountains. The prophecy had now been fulfilled; for the armies of the heathen Romans had compassed or surrounded the city, and these armies were fitly called "the abomination of desolation," because they not only spread desolation and misery wherever they went, but they were abominable and hateful to the Jews, because on their standards and flags they had images and pictures of the false gods of the Romans, and also of their emperors, to whom, as well as to the gods, they offered sacrifices.

The Christians, seeing that the time of which Jesus had warned them was now come, left Jerusalem, and crossing the river Jordan journeyed on about one hundred miles, and took refuge in a city called Pella, belonging to King Agrippa: the inhabitants of Pella were Gentiles. Nero, who was still alive when the Jews defeated Gallus, ordered Vespasian, one of his bravest and most skilful generals, to march at once into Judæa with a large army. Vespasian set to work to collect soldiers, and his son Titus went into Egypt to fetch from Alexandria two Roman *legions*, or "regiments," as we should call them. An immense army thus entered Galilee: one town after another fell into the hands of the Romans, and thousands of the Jews were slain. At Joppa, large numbers of the wretched inhabitants took refuge on board their ships, hoping thus to escape; but a violent storm dashed the vessels back upon the rocks; many of the people were drowned or crushed by the broken ships; and many, seeing no further hope of escape, killed themselves: such as did reach the shore, were slaughtered without mercy by the Romans. It is said that for a long space the sea was red with the blood of these poor creatures, and that not a man remained alive to carry these terrible tidings to Jerusalem.

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During this time Vespasian had taken prisoner a man, who is famous for having written a History of the Jews, and of the destruction of Jerusalem. This man, whose name was Josephus, was a Jew, born in Jerusalem, a few years after the Crucifixion of our Lord. When he was quite young he showed a great fondness for learning, and was so very clever and sensible, that when he was only sixteen years old, the Chief Priests and rulers often asked his advice. Josephus adopted the opinions of the Pharisees; and as he grew up he took an active part in the management of public affairs.

When the wars broke out, Josephus showed so much knowledge and skill in military matters, that he was made governor, and acted as general of the Jewish armies.

Amongst other places which the Romans besieged, was a small town called Jotapa, or Jotaphata. Josephus defended it for nearly two months, but at last the Romans took it, and slew all the inhabitants except Josephus and forty of his men who escaped, and took refuge in a cave. Some one told Vespasian where Josephus was concealed; and the Roman general sent to offer life and safety to him and his companions, upon certain conditions, which they might have accepted without any disgrace. Josephus wished to accept these terms; but when he spoke of submitting to the Romans, his companions threatened to murder him. Determined not to live to become prisoners to the Romans, and unwilling to be guilty of the great crime of self-murder, these wretched people drew lots to decide who should kill his companion: in this way one fell after another, until one man only remained alive besides Josephus, who had of course taken no share in this transaction. Josephus easily persuaded his companion to submit to the Romans: Vespasian treated the Jewish general with the greatest kindness: he kept him with him more as a friend than as a prisoner, and often consulted him, and asked his advice.

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Mean time, Vespasian in one part of the country, and his son Titus in another, carried on the war with vigour; taking one city after another: in vain they besought the Jews to submit; these miserable people persisted in their useless resistance, and thus enraged the Romans, who treated them with great barbarity. Multitudes were destroyed, and a vast number were sold as slaves.

After the whole of Galilee had been thus subdued, Titus joined his father at Cæsarea, and there their armies had a little rest.

The troubles in Rome after the death of Nero, A.D. 68, prevented Vespasian having the means of carrying on the war with vigour; and indeed he was in no hurry to begin the siege of Jerusalem, because the Jews were daily rendering his task more easy, by fighting amongst themselves, and so wasting that strength which should have been kept to resist the enemy.

The city of Jerusalem was at this time in a most dreadful state of confusion and tumult. The inhabitants were divided into two parties: one party, seeing that a continuance of war would totally ruin their country, wished to submit to the Romans; the other party, the Zealots, would not hear of submission; and as they were the worst of men, they committed the most horrid crimes,

often under pretence of religion. No person's life was safe, and the whole city was distracted by acts of violence and cruelty. The leader of the party of Zealots within the city was a man named John; another man named Simon, of equally bad character, headed a party outside, and collecting a band of ruffians, encamped with them before the city. Some of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who suffered severely from the tyranny of John, fearing that he would burn the city, unhappily determined to let Simon and his troops come in, by way of defending them against John. But this step only increased their miseries; for they now suffered from the violence and wickedness of two parties, instead of one. Thus a third party was formed in Jerusalem; and these three parties, instead of joining to defend themselves against the Romans, fought against each other, and many were killed, even in the temple, and before the very altar itself.

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CHAPTER XXXV.—DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.

WE have said that after the death of Nero, A.D. 68, there were great troubles in Rome, where three different Emperors succeeded each other in the space of one year; but this state of things was put an end to in A.D. 69, when the Romans chose Vespasian to be their Emperor. The next year, the Emperor Vespasian sent his son Titus to force the rebellious Jews into obedience, and so put an end to this destructive war. Titus and his army marched towards Jerusalem, which to look at was a most magnificent and glorious city, though it had unhappily become the habitation of violence and all that is bad and wicked. The city was built upon two mountains, enclosed with walls, and surrounded by deep valleys. The walls were guarded by towers; and altogether the place was well able to resist the attacks of an enemy. But, instead of preparing to defend themselves, the Jews hurried on their own destruction; for at the very time when a formidable army was rapidly approaching the city, the contending parties within the walls were continually occupied in inventing new ways of destroying each other; and in their fury, they wasted and destroyed considerable quantities of provisions, of which they had afterwards great reason to repent.

Although danger and misery now threatened the city from the factions within and the enemy without, multitudes of people unwisely crowded into it to keep the Passover; thus adding sadly to the general confusion and distress. Miserable indeed was the state of Jerusalem when, in the year A.D. 70, Titus marched towards it with a formidable army. The actual approach of the Romans, put a stop for the time to the fighting amongst the Jews; and joining together, they left the city, and forced Titus and his soldiers to leave their camp and retire to the mountains: but no sooner had the Jews thus obtained an interval of quiet, than their quarrels began again. In the mean time the Romans were making every exertion to prepare for the siege of Jerusalem, which was surrounded by three walls, one within another, with a good space between them, filled with buildings.

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Titus sent Josephus to speak to his countrymen, and offer them peace and safety if they would now submit and receive him into their city; but these offers were refused by the infatuated Jews. They were repeated with no better success; and after they had been several times rejected, the Romans made their first attack; and at length made a breach, or gap, in the first, or outermost, wall, and so entered into that part of the city, whilst the Jews retreated within the second wall.

The Romans having encamped within the first wall, now attacked the second wall, and forced their way through that also: and the Jews retired within the third wall, many of them taking refuge in the temple and in the Fort Antonia. The greater part of the wretched inhabitants would now have submitted to the Romans, and given up their city; but the Zealots murdered all who ventured to speak of such a thing. The great numbers of people now shut up within the walls of Jerusalem, soon devoured the provisions, and added the horrors of famine to the other terrible sufferings of the Jews. The Zealots forced their way into the houses of all whom they suspected of having any food, and carried away whatever they could find. The nearest relations snatched food from each other, in the extremity of their hunger. Many of the starving Jews, who during the night ventured to go beyond the city walls, to collect roots and herbs, were seized by the Roman soldiers, and crucified in the morning: so that several hundreds were frequently seen at a time, suffering the same agony of body which had been endured by our blessed Lord Jesus Christ. It is impossible to describe what the Jews went through at this time. We shall remember that when they insisted on the crucifixion of Jesus, contrary to the wishes of Pilate himself, they had cried out, "His blood be on us and on our children"; and fearfully were they now punished for having shed His blood. Josephus, in his history of all that happened in Jerusalem at this time, writes: "Never did any other city suffer such woes, nor was there ever a more wicked generation since the beginning of the world."

At length the Romans broke through the third, or inner, wall, and got possession of the Fort Antonia, and pursued the Jews into the temple. The Jews for a moment fled before their enemies; but the foremost soldier slipped upon the marble pavement and fell. Then the Jews turned, and killed him, and drove the rest of the soldiers back into the fort. Even now the Jews still refused to submit; and the temple, instead of being a place of worship, became a scene of battle and confusion.

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At this time, when the famine pressed sore upon all the people, a most horrible thing was done; for a mother killed her infant child, roasted it, and actually ate part of it! Titus was so shocked when he heard of this, that he declared that he would leave nothing but the ruins of a

city, in which so horrible a crime had been committed. Again he attacked the temple, and got possession of the outer courts. He wished to preserve the temple itself, and gave orders for that purpose. But the Lord Himself had foretold the destruction of the temple, and a Roman soldier was the means of fulfilling this prophecy. Contrary to orders, this man threw a flaming brand, or stick, into one of the chambers: the flames quickly burst forth and spread on all sides: the Roman soldiers rushed into the sacred building, and all became a scene of plunder and murder.

The once glorious temple was soon nothing but a heap of smoking ruins, in spite of all the efforts made by the command of Titus to stop the conflagration. This sad destruction of the second temple took place on the anniversary of that day upon which the first temple, built by Solomon, was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, 587 years before Jesus Christ came upon earth.

Even whilst the temple was in flames, 6,000 people actually listened to an impostor, who led them to the roof of a part of the building, promising them a miraculous deliverance: they all of course perished in the flames. Thousands of Jews were now killed by the Romans, and every building in the city, excepting a few towers, was burned.

In this dreadful war, the greater part of the Jewish people perished: many of the rest were sold as slaves, and nothing could be more wretched than the state of all who were left. Jerusalem has ever since been "trodden down," or oppressed, by the Gentiles; and the Jews have remained in such a state as constantly to remind us of the prophecy of Moses (Deut. xxix.), where it is written, "Even all nations shall say, Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this land? What meaneth the heat of this great anger?" The answer is given to us, "*Because* they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord God." Let us ever bear this in mind, and not provoke God by *our* sins, to punish us as He punished the descendants of His chosen people, the Children of Israel.

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Titus commanded the whole city and its walls to be destroyed. This was done so completely, that not one stone was left upon another, as the Lord Himself had said.

When Titus saw how strong the walls and forts of the city were, he made a remark worthy of a Christian; saying, "We have fought with the assistance of God: it was God Who drove the Jews out of these fortifications; for what can the hands of men, or the force of machines, effect against these towers?"

After the destruction of Jerusalem, Titus went back to Rome, taking with him Josephus, to whom Vespasian gave the freedom of the city and a pension. Josephus immediately set to work to learn the Greek language, in which he wrote his History of the Wars of the Jews and of the Destruction of Jerusalem. He died A.D. 93, at the age of fifty-six: but we are now speaking of the year A.D. 70, when Titus took him to Rome.

The Roman Senate decreed a Triumph to Titus and Vespasian. "A Triumph" was a grand procession, in honour of a general who had gained some great victory. A magnificent car was provided to convey the person for whom the honour was intended: his army, partly before, partly behind the car, marched with flags and banners, to the sound of music: any prisoners who had been taken in the war were made to follow the car, chained two and two together; and if any valuable spoils had been taken from the enemy, they were carried in the procession. In short, everything was done to make the Triumph a very grand affair; and it was considered the greatest honour that could be bestowed upon a military leader: it often cost an immense sum of money. The Senate now decreed, that a Triumph should take place in honour of Titus and Vespasian, who were to share the chariot provided for the occasion. Amongst the beautiful things carried in this procession, the most remarkable were the golden candlestick, and other precious things saved from the temple at Jerusalem: also the volume, or Book of the Law of Moses, which was indeed deserving of the greatest respect, though the heathens did not know its real value.

In remembrance of the great deeds of Titus, a marble arch was erected at Rome, not far from the Forum. On the inside of the archway are carved representations of the golden candlestick, and of many other things brought from Jerusalem. This arch, called "The Arch of Titus," still stands in Rome; and not one of the Jews, of whom there are now many thousands living in Rome, will ever pass under this archway, because it reminds them of the destruction of their once glorious temple, and of the ruin of their nation.

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When Jerusalem was destroyed, there still remained in the almost desolate land of Judæa three strong castles, which resisted the Romans. Two were soon taken; but the third was so very strong both by nature and art, and was so well defended by a man of great courage, called Eleazer, that for some time the Romans could not succeed in getting possession of it. At last they built a high wall round it, so that no one could come out or go in: they then set fire to the gates, and prepared to storm, or attack, the castle the next day. The Jews now saw that there was no hope of defending the fortress, or of saving their own lives; and Eleazer therefore persuaded the garrison to burn all their valuable stores, kill the women and children that were with them, and then destroy themselves. Ten men were chosen to murder all the rest: after they had done this, they killed each other; and the last man who was left set fire to the place, and then killed himself. The next day, when the Romans were preparing to climb the walls, two of the women who had hid themselves, and so escaped being murdered, came forth, and told all that had happened.

AFTER the terrible event which has just been related, the Jews who still remained in the land, ceased for a time to oppose the Romans. It was the submission of despair; for they felt that they had no power to resist, and ruin and desolation surrounded them on all sides. The once flourishing fields and plains of Judæa were covered with dead bodies; most of the celebrated cities were merely heaps of ruins. All the fighting men were removed from Jerusalem, and only some women and old men were allowed to take up their abode amongst the ruins of their beloved city.

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The Emperor only allowed the Jews to observe the forms of their own religion, on condition of their paying to the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, one of the heathen deities, the tax hitherto paid by every Jew for the service of the Temple, or House of the Lord. Ever since Judæa had been made a Roman province, the Jews had been allowed to collect their own taxes: the annual tribute to the temple they looked upon as an offering to God, Whose subjects they were. The Emperor now, in their opinion, usurped the place of God; and this was a great affliction to the Jews; whilst the use to which the tax was to be put, and the severity exercised in collecting it, made these unhappy people feel it to be an intolerable disgrace and burden.

Vespasian died nine years after the destruction of Jerusalem, A.D. 79, and his son Titus became Emperor. Titus reigned for only two years, and was succeeded by his brother Domitian, A.D. 81.

We have reason to believe that only one of the Apostles was alive when Titus took Jerusalem: this was St. John, the disciple "whom Jesus loved." As the Bible tells us nothing concerning this holy man, during the time that St. Paul was journeying about, we cannot be sure as to what he was doing; but he is supposed to have remained in his native land, and probably in Jerusalem itself, till he saw the city compassed by foreign soldiers, and beheld the other signs of its approaching ruin, as foretold by his Divine Master. Then it is believed, that St. John travelled through Parthia, India, and Arabia; and also founded Churches at Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicia, and other places in Asia Minor; after which, he passed some time at Ephesus. There is a story that he afterwards went to Rome, and was, by the order of Domitian, who persecuted the Christians most cruelly, thrown into a large vessel of boiling oil. But instead of dying in tortures, as was expected, the Lord preserved him, and he came out unhurt. We may well believe this story, though we cannot be quite sure that it is true. After this, Domitian banished the Apostle, now a very old man, to the island of Patmos, in the southern part of the Archipelago. At Patmos, the Lord sent St. John a most wonderful vision; and his account of it forms part of the New Testament, where it is called "The Revelation of St. John the Divine": it is also called the "Apocalypse." "Revelation" means some hidden secret thing made known. "Apocalypse" comes from a Greek word, meaning the same as Revelation.

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The Apocalypse is a book of prophecies, revealing and foretelling in mysterious language, events which are to happen even to the end of the world. It is of course very difficult to understand any of the prophecies in this book, and quite impossible to do so perfectly; but like every other part of Scripture, it teaches men to be holy. In the first chapter of this book, St. John tells us himself, that this Revelation was made known to him in the isle of Patmos, to which he had been banished on account of his religion.

Domitian persecuted the Jews as well as the Christians; and great numbers of both were put to death by this tyrannical and wicked Emperor, who proposed to destroy all the descendants of David, lest any one of them should attempt to become king of Judæa. Some grandsons of the Apostle Jude, or Thaddeus, who was of the family of David, were brought before the Emperor; but on being asked concerning the kingdom of Christ, they declared that it was a spiritual, not a temporal kingdom; and as they were very poor, and could only by the hardest labour contrive to support themselves, and pay the tax demanded by the Romans, he spared them, as persons who were not to be feared. Some of the Jews, who had retired to Alexandria, had endeavoured to get up a disturbance there; but the Jews, who had long lived quietly in that city, fearful of the consequence of any revolt, gave up their seditious countrymen to the Romans, who put them to death: they were obstinate to the last, and even their children suffered the greatest tortures, rather than acknowledge the Roman Emperor to be their master. Such conduct, however mistaken it may have been, sets a good example to Christians in every age. These Jews believed that to submit to the Roman Emperor was contrary to their duty to God; and therefore they bore any sufferings rather than do it. Let us ever be ready and willing to suffer, rather than do anything which we believe to be contrary to our duty to God.

The Emperor Domitian, displeased with what had happened in Alexandria, ordered the temple which had been built in that city to be shut up; lest, under pretence of public worship, the Jews of that place should meet there and plot rebellion.

Domitian died A.D. 96, and was succeeded by Nerva, who immediately set St. John at liberty: the Apostle at once left Patmos, and went into Asia Minor, where he wrote the account of the wonderful Vision or Revelation made to him in that island. Very soon afterwards, St. John wrote the three Epistles called by his name.

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The First of these Epistles is not addressed to any persons in particular; but was written to warn all Christians not to listen to the false teachers, who were then leading many into serious error. Some of these false teachers, pretended that Jesus was not really man; and that, as He had no real body like ours, He did not really suffer crucifixion. Others, on the contrary, taught that He was *only* man. Both doctrines were equally fatal to the hopes of Christians: if Jesus Christ did not share our human nature, He could not atone for the sin of man; if He were only man, however free from sin Himself, He could not atone for the sins of His fellow mortals. Thus a firm belief in

Jesus Christ as *God and Man*, is absolutely necessary for all who look for salvation through Him. Another set of false teachers taught, that those who believed themselves to be justified by faith, and so freed from the restraints of the Levitical Law, might sin without fear of punishment. St. John cautions all Christians not to be led away by these, or any other false doctrines; and he shows them how very different they are from the truths contained in the Gospel as taught by Jesus Christ, and fully explained by His Apostles. St. John, in this Epistle, speaks much of the love of God towards His creatures, and of the duty of all men to love Him and their fellow creatures for His sake.

The Second Epistle of St. John was probably written from Ephesus, his usual abode at this time. This Epistle is addressed to some particular lady, to warn her and her children not to listen to the dangerous doctrines of false teachers.

The Third of St. John's Epistles is written to a man named Gaius, who is supposed to have been converted by the Apostle, who therefore speaks of him as one of his children: a very usual figure of speech with teachers, respecting those whom they converted. In this way St. Paul calls Timothy his "son." In the Acts of the Apostles, and in the Epistles, we meet with the name of Gaius five times; and four different persons seem to be meant. Gaius, of Macedonia (Acts xix.); Gaius, of Derbe (Acts xx.); Gaius, whom St. Paul baptized at Corinth (1 Cor. i.), and who lodged that Apostle in his own house at Corinth (Rom. xvi.); and this Gaius, to whom St. John writes his Epistle; whether he was one of those already mentioned, we cannot know.

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The object of this Epistle from St. John, seems to have been to praise Gaius for his steady faith, and for having shown kindness to some Christian strangers, who had passed through the place where he lived: at the same time, St. John cautions him to have nothing to do with a teacher named Diotrephes, who had denied St. John's authority, and set himself up as the head of a party, in opposition to the Apostles.

St. John entreats Gaius to do, what may equally apply to each one of us, for he says, "Follow not that which is evil, but that which is good." He also recommends to him Demetrius, of whom we know nothing, except that he was a good man. This letter to Gaius is very short, because, as St. John writes, he hoped shortly to meet and talk to him.

St. John spent the last years of his long life at Ephesus, and there, about A.D. 99, he wrote that very valuable and beautiful portion of Holy Scripture known to us as "The Gospel according to St. John." When St. John wrote, he was of course well acquainted with the Gospels of St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke, and also with the Book of Acts, for they had all been written many years before this time. He does not, therefore, repeat much of what they tell us, but gives an account of many things which they do not mention; and repeats especially much of what his blessed Lord said at different times to His disciples. There was a good reason for this.

Even by this time, many errors had crept into the Christian Church, as has already been said, when speaking of St. John's First Epistle.

St. John, therefore, wrote his Gospel to correct these errors, and to show all men, that Jesus Christ was truly and indeed the Son of Man and the Son of God: the Word that was from the beginning with God, and was God, and was made man, that He might suffer for us.

The Gospel of St. John completed the Canon of Scripture; that is, those writings which are undoubtedly written by inspiration of God, and are, therefore, to be the general rule of Christian faith and practice.

CHAPTER XXXVII.—THE DEATH OF ST. JOHN.

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ST. JOHN was nearly 100 years old when he wrote his Gospel: he had spent a long life in preaching and exhorting, and we are told that, when his great age prevented his continuing his active labours, he used to be carried into the public assemblies of the Christians, in order to repeat his exhortation, "Little children, love one another": words constantly repeated in some shape or other, in the writings of this Apostle, who also dwells much upon the love of Christ for man, as a reason why men should love Him, and love each other for His sake. Let us try to obey the precept, "Love one another"; remembering that St. John also says, "Love not in word neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth"; that is, do not talk about your love, but show it by your actions. Love to Christ must show itself in obedience; love to man for His sake, by kindness to every fellow creature, and by doing all the good we can to them, whether they are kind to us or not.

St. John died quietly at Ephesus, about A.D. 100: his faith and love were great, therefore his death was peaceful and happy; for he felt that he was now going home to his beloved Master, Whom he had faithfully served for many years on earth.

A century, or space of 100 years, had now passed since the birth of Jesus Christ: at the time of that event, the inhabitants of the world, with the exception of the Jews, were Heathens or Pagans; who, in their total ignorance of an Almighty and Holy God, gave themselves up to follow their own sinful inclinations, and were guilty of every sort of wickedness and vice. The Jews, though still retaining a nominal observance of the Law of Moses and the worship of One True God, had strangely forgotten and forsaken the religion, so long the glory of their nation. Thinking

more of temporal than of spiritual things, they wilfully misunderstood the writings of the prophets, and looked for a temporal king in the promised Messiah: those who dared to hold a different opinion, were treated with contempt.

The two sects of Sadducees and Pharisees, though in other matters opposed to each other, equally set at naught the holiness of heart and life commanded by the Law of Moses. The Sadducees, denying the possibility of a future life, laughed at the idea of denying one's self any gratification here, from the fear of punishment hereafter. The Pharisees, passing by the Moral Law, which it did not suit them to keep, taught, that a strict observance of the Ceremonial Law, and of the traditions handed down from father to son, would secure the favour of God.

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Thus Sadducees and Pharisees both destroyed all true religion; that is, all devotion of the heart to God, producing holiness of life.

The consequence of this was, that the knowledge and love of God were daily growing less amongst the Jewish people, and rapidly ceasing to have any effect on their motives and actions. So that, both as regarded Jews and Gentiles, it might truly be said, "The whole world lieth in wickedness."

The doctrines and precepts of our blessed Lord, were meant to make man hate and renounce all sin and wickedness; to show him the necessity of self-denial, and of holiness in thought, word, and deed; and to set before him that love towards God, which was to be the motive and principle to govern all his actions.

Thus, wherever the Gospel was received, a great change at once took place; and the close of the first century, found the world in a very different condition from that, in which it had been at the beginning. Mankind must now be considered as divided into three classes: First, the Heathen, who, in addition to all former wickedness, now added a spirit of hatred and persecution towards those who rejected their false religion, for the Truth as is in Jesus. Second, the Jews, who, in spite of all the miseries they had gone through for their rejection of Jesus Christ, still clung to the Law of Moses; hating the Heathen, but above all, hating the followers of Jesus with an increasing hatred. The third class comprehended all, who, by the mercy of God, had been brought out of either of the other two classes, to be sincere and faithful followers of the precepts and examples of the Holy Jesus. This class, called Christians, already contained a very large number of persons of all ages and sexes; and their number was increasing daily, by fresh converts from amongst the Gentiles.

Thus, by the close of the first century, the Church of Christ was so firmly established upon earth, as to defy all the efforts made to overthrow it.

Even during the first century the Christians suffered persecution; and many of them were put to death, because they would not give up their belief in Jesus, and act contrary to His precepts. This cruel persecution of the Christians continued during the second and third centuries; sometimes with greater, sometimes with less severity. But it has been truly said, that "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church"; for numbers, seeing their holy lives, and then witnessing the wonderful manner in which they were supported to bear the most exquisite tortures rather than give up their religion, felt that there must be some sure and strong foundation for such faith and steadfastness, and were thus led to become Christians themselves; and by their future conduct and martyrdom they again, in their turn, brought others to join the Church of Christ, which thus extended itself rapidly on all sides.

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Before the close of the second century, Christianity had been established as the religion of the Britons; but how, or by whom, it was brought into our island, we do not know: it seems very probable that, during the long interval in which we know nothing of St. Peter's movements, he came to Britain, and established the Church which has ever since existed here.

In reading of the martyrs, we should remember that they, knowing that the favour of God was the only thing worth having, were willing to suffer and die in order to obtain it; trusting to the Lord to give them a happy issue out of all their sufferings. They did not trust in vain. We must also recollect, that the religion of the martyrs was no sham; no system of outward forms, but an entire devotion of the whole heart and life to God; and that the same devotion is required of Christians now. If we are not now called upon to suffer martyrdom, we are called upon to give our hearts to God; and show our Faith, by denying ourselves in everything contrary to His Will, whatever pain or difficulty we may have in doing so.

Do we do this?

The Jews, who outlived the destruction of their city and temple, sought refuge in different parts of the world. Many went into Egypt, where there was a Jewish colony, that had been established in the time of Alexander the Great. Others fled to Cyrene, another part of Africa. A large number removed to Babylon, and joined their brethren who had remained from father to son in that country, instead of returning to Jerusalem when the decree of Cyrus permitted them to do so. Some took refuge in Persia and other Eastern countries.

By degrees, these Jews formed a regular system of government for themselves.

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They were divided into Eastern and Western Jews. The Eastern Jews were those who settled in Babylon, Chaldæa, Assyria, Persia, and the adjacent countries. Those who remained in Judæa, or took up their abode in Egypt, Italy, and other parts of the Roman dominions in Europe, were

called Western Jews. In the course of time, these two parties each chose some distinguished person as their head, or chief. The chiefs of the Eastern Jews were called "Princes of the Captivity"; and those of the Western Jews, were simply styled "Patriarchs." Gradually these chiefs obtained more and more influence and authority amongst their fellow countrymen in all matters. Both parties of Jews also founded schools, that the children might be fully and carefully instructed in all the doctrines and practices of their religion. But these things were done gradually during a long course of years, one step leading to another; for naturally, on their first dispersion after the destruction of Jerusalem, their whole attention was turned to securing a safe asylum, where they might worship God after the manner of their fathers—as far, at least, as they could do so; but the destruction of the Temple had rendered it impossible to keep the feasts and offer the sacrifices, so strictly enjoined by the Law of Moses.

The impossibility of obeying the precepts of their religion, should have made the Jews more ready to listen to those, who declared that the promised Messiah had indeed come; and that therefore, the Old Dispensation contained in the Law of Moses was at an end.

As Scripture history closes before the destruction of Jerusalem, all that has been said regarding that and subsequent events, has been gathered from other histories; and all that has been related concerning the latter days of some of the Apostles, has been supplied in a similar way. It will be well now to give a short account of the labours and deaths of such of the Apostles as have not been already mentioned; only remembering, that whilst we have every reason to believe such accounts are true, we cannot feel certain, as we do in regard to all the facts related in the Holy Scriptures.

Taking, then, "the names of the twelve Apostles" as given by St. Matthew (x. 2, &c.), we have "first, Simon, who is called Peter." Of him we have heard much in the course of our Lord's life, and during the time of which the Book of Acts gives us the history: and we have also spoken of what he is believed to have done after that period, and of his martyrdom. Of "Andrew his brother," we only know that he was also a fisherman, and that he was a disciple of John the Baptist, with whom he was standing when the Baptist said of Jesus, "Behold the Lamb of God." Andrew, nothing doubting, at once sought an interview with Jesus, and then went to find, his own brother Simon, giving him the joyful news, "We have found the Messias." Andrew became afterwards one of the constant followers of our Lord, chosen to be Apostles; and his name is mentioned two or three times in sacred history.

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From other sources we learn, that after the Ascension of our Lord, St. Andrew travelled to Byzantium, now called Constantinople, and there founded a Church; and that he also preached the Gospel in the Crimea. But he ended his life in Greece, under the following circumstances: St. Andrew was preaching at a place in Achaia with great success, when Ægeas, the pro-consul or Roman governor of the province, came there, and was greatly enraged to find that multitudes had already been converted from Heathenism to Christianity: he therefore told the Apostle, that he should be crucified unless he would himself offer a sacrifice to the heathen gods. This St. Andrew of course refused to do, and he was put into prison; but the people were so angry at this, that they would have rescued him by force, had he not begged them not to do so; telling them that he was quite ready to suffer martyrdom, if such was the will of God. It is said, that amongst other miracles performed in the name of Jesus by St. Andrew, he had healed the wife and the brother of Ægeas of diseases; and that both had, in consequence, become Christians. This made the pro-consul still more furious; and, in his rage, he ordered St. Andrew to be severely scourged by seven men, before he was put to death. He was tied to a cross of the shape of the letter X; and it is said that he hung upon it for two days, during which, in the midst of his agony, he continued to instruct and exhort the people. After his death, his body was embalmed and buried with all honour, at the expense of a noble lady, named Maximilla. We are told that, 300 years later, St. Andrew's body was taken to Constantinople by the Emperor Constantine, who had become a Christian, and buried in a church which the Emperor had built in honour of the Apostles.

In after times, St. Andrew came to be looked upon as the patron Saint of Scotland.

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A cross, the shape of that upon which St. Andrew was crucified, is always called a St. Andrew's Cross.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.—THE APOSTLES.

THE next on the list of the Apostles, are "James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother." Both of these have been already mentioned: the Scripture tells us, that St. James the elder, the brother of St. John, was killed with the sword by Herod Agrippa.

St. John, as we have heard, survived the destruction of Jerusalem; was banished for some years to the island of Patmos; and finally died a natural death at Ephesus.

"Philip and Bartholomew" are the next upon our list; and throughout their lives they seem to have been intimately connected with each other. Philip's name is mentioned two or three times in Scripture. He was no sooner called to be a follower of Jesus, than, as we are told, "he findeth Nathanael (or Bartholomew), and saith unto him, We have found Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Or, in other words, that they

had found out, that Jesus of Nazareth the reputed son of Joseph, was, in truth, The Messiah, of whom Moses and the prophets had written.

After the Lord's Ascension, Philip is supposed to have preached the Gospel in some parts of Asia, and then to have suffered martyrdom in Phrygia. It is said, that coming to a place where the inhabitants were the grossest idolaters, Philip, greatly distressed at their condition, prayed constantly for them; at the same time labouring to convince them of the folly of their present worship, and telling them of the true God, and of His Son Jesus Christ. The Lord so blessed Philip's efforts, that many of his hearers turned from idolatry and became Christians. This success, stirred up the opposition and persecution of the heathen magistrates, who accordingly seized the Apostle, put him in prison, caused him to be unmercifully scourged, and afterwards crucified. It is said, moreover, that whilst hanging on the cross, he was stoned to death; and that then, such a violent earthquake took place, as greatly alarmed all the people; and that many, in consequence, repented of their idolatry and wickedness, and turned to God.

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Bartholomew, or Nathanael, could not at first believe that Jesus of Nazareth was the promised Messiah, but after acting according to Philip's advice, of "Come and see," he cordially acknowledged Jesus Christ to be the "Son of God, the King of Israel." After our Lord's Ascension, this Apostle is said to have laboured amongst the savage tribes of Abyssinia, then called Ethiopia; and we are told, that 100 years afterwards, a missionary who went to preach the Gospel in those parts, found a copy of St. Matthew's Gospel, which was said to have been left there by Bartholomew. Bartholomew was in Phrygia with Philip, when the latter was put to death: and it is said that he was also fastened to a cross, but that the heathens were so alarmed by the earthquake, that they took him down, and set him at liberty. After this, he is said to have preached in various parts of Asia Minor, ending with Armenia, where he was seized by the idolatrous governor, and treated with the greatest cruelty; he was beaten to the ground with staves; crucified head downwards; then taken from the cross, flayed, and finally beheaded.

Thomas, the next on the list of Apostles, is well known to us for his doubts as to the reality of the Resurrection—doubts mercifully removed by the Lord Himself. After the Ascension, Thomas is said to have laboured in Judæa, Parthia, Medea, Persia, and other countries, until he reached India. Here he was at first afraid of venturing amongst the dark-coloured and cruel heathens, who inhabited the country; but being encouraged by a vision, he fearlessly journeyed on into the country, and was most successful in bringing the people out of the darkness of Paganism into the light of the Gospel. The Brahmins or priests, however, were much opposed to him: at a certain town he began to build a place of worship for the Christians, and Segamo, the prince of the country, persuaded probably by the Brahmins, forbade him to go on with it. Thomas, however, by the help of God, performed several miracles, which so convinced Segamo of the truth of all his doctrines, that he himself became a Christian, and allowed the building to be continued. The idolatrous priests now saw that their religion was in great danger, and therefore, watching for a convenient opportunity, they came upon Thomas in a quiet spot, to which he had gone to pray, and shot him with their arrows. Having thus disabled the Apostle, the Brahmins stoned him, and finally ran a lance through his body. The dead body of Thomas was carried by his disciples to the church which he had just completed, and there buried. About 1,500 years afterwards, when the Portuguese first made their way to India, they found upon the Malabar coast many Christian families, who called themselves "St. Thomas's Christians"; being descendants of those, who had been converted from Paganism to Christianity, by this Apostle.

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Matthew's name stands next on the list of the Apostles; he has already been spoken of, as far as the Scriptures make mention of him; and also as the writer of the first of the four accounts of our Saviour's life and death. We neither know what this Apostle did after our Lord's Ascension, nor how he died; but there is a tradition that he was murdered in Ethiopia, where by his teaching, and the miracles he was enabled to perform, he had been the means of converting multitudes from Heathenism to Christianity.

"James the son of Alphæus, and Lebbæus, whose surname was Thaddæus," now come under consideration. They were brothers; two of the sons of Mary, sister to the Virgin Mary, and of Cleophas one of the disciples to whom, after His resurrection, the Lord appeared on the way to Emmaus. This James, distinguished as "the Less," has already been spoken of as Bishop of Jerusalem, and his death has also been mentioned (p. 351).

Lebbæus, also called Judas and Jude, was, as has been said, the writer of an Epistle. No ancient writer gives any account either of his labours after the Lord's Ascension, or of the manner of his death.

Of "Simon the Canaanite," whose name stands next on our list, Scripture tells us nothing, except that he was also called "Simon Zelotes." "Zelotes" means full of zeal and eagerness; and the name was probably given to this Apostle, on account of his great zeal and earnestness in the service of his Master. The term "Canaanite" seems to be derived from a Hebrew word, which also means zeal. After the Ascension, Simon is said to have preached the Gospel amongst some of the barbarous nations in Africa; and then to have gone westward, finally reaching Britain, where he was crucified, probably by the Romans.

The last on the list of Apostles is Judas Iscariot, whose surname, it is thought, is merely derived from the place of his birth. Of him it is unnecessary to speak now. The mention of Judas Iscariot naturally reminds us of him who was afterwards chosen to fill the place, "from which by transgression he fell."

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Matthias, chosen after the Ascension to complete the original number of Apostles, was one of those disciples "which had companied with the Apostles, all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among them." Beyond this, Scripture says nothing about him; nor do any ancient writers tell us how long he laboured in the holy office to which he was appointed; but it is said, that he was finally put to death by some amongst whom he was preaching.

No sketch of our Lord's Apostles would be complete without some notice of Paul and Barnabas; who, though not called to be Apostles until after the Ascension, laboured zealously in that sacred ministry. St. Paul has already been spoken of most fully, and frequent mention has been made of St. Barnabas, up to the time of his separation from St. Paul, after which the Book of Acts contains no account of him: but in one of his Epistles, St. Paul writes of him in such a manner, as shows that though for the moment "the contention between them was so sharp as to part them asunder," it had not caused any real coolness or estrangement. Another proof of this, is found in the fact, that St. Mark afterwards became a devoted attendant upon St. Paul, by whom he was highly valued. St. Mark was with the Apostle whilst he was a prisoner in Rome.

Of the labours of St. Barnabas after his separation from St. Paul, we have no certain account anywhere: in the end he is said to have been stoned.

Before closing this chapter, it seems well to take notice of St. Luke and St. Mark, who, though not Apostles, are, as writers of the Gospel, entitled to the respect and gratitude of all who value the holy Scriptures.

There is, however, little to add to what has been already said of them.

Luke, by birth a Jew, and probably a native of Antioch in Syria, was a physician, who became a convert to the religion of Jesus. He is said to have been one of the seventy disciples, sent out on one occasion, "two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come." This is very probable, although, as he is not once named in any of the Gospels, we cannot be sure.

From St. Luke's own account in the Book of Acts, we find that he went with St. Paul on his first voyage to Macedon. At Philippi, he seems to have left the Apostle; why we know not, but perhaps St. Paul sent him on some mission. It is not unlikely that he remained in that country; but during St. Paul's second journey, he rejoined him, and sailed with him from Philippi. For the next five years, St. Luke continued with St. Paul: this brings us to the release of the Apostle from his confinement in Rome. Here ends any certain account of St. Luke. It is said that he then went into Achaia, and afterwards preached the Gospel in Africa. As no ancient writers mention his having suffered martyrdom, it is probable that he died a natural death.

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If the Evangelist St. Mark was, as there is every reason to believe, the same "Mark whose surname was John," he was nephew to Barnabas. We first hear of him in Scripture, as going from Antioch to Jerusalem with Barnabas and Saul; and then accompanying them on a journey, but leaving them unaccountably at Perga; in consequence of which, St. Paul afterwards refused to take him with them on another journey, thus causing the contention already mentioned. "Barnabas, taking Mark, sailed to Cyprus." It is said that St. Mark was with St. Barnabas at the time of the latter's death, and received his dying commands to go without delay to St. Paul, by whom, as has been already said, he was well received. What his ultimate fate was, we know not.

It may not be amiss to mention, before we take leave of the immediate followers of our Lord, that in pictures, the four Evangelists are distinguished by certain signs or symbols. St. Matthew is simply a man with a pen in his hand; St. Mark is accompanied by a Lion; St. Luke by an Ox; and St. John by an Eagle.

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PART III.

CHAPTER I.—THE JEWS TO THE TIME OF THE EMPEROR ADRIAN.

THE history of those chosen by the Lord to be His peculiar people, has now been traced for more than two thousand years, from the Call of Abraham, B.C. 1921. For the two centuries immediately following that event, we have the history of Abraham's descendants, Isaac, Jacob or Israel, and the twelve sons of Israel, or Patriarchs, as they are called, from being the fathers of all the tribes of Israel. Israel and his sons and grand-children, to the number of sixty-six persons, went down,

B.C. 1706, into Egypt, where Joseph then was, having been sold as a slave about twenty years before.

During the next 300 years, the descendants of Israel multiplied so wonderfully that, in B.C. 1491, 600,000 men, besides women and children, went out of Egypt under the guidance of Moses.

The giving of the Law, Ceremonial and Political, as well as Moral, established the chosen people of God, as a Church and Nation.

Forty years of wandering in the wilderness brought the Children of Israel to the eastern banks of the Jordan, B.C. 1451. The Bible then relates how, under the command of Joshua, the Jordan was crossed, and the heathen wonderfully driven out of the land, which the Lord had promised to give to Abraham and his descendants, for a possession.

For forty-six years, the Children of Israel were ruled by Joshua and the elders who outlived him. For the next 300 years, they were governed by Judges, raised up by the Almighty at different times, as they were needed. In B.C. 1095 the Children of Israel were bent upon having a king, and Saul was accordingly crowned, and reigned for forty years. During the next eighty years, the kingdom flourished under David and his son Solomon; the latter of whom built the glorious Temple, dedicated to the service of the Lord with much ceremony, B.C. 1004. It had taken eight years to build.

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The division of the country into the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel, under Solomon's son Rehoboam, took place B.C. 975. One king succeeded another more or less quickly, until the sins of kings and people led to the destruction of the kingdom of Israel by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, B.C. 721; and to the burning of Jerusalem and of the Temple, B.C. 587, when Nebuchadnezzar carried the inhabitants of the kingdom of Judah into a long captivity in Babylon. Some years before, in B.C. 606, this same Nebuchadnezzar had carried away many of the children of Judah; and from *this* date the Captivity, which lasted seventy years, is reckoned to have begun. The seventy years expired in B.C. 536; and Cyrus, king of Medea and Persia, having conquered the Babylonian Empire, gave the children of Judah leave to go back into their own land, showing them much kindness upon the occasion. The Jews, as they were now called, returned in great numbers to Judæa; though many of them still, by their own choice, remained in the land where they had been born and bred.

The Jews who did return, had great difficulties to overcome; but at length they built a Second Temple, which was dedicated B.C. 515. Under the governance of Ezra and Nehemiah, the Jews served the Lord in the land of their fathers; but soon they again fell into grievous sin, though they were never more guilty of idolatry: that crime which principally caused their captivity. So far the Bible has given us the history of the people of God.

From other histories we learn, that Alexander the Great, who became king of Macedonia B.C. 336, conquered Persia and all the countries in any way dependent upon her: Judæa, of course, amongst the rest. The remarkable vision which made Alexander treat the Jews with kindness has been mentioned (iii. 425). After the death of this monarch, B.C. 323, Judæa became in some sort dependent upon Syria; and we have already seen how severely the Jews suffered during the next 153 years, from the wars and fightings going on continually between Syria and Egypt. The cruelty and oppression of the Syrian princes became intolerable; and, after Antiochus Epiphanes had taken Jerusalem, B.C. 170, the Lord in mercy raised up the family of Maccabæus, to deliver the Jews from his tyranny.

Under the Maccabæan princes, the Jews fought successfully against the enemies of their religion. Judæa gradually recovered from its desolation and misery, and again became prosperous; whilst the pure worship of the One True God was once more the established religion of the nation. But after the death of John Hyrcanus (iii. 481), B.C. 107, enemies without, and divisions and troubles amongst themselves, again filled Judæa with confusion.

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In B.C. 63, Judæa became, like so many other countries, a province of Rome; and we have seen how the Romans appointed governors or kings, and even high priests also. The Government of Rome itself underwent a great change about this time: the Republic, or Commonwealth, which had lasted 479 years, from the Expulsion of Tarquinius Superbus, B.C. 509, now came to an end, and Octavius Augustus Cæsar was chosen as the first Emperor, B.C. 27.

Octavius Augustus had ruled the vast dominions of Rome as Emperor for twenty-seven years, when that event took place, destined to affect in the most momentous manner all races and kindreds of men: even the Birth of Jesus Christ, the long-promised Messiah. When our blessed Lord was twenty-nine years old, that is, in A.D. 29, He began to teach publicly amongst the Jews. Octavius Augustus was no longer Emperor of Rome at this time; he had died when Jesus was fourteen years old, and had been succeeded by Tiberius.

Although a small number of the Jews owned and received Jesus Christ as the expected Messiah, He was rejected by the nation in general: and after His crucifixion, the Jews tried in every way to oppose His Apostles, and prevent the spreading of Christianity. We have read their punishment in the destruction of Jerusalem, A.D. 70, and the dreadful sufferings which came upon the unhappy Jews, and forced them to scatter themselves through all lands, hoping to find safety—a hope too often disappointed, and that constantly through their own fault.

The history of the Jews has thus been traced to the close of the first century after the Birth of

Christ, that is, to A.D. 100.

It will now be advisable to give a slight sketch of their history, from that date until the present time. Unhappily there are many thousand Jews who profess still to expect the promised Messiah; refusing to believe that Jesus of Nazareth, in Whom all the prophecies of their Scriptures have been so literally and exactly fulfilled, was indeed the Messiah, of Whom Moses and the prophets did write.

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May the Lord take away their blindness, and bring them into the one fold, under the one Shepherd, Jesus Christ.

In spite of all that the Jews had suffered from their opposition to the Romans, they could not make up their minds to submit quietly to foreign rulers.

Trajan, who became Emperor quite at the close of the first century, treated them with great severity, and even forbade them to read the Law. In consequence, a rebellion broke out, A.D. 115, at Cyrene, in Africa, where the Jews had been settled for many years: it quickly spread over Libya into Alexandria: in the struggle, the country was plundered and ruined, whilst thousands of people were killed on both sides: but finally, after a great slaughter, the Romans got the better of the rebellious Jews. The next year, the Jews in Mesopotamia took up arms, and filled the country with terror. Trajan sent against them a famous general, who, after killing great numbers of the people, forced the rest to submit to the Roman power: the successful general was then made governor of Judæa, that he might keep the Jews still residing there, in submission. Soon afterwards, there was a still more dreadful insurrection in the isle of Cyprus, where the Jews massacred an incredible number of the inhabitants: a Roman general called Adrian, then went into Cyprus, and defeated the Jews after an obstinate battle. Trajan now published an order, that all Jews should leave the isle of Cyprus, and never return to it.

When Trajan died, A.D. 117, Adrian became Emperor; he forbade the Jews to circumcise their children, and sent strangers to settle in the land of Judæa, and rebuild the city of Jerusalem, which he meant to ornament in the Roman style, and call by some Roman name. These measures so enraged the Jews, that they again broke out into open rebellion: their leader was Coziba, one of the banditti who infested the country; and under his command, all kinds of violence were committed against the subjects of Rome. Coziba pretended that he himself was the person spoken of by Balaam, when he said, "There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel": and in consequence, he called himself Barchocheba, or "the son of a star." Even before this time, several impostors had pretended to be either the promised Messiah, or the Elias who was to prepare his way; but Coziba was the first whose pretensions led to any important consequences.

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Coziba promised to deliver his countrymen from the power of Adrian, and to make them once more an independent and glorious nation: such a Messiah as this exactly suited the false ideas of the Jews, and they acknowledged Coziba to be the Christ, the Son of God. The Rabbi Akibha, chosen by the impostor to be his forerunner or messenger, publicly anointed him as the Messiah, the king of the Jews; placed a crown upon his head; coined money in his name; and collected for him a body of 20,000 disciples. By calling upon all the descendants of Abraham to help "the Hope of Israel," promised to their common forefather, an immense army was soon assembled at Bither, a town near Jerusalem, chosen by Coziba to be the capital of his new kingdom.

Adrian, not believing that after all they had gone through, the Jews could raise an army, thought little of this revolt at first; and when at length he did send against them a powerful army, it was totally defeated. The news of this misfortune caused great astonishment and dismay at Rome: and Julius Severus, one of the greatest generals of his time, was sent to put an end to this dangerous rebellion,—a matter which he found it difficult to accomplish; but at length, in an attack upon Bither, Coziba was killed; a dreadful slaughter of men, women, and children followed; and Akibha and his sons were put to a cruel death by the Roman conqueror.

The Jewish historians say, that between battle, famine, sickness, fire, and other calamities, the number of Jews that perished in this war was greater than the number of the Children of Israel who originally came out of Egypt: and they also declare, that their terrible sufferings under Nebuchadnezzar and Titus, were not so great as those inflicted upon them in the reign of Adrian. Both these statements are probably exaggerated; but they show that the misery of the unhappy Jews at this time, was most extreme.

CHAPTER II.—STATE OF THE JEWS TO THE END OF THE THIRD CENTURY.

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THE repeated provocations which, by their rebellions, the Jews gave to the Romans, could not, of course, tend to make their conquerors deal mercifully with them: thus did they, time after time, draw upon themselves those miseries, which were a chastisement for all their sins against God; and especially of that crowning one, the Crucifixion of "the Lord of Life and Glory."

After the rebellion under Coziba, numbers of the Jews who outlived it, were offered for sale at the same price as a horse, at the fair of Terebinth, held every year on the plain of Mamre. The

horror of such a fate was doubled by the fact, that the plain of Mamre was looked upon by the Jews as a sacred spot; because here their great forefather Abraham received the angel, who gave him the promise of a son.

Those of the unhappy captives who were not sold at Terebinth, were taken to another fair, at Gaza, or sent into Egypt, to be disposed of there.

When this terrible war was at an end, Adrian caused the building of his city to be continued. He did all he could to profane, and hold up to contempt, whatever the Jews looked upon as most sacred: he placed a marble hog over the gate of the city nearest to Bethlehem; built a temple to Jupiter Capitolinus, on the spot where the temple of the Jews, the House of God, had stood; and used the stones which had been employed for the temple, to build a theatre.

As Adrian hated the Christians as well as the Jews, he set up statues of heathen deities at Bethlehem, where Jesus Christ was born; on the spot where He was crucified; and in the garden, from whence He rose again from the dead.

Adrian also forbade the Jews to enter Jerusalem, or even to go near enough to look upon its ruins. Before this time, they were constantly to be seen, clothed in rags, wandering sadly upon the Mount of Olives, and amongst the ruins of their once glorious temple and city: a Roman garrison was now charged to see that Adrian's harsh decree was obeyed, or to put the transgressors to death. But by giving money to the garrison, the unhappy Jews did get leave to go once a year, on the anniversary of the destruction of Jerusalem, to weep over the ruins of their beloved city.

Thus were the Jews forced to pay even for the privilege of shedding tears, in the places where they had purchased and shed the blood of Jesus Christ. Truly was "His blood," that is, the punishment for shedding it, "on them and on their children." When they had madly cried, "His blood be on us and on our children," they had, in fact, *asked* that the curse of God might come upon them; and heavily indeed had it fallen. The dreadful fate of the Jews should ever be a warning to each individual Christian. We have owned Jesus Christ to be the Messiah, the Redeemer of mankind; we are called by His name; His Word is in our hands: if we do not love and obey Him, shall we not deserve a greater punishment even than the Jews? whose history is given us as a warning of the hatefulness of sin, in the sight of the Almighty.

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Whilst the Western Jews had been suffering as has been described, the Eastern Jews were more fortunate. The Emperor Adrian had agreed to let the Euphrates be the eastern boundary of the Roman Empire, and therefore the Jews on the eastern side were no longer subject to his power. Many of them, however, eager for the liberty of their country, went into Judæa to help their brethren, but they only added to the number of sufferers.

Little is known of these Eastern Jews: they chose chiefs, called "Princes of the Captivity," to preside over their synagogues; they founded schools, and encouraged learned men; so that some of their rabbis became famous for their learning. One of these rabbis, named Judah, wrote a book called "The Misna," of which some account must be given.

After the destruction of Jerusalem, the sect of Pharisees became very powerful amongst the Jews; the chief thing taught by them in the schools was, not the written Law of Moses, but all the *traditions*, or doctrines and precepts, handed down by word of mouth from father to son. Of course doctrines handed down in such a way, got sadly altered from what they had been at first; and thus the truth was corrupted. As time went on, fresh traditions were added, till at last they were so many, that the doctors, whose duty it was to explain the meaning of them, found it necessary to write them out, as it was impossible otherwise even to remember them. The disciples of the doctors again, took notes of the explanations given of these traditions; and all this made so much confusion, that the Rabbi Judah undertook to make a new arrangement of the traditions, or oral Law. The meaning of the word "oral," is "delivered by the mouth"; and this Law was called "oral," because it was originally given by the mouth. Judah, therefore, collected together all the traditions, with the commentaries or explanations given by the most famous amongst their teachers or doctors. This work occupied him for forty years; it contained all the laws and doctrines, with an account of the institutions and modes of life, which the Jews supposed themselves bound to observe, *beyond* those commanded in the Mosaical Law. The Jews held this work in the greatest possible veneration, and called it "The Misna"—Misna being a Hebrew word, meaning the Second Law. It was also called "The First Talmud." The Jews called it "The Misna," or Second Law, because they considered that it was as necessary to obey it, as it was to keep the Pentateuch, or First Law. The Misna did not, however, settle all the doubtful cases and questions often raised by the Jews; and another rabbi, with the assistance of two of Judah's disciples, wrote a commentary, or rather an addition to the Misna. This addition was called the Talmud of Jerusalem, because it was compiled or put together in the land of Judæa, for the benefit of those Jews who still remained in their native country.

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During the second century the Jews became still further divided into sects, holding many opinions or doctrines contrary to those held originally by the Jewish people; but the sect of the Pharisees still continued to be the largest.

The consequence of these divisions into numerous sects was, that there were perpetual jealousies and contentions amongst them. One great subject of dispute was, as to the use of the Septuagint version of the Scriptures by the Hellenists. The Hellenists were Jews who spoke Greek, and did not understand Hebrew, so as to read the Scriptures in their original language;

and who were, therefore, very glad to make use of the Septuagint version, which was written in Greek. The rest of the Jews used the Hebrew Scriptures; but at last they agreed that the Hellenists might use the Greek copies. Afterwards, however, finding that the Christians always used the Septuagint, when endeavouring to convince the Jews that Jesus Christ was the Messiah, their dislike to that version of the Holy Scriptures increased to such a degree, that they came to look upon all persons who used it as Schismatics; that is, as persons who sinfully separated themselves from their brethren, who held the true faith as delivered to them by Moses.

Antoninus Pius became Emperor of Rome towards the middle of the second century, that is, in A.D. 138. The edict forbidding the Jews to circumcise their children, was so hateful to them, that in spite of the warnings given them by former sufferings, they again revolted. Antoninus put down the revolt by force; but afterwards he treated the Jews very mildly, and gave them the privilege for which they had fought; only forbidding their attempting to make proselytes. In the reign of Marcus Aurelius, who became Emperor A.D. 161, the Eastern Jews, who were subject to the king of Parthia, joined that monarch in a war against the Romans; and Marcus Aurelius was so angry, that he unjustly revenged himself upon his Jewish subjects, and once more ordered Adrian's law against circumcision to be put in force: but in the distant provinces this law was not observed.

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In A.D. 197, Septimius Severus became Emperor: at this time the Jews had settlements in Galilee, but the law forbidding them to enter Jerusalem was still in force. Though defeated and humbled so constantly, this unhappy people attempted to get possession of Samaria and Judæa by force. When the Romans had again brought them into subjection, Severus treated the Jews as Antoninus had done before; and in reward for some service they had done him, he also granted them the privilege of Roman citizens, and even allowed them to be chosen to fill offices of trust and honour. So ended the second century.

Early in the third century, Heliogabālus became Emperor of Rome, A.D. 218. This Emperor pretended to be in some respects a Jew himself, and would not, in consequence, eat the flesh of swine; but at the same time he built a temple in honour of the Sun, and was anxious to make both Jews and Samaritans mix this worship, with their own religious observances. The Jews, who never would have consented to such idolatry, were saved from the misery which a refusal would have brought upon them, by the death of Heliogabālus, who was assassinated by his own soldiers, A.D. 222. Alexander Severus, who succeeded him, favoured the Jews, and caused himself to be instructed in their religion. The great object of Alexander Severus was to mix up the Christian and Jewish doctrines with those of Paganism, and make one religion of the whole: this shows that he could have had no real knowledge of the two former. In his own private chapel, Severus placed statues of Jesus Christ, of Abraham, and of Orpheus, a famous musician of ancient times, of whom many mythological tales are told.

The Eastern Jews established academies in the beginning of the third century; and in Persia their rabbis were for some time treated with great respect: but at last the Persians became jealous of the power and influence of the Jews, and persuaded Sapor, king of the country, to allow a violent persecution to be carried on against these unhappy people: those who could escape sought refuge in other lands. Under Zenobia, Queen of Palmyra, (the Tadmor built by Solomon,) the Jews flourished exceedingly: they built handsome synagogues in every part of her dominions, and filled the highest offices in the state. In A.D. 273, the Emperor Aurelian defeated Zenobia, and took possession of her dominions: some of the Jews then returned into Persia; but under Aurelian, and the Pagan emperors who succeeded him during the remainder of the third century, the Jews enjoyed peace and tranquillity in the dominions of the Romans. In this respect they were more fortunate than the Christians, who were persecuted by various Emperors, and especially by Diocletian, who began to reign A.D. 284. Whilst the Christians were treated with the most barbarous cruelty, because they would not give up their religion, the Jews were allowed to celebrate all the forms of their worship in the most public manner. Thus ended the third century; but early in the next, an event took place, which made a great change in the condition of Jews and Christians.

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CHAPTER III.—JEWS IN THE FOURTH CENTURY.

EARLY in the fourth century, as has been said, a great change took place in religious matters. Constantine, surnamed the Great, who began to reign as sole Emperor of Rome A.D. 324, became a Christian. It is said, that when going to fight against a rival who claimed the Imperial power, Constantine saw, or dreamed that he saw in the sky, a bright cross, and upon it the words, "In hoc vince" (in this conquer). He gained the victory; and ascribing it to the God worshipped by the Christians, (whose emblem was a cross,) he became a convert to their religion, and adopted the cross as his standard. The example of Constantine was followed by the greater part of his subjects, so that Christianity was established as the religion of the Roman Empire, though many of the inhabitants still remained Pagans.

The city of Jerusalem, which Adrian had called Elia, took again its own name; and many beautiful churches were built in it by Constantine. But the establishment of the Christian religion was by no means a favourable circumstance for the Jews, who were looked upon as its worst enemies: against them, Constantine, in the beginning of his reign, made some very severe laws.

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The Jews in Persia had grown insolent in consequence of the prosperity they had enjoyed: they insulted and abused all Christians, and were even supposed to have put to death some of their brethren who had embraced Christianity. Constantine, indignant at such conduct, visited it upon the Jews in his own dominions, and treated them with the greatest severity, even forbidding Christians to eat with them. In short, the unhappy Israelites were now subjected to every sort of insult and suffering.

The Persian Jews were very angry at such treatment of their brethren; and as they had great influence over the King of Persia, they now tried to avenge the Jews in the west, by raising a bloody persecution against Christians in the east: numbers of Christ's followers were accordingly killed; their churches destroyed; and their sacred book burnt. This persecution was carried on, until every trace of Christianity was almost rooted out of the country.

But the cruelty of the Persian Jews did not go unpunished, although the Roman Empire was now greatly disturbed by internal strife, as well as by the attacks of foreign enemies.

Constantine the Great died in A.D. 337; and after his death the Roman Empire rapidly declined, both in extent and power; but of this we need say nothing here, as our business is with the Jews. Constantius, who succeeded Constantine as Emperor, hated the Jews, and by his cruel treatment, drove them to raise an insurrection in Palestine. This only enraged the Emperor still more, and led him to add new and more severe laws to those already made against these unhappy creatures, by former Emperors. Any Jew who dared to marry a Christian, was to be put to death; and the same punishment was inflicted upon one who tried to make a proselyte of his own slave; or who kept in slavery any man who had become a Christian.

On the death of Constantius, A.D. 361, the Jews experienced some relief from his successor the Emperor Julian, surnamed the Apostate; because, after having been brought up as a Christian, he renounced that true religion, and lived as a Pagan.

When Constantine the Great died, he left Constantius and two other sons, who were to divide his dominions amongst them: and he left two brothers, who had sons also. Gallus and Julian were the sons of one of these brothers, and were consequently cousins to Constantius. The generals and ministers of Constantine, persuaded the people after his death, that there would be constant struggles for power between the brothers and sons of the late Emperor. The soldiers, who were very fond of Constantine, declared that no one but a son of their beloved Emperor should reign over his dominions, or rule in the city of Constantinople, which he had built to be the capital of his dominions, and the royal residence. The soldiers stirred up the people, and formed a plot to destroy the brothers and nephews of Constantine.

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Constantius, when he first came to Constantinople after his father's death, had solemnly promised to protect his uncles and cousins from all their enemies; but in spite of this, he was easily persuaded to join in the plot for their destruction; and a pretext was soon found for carrying out the scheme. A paper was produced, which was pretended to have been written by Constantine just before his death. In this paper, the Emperor was made to declare his belief, that he had been poisoned by his brothers; and he desired his sons to revenge his death, and secure their own safety, by the destruction of their uncles and cousins. Such a pretext was quite sufficient; and the soldiers, without waiting for any inquiry or trial, murdered the suspected princes and all their sons, excepting the two young boys Gallus and Julian, who were hidden by their attendants from the fury of the soldiers; and thus escaped the fate of the two brothers and seven nephews of Constantine, who were now murdered.

Gallus and Julian, who alone escaped the slaughter, were of the respective ages of twelve and six years. Constantius justly felt, that to put these children to death in cold blood, would be looked upon by all mankind as an act of wanton and needless cruelty: perhaps, too, he felt some sorrow for the crime already committed. At any rate, the two boys were allowed to live, and were sent to some city in Bithynia, or Ionia, where persons were appointed by the Emperor to educate them. As Gallus and Julian grew up, Constantius feared that they might plot against him; and he therefore chose for their residence a strong castle, standing in a pleasant situation, with extensive grounds belonging to it: having been an ancient palace, it contained very good rooms. Here, attended, or rather *guarded*, by a numerous household, the young princes lived for six years: they were carefully instructed by the best teachers, in all branches of learning, as well as in active exercises; but in spite of every attention and comfort, they felt themselves to be prisoners, shut out from all society except that of persons devoted to Constantius, and ready to obey him in every matter. A very strict observance of all the outward forms of Christianity, had been forced upon them; but upon the heart of Julian, at least, the blessed truths and precepts of the Gospel had taken no hold. He had rather learnt to connect Constantius and his religion, with cruelty and tyranny; and the violent disputes carried on by the bishops, who professed to be the followers of Jesus Christ, still further increased his dislike to a religion, associated in his mind with his own sufferings.

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When Gallus was twenty-five years old, disturbances in his dominions induced Constantius to release him, and even to place him as governor over part of the country. The cousins, therefore, met, and took a solemn oath, never to do anything to injure each other; and then Gallus was settled at Antioch, to rule over the neighbouring provinces. Gallus was not unmindful of his brother, but also obtained liberty for him. Julian, now nineteen years of age, having been so long restricted in his choice of society, eagerly sought that of learned men, the greater part of whom were unfortunately Pagans; to whose ideas of religion he willingly listened, until he became convinced that Paganism was a better religion than Christianity, which he accordingly

renounced; and from that time, became a devout and sincere worshipper of the gods of Rome and Athens. On the death of Constantius, A.D. 361, Julian became Emperor of Rome, and he proved a just and wise ruler. As it was his great wish entirely to destroy the Christian religion, Julian gave great encouragement to its enemies the Jews; allowing them the free exercise of their religion, and treating them with the greatest kindness. This emboldened the Jews to destroy the churches of the Christians, and commit other acts of violence against them—an example followed by their brethren in Egypt, who destroyed the finest churches in Alexandria. Julian issued a law establishing Paganism as the religion of his empire; but he did not put to death those who held contrary opinions.

He hated the Christians, and would not allow them to have any power in the State; he forbade them to teach any sort of science in the public schools; he fined and banished their clergy; and also fined all who refused to offer sacrifices to the Pagan deities. But nothing he could do had any effect upon the Christians, who held firm to the true faith.

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The Emperor then determined to rebuild the temple, and settle a powerful colony of Jews in Judæa; where they would be always ready to join in any measure against the Christians. The destruction and desolation of the temple having been foretold by Jesus Christ, Julian thought, that by rebuilding it, and re-establishing in it the ancient worship, he should shake the faith of mankind as to the truth of Christianity.

Great preparations were made for the work; but when the workmen began to clear out the foundations, they were hindered by balls of fire which broke out, scorching and burning the unfortunate people. Some writers doubt the truth of this account; but though we cannot be quite sure, there is great reason to believe that it really did happen. We may well believe that the Almighty worked this miracle, to prove the truth of prophecy; and to show that the Christians were now his chosen people, instead of the Jews, who had filled up the measure of their iniquities by crucifying the Saviour of mankind. At any rate, Julian gave up the attempt to rebuild the temple. Julian was killed in battle A.D. 363, and was succeeded by Christian Emperors. Christianity was then re-established as the national religion, although both Pagans and Jews were allowed to practise their own forms of worship in peace, until the close of the fourth century, when the Emperor Theodosius put an end to Paganism in the Roman Empire: sacrifices to the heathen deities were absolutely forbidden; and all the heathen temples were destroyed, or shut up.

CHAPTER IV.—FIFTH AND SIXTH CENTURIES.

By the close of the fourth century, the Roman Empire was very considerably weakened and diminished, by the attacks of barbarian tribes on all sides.

On the death of the Emperor Theodosius, A.D. 395, all that remained of the once Roman Empire was finally divided between his two young sons: Arcadius becoming Emperor of the East, with Constantinople for his capital; Honorius Emperor of the West, with the ancient capital of Rome.

The Jews of the Eastern Empire, emboldened by the mild treatment they had experienced, now insulted the Christians. Whilst celebrating the Feast of Purim, in remembrance of their deliverance from the wicked plots of Haman, instead of hanging a figure of Haman on a gibbet, and burning it, according to custom; the Jews, in mockery of the Christians, nailed the figure to a cross, and burnt that. This, of course, greatly displeased and shocked the Christians; and the magistrates caused the houses, as well as the synagogues of the Jews, to be burnt. Laws were now made, forbidding the Jews to insult the established religion; and also forbidding the Christians to destroy the synagogues of the Jews: but these unhappy people were still subject to great cruelty and injustice from the zeal of the Christians, and the Emperor was obliged to make fresh laws, for their protection from those, who would have done well to copy the *example* of Him, Whose followers they professed to be.

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During the early part of the fifth century, the Jews in the West, enjoyed the free exercise of their religion under the Emperor Honorius: the office of Patriarch was, however, abolished by law; and this was a great grief to the Jews, who from this time were under the direction of chiefs of the synagogues, whom they called Primates. The fifth century was remarkable for the still further curtailment of the Roman dominions, especially in the West. Britain was lost. Rome itself was plundered, and a Visigothic Empire established in Spain. The Jews of the Eastern Empire were much worse off during the fifth century than their brethren in the Western. A great number of Jews had settled at Alexandria, in the north of Egypt: they were very clever in their various trades, and therefore prospered and grew powerful; but they were not at all disposed to obey any rulers or magistrates. As early as A.D. 415, they had become much less strict in their observance of the forms and ceremonies enjoined by their religion; and instead of attending the services of the synagogue on Saturday, their Sabbath, they fell into a habit of going to witness the public amusements which took place on that day. On these occasions, there were frequent quarrels between the Jews and the Christians, and blood was often shed. Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria, who had an extreme hatred of the Jews, threatened them with the severest punishments; but as the governor of the city was their friend, they paid no attention to the bishop, and even laid a plot, and attacked the Christians during the night, killing many of them. Cyril, without waiting for a

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legal sentence against these murderers, encouraged the Christians to attack and destroy the synagogues. After doing this, the people entered the houses of all Jews, whether innocent or guilty, and robbed them of their goods, which were given up for the use of the Christian Church. The Jews were thus forced to quit the city, and Alexandria lost a useful and rich colony. The governor Orestes was much displeased at the Jews having been driven out of the city; and fresh disturbances arose in consequence, between him and Cyril.

Towards the middle of the fifth century, a man appeared in the island of Candia, pretending that he was a second Moses. There were a great many rich Jews in the island, and this impostor persuaded them that he was sent by the Almighty to deliver His people from worse than Egyptian bondage; and that the sea would be divided before them, to give them a safe passage to their own land. This man passed through every town and village in Candia, and persuaded the Jews to meet him at a particular spot on the sea-shore, on a certain day which he named. Multitudes did so, taking with them as much of their wealth as they could carry. The impostor then led the assembled multitude to the top of a rock, and ordered them to throw themselves into the sea. Men, women, and children, with a faith worthy of a better cause, at once jumped into the sea, where most of them were, of course, drowned: some were rescued from their fate by Christian fishermen. The survivors, convinced too late of the falsehood of their pretended deliverer, now attempted to seize him, but he managed to escape. Many of the Jews, ashamed of having believed in such an impostor, are said to have become Christians. What the object of this man was it is hard to see: it certainly does not seem that he was any friend to the Jews, whom he misled to their destruction.

During the fifth century, the Jewish work, called "The Talmud of Babylon," was probably compiled: like "The Talmud of Jerusalem," it contained the Misna of Judah, with other remarks and explanations. It is supposed that another work, called "The Masora," was also written at this time. The Masora fixed the true reading of the Hebrew words, and numbered the chapters and verses, and even the words and letters, of the Old Testament Scriptures. The object was, to prevent the Hebrew Scriptures from being in any way altered, and so corrupted; and therefore the Jews called the Masora "the hedge of the Law."

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Towards the close of the fifth century, a tribe of Goths, called Heruli, led by their king Odoacer, put an end to the Western Empire, A.D. 476. Romulus Augustulus, the Emperor, was deposed; but his life was spared, and a pension was granted him by Odoacer, who established a kingdom of his own in Italy. He protected the Jews, who had establishments for trade and commerce at Rome, Naples, Milan, and Genoa: laws were made to defend them from the attacks of the Christians; but, nevertheless, they were often robbed and ill-used by the populace.

A few years later, A.D. 493, the kingdom of the Heruli was overthrown by the Ostrogoths; but this change in the masters of the country does not appear to have made any difference in the treatment of the Jews.

During the sixth century, the Jews in Persia were cruelly persecuted by the kings, who wanted to force them to follow the idolatrous religion of the country. Nor were the Jews on the western side of the Euphrates better off, for the Emperor Justinian, who began to reign at Constantinople A.D. 527, oppressed them most severely; and by degrees deprived them of all the privileges they had enjoyed. He took upon himself to settle all matters connected with religion: he would not allow the Jews to keep the Passover at the time they wished; nor to educate their children in their own faith; and he forbade the magistrates to receive evidence against a Christian from any Jew. Justinian also forbade the Jews of Carthage to worship God in their own way; and commanded that their synagogues should be turned into places of worship for the Christians. All these harsh measures inclined the Jews to revolt, and a man called Julian, taking advantage of this disposition, pretended to be the Messiah, whose coming the Jews still expected. Many of these unhappy people joined Julian in Palestine, confidently hoping for deliverance from their bondage: he immediately led them to attack the Christians, who, not being prepared, were defeated with great slaughter.

But the triumph of the Jews was of short duration, for Justinian sent troops, which routed the rebels entirely; Julian was taken prisoner, and immediately put to death.

Some years afterwards, the Jews of Cæsarea rebelled against the government of Justinian, and notwithstanding the hatred which existed between them and the Samaritans, the two people joined together to fight against the Christians: the governor of Cæsarea, and great numbers of the Christians, were massacred; and many of their churches were destroyed.

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This rebellion was quickly put down by the troops of Justinian; many, who had taken part in it, were beheaded, and the rich were deprived of all their property.

When Belisarius, the famous general of Justinian, besieged the city of Naples, the Jews defended it most obstinately; and the length of the siege caused the death of very many of the assailants. Belisarius at length took the city: he tried to protect the Jews from the fury of his own soldiers, but his efforts were unsuccessful, and men, women, and children were murdered. The Jews were now so terrified, that they kept quiet for the remainder of the sixth century.

The seventh century was a time of great suffering for the Jews in general. Those of Antioch brought their first miseries upon themselves, by attacking the Christians A.D. 602: the Christians defended themselves bravely, but were overpowered: many were burnt in their houses; others, with their bishop, were treated with every insult, and then put to death. This rebellion was at last

crushed, and the Jews were most severely punished for their cruelty.

Cyprus gives us a pleasanter picture: in spite of Adrian's edict of banishment, the Jews had again become numerous and powerful in that island; and Leontius, the Christian bishop, fearing such an insurrection as had taken place at Antioch, treated the Jews kindly, and tried by gentle means to convert them. We are told that, under his wise management, numbers really did become Christians.

In Rome, too, the bishops or pontiffs, who, under the title of Pope, began to have great power and authority over all Christians, would not allow the Jews to be persecuted.

But Heraclius, the Greek Emperor, hated the Hebrew race; and, not satisfied with persecuting them himself, stirred up other sovereigns to do the same. The Greek Empire, of which Heraclius was now Emperor, was that division of the Roman Empire which has been called hitherto the Eastern Empire, having Constantinople for its capital. There was now no *Roman* Empire; many of the countries that had formerly been parts of it had become separate kingdoms, under monarchs of their own. The two principal kingdoms were Spain, and Gaul, which we call France. Neither Spain nor Gaul was, however, one kingdom, but each was divided amongst several kings or rulers.

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CHAPTER V.—RISE OF MAHOMETANISM.

THE Jews settled in Spain had become rich by trading, and were very flourishing, until Heraclius, who had been at war with that country, made peace, on condition that all the Jews who would not consent to be baptized, should be destroyed or driven out of Spain. Many to save their lives and property submitted to the outward rite of baptism; others, more conscientious, stood firm, and were cruelly tortured. Some escaped into Gaul, but met with cruel treatment there: and during the remainder of the seventh century, the unhappy Jews, both in Spain and Gaul, were oppressed and ill-used by Christian kings, priests, and people.

The most remarkable event in the seventh century was, the rise of the Mahometan religion; so called from its founder, a man named Mahomet—an Arabian, the son of a prince of one of the chief wandering tribes who inhabited the country. The religion of these Arabians was a mixture of the superstitious belief of neighbouring people; they also believed themselves to be descended from the patriarch Abraham, and observed circumcision, with other rites and ceremonies belonging to the Jewish religion. They believed in one Supreme Being; and also in three goddesses of equal power and wisdom, to be worshipped as well: they likewise worshipped idols.

At Mecca, the capital of Arabia, there was a small temple, called the Cāābba, in which there was a stone, said to have fallen *white* from heaven, in the time when man was innocent, and to have gradually lost its pure colour as man became sinful; it was now quite black. This stone was held in such veneration, that people from all parts of Arabia came to the Cāābba, to worship, bringing gifts; and thus Mecca grew to be a rich and flourishing city.

Mahomet was left an orphan when he was quite young, and in order to provide for him, his relations placed him in the service of a woman, who was in the habit of going backwards and forwards to Syria, trading; that is, selling the spices and other things which grew in Arabia, to the Syrians; and bringing back such things as she could sell to her countrymen. Mahomet now accompanied her on her journeys; looking after the camels, and doing any other services required. Syria was at this time a Roman province. Mahomet, being a clever, intelligent lad, of an observing turn of mind, soon saw how much difference there was between the laws, manners, and customs of the polished Syrians, and those of his own uncivilized countrymen; and he greatly regretted not being able to read or write. The mixture of Jews and Christians which he found in Syria, turned his thoughts towards religious matters, and made him think that it would be a good thing to work a reformation in the corrupt and idolatrous religion of his own country. His ambition made him wish to distinguish himself as the founder of a new religion; but his poverty and dependent position seemed to render this impossible.

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In the course of time, however, Mahomet made himself so useful to his mistress Cadigha, and gained such favour with her, that she married him, and thus gave him the riches and consideration necessary for carrying out his schemes. His first step was to remedy the defects of his education; the next to gain favour with the people: he gave much in charity; led a solitary life; and occasionally retired into the desert, where he pretended to receive instructions from the angel Gabriel. His wife assisted him by every means in her power; and in a short time the whole city of Mecca talked of nothing but Mahomet, who then began to lecture publicly. He taught that mankind should acknowledge one God (without division of persons, as in Christianity); he declared that the love of this Being was equal to His power, and that all His laws tended to make His creatures happy. Mahomet also taught, that as mankind sinned, God had from time to time sent prophets upon earth to reprove them, and bring them back to His service; and that the chief of these prophets were, Abraham, Moses, Jesus Christ, and Mahomet; the last being the greatest of all "There is one God, and Mahomet is His Prophet," was their confession of faith. Prayers were to be offered to God seven times a day; and the pilgrimages to Mecca, as well as circumcision and ablutions, were recommended as outward signs of belief, in the doctrines of what Mahomet declared to be a new Revelation, delivered to him by the angel Gabriel. The book,

in which all the doctrines and precepts taught by Mahomet were recorded, is called "The Koran." The Koran contains many precepts worthy of Christianity; and many doctrines in which there is much truth, mixed, however, with a great deal of falsehood and error, whilst the indulgence of man's evil passions is allowed. Such a religion accorded well with the disposition of the Arabians; the disciples of Mahomet increased greatly, and amongst them were the richest and most respectable citizens of Mecca.

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Very shortly, Mahomet began to spread his religion by conquest; and in a few years he had subdued to his empire and religion, all Arabia; thus establishing the "Saracen Empire," which afterwards extended itself over much of Asia, Africa, and even Europe.

The Arabian followers of Mahomet took the name of "Saracens," to induce a belief that they were descended from Abraham and his wife Sara; whereas they were the descendants of Ishmael, the son of Abraham and the bond-maid Hagar.

After the destruction of Jerusalem, many of the Jews settled in Arabia; and by the beginning of the seventh century, they possessed several towns and fortifications, and had armies commanded by princes of their own. Their number and influence made Mahomet wish for their help in his undertaking, and he treated them at first with great attention: he had adopted many of their opinions and customs, and he ordered his followers to turn towards Jerusalem when they prayed. He thus succeeded in gaining favour with the Children of Israel, who seeing what wonderful victories he gained, and misled by their own obstinate ideas as to the character of the promised Messiah, began actually to think that in this conqueror, they beheld the long-expected Messiah. Many of the Jews, therefore, embraced the Mahometan religion, which all, who were conquered by Mahomet, were forced to adopt. The Jews were soon afterwards offended by his eating the flesh of camels, a meat forbidden by the Mosaical Law; and they had speedily other reasons for changing their opinions concerning the pretended prophet; they then became his determined enemies. Mahomet returned their hatred; and in the Koran, to which he was continually adding chapters, as supposed to be delivered to him from time to time by the angel Gabriel, he reproaches the Jews with betraying and murdering the prophets sent by God, amongst whom he numbers Jesus Christ. He also declares, that for these things, and for breaking the laws of God and neglecting the Sabbaths, and above all for having refused to acknowledge his authority to establish a new Revelation, the Jews were justly accursed of God. Not contented with such declarations, the impostor cruelly persecuted the unhappy Jews; their property was taken from them, many were driven into exile, and thousands were slaughtered. But in spite of all sufferings, the Jews remained faithful to their religion.

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After the death of Mahomet, A.D. 632, the miserable remnant of the once flourishing people of Israel was forced to remove into Syria; as the impostor's dying command was, that none but followers of what he called "the true religion," should be allowed to dwell in his native land of Arabia.

One of the Caliphs, or princes, who succeeded to the power of Mahomet, carried on war to force all nations to become Mahometans or Mussulmans: he subdued Mesopotamia, Persia, and Syria: the Jews rejoiced in the downfall of Persia, where they had met with persecution. At the head of an army of Saracens, this Caliph (Abubeker) attacked Jerusalem: the Christians gallantly defended it for four months, and were then obliged to surrender the city to the Saracens; who built a mosque, or Mussulman place of worship, on the very spot where the magnificent temple of Solomon had formerly stood.

The first Caliphs allowed the Jews the free exercise of their own religion, and even permitted the Princes of the Captivity to exercise considerable authority. During the eighth and ninth centuries the Jews had their share in the troubles and calamities caused by civil wars among the Caliphs. Besides this, their treatment varied much under the rule of the different Saracen princes, who succeeded each other more or less quickly: by some they were allowed to live in peace, and worship God in their own way; by others they were persecuted. One of the Caliphs forbade their riding on horses, and only permitted them to have mules, and make use of iron stirrups: the Jews were also deprived of every office or employment in the State, and they were obliged to wear a cord round the waist, to point them out to the ridicule and abuse of the people.

In Christian countries, during the seventh and eighth centuries, we find the Jews exposed to equal, and even greater persecutions. The members of the Christian Church were at this time divided into two great parties, one of which objected to having any images of saints in the churches: the Jews, being accused of encouraging these disputes, were commanded by the Greek Emperor to give up their religion, on pain of the severest punishment. To save their lives, many of the Hebrews were baptized, but without any intention of really becoming Christians. This being suspected, afforded an excuse for still further persecutions of these unhappy people; but subsequent Emperors showed them favour, and allowed them to practise all the rites and ceremonies of their religion.

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CHAPTER VI.—TENTH AND ELEVENTH CENTURIES.

THE JEWS in Spain brought trouble upon themselves by listening to one of their own countrymen, who declared himself to be the expected Messiah, and persuaded the multitude to follow him to

Palestine, where he promised to establish his kingdom. Many perished on this expedition; and those who did return to Spain had cause to repent bitterly of their foolish credulity, for during their absence the Government had seized upon all their lands and property.

When Gaul was taken from the Romans by the barbarians, various tribes of Germans, calling themselves Franks, established their empire in the country. Charles the Great, or "Charlemagne," as he is always called, became sovereign of the Empire of the Franks (or France, as we may now term it), A.D. 772. The Saracens at this time were very troublesome in making frequent attacks upon the country; and the Jews were suspected of encouraging and aiding the Infidels, out of hatred to the Christians. Charlemagne, after defeating the Saracens at Toulouse, in the south of France, determined utterly to destroy the Jews, who were accused of causing all this bloodshed. He was, however, persuaded only to put to death some of those supposed to be the most guilty. The others were condemned to pay an annual fine; and were, moreover, obliged to assemble three times a year, at the gate of some Christian church appointed by the bishop, to receive a box on the ear! which we may well believe to have been no slight blow.

At other times, the Jews were treated with gentleness and moderation. Louis le Débonnaire became king on the death of his father, Charlemagne, early in the ninth century, A.D. 814. His favourite physician was a Jew; and for his sake Louis granted great privileges to the Jews. These marks of favour made them haughty and insolent; but when the bishops complained of their behaviour, the king would not listen to any proposition for their punishment. The favour and protection thus granted by the monarch, produced a great effect among his subjects; and those about the Court declared openly, that the descendants of Abraham ought to be treated with the greatest respect. Some even went so far as to observe the Jewish Sabbaths, and to attend the synagogues; preferring to hear the discourses of the learned rabbis, rather than the sermons of the Christian priests and monks, who were at this time extremely ignorant. During the reign of the next king, Charles the Bold, the Jews met with little favour; and in some places they were constantly insulted with impunity by the populace. In one part of Languedoc, it was the custom to pelt the Jews with stones, from Palm Sunday—that is, the Sunday before Good Friday—until the Tuesday after Easter Day.

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During the tenth century, when there was much ignorance in all Christian countries, the Saracens were great promoters of learning; and under their protection the Jews were also able to apply themselves to study, and many famous men appeared amongst them at this time; but, unhappily, disputes between themselves soon brought them into fresh difficulties.

We now come to the eleventh century, during which, if not before, colonies of Jews settled in England; for when William, Duke of Normandy, conquered the country, A.D. 1066, a considerable number of them were already established in the kingdom. William also brought with him, from Rouen, another colony of Jews, and gave them places to live in, from whence they could carry on trade with other nations. In return, they were to pay the king certain sums of money.

The Jews also appear to have been in favour with William Rufus, who encouraged disputes between the learned rabbis and the Christian bishops, declaring that he himself was quite ready to follow the religion of whichever party had the best of the argument or dispute. The Jews, always an industrious and money-making people, are said to have become so rich and powerful in England during William the Second's reign, that they not only held public meetings for the purpose of converting the upper and more learned classes, but also endeavoured by bribes to induce the poor and ignorant to renounce Christianity, and enrol themselves amongst the Jews.

What has been said of the condition of the Jews in England, applies also to all other European countries, where the Jews were richer, more fond of learning, and more polished—that is, more civil and gentle in their manners—than any other people. They were the only bankers; all trade with foreign nations was carried on by them alone; and even the gold and silver ornaments and vessels used in Christian churches, were mostly made by these determined enemies of Christianity.

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During the eleventh century, of which we have been speaking, the Jews in Egypt were for a short time persecuted by a Saracen prince, who wished to establish a new religion in the place of Mahometanism, or Islamism, as the religion established by Mahomet was called. As neither Jews nor Christians would assist him, he persecuted both; obliging the former to wear some outward mark to distinguish them, and point them out as objects for hatred and insult. He commanded their synagogues to be closed, and tried to force them to follow the new religion, of which he wanted to be the head. After a time, however, he allowed them to return to the practice of their own rites and ceremonies. Towards the middle of the eleventh century, an Eastern Caliph determined to get rid of the Jews altogether. He shut up their academies or schools; banished the teachers; and killed the Prince of the Captivity, with all his family. This cruel persecution drove many of the Jews into the deserts of Arabia; but most of them took refuge in the western countries; and by the end of the eleventh century, they had become numerous and powerful in different towns of Germany. Some of the Jews, driven out of the East, passed through Africa into Spain, and there joined their brethren, who, having helped the Saracens to conquer Spain, were now greatly favoured by the Caliphs, and were a wealthy and flourishing people. Hatred of the Christians was a bond of union between the Jews and the Mahometans; but when one of the rabbis tried to convert the Saracens of Grenada to the Jewish religion, the king was so enraged, that he caused the rabbi to be seized and put to death at once. This was followed by a terrible persecution of the Hebrew race.

The Jews, however, suffered still greater miseries in those parts of Spain which were under

the rule of Christian princes. One of these, called Ferdinand, having declared war against the Saracens, resolved, in the first place, to destroy all the Jews in his dominions, expecting by such an act of cruelty to obtain the favour and blessing of God! but the clergy of his kingdom objected to the execution of such a scheme; and the Pope himself wrote, and blamed Ferdinand for such unchristianlike zeal, so that the design was given up.

Alphonso, the successor of Ferdinand, found himself in such difficulties, owing to the increasing power of the Saracens, that he showed favour to the Jews, in order to get them to help him with men and money in his wars against the Infidels. He even allowed them to act as judges over Christians; but the Pope did not at all approve of this, and reproached the king for having, as he expressed it, "put the synagogue of Satan above the Church of Christ." Alphonso, however, did not take away the indulgences, which he had granted only to further his own interest.

The close of this eleventh century was remarkable for the first of the Crusades, or wars undertaken by Christian nations, in order to take Palestine, or the Holy Land, out of the hands of the Saracens. In many parts of Spain, great numbers of Jews were massacred by those about to join the Crusade, under the mistaken idea that they should bring the blessing of God upon their intended expedition, by destroying the descendants of those who had crucified the Saviour of mankind. In Germany, the Crusaders, who marched through the country, murdered all the Jews who refused to become Christians. An immense number thus perished, many of whom were burnt in their houses; for the unhappy Jews barricaded their dwellings, and then threw their families, their property, and themselves into the flames, thus disappointing the avarice of their enemies, who coveted their riches. Even mothers, on the approach of the merciless Crusaders, killed their children with their own hands, telling them it was far better for them to go at once into Abraham's bosom, than to fall into the hands of the Christians. Some of the Jews, less brave and conscientious than their brethren, saved their lives by pretending to adopt the Christian religion, which they must naturally have hated more than ever, since those who professed to be guided by its precepts, had acted with a degree of cruelty and inhumanity, worthy only of the most ignorant savages. The same dreadful scenes took place in Palestine, for when the Crusaders arrived in that country, they, actuated by very mistaken notions of the spirit of Christianity, inhumanly murdered all the Jews they could lay hands upon; and men, women, and children alike perished by hundreds.

During this dreadful time, it is pleasant to know that some of the Christian bishops and clergy did try to protect the Jews; and they received into their houses such fugitives as could manage to escape from the fury of their enemies.

Thus ended the eleventh century.

CHAPTER VII.—TWELFTH CENTURY.

OUR history has now brought us to the twelfth century; that is, to the space of 100 years, from A.D. 1100 to A.D. 1200. The twelfth century began as the eleventh had ended; for the Crusaders continued to persecute the Jews in Germany and other countries, as well as in Palestine.

The cry of the Christians was, "Let us destroy the descendants of those who crucified Jesus Christ, so that the name of Israel be no more remembered"—a cry as much at variance with prophecy, as with the spirit of Christianity; for the Holy Scriptures had plainly declared, that the once chosen people of God, though scattered throughout all lands, and severely punished for their unbelief, should *never be destroyed*.

Among the Christian bishops who interfered in favour of the Jews, was one called St. Bernard, who thought that it was the duty of Christians to *convert* rather than destroy them; and that kindness was more likely to do this than persecution. St. Bernard brought Innocent the Second, who was then Pope, to agree with him, and to befriend the Hebrew race.

On one occasion, when this Pope entered with much pomp and show into Paris, the Jews, approaching him with great respect, gave him a volume, or roll, containing the Law. The Pope received it, and said, "I reverence the Law given by God to Moses, but I condemn your explanation of it, because you still expect the Coming of the promised Messiah, instead of believing, as the Catholic Church does, that Jesus Christ was indeed the Messiah our Saviour; and that He now liveth and reigneth in Heaven, with God the Father, and God the Holy Ghost."

The next Pope was also favourable to the Jews, and forbade the people to insult them on any occasion whatever. Under such circumstances, the Jews became a rich and flourishing people in Rome, and in all the other cities of Italy.

Towards the close of the twelfth century, a Jewish rabbi, named Joseph, was prime minister to a Christian king of Spain, and had a coach of state, and guards to attend upon him; but having cause to be displeased with the wicked conduct of one of his countrymen, this man, whose name was Gonzales, contrived by his falsehoods to set the king against Joseph, who was in consequence turned out of his office in disgrace. Gonzales, who, though a Jew himself, was no friend to his brethren, now, under pretence of enriching the king, persuaded him to allow him to do as he pleased with eight of the principal Jews. The king consented; Gonzales caused these eight men to be put to death, and seized all their property. He then asked the king to give up to

him twenty more; but the monarch refused, thinking it more honourable to demand some of their riches for his own use, than to deprive them of life as well as property: the unhappy Jews gladly consented to give the king large sums of money, in order to preserve their lives. Shortly afterwards, Gonzales, having displeased the king, was shut up in prison, and then the Jews again enjoyed that peace and quiet so favourable to the pursuit of learning, of which they were very fond. Among the learned men who distinguished themselves at this time, the chief was Moses Maimonides, or the son of Maimon. This man claimed to be descended from king David: his knowledge and learning were so wonderfully great, and so far superior to that of any other rabbi, that his countrymen called him "The Eagle of Doctors," (the eagle being the king of his kind,) and declared, that no one before had ever come so near in wisdom to their great founder and lawgiver, whose name he bore.

But the very wisdom and learning for which they praised him, soon raised the jealousy of the Jews against Maimonides; and this feeling was increased by his showing very little respect for the Talmud, and by his teaching some extraordinary doctrines, learnt from a Mahometan of Arabia, under whom he had studied. Thus Maimonides offended a great part of the Jewish people; and at Montpellier, a town in the South of France, the chief of the synagogue persuaded certain learned men to preach against Maimonides, and defend the Talmud: he also caused the works of Maimonides to be burnt, and excommunicated all who should dare to read them.

The learned men amongst the Jews were now divided into two parties: one *for* and one *against* Maimonides; and disputes were in consequence carried on for many years. At this time, learning was not entirely confined to *men* amongst the Hebrew race; for several learned Jewish *women* made themselves remarkable in the twelfth century. One of these women was so skilful in explaining the Law and the Talmud, that many went to hear her lectures upon these subjects: she spake to the people from behind a latticed window, so that, whilst her voice was heard, she herself could not be seen by those outside.

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From Jewish historians we learn, that during this twelfth century many of their nation were raised, at different times, to high offices in the courts of princes; and that others became celebrated as generals. Several learned Jews also renounced their religion and became Christians, and then wrote books in favour of Christianity. One of these Jews turned Mahometan, and wrote a book, accusing his Jewish brethren of having altered the Law given to Moses by God. This greatly pleased the followers of Mahomet, who forbade any person to quote or translate any part of the Pentateuch, as used by either Jews or Christians.

In France, towards the end of this century, the Jews suffered greatly under Philip Augustus, or Philip the Second, who began to reign A.D. 1180. Some Jews were accused of having murdered a Christian youth; king Philip eagerly seized upon such an excuse, and, under pretence of piety and zeal for the glory of God, banished all the Hebrew race from his dominions; allowing them only to keep the money for which they could sell their furniture, the king taking for his own use all the rest of their property. It is even said that these poor creatures were robbed of what money they had been allowed to keep, and reduced to such a state of want and misery, that many died in consequence. The industry and skill of the Jews, however, made their loss felt in every country from which they were expelled; and no doubt that was the case now, for shortly afterwards Philip recalled them, excusing himself to such of his subjects as disapproved of the measure, by saying, that he allowed the Jews to return in order to get from them money to pay the expenses of the Crusades.

So wickedly were the Jews treated at this time, that if one became a Christian, all his property was taken from him—a measure not likely to encourage conversions.

Something must now be said of the treatment of the Jews in England during the twelfth century. Henry the Second, who began to reign A.D. 1154, has been blamed by monkish writers for allowing them to live in peace; but the scene was soon changed.

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The great wealth of the Jews caused them often to be applied to by those who wished to borrow money; but they were hated by all Christians, and grievously oppressed and ill-treated in most Christian countries. When Richard the First succeeded his father, A.D. 1189, the Jews hoped, by giving him large sums of money, to secure his favour and protection; and great numbers of them came up to London from the most distant parts of England, just before the king's coronation. The common people in those days were very ignorant and superstitious, and fancied that the Jews were magicians or conjurers, who could bewitch the king, and so do him harm; and Richard, therefore, forbade any Jew to be present in Westminster Abbey at his coronation.

Some of them, however, hoping to forward their own interests, ventured into the abbey, loaded with valuable presents for the monarch; but as they knelt before him, the king spurned them with his foot, and the courtiers followed his example. A great outcry was immediately raised outside the abbey; and at the same time a report was spread, that Richard had given an order for the general massacre of the Jews. An order so agreeable to the people, who hated the race of Israel, was instantly acted upon; and under this false impression, hundreds of Jews perished miserably: houses were broken open, and all the inhabitants murdered; or if they resisted the entrance of their foes, their houses were set on fire. Many of these wretched Jews put their own wives and children to death, to prevent their falling into the merciless hands of the Christians. The day after the coronation, a proclamation was published to stop these shocking acts; but the fury of the people was not so easily checked, and the persecution continued in some degree for several months. Nor was it confined to London, for in other parts of England similar outrages were committed upon the unfortunate Jews.

When Richard the First went to Palestine to take part in the Third Crusade, the Jews suffered a still worse persecution; for although they had furnished the king with large sums of money for the expenses of this war, their enemies were not satisfied.

It has been said, that in those times the Jews best understood how to get rich by trade; one way in which they made money was, by lending it at high interest. If, for instance, any person wanted a large sum of money at once, in order to buy an estate, or carry out any great object, he would borrow it of the Jews; engaging, in return, to pay a certain sum every year, or every month, as *interest* on the money lent, until he could repay the whole sum.

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The Jews who lent money asked very high interest for it; and were often guilty of great injustice and harshness to those who had borrowed it: all this added considerably to the hatred felt towards the Hebrew race on account of their religion.

CHAPTER VIII.—IMPOSTORS IN THE TWELFTH CENTURY.

WHEN Richard the First was making preparations for the Holy War, (as the Crusade was called,) his Christian subjects felt very angry that they, who looked upon themselves as the favourites of Heaven, should be obliged to deprive their families even of needful things, in order to fit themselves or others out to join in this war, whilst the enemies of Christ were left in peaceable enjoyment of their riches; and they persuaded themselves that it would be a meritorious act, acceptable to God, to destroy all the descendants of those who had crucified the Saviour, and then take their wealth to pay the expenses of the Crusade. Before his departure for the Holy Land, the King gave an order that the Jews were not to be disturbed in any way; but no sooner had he left England, than the fury of the people broke out afresh, and very many of the unhappy Israelites were destroyed in different places, and their property seized; whilst the magistrates, whose duty it was to keep order and protect *all* the king's subjects, made little or no attempt to stop these acts of cruelty and violence.

At York, the most dreadful scenes took place. The Jews of that city were great money-lenders, or *usurers*, as they were called in reproach; and as they lived in a sumptuous manner, indulging themselves in every luxury, the people envied them for their riches, and hated them more and more; and hearing what had been done in other parts of England, they prepared to attack their victims. Upon this, the chief persons among the Israelites prevailed upon the governor of York to allow their countrymen to take refuge in the castle, as its walls were strong enough to protect those within them. Very soon, however, the Jews, seeing that the governor frequently went out of the castle into the city, suspected that he was plotting with their enemies for their destruction; and therefore, one day, when he had gone out as usual, they shut the gates, and refused to let him in again. The governor, very indignant, complained to the sheriff and to the heads of the Christian party, who, as they were the chief debtors to the Jews, were most anxious to destroy them. The sheriff immediately ordered the governor to attack the castle; but he soon repented of having given such a hasty order, and many of the principal citizens refused to join in its execution. It was, however, too late to check the populace, who were bent upon murder and robbery. The attack was made, the assailants encouraging each other by the cry, "Destroy the enemies of Jesus." The Jews offered to give large sums of money, on condition that their lives should be spared; but this offer was refused. When they saw that they could defend themselves no longer, one of their most esteemed rabbis proposed that they should kill themselves, saying, that it was better to die courageously for the Law than to fall into the hands of the Christians. Accordingly, these poor creatures killed their wives and children, set fire to the castle, and then slew themselves. In this way 500 perished. A few, who gave themselves up in hopes of meeting with mercy, were murdered, and all the houses belonging to the Jews were plundered.

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Richard was very angry when he heard of such disobedience to his orders, and ordered the Bishop of Ely, as Chief Justice of England, to punish the guilty most severely. The chief offenders, however, had left York before the bishop entered that city; and he contented himself with depriving the sheriff and governor of their offices, and laying a fine upon some of the richest citizens.

Although so much has been said about the Jews in the twelfth century, there is still something more to be added, because during this period there were more impostors pretending to be the Messiah, than during any other similar period of time. The first of these impostors appeared in France A.D. 1137, and committed so many crimes, that the Government caused several synagogues to be destroyed, and at length the man himself was put to death, with a large number of his followers. The next year a false Messiah appeared in Persia, and collected a formidable army. The king of the country bribed him with a large sum of money to disband his followers, and then treacherously caused him to be beheaded, forcing the Jews to return to him the money, which he had given as a bribe to the unfortunate man.

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Spain had also her impostor, who appeared in A.D. 1157, and was supported by one of the most learned rabbis of Cordova, who had just written a book to prove that the Messiah must shortly come—a work which had probably put it into the head of this man to assume the character. The greater part of the educated and sensible Jews looked upon this impostor as a madman; but the people in general believed in him, and suffered severely for their folly.

Ten years afterwards, a person appeared in the kingdom of Fez, in Africa, and declared that in the course of a year the promised Messiah would come. The conduct of this impostor greatly displeased the Mahometans, to whom the kingdom belonged, and brought persecution upon all the Jews scattered throughout the country.

In the same year in which a false Messiah appeared in Fez, another Jew of Arabia took the title of Messiah. He pretended to work miracles, and gained many followers. He was at length seized, and taken before the ruler of the country, who asked him, what had led him to try and impose upon his countrymen? He boldly answered, that he had not done so, for that he was indeed a prophet sent by God. Being then asked what miracle he could work to prove that he was really sent by God, he said, "Cut off my head, and I will come back again to life." The king took him at his word, and ordered him to be beheaded, promising to believe in him if he came to life again. His followers actually continued for some time to expect his re-appearance; but at last they were obliged to give up all hope: they were heavily fined, as a punishment for listening to this impostor.

We have now spoken of eight pretended Messiahs; but there is still one more, the most famous of them all: this was a Jew, named David Alroi, or El David, who, with about 1,000 of his countrymen, dwelt in a city subject to the King of Persia, to whom they paid tribute. In 1199 El David took the title of Messiah; and, being a learned and clever man, he deceived the multitude by his pretended miracles, and persuaded them to take up arms in his cause. The King of Persia, alarmed by the success of the rebels, commanded El David to go to Court, promising to acknowledge him as the Messiah, if he would give some miraculous proof of being so. Contrary to all expectation, the impostor appeared before the king, persisting in his claim to be the true Messiah. He was then put into prison, in order to see whether he could work a miracle to set himself free. Somehow or other, he did manage to escape, and those who were sent in search of him were unable to find him; but, through the treachery of his son-in-law, who took a large bribe to betray him, he was given up to the king, and put to death, with a great number of those who had been deceived by him.

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Thus remarkably was fulfilled our Saviour's prophecy, that "false Christs and false prophets should arise and deceive many." It may seem strange to us that the Jews, after refusing to acknowledge Jesus Christ, Who had given so many proofs of His Divine power, should afterwards have been so ready to follow any impostor who chose to style himself the Messiah, without being able to do one single thing to support such a claim.

The reason of this appears to be, that the Jews, in spite of all prophecy, still set their minds upon a Messiah, who could at once establish a kingdom upon earth; and they were, in consequence, always ready to take up arms, hoping that the time for establishing such a kingdom was now come.

Jesus, by His conduct, put an end to all hopes of the kind in Him; and therefore He was despised and rejected. The impostors who took His name promised to deliver the Jews from all their enemies, and restore them to their country; and therefore they were believed and followed.

The cruel treatment experienced by the Jews in England during the reign of Richard the First, led many of those who still possessed any property, to leave the country; so that when John became king, A.D. 1199, the absence of so many rich people and the falling off of trade were much felt in the kingdom; and, in the early part of the thirteenth century, the king used every means in his power to bring them back. He solemnly promised, that if they would give him a large sum of money, they should enjoy all their former privileges: he allowed them to possess lands, build synagogues, and even choose a High Priest. Great numbers of Jews then returned to England, where they were soon more cruelly plundered than they had been before. It was the old story; they were odious to the people on account of their religion, and still more so, perhaps, for the enormous usury which they exacted for money lent. Thus there was a continual cry for their banishment, or rather for their destruction; but the king found it more for his own interest to keep them in the country, where he could upon all occasions make them purchase his protection by paying a heavy fine; and the Jews, seeing that so long as they gave money to the king they might exact what interest they pleased for money lent to his subjects, acted accordingly, and became more and more oppressive to all who were so unfortunate as to be their debtors.

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In the beginning of the thirteenth century, A.D. 1210, John wished to raise a large sum of money: as usual, he fell upon the Jews. The money not being readily paid, the king, in spite of the privileges which these unfortunate people had so dearly purchased, ordered men and women to be put into prison until he received the enormous sum which he now demanded. A Jew of Bristol was called upon to furnish such an immense sum, that he refused, declaring that the payment of it would reduce him to beggary. Upon this refusal, the king cruelly ordered that one of the poor man's teeth should be taken out every day until he did pay. This wretched Jew lost seven teeth, and then agreed to give the sum demanded by the king.

CHAPTER IX.—THIRTEENTH CENTURY IN ENGLAND AND FRANCE.

HENRY THE THIRD became King of England on the death of John, A.D. 1216: he was quite a child

when his father died; but those who governed for him, set the Jews who were in prison at liberty; and ordered that they should be protected against the violence of the Crusaders. Still, during the whole of Henry's long reign, which extended far into the latter half of the thirteenth century, the Jews were subject to great oppression and ill-usage in England.

As a privilege and favour to the citizens of Newcastle, the king commanded that no Jew should be allowed to dwell in their city.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Bishops of Lincoln and Norwich, took a sure way of driving the Jews out of their dioceses; for they forbade all Christians to sell them any provisions whatever.

The Prior of Dunstable, on the other hand, gave the Jews leave to reside in those places over which he had any control, on condition of their paying him every year two silver spoons.

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The Jews were at this time accused of committing all sorts of dreadful crimes; how far these accusations were true or false, we do not know. They were human creatures, and the cruel treatment they met with, might well lead them into the commission of many wrong acts, which would, of course, be exaggerated by the hatred of their enemies; who believed them guilty, upon the slightest suspicion, and compelled them, in consequence, to pay heavy fines.

In the middle of the century, when Henry the Third demanded fresh supplies of money for the purposes of war, the Jews, irritated by such repeated oppression, wished to leave England, and seek some more hospitable country, in which they might dwell: the king refused to allow them to leave the country, and forced them to pay the tax demanded. The next year, the king again applied to them, declaring that in spite of the taxes he had already levied, he continued to be greatly in want of money, and must raise it from any quarter, and by any means.

The unfortunate Jews truly declared that they could not pay the taxes now demanded of them; upon which Henry the Third actually sold them and their possessions to his brother, to raise the sum required! It was now expected that the Jews would be completely robbed of everything they possessed, in order to repay the prince the money for which he had bought them; but he, being convinced that they really could not have furnished the sum required, had compassion upon them, and left them in peace.

To such a height had hatred of the Jews risen in this reign, that when (about 1264) the barons took up arms to force the king to agree to their demands, they could think of no better way of gaining the favour and help of the people, than by killing the Jews; and 700 were accordingly massacred. The pretence for this massacre was, that one of the Jews had tried to force a Christian to pay an enormous and unfair interest for a loan of money: supposing this to have been true, the crime of one man should not have caused the death of hundreds. At the same time, houses were plundered, and the magnificent synagogue, built in the beginning of Henry the Third's reign, was burnt to the ground: it was afterwards rebuilt; but in 1270, the king most unjustly took it from the Jews, and gave it to a body of friars, who lived near it, and complained that their devotions were disturbed by the howling of the Jews during their worship.

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The fact was, that the chapel belonging to the friars was small and dark, and they coveted the fine large synagogue close by their dwelling; and as no ideas of justice ever interfered with the treatment of the Jews, they begged the king to give them this synagogue, and furnished him with an excuse for doing so.

On the death of Henry the Third, A.D. 1272, his son Edward the First became King of England, and very soon afterwards a law was made, which promised to improve the condition of the Jews; as it fixed a yearly tax to be paid by them, instead of leaving them liable to be called upon for contributions on every occasion, at the will of their enemies. This law also permitted them to possess houses and lands wherever they pleased. But, on the other hand, it was forbidden for any Christian to lodge in the house of a Jew; and every one of the Hebrew race above seven years of age, was obliged to wear a distinguishing mark upon his upper garment: this mark was a figure of two ropes joined together.

In the latter part of his reign, Edward changed his conduct towards the Jews, and they were treated with much injustice and even cruelty. The oppression suffered by these unhappy people, had not unnaturally raised up in them a spirit of retaliation; it made them think, that it was justifiable to use every possible means, right or wrong, to repay themselves for all the money unjustly taken from them by the Christians: their attempts to do this, increased the hatred entertained for them. They were accused of coining false money, and of cheating in every possible way. A great outcry being raised against them, they were, in all parts of the kingdom, thrown into prison, and many of them were executed, whilst their houses, lands, and goods, were sold for the use of Government. But to show the people that these measures were not taken merely for the sake of the plunder, the king ordered, that half the money produced by this sale should be put by, and given to such Jews as would renounce their religion and become Christians. Very few, however, could be brought, for the sake of worldly advantages, to embrace the religion of their persecutors; nor can we be surprised, that the very unchristianlike conduct of the followers of the blessed Jesus, should have increased the hatred and contempt felt by the Jews for the Christian religion.

Towards the end of the thirteenth century, about A.D. 1290, Edward the First, who had already banished the children of Israel from those parts of France which were under his dominion, now commanded them all to leave England, and never to come back on pain of death. He took

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whatever property they had, only allowing them to keep enough money to pay the expenses of removal into foreign countries; and of this miserable sum many of them were robbed by the seamen at Dover and other ports, whilst some hundreds of the poor wretches were even thrown into the sea and drowned: for this crime, however, many of the guilty seamen were punished by death.

The clergy in England were so delighted to get rid of the Jews, that they willingly gave the king very considerable sums of money to make up for the loss of a people, from whom former monarchs had always obtained help in time of need.

After this banishment of the Jews by Edward the First, they never appeared in any considerable numbers in England, until the seventeenth century.

In France we have seen the Jews banished by Philip the Second, and then recalled by the same monarch at the end of the twelfth century (p. 408). They immediately returned to all their former ways of making money by usury, so that early in the thirteenth century they had again become rich, and purchased lands of the lords who had large estates; but on certain conditions, which made them in some degree the property of the liege lord, of whom they held their lands. This "feudal tenure," as it was called, was common over Europe in those times; and all, whether Jews or Christians, who thus held lands under a liege lord, were called his "vassals," and were bound to do him certain services, whenever called upon to do so.

For some time Philip allowed, or at least did not try to put a stop to, the usurious practices of the Jews, because they gave him large sums of money in return for letting them alone; but at last the complaints of his subjects forced him to make some laws to check the evil. Philip the Second died A.D. 1223; Louis the Eighth, who succeeded him, reigned only three years: but when Louis the Ninth, surnamed Saint Louis, became king, A.D. 1226, he immediately made a law, forbidding any of his subjects to borrow money of a Jew. The condition of the Jews in France at this time was miserable enough; their property was at the mercy of those lords, in whose territories they had fixed their residence; without his leave, they could not change their place of abode, and if they ventured to do so, their liege lord had a right to follow them, and seize upon them as runaway, slaves! If one lord sold land to another, the Jews living on such land, also became the property of the purchaser: sometimes even, they were sold apart from the land, the price asked for them varying according to the talent and industry of each individual. But there was something worse still; if one of these Jews did become a Christian, the whole of his property was forfeited to his liege lord. So that these unhappy people were at the same time oppressed and persecuted for being Jews, or for becoming Christians; and this, by persons calling themselves Christians, who should have rejoiced at every conversion, and done all in their power to make them more frequent. Louis the Ninth, although called St. Louis on account of his remarkable piety and devotion, not only approved of these cruel and unjust laws, but added others; forbidding Christians to have any intercourse with the Jews, who were, in short, treated with the greatest harshness and injustice.

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But the most terrible persecution of this unhappy race, took place in A.D. 1238, when they were accused of having, in mockery of the Christians, crucified some children on Good Friday: on this supposition, multitudes of the Jews were put to death with the most cruel tortures, until the Pope, Gregory the Ninth, interfered to save them from further slaughter. During the imprisonment of Louis the Ninth in the Holy Land, whither he had gone upon a Crusade, he ordered the Jews to be driven out of his dominions; but when Philip the Third (the Bold) became king, in A.D. 1270, he recalled the Jews, because he stood in need of their money. In other parts of France, which were governed by Dukes or Princes of their own, subject more or less to the king, the Jews met with much the same kind of treatment; but in some provinces they did become magistrates, and possessed Christian slaves. Philip the Fourth (the Fair), who succeeded his father as king, A.D. 1285, followed the example of Edward the First, who was then King of England, and banished the Jews altogether from France; seizing all their wealth, with the exception of a small sum to pay the expenses of their journey: many died of fatigue and want by the way, and the rest sought refuge in Germany. Some avoided banishment by being baptized: most of these returned afterwards to Judaism; but the conversion of some of them, at least, was sincere. Amongst those who became true Christians, was one Nicolas de Lyra, who spent the remainder of his life in explaining the Scriptures; and even wrote a book to prove from Scripture, that the Jews were wrong in not acknowledging Jesus Christ to be indeed the promised Messiah.

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CHAPTER X.—THIRTEENTH CENTURY CONCLUDED.

IN Spain during the thirteenth century, the Jews suffered as much as they did in England and in France. At this time there were two Christian kingdoms in Spain: namely, the kingdom of Castile and the kingdom of Arragon; the southern part of Spain formed the kingdom of the Moors, who were Mahometans. The Bishop of Toledo, vexed at the increased numbers and riches of the Israelites in Spain, excited the populace against them, and putting himself at the head of the rioters, entered and plundered synagogues and houses; the Crusaders completed the work so unworthily begun by a Christian bishop, and, according to Jewish writers, this was one of the most severe and bloody persecutions ever endured by their unhappy countrymen: great numbers quitted the country at this time. The Spanish nobles tried to put a stop to the horrible cruelties

practised towards the Jews; but Ferdinand the Third, who became King of Castile, A.D. 1226, rather encouraged the persecution, in order to make himself popular with the lower orders, who detested the Jews.

In the kingdom of Arragon, towards the middle of the century, great efforts were made for the conversion of the Jews. One of the clergy, named Raymond, contrived to keep in check the violence of the people, who had a great respect for him; and at the same time he persuaded the king, James the First, who was a zealous Christian, that the best way to convert the Jews was by treating them with kindness, and trying to convince them of their errors. To carry out his views, Raymond caused many of the friars to learn the Hebrew and Arabic languages, and to study the Scriptures carefully, so as to be able to reason with the Jews, and point out to them how all the prophecies in the Old Testament were fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. All his attempts to convert the Jews were, however, unsuccessful, although they highly esteemed Raymond himself for his moderation and humanity.

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The King of Arragon mean time, so far from sharing the prejudices against the Jews, applied to them for instruction in many matters of learning and science: the great and learned men amongst the Spaniards also encouraged and admired them; but the people, and the ignorant and ill-educated among the clergy, hated and despised them, and would gladly have destroyed them altogether.

In the middle of the century, Alphonso the Tenth, who was then King of Castile, encouraged all learned men, whatever might be their religious opinions; and the favour shown in consequence to the Jews, excited the jealousy of the people, who formed fresh plots for their destruction. The dead body of a man was thrown into the house of a Jew, who was then accused of having murdered the man: this accusation roused the fury of the populace, who put numbers of the Jews to death. The massacre threatened to become general, but the authorities interfered, and declaring that the Jew was innocent of the crime laid to his charge, order was at length restored.

During those times, when the Israelites enjoyed the favour of the kings in Spain, many learned men flourished, and educated pupils, who afterwards became celebrated amongst their countrymen.

The Spanish Jews were again disturbed by an impostor called Zechariah, who pretended that by studying the prophecies, he had discovered the exact day on which the Messiah would appear; and declared that the Jewish people would then be gathered together by the Lord, Who would subdue their enemies and resettle them in their ancient kingdom. The Jews, always too easily deceived, prepared for this grand event by prayer and fasting; and on the appointed day they crowded to the synagogues clothed in white robes. Besides having the mortification of a bitter disappointment, they thus brought upon themselves the insult and ridicule of their enemies.

In Germany, during the thirteenth century, the Jews suffered much, in consequence of their being constantly accused of committing crimes more or less heinous. At one time they were charged with encouraging the Persians and Tartars to attack the country and destroy the Christians; at another time, with preventing the baptism of those amongst them who wished to become Christians; and they were repeatedly accused of murdering Christian children at the time of the Passover. What truth there was in any of these accusations, we do not know, but each was made by the people a pretext for robbery and murder; nor could the authorities save the wretched Jews from the fury of their Christian enemies. On one occasion, when the people of Munich were murdering all the Jews they could find, the town officers, unable to stop the tumult, advised the wretched victims to take refuge in their synagogue, a strong stone building, till the fury of their persecutors should cool down: but in spite of the efforts made by the Duke of Bavaria and his officers, they were all burnt, or otherwise killed in the synagogue. Notwithstanding all these persecutions, many learned rabbis flourished in Germany during this century; and towards its close violent disputes arose amongst the Jews themselves, as to the doctrines which were to be believed and taught. The consequence was, that the Jews were divided into two parties or sects, the Rabbinites and the Caraites: these two sects hated each other, since the Caraites taught that the Talmud, regarded by the Rabbinites with the greatest veneration, was not to be depended upon in any way whatever.

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Towards the end of the century, when Germany was disturbed by the wars between Albert of Austria and another prince, who both wished to be Emperor of Germany, a peasant pretended that he was sent by God to destroy all the Jews. This man went about the country declaring his errand, and exciting the people to execute the Will of God. The multitude rose at once, and killed great numbers of the Jews; whilst many of these unhappy people destroyed themselves and their families, to escape from their enemies. Albert would gladly have put a stop to this barbarous persecution; but he was afraid that if he did so, many of his followers, who believed that the peasant really had a divine commission, would abandon him, and take the side of the rival prince. The riot was at last stopped, and a heavy fine laid upon the town of Nuremberg, where it had begun: half the town was already burnt down, by the Jews setting fire to their own houses.

It has been already said, that the Roman Pontiffs, or Popes, often interfered to stop the persecution of the Jews, and to check the mistaken zeal of those who wanted to *force* them to become Christians. In 1247, Innocent the Fourth wrote a letter in defence of the Jews, declaring that they were not guilty of the crimes laid to their charge; and he also said, that their condition under Christian princes, was far more miserable and wretched than that of their fathers had been under Pharaoh.

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There were a great many Jews in the kingdom of Naples, and they had much wealth: as they had done the king some important service, he treated them with great indulgence. But after his death, attempts were made to convert them, instead of allowing them still to enjoy the free exercise of their religion. The Jews, fearing a persecution, offered to become Christians, provided they were allowed to marry into the richest and noblest families in the kingdom—a condition that they felt certain would be refused; but to their surprise and sorrow, permission was granted, and thus they were obliged to profess Christianity; but those who were not able to make advantageous marriages, soon returned to the practice of their own religion.

It is said, that a monk, who wished the Jews to be punished for pretending to be Christians, hid a cross in a heap of earth, and then accused one of these poor creatures of having done it: the people, enraged at such an act, rose at once and massacred a great number of the Jews, and more would have been put to death if the nobles had not interposed, and even given shelter in their own houses to some of the most wealthy, who were always the peculiar objects of popular fury. In the East, the number and the power of the Jews were much lessened during the thirteenth century. The Caliph of Bagdad, who was a zealous Mahometan, and very fond of money, was vexed to see a people growing rich by their own industry, whilst they were always ready to receive any one who declared himself to be the Messiah: and he therefore began a persecution, by which he hoped to compel all Jews, either to become Mahometans or to leave his dominions. Some departed; others, to avoid exile, pretended to become followers of Mahomet. In some parts of the East the Jews suffered greatly from the invasions of the Tartars; but towards the end of the century they enjoyed peace for a short time, under a prince, whose chief minister and favourite was a Jewish physician, who obtained many privileges and indulgences for his countrymen. But on the death of this prince, his Mahometan subjects, enraged at the favour he had shown to the Jews for the sake of his minister, accused the latter of having poisoned his master: he was condemned without any proof, and vast numbers of his countrymen were at the same time murdered.

Palestine was greatly distressed by the wars between the Christians and the Saracens. The Jews had still some synagogues in their native land; and even amidst their troubles, several learned rabbis appeared amongst them, the most remarkable of whom was styled the "Father of Wisdom"; he had been born in Spain, but went to live in Judæa, where he built a synagogue. Several learned rabbis of the Caraites sect flourished in different parts of the East during the thirteenth century.

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The fourteenth century does not seem to have brought any comfort to the wretched Hebrews. The same avarice or love of money which made Philip the Fourth drive them out of France, made Louis the Tenth, who became king A.D. 1314, bring them back again; because he wanted some of their money to enable him to reduce the Flemings to subjection. The Flemings were the inhabitants of Flanders, a country in that part of Europe which we now call Belgium. The conditions upon which the Jews were allowed to return to France were, that they should pay a heavy tax to the king; and that their stay in the country should be limited to a period of twelve years. During this time they might make money by trade and labour: they might buy land for synagogues and burying-places, and they might purchase any books they pleased with the exception of the Talmud: but they were forbidden to converse publicly or privately with any Christian; and they were obliged, as before, to wear a mark upon their upper garment.

Philip the Fifth became King of France in A.D. 1316, and during his reign the Jews suffered much from a body of men called "The Shepherds." They really were shepherds and labourers, who left their usual occupations to go, as they said, to the relief of the Holy Land. Their leaders were two priests, who, by pretending to work miracles, got many of the lowest classes of the people to join the band. Having thus strengthened themselves by the addition of a considerable body of desperate ruffians, the Shepherds plundered the southern provinces of France, and by breaking open the prisons, added still further to their own numbers, by receiving the liberated criminals as brethren. They committed the most unheard-of barbarities, especially upon the Jews, who fled before this savage band, and took refuge in considerable numbers, in a strong castle, near Toulouse; and here defended themselves bravely, but in vain. When no hope of safety remained, they put themselves or each other to death. Many of the Shepherds were taken and executed.

CHAPTER XI.—END OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

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ABOUT ten years after the affair of the Shepherds, the Jews in France were accused of having been bribed by the Saracen king of Granada to poison all the wells and rivers in the country. There was no proof of this but the declaration of a leper, who said, that a rich Jew had given him money to poison some wells; but this was enough for the populace, who, without waiting for inquiry or trial, rose at once, and put numbers of the suspected race to a cruel death.

The king, Philip the Sixth, shamefully took advantage of this popular outcry, and imprisoned the wealthy Jews in Paris until they told him where their treasures were hid; he then seized the greatest part for his own use, and banished the whole race from his dominions. The Jews, thus expelled from France, took refuge in the northern part of Italy, then called Lombardy, and there first established "banks," and the system called "banking"; by which merchants, in lands far

distant from each other, could receive the price of goods exchanged, without the risk of sending money: and by this means, the Jews from this time were often able to save their riches from the avarice and violence of their enemies. But the system of banking was not useful to the Jews alone: it was of the greatest service to trade in general, as well as to individuals, and has continued so up to the present time, when every considerable town in almost all European countries has its bank or banks. The great skill and cleverness of the Jews in all matters connected with money, made the monarchs of various kingdoms willing to let them remain in their dominions; for though they would gladly have been rid of the Jews themselves, they were anxious to keep their wealth in the country.

After John the Second became King of France, A.D. 1351, the Jews tried to obtain leave to return to France; but the permission was not granted until 1356, when, John having been taken prisoner by the English, the money of the Jews was needed to raise the sum demanded for his ransom. The children of Israel were, therefore, re-admitted into France for twenty years, on condition that they should at once pay a considerable sum, and that each Jew should pay annually a fixed tax. They would have been wiser to have remained out of the kingdom; for during the reign of Charles the Sixth, which began in 1380, they were often fined, scourged, and many of them executed, on pretence of their having committed various crimes. The wicked absurdity of many of these accusations is proved by the fact, that when Charles the Sixth became mad, the Jews were accused of having deprived him of his senses!

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Towards the end of the fourteenth century, the people of France again became clamorous for the banishment of the Jews; and supported by certain noblemen who owed those unhappy creatures money, they broke into their houses, murdered the inhabitants, and seized all the property they could find. Some of the persecuted race took refuge in one of the prisons: their wives attempted to follow them, with their children in their arms, but the mob forced the little ones away from their mothers, and carried them off to be baptized. The government, too weak to venture on punishing the perpetrators of these crimes, replaced the Jews who survived in their houses; and ordered that all persons who had taken any of their property should give it back to them—an order which was, of course, only laughed at. In A.D. 1394, an Act was passed, banishing the Jews from France for ever; but as the town of Metz, in that part of the country called Lorraine, was then a free city, under the protection of the Emperor of Germany, the Jews continued to reside there in peace; and after Lorraine became a part of the kingdom of France, the French monarchs did not molest the Jews in Metz. But though, until the seventeenth century, Metz was the only city in France where the Jews were *allowed* to reside, a few were always to be found in different parts of the kingdom. Mary de Medicis, the wife of Henry the Fourth, who became king A.D. 1589, sent for a Jewish physician to Paris, where he was allowed free exercise of his religion for himself and his family.

The Jews, who were driven out of France in 1394, went mostly into Germany, where, however, they could not have much hope of peace, as their brethren in that country had suffered much from the beginning of the fourteenth century. About the middle of the century, a number of ignorant and superstitious Christians, imagining that the Almighty had ordered them to scourge themselves and kill the Jews, formed themselves into a company, called "Flagellants," for the purpose of carrying out what they conceived to be the Divine commission. They proceeded to whip themselves in the most cruel manner, and then began their work of destruction. After many of the Jews had been murdered, the Flagellants came to some agreement with their unhappy victims; but this was rendered useless by the conduct of a Jew of Frankfort, who, not being satisfied with the agreement made, set fire to one of the public buildings, which was burnt down, with all the valuable papers it contained: the flames spread to the cathedral, and burnt that also to ashes. For this crime, not only the guilty Jew, but all his innocent brethren also, were put to death; with the exception of a few, who managed to escape, and took refuge in Bohemia.

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The year after the affair of the Flagellants, the Jews in Germany were accused of poisoning wells and springs, and a fresh massacre took place all over the country.

At Metz, the Jews not only defended themselves, which they were perfectly right to do, but in revenge put to death, in a barbarous manner, 200 unarmed Christians, who were in no way answerable for the attack upon them.

The enraged populace punished this real crime, by killing many thousands of the Jews, and setting fire to their houses. The flames spread, and did much damage in the town. This persecution extended over the whole of Germany; some of the princes and nobles tried to save and help the miserable victims, but with little success.

The Jews who had fled into Bohemia suffered equally at Prague; during the Feast of the Passover, they were burnt in their synagogues whilst engaged in their devotions.

Soon afterwards another persecution was raised, on the old charge of poisoning springs and rivers; and this persecution extended through Germany and into Italy, Provence, and other parts. The Emperor of Germany himself, convinced of their innocence of this pretended crime, endeavoured to convince his Council that it was impossible for the Jews to have committed it; but such was the feeling against the Hebrew race, that in order to save them from worse calamities, the Emperor was forced, at the close of the fourteenth century, to command these unhappy creatures either to be baptized, or to leave the country. The Jewish historians tell us, that very few did give up their religion; or, as they expressed it, "forsake the glory of their God."

In Spain, the Jews suffered dreadfully at the beginning of the fourteenth century from the

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Shepherds, who, after finishing their work of destruction in France, carried fire and sword into Spain; marking out the race of Israel as their especial victims: and a pestilence that broke out in the army of the Shepherds increased their fury against these devoted people, whom they accused of having caused it by poisoning the rivers. This story was readily believed, or at least accepted, by those who ought to have known better; and great numbers of Jews were actually imprisoned on this charge: after a long confinement, the judges declared them to be innocent. The king, unwilling to allow that he had imprisoned them unjustly, pretended that he had only kept them in prison in order to convert them; but he caused a large number who refused to be baptized, to be put to death.

Alphonso the Eleventh, king of Castile, was the friend and protector of the Jews, and had one of that nation for his principal minister and adviser. But this displeased his turbulent and rebellious subjects, who accused a Jewish boy of having in some way insulted the Sacrament: they became so violent upon the subject, that the king was obliged to summon a Council, to decide whether the Israelites should be put to death, or banished. Banishment was decided upon; and they were commanded to leave the country within three months' time: but mean time it was discovered that a *Christian*, and not a *Jewish* lad, had committed the offence complained of; and the king recalled the sentence of banishment, to the great disappointment and indignation of the enemies of the Jews, who declared, that the witnesses who had proved the Christian lad to be guilty, had been bribed to do so.

The same kind of treatment was experienced by the Israelites in other parts of Spain during the fourteenth century; but during that period the Popes in general treated them with humanity. Troubles and disputes unconnected with the Jews had caused the Popes for a time to leave Rome, and take up their residence at Avignon, in the south of France. Clement the Fifth, then Pope, did all in his power to save the Jews from the violence of the Shepherds, and all their other enemies: he also provided for them the means of instruction, by ordering that Hebrew should be taught in all the Christian universities, or places of education for young men; so that there might be some, able to show the Jews from their own Scriptures, how all ancient prophecies pointed out Jesus Christ as the true Messiah. Again, when the Jews were persecuted on pretence of their having poisoned the rivers, Pope Clement the Sixth exerted himself on their behalf; many of them found a safe asylum in Avignon, and the Pope left nothing undone to relieve their misery, and soften the fury of their persecutors. In Italy, the Jews seem to have been pretty well treated during the fourteenth century, and in Poland they met with favour and indulgence: by their industry they gained wealth and power, and became a prosperous and flourishing people, as they have ever since continued to be in that country. Poland produced many learned Jews; and Jewish children from all parts were sent there to study the Talmud, and to learn and practise all the peculiar rites and ceremonies of their religion.

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We have now come to the close of the fourteenth century. The dreadful sufferings endured by the Jews up to this time, and during future years, must remind us how surely all the prophecies contained in Scripture will be fulfilled. The prophets had foretold, that in consequence of their sins they would suffer unheard-of miseries: history shows us the accomplishment of this prediction.

Then again, it is wonderful that with such persecutions, they should not have been utterly destroyed; but, no, the Lord had said by His prophets, that they should be scattered throughout all lands, but not destroyed. The whole history of the Jews proves the truth of the Bible; and it should remind us, that Scripture equally warns us, that if we sin we shall also suffer; and that nothing will be acceptable to God, but a true, loving, and faithful devotion of ourselves to the service of Jesus Christ, Whom we acknowledge to be the Son of God, the promised Messiah.

CHAPTER XII.—THE JEWS AND THE INQUISITION.

DURING the fifteenth century there were no Jews in England or France. Of course, there may have been a few scattered here and there; but there was no body of Jews in either country during this period.

In Germany, their condition continued much the same. The slightest pretence sufficed to raise a persecution; and a pretence was afforded, at the close of the century, by an impostor, named David, who declared that the Messiah would positively appear in the year 1500. He afterwards declared, that the Messiah had delayed His coming on account of the sins of the people; and he caused the credulous Jews to appoint a solemn fast, in order to obtain pardon and hasten the appearance of the Deliverer. The Jews of course suffered; and David was imprisoned, and died shortly afterwards.

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In the beginning of this century, great efforts were made for the conversion of the Jews in the Spanish kingdom of Arragon. The Pope was zealous in the work; and one of their own race, named Jerome, who had himself embraced Christianity, undertook to convince his countrymen even by passages from the Talmud, that Jesus Christ must certainly be the Messiah. Although the Jews treated the Pope with great respect, they were by no means disposed to listen to Jerome, with whom they were very angry; first, for deserting the faith of his people; and, secondly, for drawing them into disputes, which might bring persecution upon them. It is said, however, that 4,000 Jews were then converted, and that a few years later, through the zeal of one of the clergy,

a still larger number were baptized; but the greater part, having only submitted to baptism out of fear, continued to observe in secret all the rites and ceremonies of the Hebrews.

In 1479 a great change took place in the condition of the Jews in Spain, for Ferdinand, King of Arragon, married Isabella, the Queen of Castile; so that from this time the two kingdoms became *one*, called the Kingdom of Spain. Ferdinand and Isabella were very anxious that all the inhabitants of Spain should be Christians. In 1492 the Moors were driven out of Granada, and their country became also a part of the Kingdom of Spain; but many of the Moors, rather than leave their beloved Granada, pretended to become Christians. Having driven the Moors out of Spain, Ferdinand thought it would be desirable to get rid of the Jews also; and he commanded them either to be baptized or to quit Spain altogether. In order to prevent Jews or Mahometans who had been baptized, from ever returning to the practices of their former faith, Ferdinand and Isabella were persuaded to establish the Court of the Inquisition in Spain. The Inquisition was a Court of Inquiry, the members of which were charged by the Pope to examine all persons accused, or suspected of holding any opinions in religious matters, not agreeing entirely with the doctrines taught by the Church of Rome. They had power to torture the accused, in order to force them to confessions, and to put to death all who continued to hold any opinions condemned by the Pope. So much was this dreadful tribunal feared by the people, that none ventured to withhold their nearest and dearest relations from the officers of the Inquisition, whose duty it was to arrest all persons, upon whom rested the slightest suspicion of what was called heresy. The unfortunate creatures thus dragged from their homes, were kept for a long time in the dungeons of the Inquisition, until they accused themselves and declared the cause of their imprisonment; for they were not told of what crimes they were accused, nor were their accusers ever brought face to face with them to witness against them, as justice would have demanded. Seldom did any, who were once consigned to the dungeons of the Inquisition, return to their families; and so well was this known that, when they were taken away by the officers, their friends and relations looked upon them as dead: nor did they dare to make any effort to save them, lest they should themselves be looked upon as accomplices in some unknown crime.

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When no shadow of proof could be brought against the wretched prisoners, they were discharged, with the loss of great part of their property, after suffering the most cruel tortures during a tedious and dreadful imprisonment. Many of those whom the Inquisitors (or Judges in this Court) chose to consider guilty, were secretly put to a cruel death, in the dungeons of the Inquisition. Sometimes a number of these so-called "heretics" were executed publicly, by being all burnt together with great pomp and ceremony, so as to make quite a show of their execution!

This terrible show was called an "Auto-da-Fé," meaning a sacrifice offered up by faithful Christians to prove their devotion to God! It is dreadful to think of all the cruel and wicked things which have been done under pretence of religion, when true religion should fill our hearts with love to God, and love to man for His sake, and make us strive to subdue all our own evil passions and tempers.

Sad too, to remember, that this cruel tribunal, under whose authority the most barbarous and wicked acts were committed through a long series of years, was established by Christian bishops, under the idea that they could thus please a God of love and mercy!

It is necessary to mention the circumstances which led to the establishment of a tribunal, so opposed to the spirit of Christianity.

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The Popes, from being originally the Bishops of Rome, had gradually claimed and obtained influence and power over the Church in all Christian kingdoms; and they required that every member of these churches, should believe exactly whatever they and their Council declared to be right and true. The different orders of monks, who were established in every Christian country, supported the Pope's claims, and did all in their power to increase the power and authority of the Roman Pontiffs. Not content with spiritual power, the Popes, little by little, claimed the right to interfere in temporal affairs; so that, by degrees, the Pope claimed and exercised a kind of sovereign power over all Christian kings, and required them to obey him in temporal as well as spiritual matters. Such was the influence of the priests over an ignorant and superstitious people, that their kings would not have dared to deny the superior authority of the Pope, had they wished to do so; for the people were taught to believe, that the Roman Pontiff had power to draw down upon individuals and nations who had displeased him, the severest judgments, or visible signs of the displeasure of the Almighty God Himself.

In England, the Pope's power never was so great as it became in Italy and other European countries.

But though Christians in general, and the monks in particular, were ready to profess belief in whatever the Popes declared to be the truth, there arose from time to time men who, contrary to the Papal order, dared to search the Scriptures for themselves; and thus perceived clearly, that the Church of Rome had adopted many doctrines and practices which were, in fact, quite contrary to those taught by the Apostles, and given to them by the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who made such an important discovery, naturally told others of it; and thus there grew up in the Christian Church, a party who were opposed to the Pope's authority, both in spiritual and temporal matters.

This was of course highly displeasing to the sovereign Pontiff; and, in order to check the spread of feelings and opinions which weakened the Papal power, the terrible Court of the Inquisition was established in Italy, by Pope Gregory the Ninth, in the year 1233—that is, towards

the middle of the thirteenth century. It became the constant endeavour of all future Pontiffs, to persuade the various sovereigns of Europe, to introduce this iniquitous tribunal into their dominions.

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But, although Gregory the Ninth may be said to have established the Inquisition as a permanent tribunal, it was not altogether a new institution; for, at the close of the twelfth century, the same desire to check the growth of feelings opposed to Papal power, led Innocent the Third, in the year 1198, to nominate Inquisitorial Courts, to examine all persons accused of heresy. From this beginning, sprang the Court of Inquisition, established by Gregory A.D. 1233.

Innocent the Third is well known in English history, as the Pope to whom King John gave up his kingdom, to be returned to him as a Papal fief. He is also remarkable for the encouragement given to the cruel persecution of the Albigenses in the south of France, and of the Waldenses in the valleys of Piedmont.

The Albigenses were a body of men living about Toulouse and Albigeois, in Languedoc, who distinguished themselves by their opposition to the doctrines and ceremonies of the Church of Rome. Their name appears to have been given them, either because a great number of them resided in the diocese of Albi, or because they were condemned as heretics by a council held in that town. The Albigenses became so powerful, that Pope Innocent the Third sent a legate into their country; but, as that step produced no good effect, he stirred up against them Philip the Second, King of France, who, being joined by other princes, carried on a regular crusade against these unfortunate people. They were at first supported by Raimond, Count of Toulouse; but when the King of France made war upon them, he deserted them, and made his submission to the Pope; but, soon afterwards, finding himself plundered by the Crusaders, he declared war against them. He was, however, defeated and slain at the siege of Toulouse; and the consequence was, that the city surrendered to the Crusaders, who also conquered the greater part of Languedoc and Provence.

His son, also called Raimond, who succeeded him, published a declaration against the Albigenses, A.D. 1253; and agreed with the Pope and the King of France, to set up the Inquisition in his territories. From this time the Albigenses gradually decreased in number, until, in the sixteenth century, the remnant had become so intermingled with the Vaudois, that all are known by the latter name.

The Waldenses took their name from Peter Waldo, who was a rich merchant of Lyons, in the latter part of the twelfth century. Waldo, being extremely anxious for the increase of Christian knowledge and piety, employed a priest, in the year 1160, to translate from the Latin into French, the four Gospels and some other parts of Scripture. When this was done, Waldo found that there was no authority in Scripture, for many of the doctrines and practices taught by the Church over which the Pope presided; in fact, that they were quite contrary to the Word of God. In consequence, he gave up his mercantile profession, distributed his riches among the poor, and devoted himself, as a public teacher, to spread a knowledge of Scriptural truth. His success was great. His followers took their name of Waldenses from him; and they were also called "The poor men of Lyons."

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The Archbishop of Lyons, and other rulers of the Church in those parts, opposed Waldo vigorously, but with little effect; for the simplicity and beauty of his doctrines, and the pious and blameless lives led by him and his followers, caused a daily increase of their numbers. Being driven out of Lyons, they spread over Dauphiné, Provence, and the valleys of Piedmont.

The merciless persecution carried on against these innocent people, by Philip the Second and Innocent the Third, failed to destroy them utterly, although the king is said to have destroyed the country seats of 300 gentlemen in the attempt. Amongst those who distinguished themselves most in this barbarous persecution, was Simon de Montfort, whose son, bearing the same name, retired to England, and became a favourite of Henry the Third, who created him Earl of Leicester. After one quarrel and reconciliation with his sovereign, Leicester put himself at the head of the English barons who rebelled successfully against Henry the Third; but in the battle of Evesham, when the royal forces were led by Prince Edward, the Earl was defeated and slain.

In spite of the united efforts of the Pope, the King of France, and of the Count Simon de Montfort, the Waldenses continued to exist, and were in later times known as the Vaudois.

CHAPTER XIII.—TREATMENT OF THE JEWS BY FERDINAND.

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THE Monks took such an active part in the persecution of the Jews, that it may be well to give some account of the "Religious Orders," as they are called; all of which hated the Hebrew race, and would gladly have seen it extirpated.

Very soon after the establishment of the Christian religion, there were men who wished to devote their hearts and lives to the service of God, and thought they could better do this by giving up all the pleasures and business of ordinary life. It became the practice for such to leave their families and live together in houses, thence called Religious Houses, under the direction

and authority of some priest. Here they spent their time in devotion, and in doing good to their fellow creatures: the services in the churches were performed by them; they undertook the education of the young; books were prepared by them, for in those days there were no books except such as were written by hand; and to them the sick and poor applied for relief, which was never denied.

Those who became inmates of such houses, were not bound to remain in them; but as long as they did so, they were bound to obey the orders of the ruling priest.

But before long, a change took place: these religious houses took the name of Monastery, Abbey, Priory, or Convent. Those who entered these houses, took a solemn oath to remain in them until their death, and to be in all things obedient to the priests, who, under the appellation of Abbots or Priors, ruled over these establishments, whilst they themselves were completely subject to the Pope. As the gifts of money and lands bestowed upon these religious houses, gave them power and influence, those who ruled over them became ambitious, and desired to have a share in the government of kingdoms: in this they gradually succeeded by persuading kings and princes, that by following their advice in all things, they would please the Lord God, and ensure his favour.

As time went on, the heads of the abbeys, monasteries, priories, and convents, became more and more powerful, in the various kingdoms where they were established. The inmates of these various houses belonged to different classes or "orders"; the chief of which, were the Benedictines, Dominicans, and Franciscans.

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St. Benedict, the founder of the first religious order in Europe, was born at Spoleto, in Italy, A.D. 480. At the age of fourteen, he retired to a cavern, where the fame of his pious austerities brought him numerous followers. He afterwards founded the monastery of Monte Casino, near Naples, and thus established the Order of St. Benedict, or the Benedictines. The oath taken by all who entered this order, bound them never to marry, nor to quit their convent; to practise the strictest self-denial in every matter; to speak but little to the other members of the community; to give up all intercourse with the world; and to place their minds and bodies at the absolute disposal of their superior; so as not only to do at once whatever he bid them do, but to hold no opinions contrary to his. The Pope or Bishop of Rome, naturally looked with especial favour upon this order of monks; because being pledged to implicit obedience, they formed a sort of army, ready to do anything to increase the power of the priesthood and the Pope. The Benedictine Order was introduced into England by Dunstan, when he became superior of Glastonbury Abbey, in the tenth century.

The founder of the Dominican Order, was a man named Dominic, born at Calahorra, in Old Castile, A.D. 1170. He was employed by Pope Innocent the Third to convert the Albigenses; but failing in his endeavours, he joined in the horrible persecution carried on against them; and for his zeal in the cause, he was, after his death, A.D. 1221, canonized, (that is, ordered to be called a saint) by the Pope.

The founder of the Franciscan Order was born at Assisi, in a part of Italy called Umbria, A.D. 1182; and was after his death canonized, and called St. Francis d'Assisi. He was the son of a merchant, and had in his youth led a wild and dissipated life: but on recovering from a dangerous illness, he became enthusiastically devout; retired into solitude; and underwent every species of penance and mortification; so that his family thought he had gone mad. He gave up all claim to his father's property, and took a vow of poverty. Being looked upon as a saint, many joined him, and he drew up rules for them to observe; and these rules being approved of by Pope Innocent the Third, the order of Franciscan Friars was established, and its members increased rapidly. St. Francis d'Assisi was, as well as St. Dominic, a zealous persecutor of the Albigenses and Waldenses. St. Francis made an unsuccessful attempt to convert the Sultan, or sovereign of Turkey, and then returned to Assisi, where he died, A.D. 1226: he was canonized four years later, by Gregory the Ninth.

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It has been said, that the members of the Dominican and Franciscan Orders were called friars, instead of monks. The difference between the two classes was, that the friars rejected the possession of all worldly wealth, and depended entirely for their subsistence upon what they could collect from the pious, in their wanderings about the country. On this account, they were also called "Mendicants," that is, "beggars." There were four orders of these Mendicant Friars: the Dominicans, or Black Friars; the Franciscans, or Grey Friars, sometimes called "Frères Mineurs" (Lesser Friars), or Minorites; the Augustines, or Mendicants, properly so called; and the Carmelites, who claimed their origin from the prophet Elijah.

Before we leave this subject, we must mention that there were also religious houses, called nunneries and convents, for females: the inmates were called nuns, and there were various orders of them, distinguished from each other by some differences in their rules and discipline.

But all monks, friars and nuns were bound by their vows never to marry, nor leave their retirement; and to be in all things obedient to their superior.

When the Court of Inquisition was set up in Spain, it was directed to pay particular attention to the conduct of the Jews, as the clergy had found out that their change of religion was generally only a pretence; and therefore the Pope exhorted all Christian princes to bring them to punishment.

Great numbers of the Jews, terrified at the fate which awaited them, gave up the observance

of their own rites and ceremonies, and submitted to any penance or punishment appointed by the clergy: but many of these unhappy creatures were put to death, even after they had confessed Jesus Christ to be the Messiah: others were imprisoned for a long time, and when set at liberty, were obliged to wear two red crosses on their upper garment, which was considered as an acknowledgment that they deserved to be burnt. Property was, of course, seized; and besides their persecution by the Inquisition, the populace oppressed and ill-used them, so that their condition was as miserable as possible. The sufferings of the Jews whom Ferdinand drove out of Spain, were most extraordinary. The greater part embarked on board ships, some of which, from being too heavily laden, sunk, and all on board were drowned; some of the ships are said to have been burnt; some were wrecked on foreign shores, where the miserable passengers died of want. The master of one ship determined to murder all his passengers, in order, as he said, to avenge the death of Christ, whom their ancestors had crucified: the Jews, aware of his design, reminded this bad man, that one doctrine of Christianity was, that Christ desired the salvation, and not the death of sinners; but the master, instead of feeling how little his conduct was like what a Christian's ought to be, caused the Jews to be stripped, and landed on the coast of Africa, where he left them. Some of these poor creatures were destroyed by wild beasts; some died of hunger; but some were saved by the master of another vessel. Some of the Jews, on leaving Spain, sailed direct to the city of Fez, in Africa; but the inhabitants cruelly refused to admit them into the city, and they, too, died of want. Another party sailed to Genoa, which was at that time suffering from a scarcity of food, so that provisions were very dear: the inhabitants, seeing the miserable condition of the Jews, who had no money to buy food, met them with a cross in one hand and in the other bread, which they refused to give to any one who would not first worship the cross. Many who had hitherto resisted all temptation to conform to Christian worship, could hold out no longer, and did what was required of them.

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The way in which Ferdinand had treated the Jews, was greatly blamed; and many nations expressed their astonishment, that the king should have so little regard to his own interest, as to banish a people, whose skill in money matters was so useful to the country. This very skill enabled the Jews to disappoint the avarice of the king; for they had managed to send the greater part of their wealth safely out of the country, and consequently Ferdinand got much less money from them than he had expected.

Meantime his subjects felt the loss of Moors and Jews, and the nobles complained that their towns were deserted and ruined.

Many of the Jews on leaving Spain, went into Portugal, where their brethren had done good service to the king, by bringing him accounts of the coasts of the Red Sea; and also by helping his subjects to discover the way of reaching India, by sailing round the southern point of Africa.

But notwithstanding the services of the Jews already in Portugal, the king only allowed the fugitives from Spain to enter his dominions, on condition of their paying a sum of gold, with an understanding, that on a certain day fixed, they must either leave Portugal again, or be sold as slaves: on his part, the king promised to provide ships to take them wherever they wished to go.

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When the time came, the king really wished to keep his promise; but his orders were not obeyed, and the Jews who were about to sail, were so barbarously used by the seamen, that they chose rather to be sold as slaves than to put themselves into the power of such ruffians.

The next king of Portugal had pity on the Jews, and set them free from slavery; but afterwards, in order to gain favour with Ferdinand and Isabella, he ordered the Israelites to leave the kingdom on a certain day, after which, all who remained would be again treated as slaves. But the king did not like the idea of expelling such a number of skilful and industrious people, and he determined at least to keep all the children under fourteen years of age, and have them baptized and brought up as Christians. When, therefore, the time of departure drew near, he forbade the Jews to embark from any port except Lisbon; and when they came to that city, the king's officers seized their children, and dragged them away from their parents. We may imagine what a dreadful scene this was! Many, in despair, rather than give their children up, killed them and then put an end to their own lives. Besides this, the king contrived to delay their embarkation so much, that the day fixed passed away before they had sailed, and consequently they became slaves. In utter despair, these poor creatures now agreed to become Christians, in order to recover their liberty, and their children. But such Christianity could only be a pretence; and their enemies, suspecting this, watched them narrowly. The least sign of their observing any of the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish religion, or of their preferring the Law of Moses to the Gospel, exposed them to the horrible cruelties of the Inquisition. Shame upon Christians, who could thus treat their fellow creatures! and instead of trying to win them over by Christian love, could thus render the very name of Christian more and more hateful to them.

CHAPTER XIV.—SEPARATION IN THE CHURCH.

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THE events which have been noticed in Spain and Portugal, extended well into the sixteenth century, and thus belong to modern history; for the fifteenth is the last of the ten centuries known in history as "the Middle Ages," during which, as we have seen, the sufferings of the Jews were very terrible. It is impossible here to give a particular account of this persecuted race in all countries, during the centuries that have since elapsed.

In the sixteenth century took place that important movement in the Christian church, spoken of in history as "the Reformation."

In speaking of the Inquisition, allusion has been made to the feelings of mistrust and opposition, which had arisen in regard to the Pope, and the Church of which he claimed to be the head.

By the beginning of the eleventh century, the Papal power, or power of the Popes, was far greater than that of any sovereign; and kings were obliged to acknowledge and submit to it, because in case of any dispute, their subjects would probably have obeyed the Pope rather than their own sovereigns. Nor was this extraordinary, since the people were led by the priests to believe, that they could not possibly be saved, unless they obeyed the Pope in everything; and that on the other hand, he could forgive their sins, and ensure their salvation. Thus was the Pope put almost into the place of God.

This naturally produced evil consequences, and for more than two centuries the corruptions of the Church of Rome went on increasing: the real doctrines and truths of the Gospel were more and more forgotten, and its precepts disobeyed; so that wickedness seemed everywhere triumphant. Such a sad state of things led many to think, that as the Pope and his clergy were not teaching the truth as contained in the Scripture, some reform was greatly needed. This feeling once roused, spread rapidly; and in the beginning of the sixteenth century, it was strengthened and confirmed by the preaching of a German, called Martin Luther. Luther was born in A.D. 1483, at Eisleben, in Lower Saxony: wishing to devote himself to a religious life, he entered a monastery of Augustines. His fondness for learning caused him to be appointed as a teacher in the new University of Wittenberg: but his studies soon taught him that the church to which he belonged, had departed very far from Gospel truth and practice; and a journey to Rome showed him so much that was wrong in the lives and conduct of her clergy, as quite to destroy all his reverence for the Pope. His own mind being thus made up, Luther boldly declared his convictions; and taught that all who wished to be saved by Jesus Christ, must make a great change in their religious opinions and practice; and instead of blindly obeying the Church of Rome, must strive to worship God as the Apostles and early Christians had done; for this purpose he urged every individual to read and study the Holy Scriptures, which the Pope did not permit any member of his Church to do. People of all ranks listened to Luther's words; and many determined no longer to submit to the Pope's dictation, but to purify the Church, by extirpating the errors which had one after another crept into her doctrines and practice, so as to restore her to her original condition of a scriptural Church.

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Whole nations now shook off the authority of the Pope, and became separate branches of the One Catholic or Universal Church established by the Apostles, and of which Jesus Christ is the true and only head. In A.D. 1517, when Henry the Eighth was King of England, such a branch was established in our own country, and called "the Church of England"; whilst to that branch over which the Pope still rules, we give the name of "the Church of Rome."

All the works of man are liable to error, and in this great separation from the Church of Rome, some mistakes were probably made; nor were all who advocated the changes actuated by holy and religious motives. But whatever mistakes may have been made, we find in the teaching of the Church of England the way of salvation. All of us who have been baptized into this Church, must ever remember with thankfulness that we belong to a Church which bids us take the Holy Scripture as our rule of life. As members of such a Church, let us always strive to act up to our baptismal vows, carefully studying all the articles of the Christian faith, that we may hold them fast; and that our faith may be firm and lively: let us renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil, constantly striving against sin in every form, so that we may truly keep the commandments and precepts of God: loving Him with all our hearts, and our neighbour as ourselves, for His sake. If we are thus true and worthy members of the Church Militant upon earth, we shall, through the atonement and mediation of Jesus Christ, be hereafter received into His Church triumphant in Heaven.

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Before we go on, it will be well to say a few words as to the word "Protestant," often applied both to Churches and individuals who have separated from the Church of Rome. To "protest," means to "object to," to "declare against." "Protestant," therefore, only means one who objects to anything, or declares against it; and so the word came to be applied to those, who so objected to the errors and false doctrines of the Church of Rome (which claimed for itself alone the title of Catholic), as to separate from it, and establish a reformed branch. In *this* sense the Church of England may be called *Protestant*; but we must never give up our claim of being a true and pure branch of the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, of which Jesus Christ is the Head.

The separation from the Church of Rome was not effected in any country without great struggles; many battles were fought, and many crimes committed, under pretence of religion, on both sides.

Luther died in 1546, having lived to see the doctrines he had taught, too firmly established ever to be overthrown by the opposition of the Pope and his supporters, who made great efforts to bring all men back to the Church of Rome.

Mary, the daughter of Henry the Eighth, who became Queen of England on the death of her brother Edward the Sixth, A.D. 1553, tried hard to make her subjects submit again to the Church of Rome, and many were burnt to death for refusing to do so.

Elizabeth, who succeeded her sister Mary in 1558, was zealous for the doctrines opposed to the Papal teaching; and in her time the Church of England was firmly established in this country, though many Englishmen have never joined it, and continue to this day to be Roman Catholics, as we call those who belong to the Church of Rome, to distinguish them from those who have renounced her errors; for we all claim to be Catholics, as members of the Catholic or Universal Church of Christ. Many, too, in our own times have unhappily forsaken the Church of their forefathers, and joined that of Rome. Let us watch and pray, that we fall not into such grievous error.

The Reformation relieved the Jews from much active persecution, but, on the other hand, Luther declared, that no Christian might even employ a Jewish physician; for as the whole race lay under the curse of God, they ought not to cure those who were the children of God: the Jews naturally detested Luther, by whose advice many Christian princes in Germany, refused to receive them into their dominions. The chief persecution against the Israelites in Europe during this century, arose from their being falsely accused of causing a fire that did great damage in Bohemia. In Persia they suffered much from one of the kings, who was resolved to make them embrace the Mahometan faith.

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The Jews at this time, seem to have enjoyed more peace in Egypt, Abyssinia, and other parts of Africa, than in any other countries in the world. They became numerous, wealthy, and powerful at Cairo, and also in Morocco, from whence one of them was sent as ambassador to the united provinces of Holland, in the beginning of the seventeenth century. Although the King of Portugal had banished the Jews from his European dominions, he allowed them to settle at Goa and other places, which then belonged to him in the East Indies: but, unfortunately, after some years, these Jews allowed themselves to be deceived by a pretended Messiah. The news spread to Portugal where some of the Israelites, who had become Christians, showed such joy at the intelligence, as to make it clear that they still clung to their old faith, and were Christians only in name. The Inquisition, therefore, interfered, and all Jews living in such parts of the East as were subject to the King of Portugal, were forced either to become Christians, or to leave the country.

The Jews had now been shut out of England for about 350 years; but when, after the murder of king Charles the First, Cromwell became ruler under the name of Protector, A.D. 1654, he, seeing the benefit which Holland had gained by allowing this persecuted race to settle in that country, was anxious to bring their industry and their riches back into Great Britain. At his request, the Parliament allowed Manasses Ben Israel, who was greatly looked up to by the whole Jewish people, to come to England, to beg permission for his countrymen to return: but the idea was so displeasing to the people in general, and was so strongly opposed by some persons of ability and learning, that Cromwell was unwillingly obliged to dismiss Manasses, without giving him any positive answer. Some of his countrymen, however, did venture into England, where they were left in peace, and allowed to reside together in a certain part of London: but no laws were made for their protection, though they were ready to pay large sums for any such marks of favour.

Unfortunately for Cromwell's project of re-establishing the Jews in England, a deputation arrived from the Asiatic Jews, for the purpose of making out that Cromwell was the Messiah. This made the Protector very angry; and when the object of these Jews became known, it excited so much indignation throughout the country, that they were obliged to leave the kingdom in all haste. This incident greatly increased the feelings of prejudice and dislike, with which the children of Israel were regarded. When Charles the Second was restored to the English throne, A.D. 1660, he, being greatly in want of money, sold to the Jews permission to settle in England, and their numbers increased greatly in consequence.

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James the Second, who in 1685 succeeded his brother Charles, also favoured the Jews; and during this seventeenth century, they also regained a footing in France, from whence they had been finally banished in 1394, though, as has been said, some Jews were always to be found in different parts of that kingdom. The first place in which they were now permitted to reside and carry on trade, was Bordeaux; they were also allowed to buy estates in France.

CHAPTER XV.—SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES.

THE most curious event connected with the Jews in the seventeenth century is the history of the impostor, Zabathai Tzevi, who was born in Syria, of poor Jewish parents; and being gifted with wonderful talents and great powers of learning, was enabled to take advantage of the ignorance and credulity of his countrymen. Towards the close of the century, there was a general idea amongst the Jews, that some wonderful event was about to take place, and all sorts of strange tales were told, and believed: amongst others, it was related that a ship had reached the coast of Scotland, filled with sailors who could speak nothing but the Hebrew language; that the sails of this ship were made of the most beautiful silk; and that upon them were embroidered the words, "The Twelve Tribes of Israel." Tzevi immediately took advantage of so favourable an opportunity, proclaimed himself to be the Messiah, and promised the Jews a glorious kingdom, in which they should enjoy peace and prosperity. He pretended to work miracles, and reproached some of his followers with wilful blindness, because they would not own that they had seen him rise up into the air! The multitude believed in Tzevi, but many of the better instructed and more intelligent

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Jews condemned him as an impostor, and would gladly have put him to death, could they have done so. After visiting Greece and Alexandria, Tzevi went to Gaza, where he persuaded a celebrated Jew, named Nathan Levi, to act as his forerunner. Tzevi and Levi then went to Jerusalem, and actually named a time when the Jews should recover their kingdom by the conquest of the Sultan, who then held it in subjection.

Some of the more sensible among the Jews, saw that such folly could lead only to their own destruction, and therefore they condemned Tzevi and his forerunner, to be put to death as impostors; but they went off to Constantinople: the Jews there had, however, been warned not to listen to them, and they therefore proceeded to Smyrna.

Here Tzevi received presents from the Jews of many countries; and although the Jewish Council at Smyrna condemned him as an impostor, his party was too numerous and powerful for any active steps to be taken against him. At length Tzevi having, as he said, received the command of God to do so, went again to Constantinople, where, by the Sultan's orders, he was seized and cast into prison; but this event did not in any way shake the faith of his followers, who firmly believed that it was not in the Sultan's power to put him to death.

When he was questioned by the Sultan's ministers, Tzevi declared that he had only called himself the Messiah, because his nation had forced him to do so: his life was therefore spared, and although he was kept in prison, all who chose were allowed to visit him. He remained a prisoner for some months, visited by the infatuated Jews from all parts, who still persisted in looking upon him as the Messiah; but as the Turks made all these Jews pay for the privilege of visiting Tzevi, they did not interfere with the attentions and honours paid to him. In the height of his fame he was visited by a learned Jew from Poland, who wanted to be admitted in some manner to share his honours: this, Tzevi was by no means inclined to allow, and the two men quarrelled. In revenge, the Polish Jew told the Sultan that Tzevi was a dangerous impostor, who was plotting to overthrow the Turkish dominion: upon this, the Sultan ordered that he should be set up as a mark for his archers to aim at, and that if he escaped unwounded, it would be a proof that he was not an impostor. Tzevi naturally had no mind to submit to such a trial of his truth, and therefore he at once confessed himself to be an impostor; and when he found that this was not now enough to save his life, he became a Mahometan, declaring that he had long wished to do so. This step filled his followers with grief and horror.

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Tzevi lived for many years at Constantinople, and became a learned and zealous Mahometan: he still declared himself to be the appointed deliverer of the Jews, but told them that he should not be able to prevail with the Almighty to restore them as a nation to the Holy Land, until they gave up the Law of Moses and followed that of Mahomet, as he had done. Multitudes did actually, in consequence, go to Constantinople, and there declare themselves to be followers of the false prophet Mahomet. By this means, Tzevi hoped to keep his influence over the Jews, and at the same time remain in favour with the Turks; but all his impiety and wickedness soon met with just punishment, for, for some cause or other, he was beheaded by order of the Sultan.

During the eighteenth century, the condition of the Jews improved greatly throughout Europe. No more dreadful persecutions took place; and though the prejudices of the people often led them to treat the Jews with contempt and ridicule, and to annoy them in many ways, still the laws of the different countries in which they lived, did more or less, protect the Hebrew race from real injuries and violence. In the middle of the eighteenth century there were nine synagogues in Rome, and also an academy for the instruction of youth: the Jews in this city seem to have exercised some authority over their brethren in other parts of Italy, who consulted them upon all important matters, and paid great respect to their advice. There are now great numbers of Jews in Rome, who are all obliged to dwell together in one part of the city, called the Ghetto.

The King of Naples, in the eighteenth century, granted such great privileges to the Jews, as to make the Roman Catholics very uneasy; but in spite of the remonstrances of the clergy, he persevered in this course, until the Jews, by their ill conduct, forced him to make a change.

In Spain and Portugal during this century, there were a great many Jews who, according to the permission granted them by the Talmud, *pretended* to be Christians, and as such, filled various offices in the state, and even performed the functions of priests in the Roman Catholic Church. Outwardly they were zealous Roman Catholics; inwardly they were Jews: so that it has been said, that whenever a house was more than usually furnished with crucifixes, images of the Virgin and of the Saints, relics and lamps, the inhabitants were sure to be Israelites in heart. By pretending great zeal for the Christian religion which they detested, these dissemblers generally escaped detection; though from time to time some of them did fall into the hands of the Inquisition.

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Jews can now live openly and unmolested in Spain and Portugal: they claim to be descended from the tribe of Judah, and declare that many of their ancestors went into those countries, at the time of the captivity, more than two thousand years ago! For these reasons, the Spanish and Portuguese Jews think themselves superior to those in other countries, and will not allow of marriages with them. The daughter of a Portuguese Jew having married a Jew of Berlin, the parents of the bride put on mourning for her as if she had been dead, which she was to them, as they never would see or hear of her again: they renounced her for ever.

After the revolution in France towards the end of the eighteenth century, when the king Louis the Sixteenth was murdered, the Jews were allowed all the privileges of citizens, on condition of taking an oath of obedience to the Government of the country. Their numbers then increased

amazingly in France.

In Germany also, during this century, the Jews gained many privileges from the Emperors. In short, the children of Israel were now everywhere protected by the laws, though they were still often robbed of their property, ridiculed and scoffed at, and employed in the lowest work.

At Frankfort, as in Rome, the Jews rich and poor, are all obliged to live in one quarter of the town: this consists of a long street, with high walls at the backs of the houses, to separate them from those parts in which the Christians dwell.

Zealous Christians have often formed plans for the conversion of the Jews; not, as formerly, by violence, but in a manner more suitable to the spirit of the Gospel; that is, by endeavouring to convince them that Jesus Christ was indeed the Messiah prophesied of in the Holy Scriptures, and that they must look for no other, until in the end of the world He shall come again in glory, to judge both the quick and the dead. These efforts have met with some little success, but still there are an immense number of Jews. One of these converts to Christianity in the middle of the eighteenth century, was a young man named Moses Marcus, whose parents, rich Jews of London, had him carefully instructed in Hebrew and Chaldee, and in all the learning of their people. When he was old enough, he was sent from England to finish his education at Hamburg, and there became acquainted with some clergymen of what was called the Reformed Church,—that is, a branch of the Church which had given up many of the doctrines and practices of the Church of Rome. With these clergymen, Marcus frequently talked of the difference between the religion of the Christians and that of the Jews. By their advice he studied the Scriptures of the New Testament, and became thereby convinced that Jesus Christ was indeed the Messiah. Mean time the father of Marcus had been to India, and when he returned to England he sent for his son, then about twenty years old. On his arrival, the young man at once told his father of the change which had taken place in his religious feelings and opinions. His father received this intelligence with the greatest displeasure, and spared neither threats nor promises to induce the young man not to desert the synagogue. But the faith of Marcus had been strengthened by conversation with clergymen of the Church of England, and therefore, disregarding all threats and promises, he persevered, even at the risk of his life, and was baptized: soon afterwards, he published a work explaining his reasons for becoming a Christian; pointing out the fulfilment of prophecy in the person of Jesus Christ; and showing how many absurdities and contradictions were contained in the Talmud.

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CHAPTER XVI.—CONCLUSION.

OF late years many privileges have been granted to the Jews in England, and many societies have also been formed, for the purpose of trying to prove to them from their own Scriptures, that the promised Messiah, *has* accomplished His work, and that the Christian religion should now take the place of the Jewish Dispensation,—that the two are but in fact, only two parts of one religion,—that the Jewish Dispensation, the Law, the Covenant of Works, was designed to prepare mankind for the Coming of the Messiah,—and that, as that event has taken place, we are now living under the Christian Dispensation, the Gospel, the Covenant of Grace. Some have believed; but many, alas! believe not, and still cling to their old faith.

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At the present time, no persecution is carried on against the Hebrew race, and Jews are to be found in all parts of the world, having free liberty to observe the rites and ceremonies of their own religion, as far as they can do so. Their manners and customs, and their mode of observing the ceremonies of their religion, differ in different countries; but all agree in denying that Jesus Christ was the Messiah.

One thing we must remark about the higher class of Jews in the present day—they are very charitable, not to their own people only, but also to Christians, helping even to support Christian schools.

It is said that there is in these days a growing feeling amongst the Jews, that the Messiah must have come unobserved by them. Let us pray, that through this feeling, they may be led to see and acknowledge, that Jesus of Nazareth is indeed that Messiah. Great efforts have been made, and are still being made, for the conversion of the Jews, but with little success at present. The time is not yet come for them to be brought into the fold, and made one flock with the Christians, under one Shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord.

But the time *will* come, when by some means or other, the Lord God Almighty will do this thing, for the Scriptures contain very many prophecies as to the restoration of the Children of Israel to the favour of God. The Scripture predictions of future happiness for the Jews, *will* as surely be fulfilled, as those *have been*, which foretold the miseries that have fallen upon the once chosen people of God.

The whole history of this remarkable nation, the chosen people of God, warns us in a most forcible manner of the evil of sin, which made the Almighty at last cast off the people whom He had so loved, and whose sins He had so long borne with. Let us learn from this, that sin persisted in will bring destruction upon any people; though, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, those who repent of it and forsake it, shall be forgiven.

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The history of the Jews gives also the clearest proofs of the truth of prophecy.

To go no further than Moses, let us see how exactly his words have been accomplished in the sufferings of the Jews. His prophecies, fulfilled in part when the children of Israel and Judæa were carried into captivity, also describe most truly the circumstances of the Jews, since the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, A.D. 72, put a final end to their existence as a nation.

Moses says, "And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people from one end of the earth even to the other." In the sketch which has been given of the Jews, we have read of them as being found in all parts of the known world.

Again, their condition, as described by Moses, "Thou shalt only be oppressed and spoiled evermore," exactly agrees with all that has been said of them. We have seen that, in the East as well as in the West, they have been continually "oppressed" by the cruel laws and heavy taxes of the rulers of the various countries in which they sought refuge, as well as by the violence of the people, who have repeatedly "oppressed" them in every way, robbed them, "and spoiled" them of all their possessions. Again Moses says, "The Lord will make thy plagues wonderful, even great plagues, and of long continuance." No people have ever suffered so much as the Jews: their "plagues," or calamities, have indeed been wonderfully great, and of "long continuance," carried on, as we have seen, with little intermission through 1,700 years.

Some of the calamities inflicted upon the Jews were especially foretold; for instance, "Thy sons and thy daughters shall be given unto another people"; and "Thou shalt be mad for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see." We have read that the children of the unhappy Jews were cruelly taken from them by force, and "given to another people," to be educated as Christians. Their despair on this and other occasions, when they saw that their children were likely to fall into the hands of their enemies, drove them to madness; and in their frenzy and despair, they often destroyed their families and themselves. They were indeed made "mad," by the sight which their eyes had seen.

Again Moses tells them, "Thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb and a by-word among all nations, whither the Lord shall lead thee." The amazing sufferings of the Jews, and their existence through them; their obstinate attachment to their own religion; and the manner in which they have constantly believed in impostors declaring themselves to be the Messiah,—must ever be an "astonishment" to all who read their history: and, whether justly or unjustly, their avarice, usury, and hard-heartedness, *did* everywhere become a "proverb." Even now, if any person is peculiarly avaricious and miserly, it is not unusual to hear his neighbours say of him, "Oh, he is quite a Jew,"—meaning that he has those bad qualities ascribed to the children of Israel. In short, the name of Jew has been a "by-word," or term of reproach, signifying all that is bad; and the treatment of the poor creatures has been in accordance with such notions. Then again, rulers have forced them to wear marks on their clothes, and have made their condition as low and disgraceful as possible: the people have insulted and abused them, and treated them rather as brutes than as fellow creatures. Pagans, Mahometans, and, sad to say, Christians also, have alike persecuted them; making their very name a "proverb" and a "by-word," in every part of the world whither they have been scattered.

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That any Jews should be left, after all that this persecuted race has gone through, must ever appear truly wonderful. They have, as we have read, been massacred by thousands, and exposed to privations and sufferings, which might have blotted out their name from the face of the earth; yet they still exist. Let us once more refer to Moses, for the reason of this wonderful circumstance. "And yet ... when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them: for I am the Lord their God."

These words, and these only, explain *why* their unprecedented sufferings have, contrary to all human expectation, failed to "*destroy*" the Jews "*utterly*."

The prophet Jeremiah also, in regard to the Jews, says, "I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee; though I make a full end of all the nations whither I have scattered thee, yet I will not make a full end of thee." Since the Jews were first scattered amongst all nations, great changes have taken place amongst the kingdoms of the earth; old empires have been utterly destroyed, and new ones have risen in their place; a "full end" has been made to many of the Eastern nations, amongst whom the Jews were scattered; most, if not all, the nations of Europe have changed their masters, and become, as it were, new nations: but amidst all these changes, the race of Israel has ever remained a distinct people, a nation without a country, "a homeless race," clinging to the religion, laws, and customs of their forefathers.

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Many prophecies there are, pointing to great blessings still to come upon the Jews; and, as has been already said, they *will* come as surely as the miseries foretold, have done: *how* and *when* these things will be, it is not for us to know, until the Lord shall perform his work of mercy, and take His chosen people again into favour.

Mean time the exact fulfilment of prophecy, as shown by their history, has ever been regarded as one of the strongest proofs of the truth of the Christian religion: thus through the dispensation of the Almighty, the Jews have been made the means of strengthening the faith of others in those blessed Gospel truths, which unhappily for themselves, they still refuse to believe.

It only remains for us to pray for the conversion and salvation of the Jews; and to ask God to pour out upon us the help of the Holy Spirit, that we may so truly believe all the articles of the

Christian faith, as to practise the duties which the Gospel sets before us, and act always as the servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose followers and disciples we became at our baptism.

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