

THE HOPE OF ISRAEL

A. M. STONEY

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CORRECTION

PAGE 196

“ELIZABETH” SHOULD READ “ANNA”

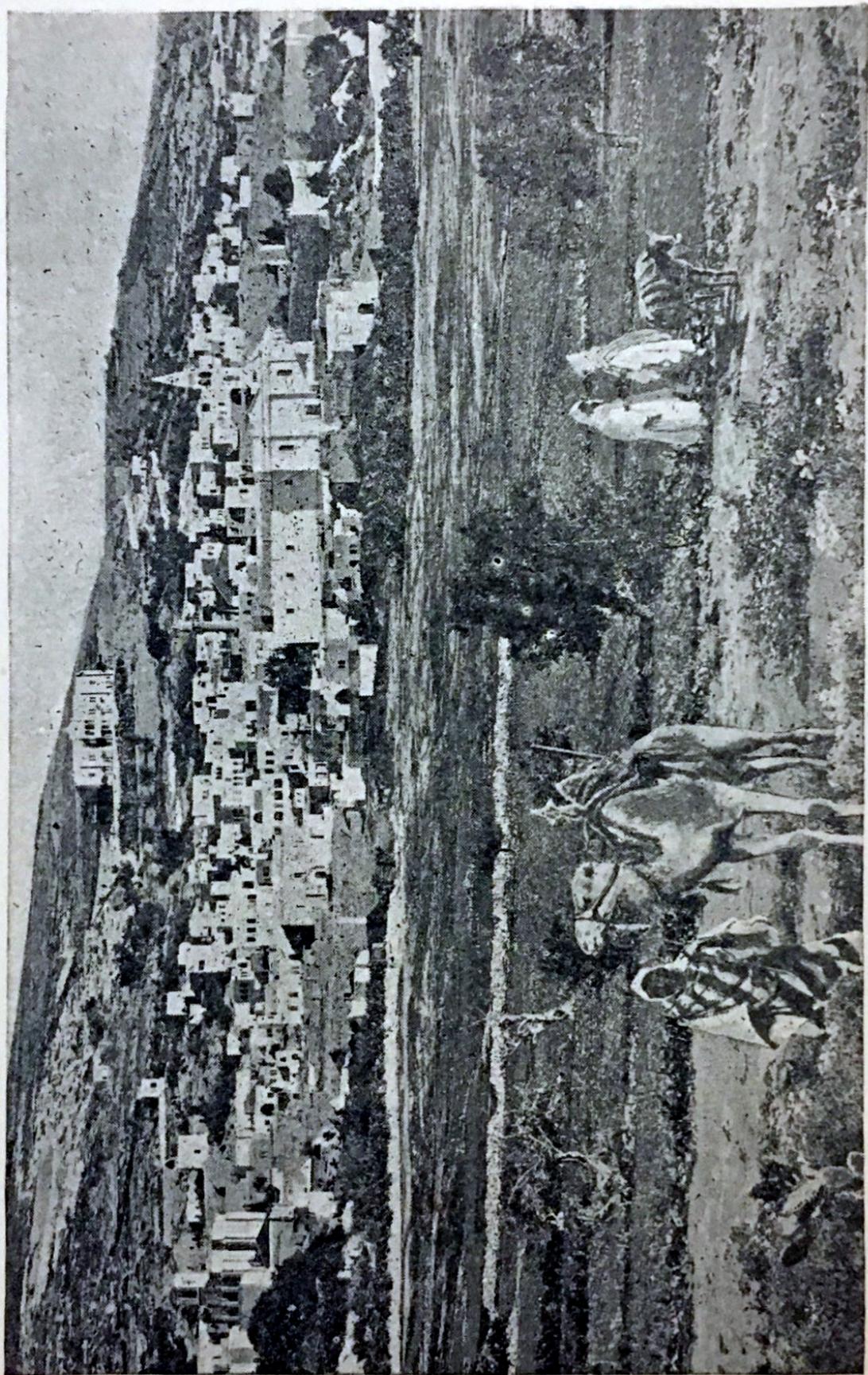
THE HOPE OF ISRAEL

SIMPLE LESSONS ON THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

“God . . . hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, Whom He hath appointed Heir of all things.”

BY
A. M. STONEY

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Photo, Bonfils.

NAZARETH.

LESSONS ON THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.

MATTHEW I.

DID you ever think that God had a Book ? There are many names in God's Book. Hard names to read, perhaps you think. But it is a very wonderful thing that God should have a Book, and that He should put down the names of men, and women, and even of little children in His Book. But there is One Name in His Book that is greater than any other name. Would you like to know that name ? It is Jesus Christ, the Son of David, and the Son of Abraham. But you say, Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Quite true, so He is. He came from God and He went to God. He came into this world to be a man ; and when God counts up His people, He writes down the name of His own beloved Son, to show that every good thing that He had ever promised

to men would all come true in Jesus Christ as Son of David and Son of Abraham.

Abraham was God's friend. God called him away from his own country and his own people, and even from his father's house, that He might show him what a blessed thing it is to be the friend of God. God treated Abraham like a friend. He told him what He was going to do. Think of God telling a secret to a man! And He gave a beautiful reason for doing so; He said, I know him, that he will command his children after him. Abraham loved God himself, and he taught his children to obey God. What a happy thing that a father should get a blessing because his children were obedient!

The first promise God gave to Abraham was that God would bless him and that he would be great. It is a wonderful thing to be great with God! Abraham had nothing in this world but what God gave him. He would not even take a shoestring from a king! Yet he was great. God promised him a son, and Isaac was the child of promise. God said his children should be like the stars of heaven and like the sand on the seashore. A heavenly

family and an earthly family would all be called the children of Abraham. All kinds of people who know God would be called after the man who left his own country, and people, and father's house. He was a man who turned away from idols to serve the living and true God. And God taught Abraham one great secret, for He told him that Jesus would come into this world, and Abraham rejoiced to think of that day. David was a son of Abraham, and God made him king over His people Israel. God also made David great, and He promised him that his son, and his son's sons should sit on his throne after him. So they did for a great many years, until they were unfaithful to their own true God, and then He allowed the Gentiles to rule over them. The Holy Spirit taught David that God would send His Son, and David wrote beautiful psalms about Him. He called Jesus the King of Glory. When He sits on His throne, the whole earth will be full of His glory. All the names in this chapter are given to us to show that Joseph was the true heir to David.

But the Romans were ruling over Israel.

They had a king of their own, named Herod. He was not one of the children of Israel. He was an enemy to God's people. It showed how sadly God was displeased with His people that He allowed the Romans to rule over them. But when the time came for God to keep His promise to Abraham and to David, He sent an angel one night to Joseph. He spoke to him in a dream. The angel called him "Joseph, son of David," and he told him that Mary would have a son, and Joseph was to call His name Jesus, because He would save His people from their sins. God's prophet had foretold many years before, that a virgin would have a son, and He should be called Emmanuel, which means, God with us. How wonderful that God should choose to be with men; and that He should come into this world and be seen as a baby in His mother's arms. When Joseph awoke from his sleep, he did what the angel told him. He took Mary home, and God gave her a little son, and Joseph called Him Jesus, which means, Jehovah is Saviour. God was come into this world. But He did not come as a Judge, to punish people for their sins. He came as Saviour, to save His people from

their sins. What joyful news it was to all those who wished to be saved from their sins ! Was it not joyful news to everybody ? Alas, no ! Some did not want God's King, and they did not want God's Saviour !

MATTHEW II.

WHILE Herod was king in Israel's country, Jesus was born at Bethlehem. That was the city of David. Did they make great rejoicings in Bethlehem that God's promise to king David had come true ? No, they had no room for the Son of David in Bethlehem's city. He had only a manger for His cradle. Was no one glad that Jesus was born ? Yes, there were some expecting Him to come, and God told His secret to those who would be glad. Some wise men came to Jerusalem ; they had come a long way, from the East, and they said : Where is the King of the Jews that has been born ? These wise men were Gentiles ; they lived far away from Israel's country, but they were wise ; they looked up, they watched the heavens. They had heard that a star should come out of Jacob, and they said, We have seen His star in the East, and we have come to worship Him. Strange thing the people of Jerusalem did not know that their King was born ! They did not see the star. They were

looking down, full of their own affairs. They were the foolish ones, who did not hear the voice of wisdom. God gives wisdom to the wise. He tells them excellent things. God made the star to shine in the East, and He taught the wise men what it meant. They set off at once to see for themselves, and they wished to worship the child that was born. But what did the people of Jerusalem say ? Oh ! they were troubled at the news. Herod was troubled and all Jerusalem with him. Herod sent for all the chief priests and the learned people and he asked them to tell him where the Christ should be born. Those religious men quote the words of the Bible quite correctly ; they say, In Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, for God had said, Out of thee shall come a Governor who shall rule My people Israel. No wonder Herod was troubled, because he was governor. He ruled over Israel. But how sad that they were content to have it so. None of them went to Bethlehem to see Him.

But Herod called the wise men to him secretly and sent them to Bethlehem, and said they were to find out all about the

little child whom they called the King of the Jews, and they were to come back and tell him. Herod pretended that he wanted to go and worship the child. The wise men went on the road to Bethlehem, and the star which they had seen in the East was there before their eyes, shining down on the spot where the little child was. And when they saw the star they rejoiced with exceeding great joy, and having come into the house they saw the little child and Mary His mother. They fell down and worshipped Him, and opened their treasures and gave Him offerings of gold and frankincense and myrrh. How beautiful to think of the joy of those Gentiles, that God had visited His people. It reminds us of the Queen of Sheba, who brought treasures to Solomon. She came a long way to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and she said how much God loved His people to give them a wise king like him. Now God was giving His own dear Son to be the King of the Jews, and to save His people from their sins.

But it was the Gentiles who brought presents to Jesus, not the Jews. The great ones of Jerusalem took no notice of Him. They did

not rejoice at His birth. God told the wise men in a dream not to go back to Herod ; so they went to their own country by a different way. God looks into every one's heart, and He knew that Herod was troubled, and that he did not really want to worship Jesus. An angel came to Joseph in a dream and told him to go away out of Bethlehem, and to take the little child and His mother and flee into Egypt, because Herod would seek the little child to destroy Him. So Joseph got up in the night and fled into Egypt as the angel said, and they stayed there until Herod died.

When this wicked king found that the wise men did not come back to him, he was greatly enraged, and he sent orders to Bethlehem that all the little boys who were less than two years old were to be killed. Cruel, wicked man ! It was a terrible time of mothers weeping and wailing, making great lamentation for their children. They would not be comforted because they had lost their little ones. How those mothers must have wished that Jesus was King instead of that cruel Herod. But they did not know or believe that He was there in their very city. They did not weep

for Him. Yet the angels were watching over Him and telling Joseph where to go. As soon as Herod was dead the angel came again to Joseph and spoke to him by a dream. He told him to go out of Egypt, and to take the little child and His mother into the land of Israel. God had a reason for letting Him go down to Egypt, because He had said: "Out of Egypt have I called My Son." When the children of Israel were in hard bondage in Egypt, God said to Pharaoh, "Let My son go, that He may serve Me." God called Israel His son, and He called them out of Egypt and showed them the way into the promised land. Now Jesus was called out of Egypt, like His people Israel.

Joseph came into the land of Israel, but he was afraid to go into Judea, because a son of the wicked Herod was king there. So God told him in a dream to go into Galilee, and he stayed in a town called Nazareth. It was a despised place. But the prophets had said that Jesus should be called a Nazarene. The people of Jerusalem made no lamentation when God's holy child Jesus had to flee out of Israel's country—none took it to heart. But

if He was unknown on earth, the angels of heaven were watching over Him. They knew how precious He was to God. He was "seen of angels." They kept their eyes upon Him. They had always been God's messengers to men. They had often come to the world before. They had watched over other little children, and told God's plans about them. It must have been a strange thing to those holy angels, that the great ones of this world should seek to destroy the One who had come from God to do them good. And He came in such a sweet, gentle, humble way, as a little child, inviting men to love Him! Those proud men at Jerusalem boasted that they had God's laws and the writings of His prophets—they were like signposts all along the way, always pointing to Jesus. Yet they did not understand the signposts—they did not expect Him. The prophets spoke of Him as the coming One, the Deliverer of Israel, the Star of Jacob. They said He would be like a shepherd leading his sheep into green pastures and beside still waters. So Jesus would lead His people into God's ways and show them how to please God all the day long.

For hundreds of years God was speaking by His prophets. But now the One they spoke of was come. Emmanuel was there among them. It was God with us, and now God was speaking by His Son. If anyone wanted to know about God, he must go to Jesus. But you say, What can I learn from that little child ? You learn that God is love, and you learn the way God loves. He spared not His only Son—the Son of His love ; but sent Him into this world for us, that we might know God in Him. It grieved the great and blessed God that His people did not know Him ; they were gone out of the way, out of His ways. They went their own ways and did what pleased themselves. God was not in all their thoughts. Jesus came that we might know God, and He began at the beginning, where we all have to begin our lives, as little weak helpless children in our mothers' arms. God was making Himself known in a child, doing just what His mother told Him. Jesus was a perfectly obedient child ; He never wished to disobey His mother. The law of God said, Obey your parents, and Jesus did so with His whole heart. No one

could show what God is but One who is God. Moses could teach the law of God, but Jesus lived it. He lived down here to do the will of God. He always knew what was God's will. As a child Jesus showed what was pleasing to God in a child. As a man He showed what was pleasing to God in a man.

Know'st thou, my child, that lowly One
Who came to do God's will—
Jesus, who left the throne above
His purpose to fulfil ?

Jesus, who came as Light and Love,
To make His Father known ;
He bore the judgment due to thee,
He bore it all alone !

He had a secret dear to Him
Which no one else could tell—
The secret of His Father's love,
Which He knew, oh, so well !

From all eternity the Son
His Father's thoughts had shared,
And He knew all the plans that Love
And Mercy had prepared.

Mercy for little ones like thee,
High as the heavens above ;
Eternal life e'en in Himself,
In boundless, endless love.

MATTHEW III.

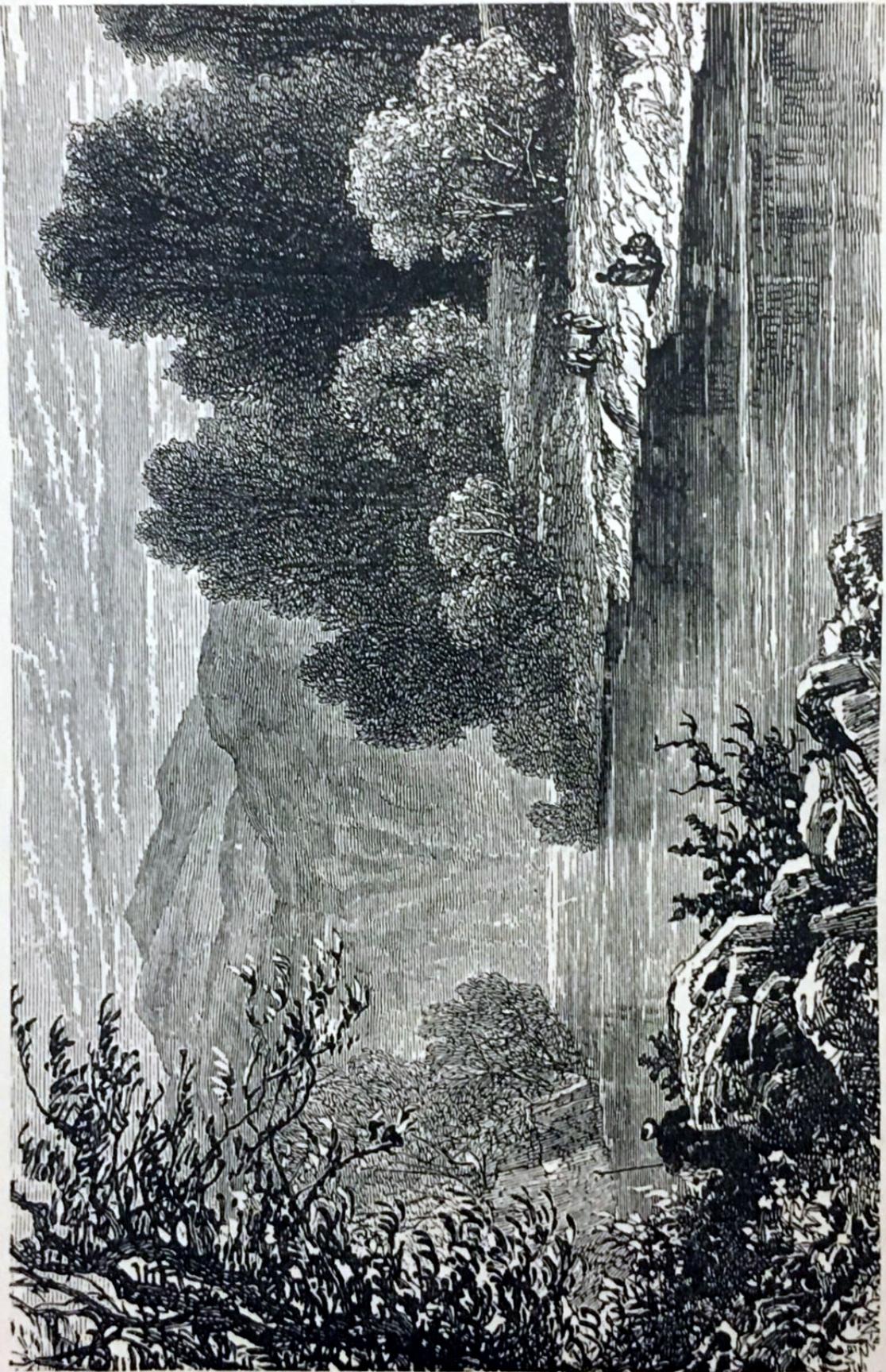
IN those days—that is, while Jesus was at Nazareth—John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea. Perhaps you think that was a strange place to preach in, away from the dwellings and occupations of men. It was a strange place and the reason for it was a sorrowful one. It showed that the Jews were not expecting their King. But the prophet Isaiah had said there would be a voice crying in the wilderness, and saying, Prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight. John was this Voice. He was a man sent from God to prepare the people of Israel for the coming One. What did he preach? It was a short sermon, but it had a tremendous meaning. He said, Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens is drawn nigh. What is the kingdom of the heavens? It is the rule of heaven. If the King is in heaven, it must be the kingdom of heaven. God said, Heaven is My throne and earth is My footstool. But Jesus came to the earth to be King of the Jews.

He had a right to sit on David's throne. True, He came to His own people, but they did not receive Him. Not one of the great men of Jerusalem said, Hail ! to the Lord's Anointed, or, God save the King. But God cannot be stopped in any thought of His, and if the Jews did not open their hearts to their Emmanuel, heaven was open to Him. The King might go back to heaven and leave the kingdoms of the earth to wicked men like Herod. John preached that it was near. The effect of the rule of heaven is to make God's people strangers on earth. So John was a stranger ; his dress, his food, the way he lived and spoke all showed quite plainly that he did not belong to the earthly kingdom in Judea. In the palaces of kings people wear fine clothes and eat dainty food. But John was clothed in camel's hair, and his food was locusts and wild honey, things he found in the wilderness—there was nothing of Herod's court about him ; and he himself was but a voice, calling in the wilderness and saying, Repent, that is, they were to be sorry for their sins and turn to God, as those who were expecting Jesus, so that He would find them ready for Him when He came. The

wicked man had to forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and God would abundantly pardon.

A great crowd of people went out to the wilderness to John, and he baptized them in the river Jordan, while they confessed their sins. Why did he baptize them? Baptism meant washing with water to repentance. It showed that they wished to be washed from their evil ways, and to be a people prepared for the Lord. We read in the Old Testament that when God had something to say to His people, He said, Wash yourselves and be clean, and wash your clothes, and be ready to hear what God is going to say to you. It is always God's way with us. We must stop doing what is wrong, and then He shows us what is right. Cease to do evil, learn to do well. Suppose a child is playing with mud, and his hands and clothes are dirty with it, and I say to him, I have a beautiful new toy for you, but you are a disobedient child, and you are a dirty child, I cannot possibly give my nice present to you. Suppose the child says, Oh, I am very sorry, and he runs away and gets his hands washed and his clothes

changed, and says, Do forgive me. He has repented, he has turned from his dirty play. He is able to enjoy what I give him, with clean hands and a forgiven heart. That is like what John wished those people to do. John came in the way of righteousness, to teach them what was right. He taught them to speak truth with their neighbours, not only with their lips but with their hearts. They were not to have unkind thoughts in their hearts. This Great One who was coming would be able to see into their hearts. Jesus would know who spoke the truth and who did not. The religious men might say: We are the children of Abraham. But that was no good to them unless they had the faith of Abraham. They might look like fine trees, but if trees do not yield good fruit, the gardener cuts them down; they are only fit to be put into the fire. John said that he was baptizing with water to repentance, but the One who was coming would baptize with the Holy Spirit. He would be much greater than John. His presence would settle everything. John said he was not worthy even to carry His shoes. For John knew that Jesus was God's King.



ON THE JORDAN.

Jesus knew all that John was saying about Him, and He knew that many were going out to be baptized. So one day Jesus came from Galilee to the river Jordan to be baptized. John was distressed that Jesus should come to him to be baptized, so he said, I have need to be baptized by Thee, and comest Thou to me ? But Jesus said it was to fulfil all righteousness. John understood that. Jesus saw His repentant people there. He knew they were expecting Him to come, to save them from their sins. He would be the companion of all who feared God ; He took His place among them that He might lead them in paths of righteousness. How His presence must have comforted them. His love and grace brought Him where sin brought them. The proud religious men at Jerusalem did not know what was going on at the Jordan. But the heavens knew it all, and as Jesus came up out of the water the heavens were opened to Him, and John saw the Spirit of God coming down like a dove and resting upon Jesus. What a sight that was ! But hark, there is a voice ; not now from the wilderness, but out of the opened heavens ; not only speaking of Jesus as John did.

This voice speaks *to* Him. It says, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Jesus is proclaimed from the opened heavens as the Son of God. And not only that, but God had found a man on the earth that He could delight in. One who came to do God's will and knew how to do it perfectly. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit were all present at that moment, to be heard and seen by men on earth. There never was such a moment before. The heavens had never been thrown open to a man before. The Holy Spirit had never found a man that He could rest on till now. He used to come to men to comfort them, or to help them, but He could not stay with them as He stayed with Jesus. God called Himself the God of Abraham, and He said David was a man after His own heart, yet He never found His pleasure in a man till Jesus came.

MATTHEW IV.

AS soon as it was proclaimed from heaven that God had found His pleasure in Jesus, the Holy Spirit took Him into the wilderness to be tempted by the Devil. Why was that? Because the Devil is man's great enemy, he is the enemy of our souls, he is our spiritual enemy. The Spirit of God led Jesus away from men into the wilderness, where He was alone for forty days and forty nights. The wilderness was a desert place; wild beasts were there, and there was no food, no comfort. The Spirit of God led Him into conflict with the great spiritual enemy of man. Jesus allowed Himself to be tempted by the Devil, that He might show how completely He overcame him by the word of God. He could say to God, "By the words of Thy lips I have kept Me from the paths of the destroyer." Jesus could have commanded the Devil to go away. But He did not do so until he had finished all his temptations. The Devil knew that Jesus was hungry, and he came as the tempter and

said, " If Thou art the Son of God, speak that these stones may become bread." The Devil always says " if " when he speaks of God, because he wants to make us not quite sure. He said to Jesus, " If " you are the Son of God. He knew that Jesus had so truly taken the form of a man that He was hungry. But he wanted to make Him doubt God's love to Him. It was like saying, " If " God is so pleased with you, how is it that He lets you be hungry and all alone here in this terrible wilderness ? Jesus gave him a very simple answer, but a very touching one when we think who He was that said it. He said : " It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word which comes out of the mouth of God." Jesus did not say : I am the Son of God, and I could command manna to come down from heaven if it were God's will for Me to do so. But Jesus said, I am a man, an obedient, patient man. I am come to do God's will. I will only obey Him. Not all the hunger or loneliness in this poor world will make me doubt the love of God. The Devil made the first man doubt God and disobey God. Adam was not in a wilderness but in a beautiful garden,

with all kinds of fruit that were good for food. Yet he took the only one that he was told not to take. His wife gave it to him and he ate, not because he was hungry, but because he liked it !

Then the Devil tried another kind of temptation. I think he pretended to be religious. He took Jesus to the holy city and set him on a pinnacle of the Temple. The Devil hated the Temple because it was God's house, and he said to Jesus, " If Thou art the Son of God, cast Thyself down." Again he said " If," and he even dared to quote the words that the Holy Spirit had written about Jesus. He said, " It is written, He shall give His angels charge over Thee to keep Thee." The Devil can quote the words out of the Bible when it suits him to do so. But he always leaves out something that the Spirit of God is most careful to put in. Jesus answered, " Again it is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." God was His God. He would not tempt the God He loved and knew so well ; that means, He would not try if God meant what He said. Then the Devil tried another kind of temptation. He took Jesus to a very high mountain and

showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them. I suppose that was all their riches and power. And he said to Jesus, All these things I will give to you if you will fall down and worship me. Then Jesus said, "Get away, Satan, for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." Jesus called the Devil by his name Satan, which means adversary. He was against God, and he was against man. He proved himself the adversary in these three kinds of temptations. Now Jesus commanded him to go away, and he obeyed--he was a conquered enemy. Jesus overcame him by the words of God. Satan had not a word to say. He had turned other men against the God of mercy and of loving-kindness. He could always find some bit of selfishness in other men, and the Devil knows exactly how to tempt every one of us, with something that we wish for. He finds out our wishes and he is ready to give us what he calls the glory of this world, if we will give him the honour that is due to God only. The Devil could find nothing in Jesus to be tempted by. He found nothing in Him but patient obedience and

faithful love. He could not be tempted by Satan, but he showed that he was the adversary, always against us as God is always for us. Dear children, who read this wonderful story, think of that. Keep that one little sentence deep down in your hearts. God is for me. Satan is against me. It was terrible suffering to the holy mind of Jesus. It grieved Him to the heart to see how Satan had flattered and deceived the minds of men and turned them away from God. He taught men to do their own wills, and when we do our own wills Satan can do whatever he likes with us !

When the Devil went away, angels came and ministered to Jesus. God gave them charge concerning Him. Those ministers of His that do His pleasure, how gladly they came to minister to that blessed perfect Man.

At this time Jesus had been thirty years in this world. The whole life of Jesus expressed the truth about God. He could say, I am the Truth. He brought truth into this world, instead of the untruth that the Devil brought. Grace and truth came into the world in Him. All He said, and all He did, and all He was, expressed God's mind and will. Moses taught

God's law in words, but Jesus lived it. His life down here was not only to fulfil the words of the law, it was a great deal more. He lived to God, and with God, so that the Devil could find nothing in Him, and God found His delight in Him. Now Jesus was going to be God's servant in this world. He was anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power, and went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the Devil, for God was with Him. But the Holy Spirit tells us first the blessed sort of Man He was, before He tells us that He was God's Servant, to be for God ; not only to do His will, but to finish His work.

He began at Nazareth, where He was brought up, but they would not listen to His preaching there, though they called it gracious words. They cast Him out of their city, and Jesus went to Capernaum. He heard that Herod had shut up John in prison. Herod could not destroy Jesus, but he shut up in prison the man who was telling people about Jesus. Isaiah had said of the people who lived in the country beyond the Jordan, that they were sitting in darkness but they should see a great light. It was outside the land of Israel, Galilee of the

Gentiles. Israel refused God's messenger—John was in prison; and they refused God's King—Jesus was gone outside their country to preach the good news to the poor, to those who were oppressed and sorrowful, to them a light sprang up. Jesus said, Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn nigh. That is what John preached? Yes, Jesus took up his words as if to say, You may put My prophet in prison, but you will not silence the voice that calls you to repent and to look for a kingdom that is above all the kingdoms of this world and above all the oppression and misery of this world.

As Jesus walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers casting their net into the sea, for they were fishermen. Jesus said to them, Come after Me, and I will make you fishers of men. Immediately they followed Jesus! They did not wait to draw up their nets; they left all, and followed Him. Their names were Simon Peter and Andrew. A little further Jesus saw two others, James and John, who were sons of Zebedee; they were in the ship with their father mending their nets. Jesus called them, and they left their

ship and their father immediately and followed Jesus. I think they had all heard of Jesus from John the Baptist, and some of them had seen Him before this. For one day Andrew and another—perhaps the other was John, the son of Zebedee—were with John, when Jesus passed, and John, looking on Jesus as He walked, said, Behold the Lamb of God. These two did behold Him. They saw the great light that Isaiah spoke of, that light had sprung up in their hearts, and they followed Jesus. He saw them and said, What seek ye? They said, Teacher, where dwellest Thou? Jesus said, Come and see. They went and saw where He abode, and stayed with Him that day. It was a new day to those two disciples. It was the beginning of a new way for them. It was the first day of the rule of the kingdom of the heavens in their hearts. They had found Him of whom the prophets had spoken. He was God's Anointed One, the Son of God, the King of Israel. He came to where they were. He called them by their names and said, Follow Me. He chose them to be with Him. What could they do but follow Him? What company for those poor fishermen, to be with One

they could call Teacher, who could teach them about the kingdom of the heavens. They left all they had in this world to be with Him ; no more to toil for fish, no more to try to mend their broken nets.

Jesus went all round Galilee, teaching in the synagogues and preaching the glad tidings of the kingdom, and He healed every disease and every sickness among the people. His fame spread through the whole of Israel's country, and they brought to Him all who were ill and afflicted in their minds or their bodies, and He healed them all. That was a picture of what the Kingdom of heaven would do for every one who came under that blessed rule. God had said : With blessing I will bless. Those who came to Jesus got the blessing ; those who did not come missed it. But when they heard His fame for healing diseases, a great crowd came from all the country round.

He did kind things so kindly,
It seemed His heart's delight
To make poor people happy
From morning until night.

MATTHEW V.

WHEN Jesus saw the crowds He went up to a high place and sat down, and His disciples came to Him. He had told them about the kingdom, now He was going to teach them the sort of people who would belong to this kingdom. He began by saying: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. How astonished they must have been! Men do not like people who are poor in spirit, people who let themselves be pushed off the footpath and take it patiently. Men despise people like that, and yet Jesus says: Theirs is the kingdom of heaven. The kingdoms of the earth would not take much account of a man who was poor in spirit. Then Jesus said that people who mourn were blessed, for they should be comforted. How sweet that was to some of those mourners; your very sorrow makes you blessed, because of the heavenly comforting that you will get. Then, Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth. I suppose a meek man is something

like one who is poor in spirit; he gets the blessing of the kingdom of heaven now, and he will inherit the earth by and by. Jesus was teaching His disciples the kind of people who would get the blessings of the kingdom of heaven. Those who longed for righteousness, who were merciful, who were pure in heart, and those who were peace-makers. They would be like what Jesus was Himself. So the men of this world would persecute them, they would say wicked things against them for Jesus' sake, because they belonged to Him. But they must rejoice and be glad because there was a great reward for them in the heavens. Jesus points them to heaven for everything. On earth they would have trouble and sorrow, but He comforted them by the hope of a great reward in heaven. The men who did not love God had always persecuted His prophets. Now they would persecute Jesus, and all those who followed Him would be persecuted for His sake. But for all that, these poor persecuted people were the salt of the earth. What did that mean? Salt is a thing that is good in itself, and it keeps other things good. If the salt gets bad, it is good for nothing. But

Jesus meant that His disciples and those people who would get all these blessings that He was teaching them about, they were the salt of the earth. As long as they were down here there would be something here for God. If they were righteous and merciful and meek and lowly, like those who are under the rule of heaven, they would be like salt, keeping other people from bad things as well as themselves. You know salt kills the weeds that grow on our walks. It keeps them clean.

Jesus also said they were the light of the world. Those who had seen the great light, and in whose hearts the light had sprung up, would give light themselves to this world. Jesus was the Great Light. He was the Light of God. He came down from heaven that He might declare the truth about God. And Jesus lighted up all the little lights. It was His light they were to carry; so that this dark world would be able to see something of God, and to see what suits His kingdom. They were to let their lights shine so that men might see beautiful works that God's light could shine upon, and then men would glorify their Father in heaven. What a wonderful thing for those

fishermen to hear that they had a Father in heaven. Jesus came from His Father in heaven. His heart was full of heaven. His disciples had left all to follow Him. Now He wanted them to get their hearts full of heaven, so that they might know how much better off they were, and how great was their reward in heaven. As long as Jesus was in the world He was the Light of the world, and He was also the salt of the earth. No spot or stain could come on Him; no kind of evil could stay where He was. He was the light to show it, and He was the salt to keep it away.

Jesus said His disciples were to be like a city set on a hill, giving light to all the country around it. The light of Jesus cannot be hid, and each one was to be a lamp holding the light, that it might shine for all who were in the house. Jesus said, Do not think that I am come to set aside the law and the prophets. I am come not to set aside but to fill up all for God. Not one little word that God has ever said will pass away. It will all come true; and whoever does His commandments and teaches other people to do them, will be called great in the kingdom of the heavens. The children

of their Father in heaven would keep God's laws, but they would do more, because His heavenly grace was in their hearts. The law said, Thou shalt not kill; but Jesus said, You must not be angry, and you must not say Fool to your brother. And if anyone was going to offer a sacrifice to God, and his brother was offended with him, he must leave his gift before the altar and first go and be reconciled to his brother, and then he might offer his gift. God will not accept a gift from us if we are quarrelling with one another. No one can be in the blessing of the kingdom until he is at peace. So Jesus said: Make friends quickly with your enemy, because if not he may bring you to the judge and you may be put in prison. Jesus wanted the Jews to understand that God was speaking to them like that. They ought to come quickly to be reconciled with Him. He was reconciling the world to Himself in Jesus Christ. He was forgiving all their debts and sins, but if they did not come to Him quickly, they would lose the opportunity and they would have to pay the last farthing. Jesus said they ought to be so terribly in earnest about getting the blessings of the

kingdom, that if they were stopped by something pleasant to the eyes, it was better to pluck out their eyes than to be stopped, and if their right hand were a hindrance to them, it was better to cut it off. Eve saw that the forbidden fruit was "pleasant to the eyes," and she put out her "hand" and took it. Jesus was teaching them what small things may spoil the salt, or hide the light that showed they were under the rule of heaven, and that they had a Father in heaven.

Jesus said they must not swear. It was quite enough to say Yes and No, for God heard what they said. People used to say, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; that means, if you hurt me I may hurt you. But that was not the heavenly grace that Jesus taught them. He said, If a man strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also; and if he takes away your coat, let him take your cloak also. That is the sort of thing a meek man does. It is the grace that Jesus brought into the world, and Jesus says to a man like that, Never mind, you shall inherit the earth. It was said, Love your neighbour and hate your enemy; but Jesus said, Love your enemies and pray for

those who are unkind to you, that you may be the sons of your Father who is in the heavens. He makes His sun to shine on the evil and on the good, and He sends rain on the just and on the unjust. What a wonderful thing to have such a God for our example, so that a little child may say, I must be kind to those who are unkind to me, because that is like what my Father in heaven does. God loves His enemies. He is kind to those who do not deserve it. He says, I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy. He likes to show mercy, and He has a right to do so. He sent His own beloved Son into this world to prove His love to man. Many did not believe in Him. But those who did receive His Son, those who followed Him like the disciples, to them God gave the right to be called the children of God, and Jesus said, Be ye also perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect.

MATTHEW VI.

NOW these people who knew that they had a Father in heaven were always to remember that His eyes were looking down on them. Other people did good works for men to see, and the only reward they had was what men thought of them. Men thought they were good—that was their reward. They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. But the children of God were to do their good deeds in secret, for their Father in heaven to see, and He who can see in secret would reward them openly. Jesus said some made long prayers for men to hear. But if only men heard their prayers, they could only expect men's reward. They were like those of whom God said, They honour Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me. God looks into the hearts. He knows exactly what each one of us thinks of Him. So His children were to go into their chamber and shut the door, that they might be alone with God ; and then they were to pray to their Father who is in secret,

and their Father who sees in secret, would reward them openly. They need not make long prayers, for their Father knew what they wanted before they asked Him. Yet He likes His children to pray to Him. He likes us to know that He listens to our poor little prayers. He is so great and so high up in heaven, that we might think, "He could not hear a little child like me." But He does hear, and He does answer. Jesus taught His disciples how to pray, when they were in secret, with the door shut ; when no one else could hear what they said to God.

It was a short prayer, but it said all they wanted for that one day. God gives us everything for one day at a time. He gave His people manna in the wilderness for one day at a time ; and He gave them work to do for one day at a time, as the duty of every day required. So we have to pray to our Father in heaven every day, just for the day, and leave to-morrow till it comes. It is a beautiful little prayer that Jesus taught them. It begins, Our Father, who art in heaven. Hallowed be Thy name. The first and greatest wish they had was that the name of their Father

in heaven should be hallowed. What did that mean ? That it should be sacred, holy ; it was not to be made common. It was to be said with reverence and godly fear. It was a holy name. Thy kingdom come. They wished for that because then God's will would be done in earth as it is in heaven. God's name and God's will came first. Then they would pray about their own wants. Give us this day our daily bread. They do not pray for a great store or for money in the bank, but for just enough food for one day at a time, and their Father who knew what they wanted before they asked Him, gave them enough for the day. They could say, This is what our Father gives us, and they gave Him thanks for it. The last thing is, Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors ; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. If their heavenly Father forgave them, it would be easy to forgive other people, but if they did not forgive, they would not have the happiness of knowing that they were forgiven.

Those people who prayed to their Father in heaven did not need to lay up treasures on earth, where a little moth could destroy the

most beautiful things ; or where rust could make things not fit for use ; and where a thief might come and carry off their treasures. So Jesus said to them : Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven ; no moth, nor rust, nor thieves can come there ; and where your treasure is your heart will be. He taught them that the only happy thing was to have their whole hearts and hands and eyes taken up with what is in heaven. They could not do two things at the same time ; they could not serve God and their own selfishness at the same time. He said, Look at the birds of the heavens ; they do not sow or reap or make storehouses to lay up food for the winter days, and your heavenly Father feeds them. To the birds He is the great Creator ; to you He calls Himself Father ; and do you not think He cares a great deal more for you than for the little birds ? And look at the lilies how they grow ; they do not toil, they do not spin to make fine clothes ; and yet even Solomon in all his glory was not so beautifully clothed as they are. And again, Jesus said, Your heavenly Father knows all that you have need of ; you have to seek His kingdom, and to lay up His things for your

treasures ; and He will take care of you down here. He will do it so perfectly that you need not think of to-morrow. Your heavenly Father who takes care of you to-day, will do so to-morrow and the next day, and for ever and for ever.

MATTHEW VII.

JESUS taught those people who were seeking the kingdom of God, not to judge other people but to judge themselves. That is, if you think some one is doing what is wrong, ask yourself, Am I doing wrong ? Perhaps I am doing something worse than they ! God sees into our hearts and He knows when we feel that we have done wrong, and we have to confess it to Him ; and if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. Is the kingdom of God the same as the kingdom of heaven ? The kingdom of God is God's rule in your heart and in mine ; that is why Jesus said, Seek first the kingdom of God, and then all the blessings of the kingdom of heaven will be added to you. God is a cheerful Giver. He delights in giving, but He will not give His good gifts to those who do not value them. That is why He likes us to ask Him for things, to seek for them ; and He never disappoints those who are longing to find the good things of His kingdom. Jesus said, If a son asks his

father for some bread, will his father give him a stone ? Surely not. Then if men who are not good know how to give good gifts to their children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask Him ? He will give His very best things. In another place it is said that He will give the best thing of all, and that is His Holy Spirit. But here Jesus was showing them that the law and the prophets taught them to do to others as they would have others do to them. It was sorrowful to think that they had not kept the law, and they had not listened to the warnings of the prophets.

But there is a way that leads to life. It is a narrow way, and only those who are in earnest find it. They that seek shall find. God said, They that seek Me early shall find Me. And so it is as to His narrow way. People who are seeking one thing, leave the things their eyes are pleased with, or the things their hands can get, because they want to find what they are seeking for. Jesus said, Enter in by the narrow gate ; for there is another way that is very wide, and many go that way. It is an easy way. It does not want any seeking to

find it, but it leads to destruction. The narrow way is the way that leads to life. Some might pretend to be good, even by their dress, but it would be quite easy to see if they were going in the way of life, because they would be like the trees that had good fruit ; anyone can see a good tree or a bad tree by the sort of fruit it has on it. A thorn will not have grapes on it, and a thistle will not have figs. Thorns and thistles were what grew on the earth when Adam sinned, but all the trees of God were good for fruit. But how could people have good fruit ? By doing the will of My Father who is in heaven, Jesus said. If they did that, they would be like the good trees, for they would be doing what Jesus came to do so perfectly. He did it all His life down here, and He was teaching those who were with Him how to do as He did. To others, who chose the broad way, He would say : Depart from Me because you are doing your own will. Whoever hears My words and does them, is like a wise man who built his house upon a rock ; the rain came and the wind blew, but his house did not fall down, because it was built upon the rock. But those who heard the words of Jesus and did not do

them, would be like a foolish man who built his house upon the sand. We know how the sand runs away when the rain comes, and when the wind blows; and so a house built on sand would come down with a great fall. The crowds were astonished to hear what Jesus said. They felt that He taught them with authority, and not as the scribes did. The scribes were men who wrote down the laws and read them out to the people. What does authority mean? It means that Jesus had a right to speak these things. He spoke from Himself. He was the Truth, and He spoke what He was. His words were words of life and words of power. They were the expression of what He was as a man down here. And they were words which would keep His disciples in the way that leads to life, if they were like the wise man who heard His words and did them. They would be doing the will of their Father in heaven. They would choose the things that pleased Him, and that would be good fruit before Him.

When Jesus had finished these words about the kingdom of heaven, He came down from the mountain. Those words were all about

blessing. Jesus was pointing them to heaven and to their Father in heaven. He could speak with authority about the rule of heaven, and about His Father who was in heaven.

There is rest in the blessed yoke
That knows no will but His,
That learns from His path and the words
 He spoke,
What that loving patience is !

MATTHEW VIII.

WHEN Jesus came down from the mountain a leper came and worshipped Him. He was a man with a horrible disease. No one might come near a leper ; he was obliged to live alone, and if anyone met him, he had to cry, " Unclean, unclean " ; that meant, Keep away from me, or you will get the leprosy. This man said, Lord (he called Jesus Lord), if Thou wilt, Thou art able to cleanse me. He knew that no one but God could cleanse a leper. He knew that Jesus could do it, but he was not quite sure if He would. Jesus stretched out His holy hand and touched the leper ! He came near to him and said, I will, be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed ; in a moment all his dreadful sores disappeared and he was well. Jesus said, Tell no man, but go to the priest and take the offering that Moses commanded ; so that they would see that he had been a leper, but was now a cleansed leper. Jesus would not have them tell of Him. He hid Himself, but His works told who He

was—Jehovah the Saviour. None but He could touch the leper, or cleanse the terrible disease of sin. His action proved that He was Emmanuel. He could come near the sinner, but neither sin nor disease could touch Him. This man was a picture of the state of Israel. They were sinners, and they were suffering from the effects of their sins. It was an incurable disease; none but God could put away sin. But God provided a remedy. He sent His own beloved Son, and those who came to Him, like the leper, found that He would come near enough to touch them, and would say to them, Be clean !

When Jesus went into Capernaum, a Gentile soldier came to Him. He said, Lord, my servant is very ill and in great pain. Jesus said, I will come and heal him. The man said, I am not worthy for You to come into my house, but if You speak a word he will get well. He said, I am only a servant myself, and I say to the soldiers who are under me, Do this, and they do it. That poor Gentile knew that Jesus had authority; he called Him Lord; he knew that His word was with power. Jesus was surprised at his faith, and

He said to those who followed Him, I have not found such faith in Israel. But I say to you Israelites, that many shall come from the east and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of the heavens. But the sons of the kingdom shall be cast out into the outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. What did that mean? That they would be sorry when it was too late; they would weep and gnash their teeth with the painful feeling of what they had lost, and of how they had missed the blessing. God prepared a kingdom for those who chose the way that leads to life. But those who chose the broad road of their own will, would find it would end in an outside place, where there is darkness and weeping, and the kind of pain that people feel when they have missed their way, when they find that it is too late to choose the narrow way that leads to life. And Jesus said to the soldier, Go; as thou hast believed, so be it unto thee. And his servant was healed at that moment.

When Jesus came into Peter's house at Capernaum, he saw that the mother of Peter's wife was very ill. She had a fever, which

makes people weak in mind and in body. Jesus took her feverish hand in His, and the fever left her, so that she was able to get up at once and serve Him. Perhaps she prepared a dinner for Him. But it shows how near He came to His afflicted people, and how nearness to Him banished their afflictions, whether it was leprosy, or pain, or fever. His presence, the touch of His hand, made every one well immediately. When it was evening the people brought their sick ones to Him. Many had evil spirits, and He cast out the spirits with a word, and made all the sick people well ; that what the prophet Isaiah had said of Him might come true, Himself took our infirmities, and bore our sicknesses. When Jesus saw the crowds of people, He told them to take the ship to the other side of the lake—it was also called the Sea of Galilee. But a scribe out of the crowd came up to Jesus and said, Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go. The scribe was a teacher himself, and he thought listening to Jesus would be useful to him. Jesus did not want to be followed only for His teaching. He liked people to follow Him for love to Himself, so He said : The foxes have holes to

live in, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head. Had Jesus really no home? Yes; He was the Creator of all things, and yet He had nothing in this world. He had no home but in the hearts of His people. Those who loved Him made Him a home.

Why did Jesus call Himself the Son of Man? It is the first time He does so. God had sometimes called His prophets, son of man; when they were suffering on account of man, and when they were persecuted for righteousness sake. Jesus took the place of Son of man to suffer for man. It was said of Him, He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. He felt all the sorrow and suffering that He saw around Him. It was grief to His holy mind. It showed how they had forsaken their one true God. He had said that He would not let them have those diseases if they kept His commandments. But when they were mixed up with the Gentiles and learned their ways, all those diseases came upon them. Jesus was against all that, just as His prophets had been. So when He gave that answer to the scribe, it was as if He said, If you follow Me, you will

find it only suffering in this world. I am a homeless stranger down here. I am doing the will of God, and it is no use for you to hear My words unless you do what I say. God says of Israel, With their lips they show much love, but their hearts are going after the things of this world. Jesus knew all men; He knew whether He could trust them. He liked people to follow Him for Himself, that they might be with Him; because they loved Him with a love that put out all other love. Another man wished to follow Jesus, but asked if he might first go and bury his father. Jesus said, Follow Me, this is the way that leads to life. Let those who have chosen the broad road go and bury their own dead. Jesus meant that there must be no delay. They must do it quickly. Now was the day of salvation for them, if they really wished to follow Him. He could say, He that findeth Me findeth life, but he that misses Me is losing his own soul.

Then Jesus went into the ship, away from the crowd; and those who were truly taught by Him followed Him. They were called disciples, which means that they learned from Him. But the wind blew and the waves

of the sea washed over the ship. And Jesus slept ! What a picture of God's blessed Son and Servant. He had not a pillow to lay His head on, but He slept in the storm. He could say, I will lay Me down in peace and sleep, for the Lord only makes Me to dwell in safety. The poor disciples were frightened at the storm. Did Peter or John say : See how He sleeps. It must be right to do what He does. Let us go to sleep in peace, and trust to our Father in heaven to take care of us. If Jesus is in the ship with us, He is greater than the waves. That Great One who can command the devils with authority, He can surely save us from the wind and waves. Was that what they said ? Oh, no. They awoke Him and said, Lord, save us ; we perish. How touching His answer is : Why are ye fearful ? O ye of little faith ! He had said the same words before, about being anxious as to food and clothes. How could they have cares while their Father in heaven was taking care of them ? Now He said the same about their fears. For if the kingdom of God were ruling in their hearts they would have no fear. With Jesus in the ship there

was no need for care and no cause for fear. Then He got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. It was as if He put all to sleep. He made them all as calm as He was Himself. He was always calm and strong—people who are strong are calm. Weak people get excited, feverish, and lose patience. But Jesus makes a great calm in the feverish, impatient heart, as easily as He made a great calm in the storm of winds and waves. The men were astonished and said : What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him ? Of course they obeyed Him, for He was their Creator. Man is the only creature on the earth who disobeys his Creator !

When Jesus came to the other side of the sea, two men met Him. They had evil spirits and came from among the graves ; they were so dangerous that the people were afraid to pass that way. I think those two men were more terrible than the storm on the sea, and they cried out and said, What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, Son of God ? Hast Thou come here to torment us before the time ? The devils knew that Jesus was Son of God,

and they knew that He had come to undo the works of the devil. They knew that He would command them to come out of the men, so they said, If Thou cast us out, let us go away into the herd of swine over there. Jesus said, Go. They did so, and the whole herd of swine rushed down a steep place into the sea, and died in the waters. This is a solemn picture of the state of Israel. They were forbidden to eat pig's flesh. It was sinful of them to have a great herd of those unclean animals. The devils knew that, but the unclean animals suited those unclean spirits. Jesus granted their request, and the animals, maddened by the evil spirits, rushed into the sea and were all drowned. It is like what happened to Israel when they entirely rejected the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who fed the swine went into the city, and told what had happened. The whole city went out to meet Jesus. Did they beg Him to stay with them for ever to keep the devils away? No. When they saw Him they begged Him to go away out of their coasts. So Jesus went on to the ship again and passed over to his own city, as they called Capernaum. What sorrow was

in His heart as He left them ; they would rather have the devils and the swine than Jesus ! They begged Him to go away, and we do not hear that He ever went to that city again. They missed the way to the Tree of Life, and those who hate Me, the Lord said, love death.

MATTHEW IX. 1-13.

THEY brought a paralysed man to Jesus.

They carried him on his bed because he could not stand or walk. Jesus seeing their faith, said to the sick man, Son, or Child, be of good cheer: thy sins are forgiven. Jesus called him child, as if He felt like a father to this poor cripple. It pleased Jesus to see their faith; without faith it is impossible to please Him. He was pleased to see faith in a Gentile soldier, and now He saw faith in these Israelites. He saw that they believed in Him; light had sprung up in their hearts. But there were scribes and others looking on, who had no faith, and they had thoughts about Jesus that He had no right to talk about forgiving sins. They did not know that Jesus could see their thoughts. He said to them: Why do you think evil things in your hearts? How ashamed they ought to have been, to find that Jesus could read their bad thoughts of Him! But it was true what God had said: My people are not ashamed; they know not

how to blush. Jesus said to them, Which is easier to say, Thy sins are forgiven, or to say, Rise up and walk ? They did not answer that question. So Jesus said, That you may know that the Son of Man has power, or authority, on earth to forgive sins, I will say to this poor cripple, Rise up, take up thy bed, and go into thy house. He rose up and went to his house. No more a cripple, and his sins forgiven. The blessed Son of Man had called him child, for grace had made him a child of his Father in heaven.

What is grace ? It is kindness that we do not deserve. God's grace is what comes out of His own heart ; Jesus brought it down to man. It was like the manna that came down from heaven ; men did not know what it was. The heart of man cannot understand grace, but God is so great in goodness that He can pour out abundantly out of His own heart, loving-kindness and tender mercy that not one single man has any right to. We do not deserve the sun to shine upon us, yet it shines on the evil and on the good. The sun is always shining. The clouds on our side may shut us out from its shining, but it shines on ; even at night

the sun is shining, though we have moved away from its light. I mean the bit of the earth we live on has turned away from the light of the sun—that makes night. But it is a picture for us of the way God's grace shines on in spite of all that we are. He must be true to Himself, and it is His nature to show grace and mercy and loving-kindness. It is His delight. He says, I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy. That is what the proud religious people of Jerusalem could not understand. The crowds were surprised at what they saw Jesus do; they glorified God who had given such power to man. But they did not know who Jesus was.

As Jesus was passing a tax office, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the money-table, collecting taxes for the Romans. Jesus said to him, Follow Me. He rose up at once, left all the money and everything, and followed Jesus. Matthew was not a fisherman like the other disciples. He was getting riches for himself by collecting money from the Jews for their conquerors. This was considered a disgraceful occupation for a Jew, and they spoke of those men who did it as

sinners. But the grace that Jesus brought was just what suited sinners. The law would only condemn a sinner, and make him feel that he was too bad for God. Nothing else but grace could shine into the heart of a man like that—one who knew he was degraded as a Jew. Jesus said to him, Follow Me ; and the grace that was poured out on him so abundantly made him able to be used by the Holy Spirit to write this account of Jesus. This man wrote the Gospel by Matthew many years after, and it is touching to notice that when he mentions his own name again, he reminds us that he was a tax-gatherer. He seems to delight in the grace that called him when he did not deserve it. Jesus goes to his house and there He finds that Matthew has invited a great many people who were called sinners like himself, and Jesus sits down to table with them. What beautiful grace that was ! Jesus would make those sinners feel at home with Him. He came where they were. A great man could not do that ; he would be ashamed to be seen in such company. No wonder the proud Pharisees were shocked. They say to His disciples, Why does your

Teacher eat with tax-gatherers and sinners ? Jesus heard what they said. He answered them by saying, People who are well do not want a doctor. It is only sick people who want a doctor. He meant that it was sinners who wanted a Saviour, and He was come to seek for sinners and to save them. So He said to the Pharisees, Go and learn what that means ; I will have mercy and not sacrifice, for I have come not to call the righteous—those who think themselves righteous—but I have come to call sinners to repentance. Jesus meant that the knowledge of God was better than burnt offerings. The Pharisees were proud of their religious name ; they offered sacrifices, and professed to be the people of the God of Israel. But they did not know Him. They could not understand the goodness of His heart. Jesus came from Him with grace and truth ; but they did not know Him. They could not understand the grace that could reach out to sinners. They did not know that Jesus was Emmanuel, that He brought God down to man. He brought God into that house of Matthew, where all the sinners were. They could say, This is God with us ; man thinks us

too vile, but the One who is holy, harmless, undefiled can come and sit down with us, not because He does not hate sin a great deal more than the Pharisees do, but because He will put it all away ! He is able to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. It was a happy day for Matthew when he was called away from his money-table. He followed Jesus until Jesus went back to heaven, and then he went about preaching and telling people of Him, and it is said that he was killed by wicked men who did not believe in Jesus. Matthew was a Jew, and he tells us more about the Jews than any of the other writers. He tells how Jesus was offered to them as king of the Jews and how they refused Him. But nothing stopped Jesus in His kindness to them.

MATTHEW IX. 14-38.

JESUS went about doing good. Mercy and grace flowed from Him to all who felt their need of it. And the needy ones were drawn to Him. He drew them to Himself with the bands of a man, with the cords of love. As they followed Him He taught them how to love. The disciples of John the Baptist asked Him why His disciples did not fast as they did. Jesus said : How can the children of the bridechamber be sad while the Bridegroom is with them ? When the day comes that the Bridegroom is taken away from them, then they will fast. Jesus calls Himself the Bridegroom, because He loved those poor disciples the way a Bridegroom loves his bride, and they loved Him. While He was with them they were happy. He could say, Lacked ye anything ? and they said, Nothing. They had all things in Him. But He went on to say, It is no use to put a new bit of cloth on to an old coat ; and it is no use to put new wine into old bottles. The new thing was too strong to go with the old

things. The new thing was what Jesus brought : Grace was too wide and great to fit into the rules and regulations of the Jews. It would burst them all to pieces ; they must have new vessels for the new wine. Their sacrifices could only be offered in the land of Israel, but the rule of the kingdom of heaven was as wide as the heavens. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is God's mercy to those who fear Him. His grace would go beyond Israel's country and beyond its unfaithful people. None could be called the children of Abraham but those who had the faith of Abraham.

While Jesus was speaking, a ruler came to Him. He worshipped Jesus and said, My daughter is so ill that she is most likely dead by this time, but come and lay Thy hand upon her and she will live. Jesus rose up to go with him. As He was on His way to the ruler's house, a poor woman came behind Him and touched the hem of His garment. She did not think He could see her ; but she said to herself, If I could only touch His garment I should get well. She had been ill for twelve years. She did not tell anyone what she

thought of. She meant to do it in secret. But the One she touched could see in secret. Jesus turned round and looked at her. He spoke to her in the same way that He spoke to the paralysed man. He said, Be of good cheer, daughter ; thy faith has healed thee. And the woman was healed from that hour. But when Jesus came to the ruler's house, they were having great mourning because the child was dead. Jesus said, Go away, you mourners ; she is not dead, but sleeps. And those unbelieving people dared to laugh at Him. So He put them all out, and went in and took her hand in His—just as He did before to Peter's wife's mother—and she got up and was quite well. The father had said, Lay Thy hand on her and she shall live, and Jesus did not disappoint his faith. The fame of it went into all the land of Israel, so that two blind men heard of Jesus, and cried after Him, saying : Have mercy on us, Son of David. Jesus waited until they came into the house, away from the crowd outside, and He said to them, Do you believe that I am able to do this ? They knew that no one but God could open blind eyes. They said, Yes, Lord. He was

not only Son of David, but He was Lord. Then Jesus touched their eyes and said, According to your faith, be it unto you. And their eyes were opened. They were able to see Jesus. He was the first sight they saw with those opened eyes. They not only believed in Him but they saw Him. Jesus said they were not to tell anyone; but I suppose they could not keep it in, for they spread His name in all that land. Why did Jesus tell them not to speak of Him? Because He did not want men to come to Him only for what He could do for them. He wanted those who had faith, and who came to Him because they knew who He was.

Then they brought to Jesus another kind of distress. It was a man who could not speak; he was dumb and had a devil. Jesus cast out the devil and the dumb man spoke. The crowds were so astonished that they said, It was never so seen in Israel. But the Pharisees were displeased and said, He casts out devils through the prince of devils. Jesus took no notice of their wicked words, but went on just the same, all round the cities and villages. He taught in their synagogues and

preached the glad tidings of the kingdom. He healed all their diseases ; and He was moved with compassion for them, for they were like sheep who had no shepherd. He would have been the Good Shepherd to them if they had come to Him. He would feed His flock like a shepherd. He would gather the lambs with His arm, He would carry them in His bosom, and gently lead the mothers.

Then Jesus said to His disciples, The harvest is great, and the workmen are few. Pray to the Lord of the harvest that He may send workmen into His harvest. What did Jesus mean by that ? A harvest is when they gather in the ripe corn and carry it home to the barn. John the Baptist said that Jesus would know the good wheat; and He would gather it all up and put it into His barn ; but the wind would blow away the chaff—that is the part that is no good ; it is not grain. Jesus was gathering together the children of God. They were scattered, like the sheep who had no shepherd, or like the corn in the field that was waiting for the workmen to gather it up. Jesus was gathering the ripe corn for God's kingdom, and He was going to teach men how to do the

same. He would make them God's workmen, to gather in God's harvest in this world. They were to go and tell every one about the kingdom of the heavens, and Jesus gave them power over unclean spirits, that they should cast them out. And they were to heal all diseases as Jesus did Himself. How great a Person Jesus was ! He not only did great things Himself, but He had power to make poor weak men like the disciples able to do the same. He was the Lord of the harvest, and He was sending workmen into His harvest.

MATTHEW X.

THESE are the names of the twelve disciples.

The first is Simon, to whom Jesus gave the name of Peter; Andrew, Simon's brother; James and John, the sons of Zebedee; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew; James and Jude his brother; Simon and Judas. Jesus sent them out to preach the same words that John preached, and that Jesus preached. It was the third time that message had been sent to Israel, and it was the last time! They were to say: The kingdom of the heavens has drawn nigh. They were to go to no one but the lost sheep of the house of Israel. It was a last message to them. They were not even to go into a city of the Samaritans. Jesus sent them to preach the kingdom, and He gave them authority from Himself to use the powers of the kingdom. They were to heal the sick, to raise the dead, to cleanse the lepers, and to cast out devils. Jesus said: Freely ye have received, freely give. There was no limit to His free giving. What a wonderful time it was!

Twelve men going from city to city, and from one village to another, with that one short message.

When they came to a place, they were to ask, Who is worthy in this place ? And if they went into a house, they were to salute it, and if the house was worthy, they were to stay there, and their peace would be on that house. But if it was not worthy, that is, if they did not receive the messengers of Jesus, if they did not listen to their words, they were to go out of that house, or that city, and shake the dust of it off their feet ; they were not worthy, they shut their ears to the good news about Jesus. They refused His messengers. They did not make friends quickly, as Jesus told them, so there was nothing for them but judgment. Those twelve men who were sent to preach of the kingdom, were to be like what they preached. When God sends a messenger, He always makes him like what he says. Jesus was entirely what He preached. And He said to His disciples, You must not provide yourselves with gold and silver, or food or clothes. The workman is worthy of his food, and those who are worthy to hear your message will give you

food. You will not want anything else. They were to be like men who had a Father in heaven, and who belonged to the kingdom of heaven. Such men would not carry about the things of this world ; gold, silver, and brass were of no use to them. They had tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come. How rich they were ! They were to go and gather up all the good grains for God's harvest, to find out who was worthy of Jesus. Those who were not worthy of Him would not receive His messengers.

God was saying to Israel, Be ye reconciled ; I will forgive you freely and put away all your sins if you believe in Jesus. Some did hear the message ; they believed in Jesus. But it made their friends very angry, so that people in the same house became enemies to them. Jesus said, He that loves father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me. The whole question with every one was what they thought of Jesus. If they received His disciples, it was the same as receiving Him, and they would get His reward, even for a cup of cold water. But the disciples were not to expect to be better treated than their Master.

If they persecuted Jesus, they would persecute those who belonged to Him, yet their Father in heaven would take care of them. They would be brought before kings, who would ask them why they believed in Jesus ; but they were not to be frightened, or to think beforehand what they should say, for Jesus would be so near them then, that He would tell them how to speak of Him, so that they would not be the speakers ; the Spirit of their Father would put words into their lips, and they were to understand that what they suffered would be a testimony to the kings, to show the kings and rulers how worthy Jesus is. They would be like sheep among wolves ; the men of the world would kill them the way the wolves kill the gentle quiet sheep ; but they were not to be afraid of men who could kill only their bodies. God can send both soul and body to hell ; but cruel men cannot touch the soul : if they kill those who love Jesus, they only hurt the body. Jesus will take care of the soul. They were to remember that not even a little sparrow could fall to the ground without their Father knowing all about it. And if God cares for a little bird that men kill so carelessly, will He not care

much more for those whom He calls His children ? Men sell two sparrows for a farthing, so little do they value a sparrow. But your Father, who cares for one sparrow, numbers the very hairs on the heads of His children. You are more value to Him than many sparrows.

Then Jesus said a very wonderful thing : Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father who is in heaven, What a thought to comfort those persecuted ones : that as surely as they confessed the great Name of Jesus before men, so surely would they hear Him confess their little names in the presence of God His Father by and by. Many of those who believed in Jesus were brought before kings, and were cruelly treated. They were thrown into the fire, and some were given to the wild beasts, to be killed by lions and tigers. But it killed only their bodies ; it set the soul and spirit free to be with Jesus for ever. And when He comes in glory, they will hear Him confess their names before all His holy angels. He will say, Those

are the people that I died for ; I put away all their sins ; and when cruel men tried to make them deny Me, they were not afraid to confess that they loved Me, and now I will call out their names before My Father, that angels and men may hear that they loved Me enough to die for Me.

A story is told of a little child in China, whose father and mother were killed because they would not trample on the cross ; and then their child was told to do so ; to the surprise of every one he refused. They thought he was too young to understand ; but he knew that it meant to deny Jesus. They said, We will kill you if you do not trample on the cross. The child would not do it, and he was killed. God was looking at that little child. It was his little way of confessing Jesus. He was not afraid of those who could hurt only his body. He was of more value to God than many sparrows, and when Jesus comes again He will bring that little child with Him, among the myriads of those who are saved by His precious blood, and Jesus will confess the name of that little one before His Father and all the holy angels.

MATTHEW XI.

WHEN Jesus had finished commanding His twelve disciples, He also went away to teach and preach in their cities. John the Baptist was still in prison ; but they told him of the great works which Jesus did. They thought He must be the Christ, the Anointed One of God. So John sent his disciples to ask Him : Art Thou the coming One, or are we to wait for another ? We may think it strange that John sent that message. Had he not seen heaven open upon Jesus ? Had not the Holy Spirit come, like a dove, and rested on Him ? Did not the voice of God sound out of heaven and say, This is My beloved Son ? Yes ! John had seen and heard all that. John was a prophet of God, but he was only a man, and his faith began to fail under the suffering of that dreadful prison, and Satan tempted him with doubts. John had said that Jesus was come to set the captive free, and yet He allowed the wicked Herod to keep His dear servant in prison. Satan would say : If He were the Son

of God He could open the prison gates. Poor John ! How we can feel for him. He began to wonder if Jesus really was the Great One who would set the captive free. He sends straight to Jesus to ask Himself to answer this anxious question : Art Thou He that should come, or must we wait yet longer for God's promised One to come ? Jesus felt for him, with all the tenderness of His heart. He quite understood His dear servant's difficulty. Jesus did not blame John as men do. He did not even say, O you of little faith ! He knew that John loved Him and believed in Him. Jesus said to them, Go and tell John all you hear and see. Report to him what I am doing, that he may know that every word he said of Me is true ; and blessed is he who shall not be offended in Me. Why did Jesus say that ? Because He knew that Herod would kill John. But why did Jesus not open the prison and set the captive free ? Because John was God's prophet to Israel, and he must suffer on account of that rebellious people. As soon as they were gone back to John, Jesus spoke of him to the crowds. He said, What went ye out into the wilderness to see ? Was it to see a prophet ? Yes, John was much

more than a prophet ; this is he of whom it is written : I send My messenger before Thy face, who shall prepare Thy way before Thee. John was that messenger, and he did faithfully what God sent him to do. But he thought Jesus was going to be King of the Jews, and to have a holy kingdom on the earth. He did not know that they would refuse their King. But Jesus knew that they would refuse the servant as well as his Master. John was the last of the prophets that God sent to Israel, and Jesus said he was the greatest of all. The time for the law and the prophets came to an end in John. The new wine would not fit into the old bottles, so the little one in the kingdom of the heavens would be greater than John. Grace is greater than law. Laws were only made for men to keep them in the right way. But grace is what flows out from God's heart ; it came in His own beloved Son. For hundreds of years God had spoken by prophets ; now He was speaking by His Son. It was a question who had ears to hear what Jesus said. But their ears were dull of hearing. John came with a voice of warning, and they were not warned ; they did not repent of their sins. They spoke

against John and said he had a devil. Jesus came as the blessed Son of Man, with a voice like sweet music, winning them by kindness ; but they called Him a friend of sinners. They despised Him for eating with sinners. But Jesus said, Wisdom was justified in her children. That meant that it was easy to see who was wise and who was foolish. The wise had ears to hear the words of Jesus ; they were worthy of Him because they loved to do the will of God as Jesus did. Then Jesus began to reproach the cities where most of His mighty works were done, because they did not repent. They were not wise ; they had no ears to hear the sweet music of grace. Woe to thee, Jesus said, Woe to thee, for if the Gentiles had seen all you have seen, or if they had heard all you have heard, they would have repented long ago. They would have sat in sackcloth and ashes until they got God's forgiveness. That was the way they showed that they were sorry for their sins. When God sent the prophet Jonah to tell the people of Nineveh that they would be destroyed because they were so wicked, they believed God, and even the king put off his royal robes and put on sackcloth, and

sat in ashes, and commanded all his people to do the same. They put ashes on their heads and even on their cattle, and they took no food, but cried mightily to God, for they said, Perhaps God will turn from His great anger. And God saw that they repented, and He did turn from His anger, and He did not destroy the people of Nineveh. Jesus reminded them of this, because those who saw His mighty works did not turn to God. They did not believe His words as those Gentiles did. And the judgment day was coming, when God would give to every man according to his works. Every one will have to give an account of himself in that day ; he will have to own up to every idle word that he has said ; every careless thought about Jesus will come before him then ; he will not be able to make any excuses in that day ; he will have to confess, Yes, I had those bad thoughts, and I said those idle words ; and the shame of it will be so terrible that they will wish to hide from God.

It was great sorrow to Jesus to say these things. It was a grief to Him to be rejected by the people whom He loved. He came down from heaven to save them from

their sins, but they were not worthy of Him ; they loved other things more than they loved Jesus. But in the deep sorrow of His heart Jesus turned to His Father in heaven and He said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight. Jesus was able to rejoice in the will of God. He knew that nothing could stop the overflowing stream of grace that He brought down from God to man. He rejoiced that the babes would get the precious things that the great ones in those cities were missing. God does not give His precious things to people who do not value them. The Pharisees and Scribes were like the swine who trampled on pearls. They did not know how precious a thing grace is. But it pleased the Father to reveal it to the babes. A babe is one who knows nothing of itself. It has to be taught everything. How blessed that the great God who is Lord of heaven and earth should choose to teach a babe, and to reveal things to a babe ! What is the difference between a great man and a babe ? A great man has a

mind of his own ; he trusts himself ; he thinks he knows what is right and what is wrong. If you gave him something, he would want to pay you for it ; or perhaps he would say he did not want it. A babe has no mind of its own. It asks no questions. It takes all it gets, and gives nothing in return. How could a baby pay its mother back for all her love and care ? There is only one way, and that is by love ; a babe can love and it can trust. It knows its mother and it is happy when she is near. Now Jesus rejoiced that His Father in heaven would give His grace to the babes. They would love Him, and they would trust Him, and they would be happy with Him for ever.

Then Jesus said : All things are delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son but the Father, and no one knows the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son may be pleased to reveal Him. Jesus took comfort in the thought that the Father knew Him perfectly, and He knew the Father perfectly. They understood each other perfectly. The Father would give Him all things. Man might reject Him, but He knew what the Father thought about it all, and the

Father knew how entirely Jesus understood His wise and holy thoughts and plans. Jesus felt the sorrow of being refused by men, but He rejoiced that His Father would be glorified, so that whatever happened He could say, Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight.

Then He turned to those around Him and said, Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Jesus would bring them into God's rest, and make them feel that great calm in which He lived Himself. Take My yoke upon you, He said, and learn from Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light. A yoke is a thing put on the neck, which links two people together, so that one helps the other to carry the load. It was rest to Jesus to do His Father's will ; He invited all who were weary of doing man's will to come to Him, and learn the rest of heart it is to say, Even so, Father, Thy will be done. And when they came to Him He would let them walk beside Him under His yoke, so that He would ~~carry~~ carry the yoke and the burden too. He was meek and lowly in heart. He would show them how to be meek and lowly

in heart, how to walk under His yoke, and they would find rest to their souls. When Jesus carries the yoke, it is easy, because it is His yoke, and He calls your burden His. He carries it for you.

As the bird beneath her feathers
Guards the object of her care ;
So the Lord His children gathers,
Spreads His wings and hides them there.

MATTHEW XII.

AT that time, when Jesus was feeling the sorrow of being refused by Israel, He went through the cornfields. He was still thinking of God's harvest ; but He went away from the cities where His mighty works were done. He had brought God near to them, yet they did not repent. At that time Jesus left the cities and went into the country. But His disciples were hungry, and they ate the grains of corn. It was the Sabbath day. The Pharisees were much displeased that they should pluck the ears of corn on the Sabbath day. They said it was breaking the law of God which said : Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. But Jesus said, Do you not know what David did when he was hungry, and those who were with him ? How he went into the house of God, and how the priests gave him the shewbread out of the holy place ? Only the priests had a right to eat the shewbread. What did Jesus mean by saying that ? He was reminding them of how David had to fly from his enemies, and

how the priest fed him when he was hungry. Jesus was in the same way. Israel was refusing the Son of David. He was greater than the Temple ; He was greater than all the laws and rules of the Temple ; and He was greater than the Sabbath, for He was Lord of the Sabbath. If the Pharisees had understood what He said to them before, that God would have mercy and not sacrifice, they would not have blamed those who were not doing wrong. The Sabbath day was God's mercy to man and beast. God rested on the seventh day from all the works which He had done, and He gave the seventh day to man for a day of rest.

God made the Sabbath the sign of His covenant with Israel. The Pharisees kept the sign, but they did not keep the covenant. They did not know the Lord of the Sabbath ; they did not understand that He would have mercy. They did not know the Father, and they did not know the Son. Jesus went away from them. But when He came into their synagogue there was a man who had a withered hand ; he could not do any good works, he could not offer a sacrifice ; he might have said " Nothing but mercy will do for me." But

those unbelieving people thought, Now Jesus will heal that man ; so they asked Him, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day ? They wanted an excuse to speak against Jesus ; they wished to prove that He did not keep God's law. How did Jesus answer them ? He said, If one of you had a sheep and it fell into a pit, would you pull it out of the pit on the Sabbath day ? Of course they would. Jesus said, How much better is a man than a sheep ! So that it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day. Jesus was gathering His sheep ; He was taking them out of the pit of unbelief and sin. He was not resting, although it was the Sabbath day. How could the Saviour rest where sin and sickness were ? He came to seek and to save ; there was no day of rest for Him in this world, but He showed how God delighted in mercy. So He said to the man, Stretch out your hand, that poor withered hand that could not stretch itself. The man obeyed the word of Jesus, and his hand became perfectly well

But those hard-hearted Pharisees had no care for the sheep ; they felt no joy in seeing the poor man made well and able to use both his hands. They were angry with Jesus. They

went out of His presence, and talked together about how they could destroy Him. Could they have destroyed Jesus? No. They had no power at all against Him. They only showed how wicked their own hearts were. They remembered the Sabbath day, but they made it unholy by their evil thoughts. Jesus knew their thoughts, and He went away from them. Great crowds followed Him, and He healed them all. But He told them not to tell people who He was. They had refused the Son of David, and now the words of the prophet would come true, where God said, Behold My servant whom I have chosen, My beloved in whom My soul has found My delight. I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He shall show judgment to the Gentiles.

God had spoken out of heaven of His beloved Son, and He sent the Spirit like a dove to rest on Him, while He sent Him to the children of Israel with the sweet message of grace. He said to them, Come to Me, and I will give you rest. He would have brought them into God's rest, for there will be a great Sabbath day when God will rest. But they refused the Son of David; and now God was looking away from

Israel. He was going to send His message of mercy to the Gentiles. God calls Jesus His Servant and His Beloved. God delighted in Him as a Son, and God delighted in Him as a Servant, and He said, In His name shall the Gentiles hope. If Israel did not believe in Jesus, the heathen nations would.

A man possessed with a devil was brought to Jesus ; the man was blind and dumb. The devil made him unable to see Jesus or to speak to Him. He could not ask to be made well ; but Jesus healed him, so that he could both speak and see. What a day that was for him when his eyes were opened, and he saw his Saviour. He was set free from the devil and brought to God. It is all dark to a blind man, he cannot see the light. But Jesus is able to deliver us out of darkness, and to bring us into His wonderful light. The crowds were astonished and said, Is this man the Son of David ? But they said it carelessly, they did not try to settle this great question for themselves. And the Pharisees said, It is by the prince of the devils that He casts out devils. Jesus knew their thoughts, and He showed them what a foolish thing it was to say, because

Satan would not cast out Satan ; he would be fighting against himself. Satan would put a devil into a man, but he would not cast him out ; but if Jesus cast out devils by the Spirit of God, it showed that the kingdom of God was come to them. Jesus said, No one can go into a strong man's house and spoil his goods until he first binds the strong man ; then he will be able to spoil his house. This meant that no one could touch the things of the devil until they first overcame himself. Satan was the strong man, but Jesus overcame him. No one else could do so, and now Jesus was spoiling his goods ; that is, He was casting out the devils who took possession of men. Jesus would spoil his house. He came to undo the works of the devil. Jesus opened the eyes of the blind. He turned men from darkness to light ; from the power of Satan unto God.

But Jesus said a very solemn thing to the Pharisees. He said, If you speak evil of the Spirit of God, it will never be forgiven. They spoke evil of Himself, the blessed Son of Man ; in His great mercy that might be forgiven ; but to speak against the Spirit of God and to call Him a devil never would be forgiven to men,

either at that time or in the coming time. God would not forgive them for saying that His good works were done by the devil; because what is good can come only from One who is good, and evil can come only from one who is evil; just as good fruit can grow only on a good tree, and bad fruit shows that the tree is bad. The people who spoke like that were of the devil, they could not speak good things because their hearts were wicked. It is what is in the heart that the mouth speaks of. So a good man talks of the good things he has in his heart, and a man who has wicked things in his heart says wicked things. But they would have to give account of their words in the day of judgment, because the words they spoke would tell what was in their hearts. God will judge people by what they say.

Those Scribes and Pharisees showed the unbelief that was in their hearts, for they asked Jesus to give them a sign of who He was. All the mighty works that He did ought to have shown them who He was. So Jesus answered that no sign should be given to that wicked generation, except the sign of the prophet Jonah; for as Jonah was three days and three nights

inside the whale, so the Son of Man would be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. That meant that Jesus would be three days and nights in the grave. It was the first time that Jesus spoke of His death. It was the only sign He would give them ; and the people of Nineveh would rise up in the day of judgment and would condemn them, because they repented when Jonah preached to them. Jesus was greater than Jonah, yet they did not hear Him. The Queen of Sheba would also condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon. But Jesus was greater than Solomon. The Gentiles had paid attention to God's prophet and to God's king, but the nation of Israel paid no attention when God spoke to them by His Son. So Jesus warned them of the judgment that would come upon the nation. He said they ought to have been the dwelling-place of God. He had chosen Jerusalem to put His name there ; but they were the dwelling-place of devils. His presence among them kept away the devils. He cast out the unclean spirits by His word ; but the time would come when the evil spirits would come back and dwell there,

so that they would be worse than before ; the unclean spirit would take possession of them again.

While Jesus was saying these things to the crowds, His mother and His brethren wished to speak to Him. They tell Jesus, but He answered, Who is My mother ? and who are My brethren ? Then stretching out His hands to His disciples He said, Behold My mother, and My brethren ; for whoever shall do the will of My Father in Heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother. Why did Jesus say that ? To show how entirely He gave up His place in Israel. They refused Him as the King of the Jews, and they refused Him as the Son of David. He had told them not to say He was the Son of David. His mother knew He was, but even His mother must see that He will not take that title now. Jesus would not own any relations with Israel now. He would have a new kind of relations. Those who did the will of His Father in heaven, as it was His own delight to do, they would all be His relations. He did not cast off His mother, He loved her tenderly, but He said she must belong to Him in a new way now, and all those who did the will of His Father

would be as near to Him as she was. Jesus was going to have new relations who would be like Himself. They would not be like the proud Pharisees who could not understand mercy, and who did not care to see the sick people made well. Jesus would call those people His relations who were like Himself ; meek and lowly, merciful, pure in heart, they were the blessed ones ; they were the salt of the earth, and they were the light of the world, because they were doing the will of their Father in heaven. There would be a new family for God, vessels for His mercy.

When Jesus had said this, He went out of the house and sat down by the sea. He left the house of Israel and looked out upon the wide sea of peoples in the world. The old bottles would not hold His new wine. Jesus would bring in something new.



THE SOWER.

MATTHEW XIII. 1-35.

JESUS left the cities of Israel and sat down by the sea. But some people out of those cities came to Him. And when He saw the great crowd He went into a ship and sat down. And Jesus spoke to the people who stood on the shore. He had something quite new to say to them. He spoke to them in parables. A parable is a story with a meaning to it ; as when Jesus spoke of the good tree that had good fruit, He meant people who would show what was in their hearts by the words that came out of their mouths ; like the good fruit growing on the good trees. So Jesus said, Behold, a sower went out to sow. I dare say you have seen a man take a handful of precious seed and scatter it in his field. He sows something that was not there before. He does not see where every seed falls, but he hopes that some will grow and will be good wheat by and by. So Jesus said, Some seeds fell by the way-side, and the birds came and ate them up ; some fell on stony places, where there was not much

earth to grow in, and when the sun was hot those seeds were scorched because they had no roots. Some fell among thorns, and they were choked by the thorns.

Were all the good seeds lost ? No ! Some fell on good ground, and grew up into good corn and brought forth fruit, so that one grain in the good ground would make sixty more grains, or thirty, or a hundred. I think we can understand what Jesus meant by that parable. He was sowing God's Word in this world in the hearts of men, and the people had all kinds of things in their hearts that kept it from taking root in them. But in the good ground the seeds had room to grow. The gardener pulls up all the weeds and digs up his ground to make it ready for the seed. The good ground that Jesus spoke of was a heart that was ready to receive His words of grace and mercy. It would be a seed that God had blessed. It would grow and bring forth fruit, like the plant of God's delight. Jesus was sowing good seed for God's harvest. Then He repeated what He had said before. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. Those who had hearing ears were the good ground ; those whose hearts were like the

ground that was choked with thorns and stones, were the people whose ears did not attend to the words of Jesus.

The disciples asked Him why He spoke in parables. It was to show who had an understanding heart and who had not. The disciples were told of the hidden things of the kingdom of the heavens. They heard the word of the kingdom and understood it ; but many in that crowd were like the people the prophet Isaiah spoke of ; their hearts were grown fat and their ears were dull of hearing, and God let them remain so, because they had no room in their hearts for Jesus ; they loved other things more than Him. They were not worthy of Jesus ; they had no good ground for His seed to grow in. Jesus said to those who did understand, Blessed are your eyes, because they see ; and blessed are your ears because they hear. Many prophets and good men had wished to see and hear those things that they were seeing and hearing. They were but a remnant of Israel, few and despised by the rest, but they were a very favoured few ; their eyes had seen the One who came to do His Father's will ; their ears had heard His voice, and He had sown the Word of the kingdom in their hearts.

First of all Jesus told them about the good seed that He brought into this world. He would sow it everywhere. He would scatter His Word in all kinds of places, so that all kinds of men would hear it, if only they had hearing ears and hearts that understood it. Then He told them what the kingdom of heaven would be like in this world, when the King was not here. He gave them three parables, or kinds of pictures of what the people who heard the Word would look like down here. The kingdom of heaven would be like a field where a man sowed good seed. But while men slept, his enemy sowed tares among the wheat, and went away. No one saw the tares at first. Those who ought to have watched the field were asleep, and the tares did not look very different from the wheat until the ears began to come. Then it was easy to see the ears of corn that grew from the good seed, and of course the tares had none ; the good seed had fruit, the tares had not. The servant came, and said, Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field ? Why then has it tares ? The master said, An enemy has done this. The servant asked, Shall we go and gather up the tares ? The master said, No,

you might gather up the wheat along with the tares ; both must grow together till the harvest, and then I will order the tares to be tied in bundles for the fire ; but all the wheat will be brought into my barn. What are tares ? Something not true ; what Jesus sowed was the truth. The tares were something that spoilt the sowing—men's thoughts would be tares—anything that is not the good seed would spoil the field.

What Jesus sowed was all good seed. It was the truth that He brought into this world. The good seed was a new thing. But while men slept the enemy sowed tares. Men could not pull up the tares, only angels can do that. Men have often dared to do it, and they have killed and burnt the people of God. Men cannot pull up the tares, but they can take care not to be tares.

In the next parable Jesus shows them what the kingdom would look like when the King was away and it was left in the care of men. It would be like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds, which a man might sow in his field. This little seed would grow into a large spreading tree, so that the birds would

roost in its branches. It would make a great show on the earth. Great kings were often spoken of as fine trees. They had power, and other men got shelter under them. So men would take up the truth that Jesus brought into this world, and they would make use of it for their own glory, to make themselves great. They would spread out like a great tree and shelter those who were not of the kingdom. In the first parable we saw that the birds picked up the good seed, and Jesus said that was the way the devil comes and catches away what is sown in the heart ; so the birds who lodge in the mustard tree were not good people, but enemies. This is a picture of what the kingdom is like now ; the outward thing that men see, and what men have done.

The next is what a woman did. It shows the inside thing. Jesus said it was like leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened. She did it secretly ; but the leaven spread and worked until all the good meal became affected by the leaven. What is leaven ? It is a fermenting matter that is put into flour to make it into bread. It is always used in the Bible to express

evil, because it works up and spreads in a hidden way, and makes other things swell out and look big. Leaven is something that is mixed with good corn. Men and women are constantly mixing up something else with the truth. What Jesus sowed was good seed and nothing else.

God does not like mixtures. When He gave His law to Moses He showed very plainly that He would allow no mixtures. His people were not to mix with the peoples of the land, they were not to learn their ways ; and every trouble that the Israelites got into was from disobeying God in that. He would not even allow them to make their clothes of a mixture of linen and wool, and he would not allow them to plough with a horse and a donkey together ; it was an unequal yoke. God said they must always keep in mind the difference between what is holy and unholy—they must not mix His holy things with what is of man. The devil began the mixture when he sowed the tares among the wheat ; men and women like to mix up things so that they look large and great and they can boast of them.

Jesus said these solemn words to the crowds.

He spoke to them in parables, because the prophet had said that He would tell them things that had been hidden. The hidden things belong to God. God is the only One who can hide. No one can hide from Him ; but the hidden thing that Jesus brought to light was grace. God shining out in grace in the Person of His Son. That was the great light that came down from heaven for those who sat in darkness and under the shadow of death.

MATTHEW XIII.—*Continued.*

WHEN Jesus had said those parables, He dismissed the crowd. Then He went into the house with His disciples, and when He was alone with them He explained the parables to them. They were the few, the remnant, who were saved out of the unbelieving nation ; the good seed had taken root in their hearts. Grace was in their hearts, so that they could understand the teaching of Jesus. He takes them indoors, away from the crowd, and He teaches them in private about the hidden things, about God's great thoughts for men. Jesus was the blessed Son of Man who sowed the seed, not only in Israel's land, but in the world. As the Son of Man He would bless all kinds of men. He was saying, Come to Me, all ye that are in need. He would show them that if men had no place in their hearts for God, yet God had a great place in His great heart for men.

Jesus told His disciples that the good seed which grew into wheat meant the children of God's kingdom. But the tares were the

children of the evil one, and he who sowed them was the devil. The sad thing is, that the devil can sow what is not true in people's hearts ; that is the way he makes them his children, because the children take after their father. The devil was a liar from the beginning, and everything that is not true comes from him. He likes us to mix up what is a little bit true and a little bit untrue, so that it looks big and makes us feel big.

But Jesus said the harvest was coming ; that would be the end of this time ; the time of God's ways with men. The harvest-men then would be angels. They would be the messengers of the Son of Man. He would send them to gather out of His kingdom everything that could offend His holy eyes, and those who did their own will. None could belong to His kingdom but those who did the will of His Father in heaven. The tares would be cast into the fire ; there would be weeping and the terrible grief of those who had missed the blessing ; now they would see that it was too late, too late ! Fire is that which burns up all the mixture ; it cannot burn that which is of God. Do you know the story of the three men who were

thrown into the burning fiery furnace by the king of Babylon? The fire burnt up their enemies, and it burnt up the cords that their enemies tied round their hands and feet; but the fire did their bodies no harm, for God took care of them.

When the harvest of this world is come, God's righteous judgment will destroy all the mixtures; whatever loves and makes a lie will be burnt up. It cannot be in His presence. When the King is reigning, the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. And again Jesus said, He that has ears to hear, let him hear. He was explaining what would be seen in this world. Men could see it. Men could see that preaching the Word of the kingdom would make a great spreading system, where evil could shelter itself. It was caused by the mixture of tares with the wheat.

But when Jesus was alone with His disciples, He told them something quite different from the other parables. He told them of something that men could not see; it was something that the devil could not touch, and the world could know nothing about it. Jesus was going to tell them a secret that was in His own heart.

No one knew that secret but His Father in heaven. He said, The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hid in a field. That is the way God saw it, and the way Jesus saw it. It was something hidden. It was not like the mustard tree which looked so great before men. It was hidden in the field, not in the cities ; man made the cities, but God made the fields. This was a treasure, and it was hid in the field. It had to be looked for. A man found this treasure and he hid it, and so great was his joy at having found it, that he went and sold all that he had and bought the field. Who was the man who found the treasure ? Who could it be but the One who came down from heaven to seek and to save that which was lost ? Jesus was telling what the kingdom of the heavens was to Him. It was a treasure. It was something very precious. He took pains to find it, for it was hidden in this world. We have read how He called the fishermen to be with Him, and how He made sinners at home in His presence ; how He sowed the good seed in their hearts, and now He wanted them to understand how precious they were to Him. It was such joy to Him to have them, that He would sell all that He had to buy the field.

He would give His life for them. He could give nothing greater than that. He would buy the whole field. The world is His as Son of Man. He has bought it all for the sake of the treasure that was hidden in it. When He finds it, He hides it. He does not want the world to see it yet. His Father who sees in secret keeps His eyes upon His treasure ; but by and by Jesus will show His treasure to the world, when He will shine as the sun. His people will shine in His light ; they will not be hidden then.

Jesus gave them another beautiful picture of what the kingdom of the heavens was to Him. He said it was like a merchant looking for beautiful pearls, and he found one pearl of great value, so that he went and sold all that he had and bought it. This was something like the treasure, yet it is not quite the same. Pearls are found in the sea. Jesus shows that He was looking for goodly pearls, and He found one of great value. He went and sold all that He had and bought that one. The treasure was precious to Him ; the pearl had a peculiar beauty for Him. I think when Jesus said no one knew the Father but the Son and he to whom the Son would reveal Him, that He was

thinking of the treasure and the pearl. He said, Even so, Father, when Israel rejected Him ; but His Father had given all things into His hands. He knew His Father's thoughts about His Son, that He would give Him the ends of the earth for His possession, and the Father knew that the Son would lay down His life to buy the field, because He found the treasure in it.

Jesus gave them one more picture of what the kingdom of heaven was like. It was like a net that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind ; and when it was full the fishermen drew it up on the shore and sat down ; then they gathered the good into vessels and cast the bad away. A net is meant to catch fish, but this net gathered all kinds. Those who used the net were to sort out the good and leave the bad. The good were put into vessels. They were kept safely ; they were not to go back into the sea. Jesus had told His disciples that He would make them fishers of men. If they were wise fishermen they would put the good into vessels.

It would be the same at the time of the end, for then the angels would sort out the wicked

and cast them into the fire. The difference was that the fishermen would have to do only with the good, but the angels would sort out the bad. Jesus asked them if they understood all these things. They say, Yes, Lord. If they did, that is, if they were really brought under the rule of heaven, they would be like a man who had a house, and who brought out of his treasure things new and old. The wise man built his house on the rock, and wisdom's house is filled with all precious and pleasant things. They would be able to bring out the old things that God gave to His people Israel, and they would also bring out the new things that Jesus brought to them.

Then Jesus went to His own country ; but they said, Is He not the son of the carpenter ? Is not His mother called Mary, and are not His brothers and sisters here ? So Jesus said, A prophet got no honour in his own country ; and He went away.

MATTHEW XIV.

JESUS would not do many mighty works at Nazareth because of their unbelief. They did not know who He was, and they were offended in Him. He went away from there, and He heard what Herod had done to John the Baptist. He had put John in prison because he told Herod he ought not to marry his brother's wife. This made him very angry, and he would have killed John then, but he was afraid of the people, for they knew that John was a prophet. But when Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of his brother's wife danced before him, and Herod was pleased, and said he would give her anything she asked for. Her wicked mother told her to ask for John the Baptist's head. Herod was sorry ; he felt ashamed, but he did it. He sent and beheaded John in the prison, and his head was brought on a charger and given to the girl ! What a dreadful picture of the wilful king and the wilful woman. They were both a pattern of those who practise lawlessness ; those who do

their own will, and whom the angels will gather out of the kingdom of the Son of Man.

Herod heard the fame of Jesus, and he said, This is John the Baptist ; he is risen from the dead. The devil knew that God could raise the dead. Herod was afraid that John would come back to him to tell him of his wickedness ; but he did not go to Jesus to learn the truth about Him. John's disciples took his body and buried it, and went and told Jesus. He felt that they had killed His prophet, and they did not honour Himself. He went away alone into a desert place. But the people followed Him out of the cities ; and Jesus saw a great multitude, and He felt compassion for them and He healed their sick. Nothing could stop Him from showing mercy and grace.

When the evening was come the disciples came to Jesus and said, This place is desert and it is late ; send the people away into the villages to buy food for themselves. But Jesus said, They need not go away ; you give them something to eat. Did the disciples say, We have not enough to feed such a crowd, but You are able to satisfy the poor with bread ? No, they only thought of what they could do, and

they said, We have only five loaves and two fishes. Jesus said, Bring them to Me. Then He commanded the crowd to sit down on the grass, and He took the five loaves and the two fishes, and He looked up to heaven and blessed. How beautiful ! There He stood in that desert place—this world was all a desert place to Him —the crowd of poor and hungry ones sitting before Him. And Jesus looked up to that heaven where He was so well known and loved, and He blessed. Then He took the little that they had ; He did not say it was too little ; but in His hands and in His blessing that little was more than enough. Jesus broke the loaves and handed the pieces to the disciples to give to the people. He let the disciples give it to them. Give ye them to eat, He said ; and He went on giving and giving until they all had enough. They gathered up the fragments that were left and filled twelve baskets full. There were twelve disciples, and they filled twelve baskets. Jesus meant them to understand how they could feed His people, if only they had faith in Him, and took their little from His hand. He showed them how largely He would give the blessings of the kingdom, if they were

simply His servants, to hand on to others what He was giving them. There were five thousand men, besides all the women and children.

Jesus made the disciples get into the ship and go away without Him to the other side of the sea. Then Jesus dismissed the crowd Himself. It was not only that He fed them, but He sent them on their way. They all knew that they had had to do with Him, that He took notice of them, and that He knew them. Could they ever forget that night in that desert place ? When Jesus had sent away the crowd, He went up into the mountain to pray. He was alone with God. But the ship with the disciples in it, was in the middle of the sea ; they were tossed by the waves, for the wind was against them.

But in the fourth watch of the night—that is, just before the morning—Jesus went to them walking on the sea ! When they saw Him they were frightened, because He walked on the sea, and they cried out for fear. But Jesus spoke to them and said, It is I, be not afraid. Peter answered Him and said, Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come to Thee upon the water. Jesus said to him, Come ! Peter came down from the

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ship, and walked on the water to go to Jesus. Peter loved the Lord and longed to be with Him. His love for Jesus made him forget the danger, and Jesus made him able to walk on the water like Himself. But Peter had no strength in himself, and though his love was strong, his faith was weak ; he saw the wind and he was afraid. Instead of looking at Jesus as he did at first, he looked at the wind, and he began to sink, and he cried out, Lord, save me ! Jesus immediately stretched out His hand and took hold of Peter ; but He said, Oh, thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt ? Peter had been in the storm with Jesus before, and he had heard Him say, Be still ! to the winds and waves ; he ought to have remembered how the presence of Jesus makes a great calm.

This is like what Jesus is doing now. He has gone up to heaven, where He prays for His people. He knows they are tossed about in this world. Everything is against them down here. But to those who love Him He says : Come unto Me. I am above all the winds and waves, and I can keep you above them if you have faith in Me. If you keep your eyes on Me, you will not sink. I am very near you ; My



A STORM ON THE SEA OF GALILEE

hand is always there to hold you up. But if you look away from Me, and look at the dreadful wind, you will begin to sink. Peter loved the Lord Jesus. His love made Peter wish to be with Him ; but only faith could keep him above the storm with Jesus, because it would be faith in a Person who alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea. As soon as they had gone into the ship, the wind fell. Now Peter was in the ship with Jesus, and there was a great calm. His presence in the ship put them all above the storm ; they felt it ; they came and worshipped Him, and said, Truly Thou art the Son of God.

The people in the city said He was the carpenter's son ; that was all they cared to know about Jesus ; but the more He was rejected by the nation of Israel, the more He shows the greatness of who He is to the remnant who follow Him. To them He is the Son of God, and they are blessed in His company.

They crossed the sea and came to Gennesaret. There they brought all their sick people to Him, and prayed that they might only touch the hem of His garment ; and all who did so became quite well.

MATTHEW XV.

THOSE poor sick people had faith in Jesus. They believed that if they only touched His clothes they would get well, and Jesus did not disappoint their faith. How different the miserable Scribes and Pharisees were. They had no faith, and they came to Jesus only to complain that His disciples did not wash their hands every time they took their food. Jesus answered them by showing that it was they who transgressed the commandment of God. For they taught people not to honour their father and mother, and to make the work of God an excuse not to take care of their parents. That showed what hypocrites they were; as Isaiah had said of them, they honoured God with their lips, but their hearts were far away from Him. They were teaching only the commandments of men. God saw that there was no worship for Him in their hearts.

Then Jesus called the crowd, and said to them: Hear and understand. It is not what goes into the mouth that makes a man unholy;

but what comes out of his mouth. The Pharisees were offended at this, but Jesus said : Every plant which My Heavenly Father has not planted shall be rooted up. They would be like the tares among the wheat. Leave them alone, Jesus said ; if a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into the ditch. The Pharisees were blind, and those who were blind were led by them. They had not the light of faith. Their eyes were closed as if they were asleep, and their ears were dull of hearing. They did not know God, and they did not believe in Jesus. Peter asked to have it explained about what comes out of a man defiling the man. Jesus said, Do you not understand that what comes out of the mouth is from the heart ? Evil thoughts, the wish to kill or to steal, all these things come from the heart and make a man say unholy words. We read before how God would judge men by their words. But to eat without washing hands was only an outside thing for men to see. Washing hands would not make them holy before God, for God looks at the heart, and He knew that the hearts of those Pharisees were full of covetousness, pride, and evil thoughts. These things come

out of the mouth and defile the man ; but food has to do with the body, and not with the hearts of men. It was their hearts that Jesus looked at. It was no use to wash their hands while their hearts were unclean.

Then Jesus went into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. Those were the Gentile places that Jesus said would have repented, if they had seen all the mighty works that He had done in Israel. And a Canaanite woman came out of those countries and cried to Him. She said, Have pity on me, Lord, Son of David, for my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. How terrible that was ! Yet Jesus did not answer her a word. The disciples say, Send her away, she cries after us. Could Jesus, who was so kind to everyone, send away a poor woman who was in such distress ? He would not ; but He said, You call me Son of David. The Son of David is sent only to the lost sheep of the House of Israel. Did that make the poor Gentile go away ? No. She came nearer to Him, and she worshipped Him, saying, Lord, help me. She did not say " Son of David " this time, but " Lord." He was Lord to all. She felt He was great enough to have a blessing even for a

Canaanite. Jesus said, It is not right to take the children's bread and to give it to the dogs. She said, Truth, Lord, but the dogs may eat the crumbs which fall from their master's table. At that word Jesus answered her, and said, O woman, great is thy faith ; be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made well from that very hour. Jesus rewarded her faith, but He waited to bless her until she took her true place as a sinner, and as a Gentile who had no right to anything. The Canaanites were enemies of Israel, yet she had faith in Jesus. She knew that He had mercy even for a dog. And she would be even a little dog to get a crumb of His blessing. It is very beautiful to see how often the Gentile got the blessing that Israel was missing. She had faith in Jesus. What a difference between this woman and the Pharisees ! It was the same with the Gentile soldier of whom Jesus said He had not found such faith in Israel. The disciples were not thinking the thoughts of Jesus, or they would have understood His way with this poor woman. They knew that an Israelite ought not to have to do with a Canaanite. She could not expect the Son of David to speak to her. But they might

have said, Perhaps she is part of the Treasure that Jesus is looking for in this world. We can see only a poor Gentile oppressed by the devil, but Jesus can find her, and He can make her a part of His Treasure !

It seems as if Jesus went to that place only to save the woman and her daughter, for He went away towards the Sea of Galilee, and sat down on the mountain. He always took a place above the crowd, so that they could all look up to Him and see Him. Again the crowds came, and laid their sick ones at His feet. He healed them all, so that they wondered to see the dumb people speaking, cripples made quite well, lame people walking, and blind people seeing ; and they glorified the God of Israel. But Jesus said to His disciples, I am moved with compassion for this crowd. They have been three days with Me, and they have nothing to eat. I would not send them away fasting, lest they faint by the way. How tenderly Jesus cared for those poor people ! How truly He was the Good Shepherd who cared for His sheep ! Did the disciples answer Jesus and say, You are able to give bread in the wilderness ; You could make five loaves feed five thousand men ? O those

disciples with little faith, how like us they were ! They thought only of what they could do themselves. They said, How could we have enough to feed so great a crowd ? Jesus took no notice of what they said. He did not even say, How little faith you have ! He said, How much have you ? He would use what they had, little as it was. They say, Seven loaves and a few small fishes. Jesus then commanded the crowds to sit down on the ground. They were to be at ease, and in the low place before Him, and He would abundantly satisfy them. Then Jesus took the loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks. And He broke them and gave to the disciples, and the disciples gave to the people. They all ate, and had enough, and they took up the fragments of what was left, and it made seven large baskets full. There were four thousand men, besides the women and children. This is like what Jesus is doing now, while He is up in heaven. He satisfies the souls of His people. Those who have nothing of their own, find that there is plenty in Him. It is a greater thing to feed the soul than to feed the body. Jesus knows how to fill the hearts of people who hunger and thirst for His things—the things that belong to the kingdom of heaven. And

He was showing His disciples how those who are near enough to Him to receive from Him, are able to hand on of His abundance to others. He is always saying to us : Freely ye have received, freely give. The first time Jesus fed the multitude they took up twelve small baskets that the disciples could carry in their hands, but the second time they filled seven large baskets, to show what a full and perfect supply there is in Jesus Himself for all the time that His people are left down here. He sent away the crowds, and went by ship to a place called Magdala.

What are the heavenly things that Jesus gives to people now ? They are things that belong to the kingdom of heaven. They are not found in this world—light and life, and all kinds of happy thoughts and holy feelings. What Jesus gives lasts for ever and ever. If we have a happy day in this world, it comes to an end, and we may have a sad one to-morrow. But Jesus is able to give us a happy time in our souls, even when things down here are sad. The love of God shed abroad in our hearts—that is a heavenly thing.

Children of the heavenly King,
As you journey, sweetly sing ;
Sing the Saviour's worthy praise,
Glorious in His works and ways.

MATTHEW XVI.

THE Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus to tempt Him by asking Him to show them a sign out of heaven. Jesus Himself was the sign out of heaven. But those men were blind in their hearts. They did not know who Jesus was. They could not see what a blessed sign He was. Jesus gave them a wonderful answer. He said, You look at the sky, and you say, It is going to be fine to-day. Or you say, A storm is coming. How is it that you can look at the sky and tell about the weather, and yet you cannot see the sign of this time? You are a wicked generation, with idols in your hearts, and that is why you cannot see God's sign. But no sign will be given to you, except the sign of Jonah. He said that to them before. Their hearts were so blinded and full of the things of this world, that they could not see God's sign out of heaven, though He was doing mighty works before them. The only sign they would get was that He was gone! He would be lost to them. They might look at the

sky, but they could not see the great world of blessing that is beyond the sky. Jesus left them and went away.

When Jesus had crossed the sea in the ship, He said to His disciples, Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. They at once began to think that Jesus knew they had forgotten to bring bread with them. But Jesus said, O ye of little faith ! How often He had to say that to them. You are thinking only about the food for your bodies, and you forget how I could feed five thousand men with five loaves. And how many hand baskets full of fragments were left ? Or when I gave seven loaves to the four thousand, how many larger baskets were filled ? How is it that you do not understand that it is not bread for your bodies I mean, but that I want you to think about your souls, and to take care that you do not get like those men whose hearts were so choked with other things that there was no room in them for Jesus. Then they understood that Jesus was speaking of the doctrine, that is, the teaching, of the Pharisees. Jesus called it leaven ; that is what the woman hid in the meal, to make it swell up and look big. The teaching of the Pharisees made

men look good, for they made very long prayers where they could be seen ; they did not pray in secret with the door shut, and they were very particular about washing their hands. They had a respectable kind of religion. The Sadducees were just the opposite to the Pharisees, because they said that when people died they would not live again ; they said there would be no resurrection and no judgment day ; so that it did not matter how they lived. These were the sort of people who could not see beyond the sky. They did not believe in a heaven, or in the rule of the kingdom of heaven. Yet they professed to believe what was written in the Bible. It shows how people can know the words of the Bible, and yet not know the mind of God. He gives us these holy writings that we may know Himself, and that we may learn God's way of thinking about things. How much greater are God's thoughts than men's thoughts ! God's thoughts reach beyond the heavens and the earth, and on to the ages of ages into the great eternity. Our thoughts are only for a moment ; they come and go like the sparks in the fire !

Now Jesus was the sign that came out of heaven, and God was looking into every one's

heart to see what each one thought of Jesus. The Pharisees and Sadducees could quote words out of the Bible, but everything depended on what they thought of Jesus. So He said to His disciples, Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am ? They answered, Some say, You are John the Baptist, and others say, You are one of the prophets. This was a curious thing to say, because the prophets were dead, and so was John. It showed that deep down in their hearts they did believe the dead would live again. But it showed how little they cared to settle that great question. It did not matter to them who this blessed One was, though He did such great things for them. He was only one of the prophets ; it did not matter which. They had no ears to hear His message, whether He spoke like John, or Elias, or Jeremiah. How it must have grieved the heart of Jesus to hear this careless answer. Then He said to His disciples, But who do you say that I am ? Simon Peter was the one to answer, and his answer made him the first of the apostles. He did not say, I think, or I say ; but, THOU ART THE CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD. How those words must have burst upon their ears, like a

peal of heavenly music and like a flash of heavenly light. How cheering to the blessed Lord to hear one man able to utter words like that, and to tell so plainly who He was ! Jesus said, Blessed art thou, Simon, son of Jonas. You are only a man, the son of Jonas, but flesh and blood have not revealed that to you. My Father who is in the heavens has revealed to you who I am. It was the Living God Himself who taught you that I am His Son, His anointed One. That is what Christ means. God anointed Him to be His Sent One to His people Israel. Then Jesus said to Simon, Thou art Peter (that means a stone), and on this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. This was another revelation. They had not heard of a church before. The only building they knew of was the Temple, which Solomon built of costly and beautiful stones. Jesus had told them before that a man who heard His word and did it was like a wise man who builds his house on a rock. The rock was the words of Jesus. No storm could blow down what was built on the words of Jesus. It was not like building on the sand of this world, which is easily washed away when

the rain comes (see vii. 24). Now Jesus said that He was going to build something of His own. He does not call it a house, which is built of stones like the Temple ; Jesus calls it His Church, or His Assembly. An assembly is a number of people. The word assembly means bringing together. Jesus was going to build together on a rock. What was the rock ? It was the words that Peter said : Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God. That was the rock. Jesus would build on that. By those words, The Son of the Living God, He would gather together in one the children of God. Jesus would build them together on the rock. So He said to Simon, You are a stone. My Father's revelation to you has made you a stone. I will build you on the rock. I will build my whole assembly together on that rock. Every one will be a stone. I will do the building all Myself. I will be like the man who looked for the treasure, and found it, and like the man who paid a great price for the one beautiful pearl. It will be My own.

Jesus would build His own Assembly, and not even the gates of hell could prevail against it. That meant that the power of death and the

power of Satan could not shake or spoil what Jesus built.

Many years after this Peter wrote a letter to the Jews who believed in Jesus, and in it he called Jesus the chief corner-stone, and he told the believing Jews that they were living stones built up into a spiritual house. He did not mention himself in his letter, but he showed how the Son of the Living God would have living stones for His building. Jesus came to give life to as many as received Him. He had life in Himself, and He could give eternal life to those whom His Father gave Him out of the world. It was a life beyond the power of death. Satan could not touch the life that was in Him or in those who were made to live by Him. But this building was not to be seen on the earth. Men could not see what Jesus was building. It would be like the treasure hid in the field. Jesus would know where it was, but He would keep it hidden. The enemy could not get into it, and a bad stone could not get in. They would be living stones, and a spiritual house. What is spiritual? Whatever has to do with our spirits. God made man with a spirit, soul, and body. The spirit is the part of us that goes to God when

we die, and it is the part of us that has to do with God while we are in this world. We cannot see God now with our bodily eyes, but our spirits can live before Him and be taught by Him. His Holy Spirit teaches our spirits to understand what Jesus meant by building and by gathering His Assembly. It was to be a spiritual building. The Holy Spirit would dwell in it. And He would teach our spirits about the things of God. The Temple was not a spiritual house. It was built of stones dug out of the earth. Men built it with their hands, and every one could see how beautiful it was. But what Jesus builds is not seen on the earth now. When Jesus comes back to this world, He will bring His Assembly with Him. Then it will be seen by the world. It will be the most glorious and beautiful thing in the whole creation of God.

All the little stones that Jesus is building now will be so closely built together that it will look like one most precious stone. Nothing will be seen in His building but His own beauty. Then the world will know that its Builder and Maker is God.

MATTHEW XVI.—*continued.*

WHEN Jesus had told what He Himself would do and that Peter was already a stone of His building, He said to Peter that He would give him a place of authority with regard to the kingdom. He said, I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of the heavens. The key is a mark of authority. Men in Eastern countries carry keys to show that they have authority from the king. Jesus was the King, and He was going away to heaven, but He had sown the good word of the kingdom. It took root in many hearts. They were brought under the rule of the heavens. Now Jesus put confidence in Peter, so that He gave him the keys, and He said that whatever Peter did with those keys on earth He would ratify in Heaven.

Jesus in heaven would see and would approve of the way Peter would use the keys on earth. In the Acts of the Apostles we read how Peter used the keys. In Chapter ii. he proclaimed the name of Jesus to the Jews with such power that three thousand souls accepted his word, and

were baptized in His name ; and, like Peter himself, they left all to follow Jesus. That day he used the keys for his own people, the children of Israel.

But in Acts x. there is a wonderful story about a Gentile soldier who saw a vision. An angel came to him and told him to send for Peter, and when the messengers came they found that Peter had also had a vision. He went to the house of this Gentile, who had gathered all his friends and relations into his house to hear what Peter had to say to them. Then he preached to them Jesus, and said that every one who believed on Him would receive through His name remission of sins ; and while Peter was yet speaking, the Holy Spirit came upon all those who heard His word. That was the way that Jesus ratified in heaven what Peter did on earth. Jesus put His seal upon them. He made them living stones for His building. And all those Gentiles were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. They believed in His name, and they were baptized in His name.

After telling Peter these things, Jesus told His disciples not to say to any man that He was the Christ. Now Jesus would not have the

name of Messiah—that was, the Christ, the Anointed One of Israel—because Israel rejected Him. Now He would call Himself only the Son of Man, for He was going to suffer for all men. And He began to tell the disciples that He must go away to Jerusalem, and there He would suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes. All the heads of Israel would agree to afflict Him. And He would be killed, and the third day He would be raised from the dead. Those were terrible words to the disciples. It was a new thought to them. They believed He was the King. They thought He was going to set up His kingdom on the earth. But that He should suffer and that He could die, they thought was impossible. Peter had just confessed that He was the Son of the Living God. They could not understand how He could die ! Peter actually rebuked the Lord for saying it. He said, God would not allow such a thing. How often men judge of God by their own thoughts ! Jesus felt it was what the adversary would say, to turn Him aside from the will of God. So He said to Peter, Get thee behind Me, Satan ! You are like Satan, because you want to keep Me from doing the will of God. And

it is all because your thoughts are not on the things of God but on the things of men. Men can see only what is on the earth and what is under the sun. But God had thoughts and plans that reached out beyond the earth and the heavens. Jesus knew the Father, and the Father knew the Son. Poor Peter! So soon to speak the words of the adversary to the Lord he loved. But he did not yet know how his Blessed Master was going to make it possible to gather living stones for His Assembly. Jesus must sell all that He had to buy them. Jesus died on the cross for sinners. He said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, he must expect to suffer. He was going to the cross. But He said, Whoever shall lose his life for My sake, shall find it. Their souls were more value than their bodies. If a man gained the whole world and lost his soul, what gain would it be to him? For what could a man give in exchange for his soul? The body might die and be put into the grave, but the soul would live for ever and for ever.

These words made the disciples very sorrowful, but Jesus cheered them with thoughts of His glory. The Son of Man would come back to this

earth in the glory of His Father, and all the holy angels with Him. And then He would reward every one according to his doings in this world. Having told them of His death, He pointed them on to the glory that would follow. He said, Some of you that are standing here shall not taste of death, until you have seen the Son of Man coming in His kingdom. It was as if He lifted a curtain to let them look in for a moment to see what He would look like in His glory. He would strengthen their faith in Himself in this way. And He would prepare their hearts for the sorrow of seeing Him in suffering and in death, by letting them first get a sight of His real glory as the Son of the Living God—the same Blessed Person who will come again as Son of Man to receive His reward from His God and Father. Then God will give Him dominion over the works of His hands, and will put all things under His feet.

Jesus will take His rightful place,
The centre of all heaven's race,
God's chosen Corner-stone ;
While everlasting notes of praise
His ransomed people's hearts shall raise,
To Him, the Lord alone.

MATTHEW XVII.

SIX days after Jesus had said these things to His disciples—perhaps it was on the seventh day—He took His three disciples with Him, Peter, James, and John, and He brought them up to a very high mountain, where they were alone with Himself. This mountain was the first possession of the Children of Israel as they were going into the Promised Land. And David said, There the Lord commanded a blessing, even life for evermore. Peter said, What they saw on that holy mount made the word of prophecy more sure to them. The brightness of that moment was like the rising of the morning star in the hearts of those three disciples. Jesus was transfigured before them. He allowed them to see with their mortal eyes His own personal glory ! When we speak of the glory of men, we think of crowns of gold, of jewels, of robes, and of thrones. But none of these things could give splendour to Jesus. The splendour was all in Himself ! His face shone as the sun and His garments became white as the light.

It was the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ that they saw. By and by the light of the knowledge of it would shine into them. But on the mount they were eye-witnesses of His majesty. They had known Him as He walked about on earth as the Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief. They hid their faces as He told them that He must suffer, and that He would die ! But now they were allowed to see Him in His own glory, and to see how from that very spot God would command blessing, life for evermore. They saw Him as the Son of the Living God ; the One who had life in Himself, and who had authority to give life to the whole new creation of God.

While they looked, behold Moses and Elijah appeared to them. And they talked with Jesus ! Moses had been on the mount with God before. He had looked into the Promised Land, but he was not able to go in. Elijah was the prophet who brought back the hearts of the people of Israel to their one true God. He was caught up to heaven in a whirlwind. These two men of God were talking with Jesus. Peter said to Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here. If Thou wilt, let us make three tabernacles : one for Thee,

one for Moses, and one for Elijah. Peter's thoughts were still upon this earth. The things of men were still in his mind. He would like to keep the Lord down here, and to build a tabernacle for Him, because it was good for us to have Him here. But could the glory of Jesus be kept in a tabernacle of boards and curtains ? Surely not. So while Peter was saying it, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and lo, a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is My beloved Son, in whom I have found My delight ; hear Him. God had said those words before, when the heavens opened upon Jesus, as the lowly Man who was so pleasing to God. Then they were to see Him. They saw the One that God owned from heaven as God's Beloved Son. Now, they were taken into the cloud of glory that they might hear Him, and they were to hear no one else. The disciples heard, and they fell on their faces, for they were terrified. The veil that Moses put on his face when the Children of Israel were afraid of the glory, was still on the hearts of those disciples. They could not look to the end of that which was passing away. But Jesus came to them and touched them, and said, Rise up, and be not terrified. And when they looked

up they saw no one but Jesus only. The man of God who gave the Law had disappeared. The voice of Moses would be heard no more. He was faithful in all God's House as a servant. But the servant had to go away when the Son came. The Son over God's House must be greater than the servant of the House. Moses got his commission from the glory, but a greater glory gave him his discharge. Elijah also disappeared. The voices of the prophets would be heard no more. John the Baptist was the last of the prophets. And he said, He that comes out of heaven is above all. It was Jesus only. He was their only Teacher now. They must hear Him. He was God's delight and pleasure. Those poor disciples might find their delight and pleasure in Him also.

But the glory went back to heaven. This world was not ready for it yet. The Son of Man had to buy the field before the world would see His glory. Jesus could have gone back to heaven from the Holy Mount. He might have gone back to God, as a glorious, perfect, holy Man who had glorified God on the earth. But then He would have been the only man that would ever be in heaven. He need not have

come down again where all the sin and suffering were. But He chose to die for sinners. He was going to lay down His life, and to take it again. And so, as He came down the mountain, He said to His disciples, that they must not tell of His glory until He was risen up from among the dead. The disciples asked about Elias, and Jesus explained to them that John the Baptist had come. He had tried to do what Elias did, that was, to turn their hearts to God. But they treated John the same way as all God's prophets were treated—they rejected his message, and they killed God's prophet. Jesus said they would do the same to the Son of Man. He would be rejected like John, and they would put Him to death.

When they came down from the mountain, a man out of the crowd came to Jesus and fell on his knees before Him, and said, Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is a lunatic : that meant that he had no sense, and suffered in his mind. In his distress he would fall into the fire or into the water. The father had brought the child to the disciples, but they could not cure him. Jesus said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you ? How long shall

I bear with you ? Bring him to Me. Jesus knew he had a devil. His father thought he was only insane, but the devil can make people unsound in mind. And the devil always does something to injure the body. He makes people try to drown or kill themselves ; his ways are the ways of death. Jesus rebuked him, and the devil went out, and the child was healed from that hour. When the disciples were alone with Jesus they asked Him why they were not able to cast out the devil. Jesus gave them a very plain answer: Because of your unbelief. If they had faith as a grain of mustard seed, they could remove the mountain of Jewish thoughts that was hindering them, and nothing would be impossible to them.

How often Jesus spoke of their want of faith ! How He encouraged them to have faith ! He taught them that there could be no work of God without faith. And they could have no power against Satan without prayer and fasting. Prayer is seeking God's will. Fasting is refusing our own will. The two things must go together, and prayer must come first. It is no use to fast without prayer ; and no man can fast to God unless he prays. If he is seeking God's

ways, he is not going after his own ways. This was the secret of power against Satan. If Satan finds a man praying and fasting, he has no way of attacking him. For Satan gets power over us by showing us how to please ourselves. While they were in Galilee, Jesus told them again that He was going to die. He said, The Son of Man is about to be delivered up into the hands of men, and they shall kill Him ; and the third day He shall be raised up. They were greatly grieved to hear those words.

When they came to Capernaum, the people who collected the tribute money for the Temple said to Peter, Does your Master pay tribute ? Peter said, Yes. He wished them to think that Jesus thought as much of the Temple as they did. But Jesus had none of their money. And He knew what Peter had said ; and before Peter had time to tell Him, He said, What do you think, Simon ? (Jesus did not call him Peter that time !) From whom do the kings of the earth take tribute ? From their own sons or from strangers ? Peter said, From strangers. Jesus said, Then are the sons free. Jesus meant that He was Son of the King of the Temple, and in His grace He counted Peter with Himself

when He said, Then are the sons free. But that we may not offend them, go to the sea, and cast a hook, and take the first fish that comes up; and when you have opened its mouth, you will find a piece of money, just enough to pay the tribute for two. Take that and give it to them for Me and thee. How touched Peter must have been at Jesus saying, For Me and thee. How it must have encouraged Peter to have faith in Him. Not only to believe in His power, but to believe in His love. It is a greater thing to have faith in the love of Jesus, than it is to have faith in His power. He was teaching Peter that there were greater things in His heart than all the wonders that His hand was doing. He took notice of everything. He was ready for everything that happened. He could command such a common thing as money. He could command a fish. And He could command Peter. He could see into his thoughts. And yet He had nothing but kindness and love in His heart for Peter. He treated him like a relation. He had said that those who did the will of His Father in heaven would be His new relations. He would not be ashamed to call them brethren.

MATTHEW XVIII.

IN the last chapter Jesus was showing how He could come down from the heights of glory to serve men and to suffer for men. But here we find the disciples thinking which of them would be the greatest. Jesus called a little child to Him, and set it in their midst, and said, Verily I say to you, Unless you are converted, and become as little children, you shall not at all enter into the kingdom of the heavens. That was a solemn answer. We are naturally great in our own eyes. Man is the only one of God's creatures that tries to be greater than he is. A robin does not want to be a thrush. It is happy in its littleness, and its joyous contentment delights us. But how could men become like little children? By beginning all over again, and dropping off all that they had gained in this world. They were to be humble, and take the lowest place, instead of thinking which of them would have the highest place. A little child has no place in the world. He is not thinking whether he is great or not. He likes to hold the hand of some one greater than himself. A

child has to be taught, led, guided, watched over, and taken care of. God likes His people to be like little children, that He may teach them, and guide them, and take care of them. We read how He revealed His great thoughts to the babes, and made them able to understand what the great people in Jerusalem could not understand, because they had no room in their hearts for Jesus. These disciples were to humble themselves, and to become as little children, and then they would be great in the kingdom of heaven. They would be like Jesus, who was meek and lowly ; and how really great He was ! Little children are not of much account in this world, but they would be of very great account with God. And if anyone received one of these lowly ones in the name of Jesus, He would count it the same thing as if they received Himself. But it was a sorrowful thing for anyone to be a hindrance to one of those little ones who believed in Jesus. It would be worse for him than if a great millstone were put on his neck, so that he would sink in the sea. In the world there would be many things that would hinder those little ones. Something might stop them from going on, or something

might turn them back. They might be made to wish for the things of the world, instead of keeping all the room in their hearts for Jesus only. It would be a sad thing for anyone who put the hindrance in their way. And, again, Jesus said it was better to cut off your hand or your foot, or to have only one eye, if they hindered you in going on in the narrow way that leads to life. He was showing them how much more important it is to think of the soul than of the things that belong to the body. The body will die and go into the grave, but the soul will not die. It will live. The soul will enjoy the great eternal things that God reveals to the babes. Those things will never pass away. They are the things that belong to eternal life, and the things that belong to the kingdom of heaven. How dreadful to think that a man can be so taken up with the things that belong to this world as to lose his own soul. Jesus spoke of such people as lost. They were lost to God, they did not know Him. They had gone astray in their own ways. Jesus had come into this world to save those who were lost, and He tells us how much He values His saved ones. He said, Take care that you do not despise even

one of My little ones. You may think they are only little ones, but they have a great place in My kingdom, and their angels continually look on the face of My Father in heaven. The face of God was never turned away from those little ones. They were those whom Jesus had come to save. He took great pains to make His disciples understand His grace to them. He said, What would you think of a man who had a hundred sheep, and one of them went astray ? (He asked them before, what they would do if one of their own sheep fell into a pit.) Would the owner of the sheep leave all the rest on the mountain, and go after the one that went astray ? He would, and if he found it, he would rejoice more in the one that was found than in all the ninety-nine who did not go astray. Why ? I suppose that one would love him more than all the rest. It would feel what a good shepherd he was to take such pains to find him. Sheep are very intelligent, though they are so quiet and gentle. They have great affection, and they never forget those who care for them or feed them.

Jesus was seeking the lost sheep of Israel, and this is a picture of His thoughts about them. He would go after even one, and He would

rejoice when He found it. It would give Him more pleasure than all the others who remained on the mountains of Israel. For He said, It is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of those little ones should perish. What a happy thing to be one of His little ones ! How sweet to think that Jesus has looked for one until He found it, and that He is glad that it is found. Matthew must have thought, I was that lost sheep. I had gone astray. I was collecting taxes for the Romans. But Jesus found me. He called me. He said, Follow Me. And I never wanted to go on the mountains again !

Jesus said all these beautiful things about His grace to them, and now He said, You have to show the same kind of grace to one another. You must not let your brother go astray. You must go after him and try to win him back. Cain said, I am not my brother's keeper. But Jesus said to the disciples, You are to be your brother's keeper. You must do the work of a shepherd to your brother. If he has done wrong to you, go and tell him of it alone. It would be a great thing to gain your brother, and he would love you more than ever. But if your brother will not listen to you alone, then take one or two

others to talk to him about it. If he will not listen to them, you must tell it to the Assembly, that all may know about it. And if he will not hear what the Assembly says, he has made himself to you like one of the Gentiles, or as a tax-gatherer, that is, one who is in bondage to the Gentiles.

When Jesus gathered people together—that is what church or assembly means—He intended them to agree. If they all had His thoughts, they would agree. He said, If two of you agree on earth about what you both pray for, it shall be granted to you by My Father in heaven. For if you are gathered to My name, I will come into your midst and I will approve of what you do in My name. You will be under the rule of heaven, though you are on the earth.

Peter asked the Lord how often he ought to forgive his brother—seven times? Peter thought it would be a great thing to forgive his brother seven times! But Jesus said, I do not say seven times, but seventy times seven. That would be four hundred and ninety times! What large thoughts grace has! God was ready to forgive Israel for 490 years of forgetfulness of Him. But Jesus said the kingdom of the heavens was become like a king who was

reckoning with his servants. And a debtor was brought to him who owed ten thousand talents. But he had nothing to pay the debt with, so his lord said he must be sold, and his wife and children and all that he had, and the debt should be paid. That was what the law said. Every penny must be paid. The servant fell down and worshipped, and said, Lord, have patience with me. Give me time, and I will pay thee all. His lord was so moved with compassion, that he let him go free and forgave him the debt. That is what grace does. And Jesus wanted His disciples to see that if they were children of their heavenly Father, they would act like kings to one another. Grace is a kingly thing, but it is only found under the rule of heaven. And so that servant went out from his lord's presence, and found a fellow-servant who owed him only a hundred pence. Forgetting how much his lord had forgiven him, he seized his fellow-servant by the throat, saying, Pay me what you owe me. His fellow-servant fell at his feet, and said, Have patience with me, and I will pay you. But he had no compassion; he cast the man into prison until he could pay the debt. The other servants were greatly grieved at this,

and went and told their lord. Then his lord called him and said, Wicked servant, I forgave your debt when you cried to me, and ought not you to have had the same compassion for your fellow-servant as I had for you ? His lord was angry, and gave him up to the penalty of the law. Jesus said, So My heavenly Father will do to you if you do not forgive your brother from your heart. It was like what Jesus had said to them about being reconciled. God was making friends with this world by grace, reconciling them to Himself by Jesus Christ. If they refused the offer of grace in the Person of God's Son, they must be judged according to the law.

The Jews did not understand the grace of God. And they could not show grace to the Gentiles. It was the new thing of the kingdom of heaven ; it would not fit with the old Jewish things. But they did not know Jesus, and they did not know His heavenly Father. His compassions fail not. They are new every morning. Jesus was saying, If you know My heavenly Father, and if you know how He has had compassion on you, go and show His compassion to others. Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.

MATTHEW XIX.

WHEN Jesus had said all His words of grace to those who were outside the cities of Israel, He left Galilee and went back to the coasts of Judea. As usual, the crowds followed Him, and He healed them all. Then the Pharisees came to Him, tempting Him, and asking if it was right for a man to put away his wife when she did what was wrong. They knew that grace had a way of forgiveness, and they hoped that Jesus would say something to weaken the Law. But He knew all that was in their foolish hearts, and He said, When God made a man and his wife at the beginning, He said, they should no longer be two, but one. And what God had joined together, man must not separate. It was quite right for a man to have a wife. But it was a greater thing to be able to give up the comfort of this life for the sake of the things that belong to the kingdom of heaven.

Then they brought little children to Jesus that He might put His hands on them and pray.

The disciples wished to send them away. But Jesus said, Suffer the little children, and forbid them not to come to Me ; for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And Jesus laid His hands on them and went away. Those little children were just the opposite to the Pharisees, who thought so much of themselves. The Pharisees had no part in the kingdom of heaven ; their hearts were like the stony ground, and they were full of the thorns and briars of this world. They had no good ground in their hearts for the good seed to grow in. Yet Jesus was still going forth scattering precious seed. A young man came to Him, and said, Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may get eternal life ? He thought he could do something good, and I am afraid he thought that Jesus was only a good man ; he admired His goodness, but he thought that he could be good too.

Jesus said, Why do you talk to Me about goodness ? There is no one good but One. That is God. Not one of the children of Adam is good. Not one understands and seeks after God. That is the only good thing a man can do—to seek God. But Jesus said to him, If you want to enter into life, keep the com-

mandments. Jesus did not say that would give him eternal life. The young man said, Which of the commandments ? Jesus mentioned only the easy ones. He did not say, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart. Jesus knew he did not do that. The young man said, I have kept those commandments ; what more ought I to do ? Jesus looked very deep down into that young man's heart, and I think He saw that a good seed of His own sowing was at the bottom of his heart, but it was choked with riches, and choked with his own thoughts of his goodness. He was not a little child. So Jesus said to him, If you want to be perfect, go and sell all that you have, and give the money to the poor. Then you will have treasure in heaven, and come and follow Me. When the young man heard that, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. He loved the world and the things of the world. He was too rich to leave all to follow Jesus. He said he loved his neighbour as himself, but he did not want to give his riches to his neighbour. He did not know his own heart, but Jesus knew it. He said, He that loves anything more than Me is not worthy of Me. The young man went

away sorrowful. But Jesus did not lose sight of him. I believe grace sought him and found him.

Jesus turned to His disciples, and said, It is hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. The disciples were astonished to hear that. They thought it was a sign of God's favour to be rich. If a Jew was rich, he could offer a bullock for a sacrifice to God ; and if a Jew were poor, he could offer only a bird. They thought riches would help them to be good Jews. But the grace that Jesus brought to men was without money and without price. It was beyond all price. All the money in the world could not buy it. You know what a great animal a camel is, and how impossible it is that a camel could go through the eye of a needle. There is a place in Palestine that is called the Needle's Eye, and when the camels have to pass through it they kneel down and their loads are taken off—the things they carry on their backs—and then they can squeeze through the little hole. Perhaps Jesus thought of that place, but He meant that before a rich man could

enter the kingdom of heaven, he must do what the camel did. He must drop off all that which made him too big to go in by the narrow way that leads to life. He must become a little child, who has nothing of his own, and then he would find great treasure in heaven. He would follow the One who fills heaven. Jesus looked at His disciples, a look of tender pity and love, and then He said, With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.

When Peter heard what Jesus said, he answered, We have left all and followed Thee. He meant, what reward would they have? Jesus said, You that have followed Me now, will, in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit upon His throne of glory, also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes.

What is the regeneration? It is the new thing that will be on the earth when the Son of Man comes in His kingdom. Everything will be settled then in a new way. Now people imagine vain things. They think that riches and the cleverness of men can do everything. God is going to turn all the thoughts of men upside down. He is going to bring in a new state of things that He calls the regeneration—

when those who are poor now will be the rich ones, and those who are lowly now will be sitting on thrones. What a change ! Those who followed Jesus when He was the rejected One, will be found beside Him in the day of glory. If you suffer with Me, you shall reign with Me, He said. And if anyone gives up houses or relations or riches for My name's sake, he shall receive a hundred times as much, even now, and he shall have everlasting life. But many that are first shall be last, and those who are last may be first ; for in the regeneration grace will put every one in his true place. Jesus might have said, You, Peter, James, and John, you gave up your boats to follow a heavenly Stranger, who had not where to lay His head in this world. But you have had His company all this time. You have known His love and His care over you. You have had His teaching, all His lovely thoughts and words to delight your hearts. Have you not already had a hundred times as much as you gave up ?

Jesus shall our Treasure be
Through His own eternity ;
He is now our nearest Friend,
And His love will never end.

MATTHEW XX.

IN this chapter Jesus tells them more about the regeneration, and how it was that the last might be first. He said, The kingdom of heaven is like a man who has a house, but he goes out early in the morning to hire workmen for his vineyard—that is where grapes grow on the vines. God used to call Israel His vineyard, and at one time He said, when He looked for grapes, it brought forth wild grapes. But Jesus was looking for good fruit. It is still the thought that He is seeking men, that they may belong to Him, that they may be His workmen. The parable says that this man agreed to give every workman a penny a day, and he sent them to work in his vineyard. They agreed to do the work, and they agreed to receive their pay. It was like Moses saying, This do, and thou shalt live ; and the children of Israel answered, All that you have spoken we will do. The young man who came to Jesus thought that was the way to be good ; and so it was if he could have kept the whole law.

But how could he say he did not covet when he loved riches ? Or that he loved his neighbour as himself when he did not want to give his money to the poor ? And what was the real state of his heart when he did not love Jesus enough to follow Him ? How could he think of being good before God ? In all these parables Jesus was teaching them what was in their own hearts. They did not know their own hearts, but God could see in secret all the different things that were choking the good seed ; and Jesus was showing how grace was able to make God's thoughts put out men's thoughts. So that all their thoughts about the doings of men, and of men's greatness would be turned upside down.

About the third hour of the day the master went out again, and he saw men standing idle in the market place. And he said to them, Go into my vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you. And they went off to work in the vineyard. At the sixth hour he did the same, and again at the ninth hour. But at the eleventh hour, that is the last hour of the day, when it would seem to be too late to go to work, he went out and found others standing idle ; and

he said to them, Why do you stand all the day idle ? They said, Because no man has hired us. The master said, Then go into my vineyard. When the evening came, and the day's work was done, the lord of the vineyard said to his steward, Call the workmen and pay them their wages, and begin at the last one that was hired. Then those who came in at the eleventh hour received each one a penny. But when those who were hired first came, they expected to get more, and they were disappointed when they received every man a penny. They murmured against the master of the house. They said, These last have worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden and heat of the day. He said to one of them, My friend, I do not wrong you. Did you not agree with me for a penny ? Take what is yours, and go. But it is my will to give the last man the same as you. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with what is my own ? Is your eye evil because I am good ? So it is, the last is first, and the first is last ; for many are called, but the chosen ones are few. It reminds us of the net that gathered up all kinds, but grace sorted out the good fish. The

chosen ones were those who trusted in the goodness of God. The others were dismissed, as workmen.

The men who were hired first were like the Jews, who had an agreement, and yet they expected to get more than they had earned. The master said, Keep to your agreement. You have all that is lawful. What the law gives you is a penny a day. They were content with their lawful wages until they saw the last men get the same. That made them jealous. So it was with the Jews. They did not like to see others go into the kingdom of God before them. They could not understand the good giving of God. He had a right to do what He chose with His own. His grace would pay the last man first, the man that had no agreement. He had no law on his side. He trusted to the goodness of the Master ; and he came off best. He accepted the goodness of God, and did not talk about his own work. So in the regeneration every one will be in his true place. Then it will be, not, Who has done most work, but, Who knows his Master best ? He trusts the goodness of his Master, and he has not an evil eye.

As Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, He took His twelve disciples apart, and said to them, We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death. They were the most religious men in Jerusalem. And He said, They will deliver Him up to the Gentiles ; to mock, and scourge, and crucify Him, and the third day He shall rise again.

How often Jesus had told them that, and how plainly He said that their own people, the Jews, would be guilty of His death. The disciples seemed unable to believe it, for the next thing we read is that the mother of James and John came with her sons and worshipped Him. They wanted to ask Him for something. Jesus said to her, What wilt thou ? She said, Grant that these my two sons may sit, one on Thy right hand, and one on Thy left, in Thy kingdom. They were still thinking of who would be the greatest, even when Jesus told them how He was going to suffer and to die. They were thinking of themselves and of where they would be in His kingdom. Jesus said, You know not what you ask. Can you drink

the cup that I am going to drink ? Jesus meant His sufferings. James and John said, We can. Jesus answered that they might share His sufferings, that was all the blessed Son of Man had to give ; but to sit on His right hand and on His left was not His to give. That place would be given to those for whom His Father had prepared it. But to share in His sufferings was a nearer and a dearer place to those who loved Him, and both those disciples found it so. James was the first to lose his life for Jesus' sake. It is only with those we love that we share our sorrows, and it is only those who love us that can share them. The other disciples were displeased with the two brothers, but Jesus said, You know how the Gentiles rule as lords over one another, but it shall not be so amongst you. Whoever wants to be great among you, must be your servant, and the one that is first among you must be your slave. This was a new kind of greatness that grace brought into this world. The greatest servant is the greatest person. The Son of Man was that. He came to serve and to give His life a ransom for many.

Jesus was going up to Jerusalem. He was going to suffer there and to die. On His way

He passed through Jericho. That was the place that Joshua conquered without any fighting men! It was a great city with strong walls, and houses were built upon the walls, and the gates of the city were shut and barred against the people of God. It was a picture of the world that did not know God. Israel did not fight against Jericho, but the precious ark of God was carried by the priests round and round that great city. What a sight it was! Priests blowing with trumpets, and priests carrying the ark of the God of Israel. Not a sound was heard but the blowing of the trumpets, and that is all the world knows about the people of God now. They know that they pray, they cause their voice to be heard on high. When Joshua said, Shout, the people shouted, and the great walls of the city fell down flat. Joshua said they must never build up the city of Jericho again. If anyone did so, he would be under the curse of Jericho. So it was called the place of the curse, as Jerusalem was the place of blessing. The ark that was carried round Jericho was a type of Jesus. In this chapter we read that Jesus, the real Ark of God, was at Jericho, and He was on His way to Jerusalem.

Two blind men were sitting by the wayside, and they heard that Jesus was passing by. It was a sad thing to see two blind men together. We often see one blind man with some one beside him who can see the way. But these men were both blind, and they had the same desire to be able to see, and they had the same faith that Jesus was able to make them see. So they cried out, Have mercy on us, Lord, Son of David. The crowd tried to stop them crying after Jesus. The crowd had no pity for those two blind men. But they cried out all the more, Have mercy on us, Lord, Son of David. Jesus heard them, and He stopped. He called them to Him, and said, What will ye that I shall do to you ? They said, Lord, that our eyes may be opened. They knew that they were blind, and they longed to see the works of God, and they did one great work, for they believed in Him whom God had sent. Jesus was moved with compassion for them, and He touched their eyes. Immediately they saw Him, and they followed Him. They got new sight, and they got a new Object for their eyes to look on. No wonder they followed Him. Old things had passed away for them. The dark night

of their blindness was gone. A new day was begun when they followed Jesus in the way. They were like a little picture of the saved ones in Israel, those who had faith to go to Jesus. They got new sight to see the Son of David. They learned His compassion for His people. The touch of His hand on their blind eyes made them able to see Him. They followed Him as He went on to Jerusalem. They left Jericho behind them. With Jesus was the place of blessing for them. They had called Him the Son of David. And now God was going to give one more testimony to Israel of who Jesus was, so that they had no excuse. Their own Scriptures taught that He was the King—the Son of David.

MATTHEW XXI.

JESUS came to Bethphage. It was the place of unripe figs. At the Mount of Olives Jesus sent two of His disciples into the village. He said, You will find an ass tied, and a little one with it ; untie them and bring them to Me. And if anyone says anything to you, say, The Lord has need of them. Jesus knew the hearts of His willing people. He would let them take part in honouring Him. It was a small thing to lend an ass, but it was for a great Person. It was for the Lord, and the Lord was King. A prophet had said, Behold, thy King cometh to thee, meek, and mounted upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. So they brought them to Jesus, and put their garments on the ass that Jesus might sit on them. And a great crowd spread their garments on the road, and cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the ground before Jesus. That was to do Him honour. And the crowds who went before Him, and those who came after Him, cried out, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David ! Blessed is He who comes in

the name of Jehovah ! Hosanna in the highest ! Jehovah was the name of God by which He brought the Children of Israel out of Egypt. He said, I am Jehovah, your God. I will take you to Me for a people, and I will be your God. The name Jehovah reminded them of His covenant with Israel, and of His faithfulness to His people. Hosanna means, Save now. They said Jesus was come to save them in the name of Jehovah. So He was, but He must die on the cross for their sins before those words could come true. But God allowed the crowds to publish who He was—the blessed Jehovah of Israel, the Saviour of His people.

So Jesus rode into Jerusalem, meek, and sitting on an ass, while the shouts of the people proclaimed who He was. The whole city was moved at the sight, and they said, Who is this ? That guilty city was troubled when they heard that Jesus was born King of the Jews. And now as He comes among them in meek and lowly grace, they say, Who is He ? The crowds answered, This is Jesus the Prophet. He is from Nazareth of Galilee. Jesus went into the Temple of God. It was the only place in Jerusalem that He could have to do with.

But what did He find there? Were people worshipping God there? No. They were buying and selling in the buildings of the Temple. Jesus turned them all out of the Temple; their money tables and the seats where they sold doves to offer for sacrifice. He made them all go out of the Temple, and said, It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer; but you have made it a den of robbers. How could Jehovah save them when even His house was so unholy? They did not know that the blessed Son of Man would offer Himself up as a sin-offering to God before they could be saved. God would no longer accept the offering of doves, or bulls, or goats. It needed a greater offering than these to put away sin. Jesus by one offering would do it perfectly and for ever!

While Jesus was in the Temple, the blind and lame came to Him, and He healed them. But the chief priests and scribes were looking on. They saw the wonders that He did; and they heard the children crying out in the Temple, Hosanna to the Son of David! Happy children. Jesus had put His Hands on them and blessed them, and how it pleased Him to

hear their young voices join in the chorus of Hosanna, to the Son of David ! But those religious people, the priests and the scribes, were indignant. It made them angry to hear Jesus praised. They did not join in that burst of joy. Poor miserable men, who thought themselves so good, they did not know the great Jehovah of Israel. They did not know His blessed Son, the King ! They said to Jesus, Do you hear what those children say ? Yes, Jesus said, I do indeed hear them ; but have you never read what David said, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise ? Jesus accepted the praise of those little ones. It reminded Him of the time when Jehovah's name would be excellent in all the earth. And it ought to have reminded those wicked men that David said there would be enemies then, who would not like the praises of the babes. Jesus did not quote the rest of the verse, because nothing but grace was on His lips. But the word of God judged them as enemies to Jehovah. (Ps. viii.).

Jesus left them. He went out of the guilty city. He could not stay there. Jehovah's

name was not honoured in Jerusalem. He went to Bethany, and passed the night there, without a home, or anything to eat, for in the early morning he came back to the city and was hungry. And He saw one fig tree on the road which had nothing on it but leaves. God called Israel His fig tree. It ought to have had ripe figs for Him. Jesus desired a ripe fig, but there was none. Israel had no fruit for Him. So Jesus said to the fig tree, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And immediately the fig tree withered away.

The disciples wondered when they saw it, and said, How soon is the fig tree withered away ! Jesus said, If you have faith, and do not doubt, you shall do what is done to this fig tree ; and you will even say to this mountain, Be thou removed and cast into the sea, and it shall be done. And all things whatever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive. How often Jesus told them that they must have faith. Nothing else would do for God. It made the whole difference between those who believed in Him and those who did not. Jesus meant them to understand that the people who had no faith were like the withered fig tree.

God would not look for fruit any more from the Jewish religion. His Temple was profaned. The One who came in the name of Jehovah was not received. The chief priests, who ought to have taught the people knowledge, did not know God themselves. The rich men gloried in their riches, but they did not understand or know Jehovah, who was showing loving-kindness to His people.

When Jesus was teaching in the Temple, the chief priests and elders came to Him, and said, By what authority doest Thou these things ? And who gave Thee this authority ? How little they knew who Jesus was when they dared to speak to Him like that. Jesus answered them in His beautiful meekness, but in the power of His divine wisdom. He said, I will ask you a question, and if you answer it, I will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men ? Those men did not love the truth, and they were afraid to answer that question. They asked each other what would be the best thing to say. They thought, If we say that John got his message from heaven, He will say, Why did you not believe him ?

They confessed that they were unbelievers, and they said, If we should say, It was of men, we are afraid of the crowd, for they all believe that John was a prophet. They answered Jesus, We do not know. What a confession for elders and chief priests to make. They were the leaders of the people, and yet they could not answer such a simple question. They were afraid to tell the truth, and they were afraid of the people. Untruthfulness always makes us cowards. Jesus said to them Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things. Jesus knew how to make them take their true place before Him, and before God. If they did not believe what John said, how could they understand the authority of Jesus? They were obliged to confess it; thy did not know. They were ignorant, blind leaders that did not know the way. So Jesus asked them another question. He said, What would you think of a man who had two sons; and he said to the first, Go and work in my vineyard. But the naughty son answered, I will not; but afterwards he was sorry, and he repented, and went. He obeyed his father. The father said the same to the second son, and

he said, Yes, sir, I will go. But he did not go. Jesus said, Which of the two did his father's will ? They said, The first. The naughty one, who repented, did better than the good one who said, Yes, sir, and did not obey. Jesus said, That is the way with you. The sinful men and women who repent, will go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him ; but the sinners believed him, and even when you saw them turned round to do the Father's will, it did not make you repent or believe in him.

Jesus was still thinking of God's vineyard, and He said to them, Hear another parable. He told them before about the householder who sent workmen into his vineyard. He was with them then, and looked after the vineyard himself. But in this parable Jesus was telling them about a householder who went away for a time. He took great pains with his vineyard. He planted it himself, and he made a fence round it. He made a place to put the wine in, for he expected to have good grapes to make wine of. And he built a tower, and then let it out to husbandmen. That is, he engaged people

to look after his vineyard while he was away. But when the time for the fruit came, he sent to the husbandmen to receive his fruits. The husbandmen took his messengers, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Then he sent other servants, and they did the same to them. That is exactly like what they did to God's prophets when He sent them to look for good fruit in Israel. At last this householder sent his son. He said, They will have some respect for my son. But when they saw the son, they said, This is the heir, come, let us kill him, and then we can keep the vineyard for ourselves. So they took the son, and cast him out of the vineyard; and killed him! It was just what they would do to Jesus. He read it in their hearts. He said, When the lord of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those husbandmen? They said, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out the vineyard to other husbandmen, who will render him the fruits in their seasons. They condemned themselves, for they were the evil husbandmen, who were saying of Jesus, Come, let us kill Him. So Jesus said to them, Have you never read in the Scriptures, The

stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner? Jesus was the Stone which they were rejecting. God had said that He would lay a precious Corner-Stone, and it would be a sure foundation for every one who believed in Him. The chief priests and the Pharisees professed to read the Scriptures, but they did not understand the mind of God. They did not know what God was doing. It was wonderful to the eyes of those who could see it.

¶ Then Jesus applied the parable to them. He said, The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and it shall be given to a nation that will produce the good fruits of the kingdom of God. Jesus said, Those who fall on this Stone shall be broken, but if It falls upon anyone, It shall grind him to powder. Jesus meant that now they were falling against Him. He knew that they were wishing to kill Him. But they were only doing damage to themselves. By and by, when He will come to sit upon His throne, God will put all His enemies under His feet. They will be crushed to powder.

The chief priests and Pharisees heard the parable, and they knew that Jesus spoke about them. But it did not make them repent.

They wished to take Jesus, but they were afraid of the crowds, because they believed that Jesus was a prophet. They could not take Him until He gave Himself up. As soon as He had finished the work that God gave Him to do, He let Himself be taken, but Jesus had more to tell them about the kingdom first.

MATTHEW XXII.

Jesus had been teaching them how God thought of Israel as a vine of His own planting, and all that God had done for it. He could say, What could be done for My vineyard that I have not done? But it did not bear fruit for God. So He said He would not ask for fruit from men any more. God would give to men; He would not receive from them. God Himself would be the only Giver. He would give like a King. And it was to do honour to the King's Son. So Jesus said, The kingdom of heaven has been made like to a king who made a wedding feast for his son. He sent out his servants to invite the people to the feast; but they would not come. Think of a king making a feast and people refusing to come to it! Then the king sent out other servants, and they were to say, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fat beasts are killed, and all things are ready; come to the wedding feast. What good news that was to send into a hungry world. How the poor

and needy ones would rejoice to hear it. But no, they made light of it. They thought another time would do, and one went after his land, and another went to see about his money, and some caught the king's servants and insulted them and killed them.

When the king heard of it he was angry, and he sent his army to destroy those murderers, and they burnt up their city. This was what happened to Jerusalem when they refused God's invitation to do honour to His Son. But this is not the end of the parable, for the king sent out other servants, who were to go away from the rebellious city, and to look for the people who were wandering about in the highways, and as many as they could find they were to invite to the wedding feast. For the king said, The wedding feast is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. They loved something else more than Jesus, and they were not worthy of Him. Those servants went out into the highways and brought together all, as many as they found, both evil and good. They were like the fishermen whose net brought in all kinds of things out of the sea. And so the wedding feast was furnished

with guests. But the king went in to see the guests, and he saw a man who had not on a wedding garment. The king said to him, Friend, how camest thou in here not having on a wedding garment? The man was speechless. He had no excuse to make, because the king provided the wedding garment. He had only to put off his own clothes and to put on the clothes which were suited to the presence of the king. What disrespect to the king to come to the feast in his own clothes. He did not know what was suitable for the presence of the king, and he did not know that even his clothes must be the gift of the king. The servants were told to cast him out, like the evil workmen who did not know how good the master was. Jesus taught them that it was not how much work they did that made them good servants, but how much they knew of the Master's grace. Just so with those who were invited to the feast. They must know what suits the King. They had to receive everything from God. Grace prepared the feast, and grace provided the garments. They must be suitable for God. They were of new cloth that did not suit with the old garments

that belonged to highwaymen. They must be clothed with garments of salvation to partake of the feast that God's grace prepared for lost sinners.

The Pharisees were the religious Jews who hated the Romans. The Herodians were the friends of Herod and of the Romans. These two sets of men hated each other, and yet they joined together against Jesus. They sent messengers to Jesus, who said, Teacher—they pretended to respect Him as a teacher. They said, We know that Thou art true, and that Thou teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest Thou for anyone, for Thou regardest not the person of men. They pretended that they really wished to learn the way of God, and they said, Is it lawful to give tribute to the Romans, or is it unlawful? The Pharisees thought if Jesus was a good Jew, He would say it was not right to pay the Roman tribute, and the Herodians would then be able to say that Jesus was against the Roman Emperor, whose name was Cæsar. They did not know that Jesus could see all the thoughts in their wicked hearts. He said, Why do you tempt Me, hypocrites? They were hypocrites because they

were pretending. Jesus said, Show Me the tribute money. Whose is this image and this writing on it ? They said, Cæsar's. Jesus said, Then you must give to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and give to God the things that are God's.

An English penny would have the king's head on it, and the writing on it would be the king of England's name ; and so it was then. The money they were using proved that they were subjects of Cæsar, and that they must pay tribute to him. But if they had given God the fruits of His vineyard, they would not have been the servants of Cæsar. They were surprised when Jesus answered them like that. It only showed what was in their own hearts, and it also showed the perfect wisdom and holy grace that were in every word that Jesus said. They left Him and went away.

The same day some Sadducees came to Him. They were people who said that there is no resurrection. They also called Jesus Teacher, and they asked Him what they thought was a very clever question, but Jesus showed that it was a very foolish one, and only proved how little they knew about God. They said, If a man were to

die and his wife were to be married again, whose wife would she be in the resurrection ? Jesus said, You are all wrong, because you do not know the Scriptures, nor the power of God. How often Jesus told them that if they knew the Holy Writings, which they pretended to value, they would not be so ignorant about God. Jesus said, In the resurrection people do not marry ; they are like the angels of God in heaven. Marriage is intended only for a world like this, where a man wants a woman to be a comfort to him, and a woman wants a man to take care of her. By and by, in heaven, God will fill every heart as He does to the happy angels now. Then Jesus told those poor ignorant unbelieving Sadducees a very wonderful thing. He said, God is God of the living, not of the dead. He says, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob ; that shows that Abraham and Isaac and Jacob are alive. You think they are dead ; they are dead to us, but they are alive to God. Their spirits are alive. Our spirits—that is the part of us that does not die—belong to God. Our bodies die and are put into the grave. The crowds were astonished at the teaching of Jesus.

The Pharisees heard that Jesus had put the Sadducees to silence—He left them without power to answer Him. So one of them who was a lawyer tried to tempt Jesus. He said, Teacher, which is the great commandment of the law ? Jesus said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it :—Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. That was a wonderful answer for that lawyer, because he knew right well that he had never kept God's first commandment, even for a day ! No man that ever lived was able to keep those two commandments, until Jesus came. He kept them perfectly and always. He always loved God with all His heart, and He loved His neighbours so truly that He would die to save them from their sins. Love is the fulfilling of the law. If they could have kept those two commandments, they could have done all the rest. That lawyer was also put to silence. Jesus showed how their own words condemned them, and while they were gathered together against Him, He asked them

a question. He said : What do you think about Christ ? He meant God's Anointed One, who would come to Israel. Whose Son is He ? They said, He is the Son of David. Jesus said, How is it that David, speaking by the Spirit of God, calls him Lord ? For David said, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit on My right hand until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool. If therefore David called Him Lord, how is He his Son ? No one was able to answer Him a word ! And from that day they did not dare to question Him any more.

Jesus had put to silence every one of them—they were speechless, like the man who had not on the wedding garment. They tried to confound Jesus, but they were only confounded themselves ; and the day when they all gathered together against Him, it was as if Jesus heard God say those words to Him, Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies Your footstool. Those very men would be His footstool. They were falling against God's precious Corner-Stone, instead of rejoicing in God's sure foundation. But God will set His King upon His holy hill. He will reign until all His enemies are put under His feet. Jesus is sitting now at

God's right hand in heaven. He is sitting on His Father's throne, until all His own saved ones are gathered out of this world. Then He will come again and bring them with Him, and He will sit upon His own throne ; every one will fall into line around Him then ; each one will have his own place—his place with Jesus will be his reward. But those who love Him most while this world is rejecting Him, will have the best and nearest place.

MATTHEW XXIII.

WHEN Jesus began His work for God in this world, He was tempted by the Devil. But Jesus put the Devil to silence by the Word of God. Then the men of the world tried to tempt Jesus, but He knew what was in man. Every kind of man came before Him. They took counsel together against Him. But their own words condemned them. They showed by what they said that they did not know God, and they did not keep His commandments. Worldly men, like the Herodians, were put to silence. The religious men, like the Pharisees, were put to silence, and the unbelieving Sadducees were put to silence—all their mouths were stopped; they were speechless and guilty before God. Then Jesus told them that the Son of David would sit at God's right hand until all His foes were put under His feet.

In this chapter Jesus spoke to the crowds and to the disciples, about those scribes and Pharisees. He said, They sit in Moses' seat;

they profess to teach what Moses said ; you may do what they say, but you must not do what they do. They teach the laws, but they do not keep the laws ; because all they do is to be seen by men. They wear a dress to look religious, and they take the best places at the feasts and in the synagogue and in the market-place, and they like men to call them Rabbi—that means, teacher. Jesus said His disciples must not be like them. They were not to be called Rabbi, because Christ must be their Teacher. And they were brethren, so they were not to call anyone father—as if he had more authority than the rest. For One is your Father. Their Father in heaven was the only One to have authority over their souls ; they were to be obedient children to Him. God is the Father of spirits. But they were to follow His own beautiful example, in being servants to all ; that would be the real way to be the greatest. For whoever exalts himself shall be humbled, and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted. Here Jesus called Himself the Christ. He had not done so before. He had told the disciples not to say that He was the Christ. But when He quoted the words of David, He wished His disciples to

understand that it was as Christ He would sit at God's right hand. Jesus is there now as Lord and Christ. What comfort for those disciples ! They could afford to be humble and despised, for they could look up to heaven as children, under the rule of their Father in heaven, and by faith they would see at His right hand the Christ who had taught them down here. He would teach them still. Although He was in glory He would still be their Teacher, and it would make them brothers to one another, because they were children of their heavenly Father. And if they really loved Jesus, they would have to love one another for His sake. If they loved Him, they would love all that belonged to Him.

Jesus pronounced judgment on the Scribes and Pharisees—first on the men who were the leaders of the people, and then on their city. They were hypocrites ; they did not go into the kingdom of heaven themselves, and they prevented others from going in. They did everything for the outside, to make a show before men. They made a religion of outside things. They strained their water through thin muslin, lest the little eggs of a fly might be in it ; but they passed

over much greater things. Judgment, mercy, and faith were more important than any outside things. Judgment, mercy, and faith have to do with God ; they were inside things, in the heart. Men look at the outside appearance, but God looks into the heart. Those Pharisees and Scribes were washing the outside of the cup, while the inside was full of what was bad—like their own hearts, which were full of selfishness, caring only to please themselves. Jesus said, Clean the inside first, and then the outside will be clean. He had told them before that it was what came out of a man that defiled the man. It was no good to appear righteous before men, or to build fine monuments to the prophets whom their fathers killed. They would do the same—for they were a perverse generation. They were disobedient and rebellious against God. But Jesus said that He would send a new set of prophets, and wise men, and scribes, and the Jews would persecute them just the same. Jesus was thinking of the time when He would sit at God's right hand, when He would receive gifts for men. Jesus gave gifts to His disciples after He rose from the dead ; and Matthew, who wrote this Gospel, was one of His scribes.

He left his tables of money to follow Jesus, but he got a great appointment in the kingdom of heaven.

Then Jesus spoke of Jerusalem, the city where the prophets had been killed. God had sent many prophets, but they were ill-treated by the guilty city. It is very touching the way Jesus spoke of it. He said, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered your children, as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and you would not ! Wonderful that He who was Jehovah could use such words. We think of the way the mother hen calls up her little ones, and how they nestle under her soft wings, and warm themselves in her feathers. How safe and happy they look, and how fond of them the hen is ! Jesus would call His own to Him like that, and make them feel the shelter and comfort of His great wing around them, and of His deep love that made them His. But Jerusalem missed the blessing of His presence, and it would be left desolate. God would send no more blessing there until Jesus comes back to it. He said, You shall see Me no more until you say : Blessed is He who comes in the name of Jehovah. That is what the children said,

and it is what made the Pharisees so angry. But Jesus will come again with power and great glory, and those words will be heard again in Jerusalem. Then they will know that His mercy endureth for ever.

We see how true the words of Jesus are, for Jerusalem is still trodden down by the Gentiles—no Temple there, no altar to the true God. It has been left desolate for nearly two thousand years, and it will be so, till Jesus comes again. Then He will raise up the tribes of Jacob, and restore the preserved of Israel. But He will do a yet greater thing. He is now a Light to the Gentiles, and He will be God's Salvation to the ends of the earth.

Sing we then the Saviour's praise,
Wondrous in His works and ways ;
Bid Him welcome to the throne,
He is worthy, He alone.

Soon the crown upon His brow,
Every knee to Him shall bow ;
While the full Creation sings,
Lord of lords, and King of kings.

MATTHEW XXIV.

WHEN Jesus had said, Your house is left unto you desolate, He went away from the Temple also. The whole Jewish system rejected the One who came from God, so Jesus turned away from it. The disciples wanted Him to look at the beautiful buildings of the Temple, but Jesus said, Every stone of it will be thrown down. He went outside Jerusalem and sat upon the Mount of Olives. His disciples asked Him to tell them what would be the sign of His coming again, and of the end of the world ? What did they mean by the end of the world ? The end of this present time. It is really the end of the age, or the time of God's ways with Israel under the law. They always expected Christ to come and put an end to that. His presence on the earth will do for man all that the Law failed to do. He will bring all things into obedience to God. He will put God's laws into their minds, and will write them in their hearts, so that even the little children will know God then. There will be no need for teachers

then, for the Lord Jesus Christ will fill all things with the knowledge of God. That will be the regeneration that Jesus spoke of, when He will sit on His throne and the disciples will sit with Him.

They wanted Jesus to tell them about it, but their own prophets had told them all about it. What Jesus wished them to think of, was the present time ; that they might be faithful and true for to-day. The day of glory would surely come, but there would be days of sorrow and distress on earth before it came. There would be wars, and famines, and earthquakes, and they would be hated and persecuted for Jesus' sake. But those who endured to the end should know God's great Salvation ; they would be saved from those who hated them.

What Jesus said came true in the time of the disciples. When He went back to heaven, those wicked men who crucified Jesus turned all their hatred against His disciples. Those who loved Jesus were persecuted and driven out of Jerusalem, before the Roman soldiers destroyed the city. They burnt up the city and the Temple, so that not a stone of it was left, not even enough to show the spot where the

Temple had stood. This was the judgment of God for rejecting Jesus. God rejected Jerusalem and the Temple and His people Israel. There were only two tribes of Israel in Judea at this time—Judah and Benjamin. The other ten tribes were scattered about among the Gentile countries, and they are still lost among the Gentiles. A few may have been in Jerusalem when Jesus was there. Elizabeth was of the tribe of Asher, and there were Levites there ; but the Jews were of the tribe of Judah. It was among them that Jesus lived and taught. He came as King of the Jews ; as Son of David Jesus belonged to the tribe of Judah. God chose that tribe out of all the tribes of Israel. He made it the royal tribe and gave it great promises, and what He called “ the sure mercies of David ” were especially for Judah.

But if Jesus came to Judah, it was Judah that rejected Him. They were the most favoured of the tribes, but they were the most guilty. The only sign He would give them would be Jesus in the grave—a dead Christ, lost to them. And so the sign He gave His disciples was the Son of Man in heaven. They were to look for Him to come from heaven. They

were not to be deceived by others who said they were Christ. There was only one Lord Jesus Christ, and He would come from heaven with power and great glory.

Jesus reminded them of what the prophet Daniel had written. When he was praying and confessing his sins and the sins of his people Israel, the angel came to him and told him what would happen at the end of the age. The angel told Daniel that Jesus would come. He was the Messiah of Israel, but they would reject Him. Messiah would be cut off. He would not get the kingdom. His life would be taken from the earth. Jesus came in His Father's name, and they did not receive Him. But another would come in his own name, him they would receive. Jesus did His Father's will, but this one would do his own will ; he would say he was the Christ, and God would let them believe a lie because they refused to believe the truth. Jesus brought truth into this world, but those who have pleasure in unrighteousness cannot believe the truth. This false Christ will make a covenant with Israel. He will pretend to be like Christ at first. He will do signs and wonders to make them believe in

him, and he will be very religious, sitting in the Temple of God, showing that he is God. That is what Jesus called the abomination in the holy place. It is an abomination in the sight of God when anything is worshipped but Himself. This man of sin, as he is called, will deceive many. Satan will give him great power and he will try to destroy all who believe in Jesus. That is why he is called Anti-Christ, which means one who is against the Lord Jesus Christ.

But God will have an elect people all through that dreadful time, when those who are in Judea will have to flee to the mountains, to escape the terrible persecution. It will be the time of Jacob's trouble, but they shall be saved out of it. They will reap the fruit of their sins. They rebelled against God. They killed His prophets, and when God sent His Son, they said, This is the heir, come, let us kill him. They are suffering for that now. For two thousand years they have been cast off as a people before God. He says of them, not My people. The scattered Jews are a living proof of the truth of the Bible, because every word that God said about them has come true. God used to speak to the kings of the earth as the God of Israel. He does not speak

to the world now as the God of Israel. Now He speaks as the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the people He calls His, are those who believe in His own beloved Son. Now God is saving both Jews and Gentiles for heaven, not for Jerusalem. He is calling people out of this evil world, where Satan rules and where he deceives men. But when Jesus has taken these all up to heaven, He will come back to earth to set things right down here. He will destroy Anti-Christ by the brightness of His coming. His presence will burst upon this world like a flash of lightning. It will bring judgment upon those who are worshipping the wrong man. Satan's man will be sitting in the Temple of God. The Son of Man who died for men will destroy the man of sin by the breath of His mouth.

But the sight of Him will make all the tribes mourn with a great and terrible mourning. Judah will come first—the most guilty of all. They shall mourn with great bitterness. They will look on Him whom they have pierced, and will mourn for Him, as people mourn for an only son. The Son of Man will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will

gather together His elect. It is like what Jesus said about the harvest, when the angels will gather up the good wheat and put away all the bad weeds. Jesus said, The heaven and the earth shall pass away, but My words will never pass away. He did not tell His disciples when these things would happen, because God keeps time in His own hands. He made time for men, and He put the sun and moon and stars in the sky to mark time, that men might know the times and seasons. God could take them away at any moment. Days and hours are nothing to God. There is no time in heaven ; all is eternal there. But the coming of the Son of Man will be sudden. The world will go on just the same as it did in the time of Noah. He told them the flood was coming. They could see him building the ark to save himself and his sons ; but they did not believe it till the flood came and took them all away. When the Son of Man comes it will be the same. Two people will be working together ; one will be taken away in judgment and the other will be left to enjoy the presence of the Son of Man on earth. So Jesus said to them, You must watch. Keep awake, because you do not know what

moment your Lord may come. If you thought a thief was coming to take something out of your house, you would watch your house and take care of it. And so you must watch for your Lord, and be ready for Him, because when you are not thinking of it, He will come !

The Son of Man will find every one doing something—two men working in a field, or two women grinding corn to make into bread. What would the Son of Man like to find His people doing ? Taking care of His household. He said the wise and faithful servant would be found giving food in season to the household of God. The faithful servant would be watching for his Lord, and the wise servant would be ready for Him; and the way they showed that they were wise and faithful was, that they were occupied with their Master's house. They were not like the man who said he could not come to the feast because he had to look after his own land. They were like the good trees which had ripe fruit at the right time. So these servants were able to give the right kind of food—that is, spiritual food—at the right time to those who needed it. Jesus said, Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when He comes, shall find so

doing. His Lord will make him ruler over all His goods. He will trust him with the good things of His kingdom. He will get his Master's blessing. But the evil servant was one who was saying in his heart, My Lord delays His coming. When he thinks that in his heart, it shows he is not watching for his Lord to come, and so he begins to beat his fellow servants. The evil servant is always against the faithful ones, and he shows he is evil by the company he keeps ; the evil servant eats and drinks with the drunken, that is, with those who indulge themselves and forget God. The Lord of that servant will come when he is not expecting Him. He will find him standing in the way of sinners, calling himself a servant when he is not serving his Lord. He will have his portion with the hypocrites. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

MATTHEW XXV.

JESUS said that in those days the kingdom of heaven would be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom. They all went out from where they were, and they took nothing with them but their lamps. The disciples left all to follow Jesus when He was on earth. Then they had Him with them ; they could see Him and hear Him. But He was speaking of the time when He would be gone away. Then those who loved Him would say, The world has no place for Jesus, and Jerusalem has no place for Him, and there is no place for us. They went out to meet Him. They left the things of the world behind, and they left the things of Jerusalem behind. They went out to meet the loved One—that is what bridegroom means ; it was One who loved them and who had chosen them out of the world. These ten virgins looked all alike. They all had lamps, but some took oil in their vessels and some took no oil. But the Bridegroom did not come at once ; He delayed and they all got tired. They

did not watch for Him. They stopped somewhere on their way, perhaps they went back to where they came out from, but they all went to sleep ! They forgot that He was coming. But in the middle of the night a cry was heard : Behold, the Bridegroom ! Go ye out to meet Him. That shows they had gone in again. But they all awoke, they all began to get ready for the Bridegroom, they all trimmed their lamps, they all tried to have a light. But there was one great difference between those virgins : the wise ones had oil in their vessels, but the foolish ones had no oil. That was a sad difference, for how could the lamps give light if they had no oil ? They might trim and trim, but it was all no good. Our lamps are going out, they say to the others ; we have no oil. Give us some of your oil. But the wise ones said, We cannot do that. Oil is not a thing that you can get from us. We have only what our own little vessels will hold. You must go and buy some for yourselves. Get your vessels full and then your lamps will not go out. Jesus was speaking of the time when He would be gone away, and when the Holy Spirit would be here instead. He promised that when He went back to heaven, He would

send the Holy Spirit down here, to comfort His disciples and to keep them company while He was away, so that they might not be lonely, and that they might not feel that they had lost Him, when He was up in heaven and they were down here without Him. The Holy Spirit would keep Jesus always in their thoughts. He would fill their hearts with His love. That would be like the oil in the vessels. He would make a little light for Jesus in the heart. He could see into every heart. He would look down on all those virgins and see them going out together, and all trimming their lamps so nicely. Perhaps we should see no difference between them, but as soon as the lamps were lighted there was a difference. Some had oil in their vessels—they were the wise ones, they were ready, because they had the Holy Spirit ; they became separated from the others, for they went in with the Bridegroom, while those who had no oil were not ready. They went away to buy some. The Bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with Him to the wedding feast, and the door was shut. The others came too late. They knocked at the door and said, Lord, Lord, open to us. But He said, I do not know you. They

had no oil in their vessels, so they lost the opportunity of carrying a light for the Bridegroom.

Jesus told them this parable to make them understand that people might look all right to one another ; they might go the same road and carry their lamps, but when He came, only those who were ready for Him would share His joy. It is only the Spirit of God that can make people ready. So He said, Watch, therefore ; for you do not know the day nor the hour when the Son of Man will come. We must remember that Jesus was speaking to Jews, and He was telling them about His coming back to this world to put all things right for God. It was the time when He would separate the tares from the wheat. So Jesus went on to tell them another parable, about a man going away out of his country—Israel's country was what Jesus was thinking of—and he called his own servants and gave them some of his goods to make use of while he was away. To one servant he gave five talents, to another he gave two, and to another only one. He knew what his servants were able for, and he gave to each one as much as he could use. After a long time he came back, and each

one of those servants had to tell him what he had done with the talents. The one who received five came, and said : My lord, you gave me five talents and I have gained five more. He had made such good use of his five talents that he had twice as much as he began with. His lord was pleased, and said : Well done, good and faithful servant ; thou wast faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy lord. What a splendid reward for that servant ! He might share in his master's joy. It was what the foolish virgins were too late for. Then the servant who received two talents came, and he said he had gained two more talents. His lord said the same to him ; that he was a good and faithful servant, he had been faithful over a few things, and he should be set over many things, and he also should enter into the joy of his lord. But the one who had received one talent came and said he thought his lord was a hard man, and he was afraid, so he went away and hid his talent in the earth. He was afraid to use it, and he brought it back to his lord unused. What did his lord say ? Wicked, slothful servant ! You think I am a hard man, so I will be hard to you. Then he took the

one talent from him and gave it to the servant who had ten talents ; for he said the one who had most should get still more, but the one who had nothing would lose what he might have had. The faithful servant knew his master, and he used his goods the way his master liked him to use them. He was faithful to his master ; he did not do too much, and he did not do too little. He that was given five gained five ; and he that was given two, gained two. His master had joy in his gains, and he was allowed to share his Master's joy. The slothful servant did not know his master ; he had no faith in his master. He did not trust him, so he is called a wicked servant, because he did not give a good report of his master. A faithful servant knows his master and speaks well of him.

This unfaithful servant was cast out, like the man in the other parable who had not on a wedding garment ; for Jesus was teaching the disciples in all these parables, how every one will get his place in His kingdom according to the way he has been faithful to Him while He is away. The faithful and wise servant who looks after His household and gives them food in due season, will be watching for Him, and he

will be ready to meet Him when He comes. His Lord will find Him using His goods faithfully, and he will enter into the joy of his Lord. In that day it will be seen who is not wise, and not ready, and not faithful, and not watching for his Lord to come. These parables were all about those who professed to know Him. They called Him Master and Lord ; they took His name, and called themselves His servants. The presence of the Son of Man on earth will throw His light upon everything. It will put every one in his true place. No one can pretend anything then.

Jesus is the one perfect Man, and His presence will show where every other man is in the sight of God. When He comes as Son of Man in His glory, and the holy angels with Him, He will sit upon His throne of glory, and all the nations will be gathered before Him. And He will separate them, the way a shepherd would separate his sheep from among the goats. He will put the sheep on His right hand, and the goats on His left. He will sit as king, to judge the nations. Having gathered His elect from among the nations, He will ask the question, How did you treat My people ? If God

allowed His people to be driven out of their own country because they were rebellious against Him, He would punish the Gentile nations who treated them cruelly. The prophet Jeremiah was sent especially to tell the nations that God was watching their treatment of Israel. He would punish them Himself, but He would not let the heathen ill-treat them. The Son of Man will know what every one has done, and He will say to those on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. I was hungry and you gave Me to eat, I was thirsty and you gave Me to drink ; I was a stranger and you took Me in ; I was naked and you clothed Me ; I was ill and you visited Me ; I was in prison and you came to Me. Those righteous ones will say : Lord, when did we see Thee hungry or thirsty or naked or ill or in prison ? And the King will answer, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as you have done it to the least of these My brethren, you have done it unto Me. How wonderful that Jesus should speak about the messengers of His kingdom like that ! He called them His brethren. He had said those who did the will of

His Father should be His brethren. They were so dear to Him that whatever was done to them, was done to Him. He would repay it. A little food or a little kindness done for His sake, showed they cared for Him. Afterwards when those disciples were persecuted and put in prison, how it must have comforted them to remember that Jesus said those words.

Then the King will say to those on His left hand : Go from Me, cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. It was not prepared for men, but if men choose to do the work of the devil and his angels in this life, they will be with the devil for ever. They say the same : When did we see Thee hungry, and did not minister to Thee ? But they got the same answer ; they had not done it to the least of those who belonged to the King, so they had not done it to Him. They would go into eternal punishment. But the righteous would go into life eternal. They were the nations that would be living on the earth when the King comes to reign. God will set Him as King on His holy hill of Zion. There He will command the blessing ; it will be life for evermore. These

were like the last words of Jesus. He had finished all He had to say to the disciples about what would happen while He was away in heaven. He told them how He wished them to behave in His absence, and how He expected them to watch for Him to come back. The one great thing was for them to know Him, and to be faithful to what they knew of Him. They were to be like Him in their thoughts and ways, so that the Gentiles would know that they belonged to Him. If they were loved, it was for His sake, and if they were hated, it was because they were His brethren.

MATTHEW XXVI.

JESUS said to His disciples, You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man is betrayed to be crucified. Jesus was Himself God's Passover. He was the Lamb of God, whose precious blood was shed to take away sin. Then the chief priests and the others gathered together to the palace of the high priest. His name was Caiaphas. They all met in his palace to consult how they could take Jesus privately and kill Him. How terrible to think of men calling themselves priests of God talking together of how they could murder His blessed Son ! How little they knew who Jesus was when they thought they could take His life ! They had no power at all against Him until He gave Himself up to do the will of God. Those wicked priests said, Not on the feast day—because they were afraid of the people. But God had chosen that it should be on the feast day. They could not do it one moment sooner than He chose nor could they

do it in any other way than the way that God allowed it to be done. But while men were making their wicked plans Jesus was at Bethany. He was in the house of Simon the leper.

It was the darkest moment in all the history of man. From the time that God created man on earth, nothing so terrible had happened as for all kinds of men to agree to put Jesus out of the earth ! He was the only perfect one who was ever on the earth. He was always doing good. He never did harm to anyone. As He walked about, His presence was like a healing stream, that flowed over a world of sin and misery. Wherever He went the diseases of sin disappeared before Him.

Disease and death and demon
All fled before His Word—
As darkness the dominion
Of day's returning lord !

Yet they hated Him without a cause. It was because their works were evil and He was righteous. They hated Jesus for His goodness. He was the Holy One of God. The heavenly beauty of His life and conversation aroused their murderous hatred. But when men were all against Him, God allowed a woman to show

how much she loved Him ! She had an alabaster box of very precious ointment. She came near to Jesus and poured it out upon His head. She anointed Him as King. He was truly King to her. He was the King in rejection, but she owned Him before all. While the King sitteth at His table my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof. It was a heave offering from her heart, and it had a sweet savour to God. Yet she was a hidden silent woman. We do not even hear her name, and her voice was not heard. Hers was a hidden love ; words could not tell it, but Jesus understood it. He put it into words for you and me, that we might understand the sort of love He likes to get. It is a love that thinks nothing is too good for Him, and that will give up everything to please Him. Even the disciples called it waste. Strange that they should think anything too costly for Jesus ! The poor woman would not give to Jehovah that which cost her nothing. The best thing she had was not good enough to express her value for Him. Jesus felt it. He valued her love. It was a good work done to Him. He took her part. The disciples said it might have been sold and the money given to the poor, but Jesus

said, You have the poor always with you, but Me ye have not always. Then the blessed Saviour told what He thought about what the woman did. He said, In pouring out this ointment on My body she has done it for My burying. Verily I say to you, Wherever these glad tidings shall be preached in the whole world, this also that she has done shall be spoken of, for a memorial of her. His own great act and hers should never be separated. They should be told together. His was that He died for sinners, hers was the sinner's sense of the preciousness of His death. The first sinner was a woman, and a woman was allowed to be the first to show forth the preciousness of the Saviour's death. It was done to His body. He took that body that He might die, the Just One for the unjust ones. As a little child once said: "Jesus was punished instead of me." I think this woman is a little pattern of the treasure that Jesus said He would sell all that He had to buy. He bought the field for the sake of the treasure. And He hid the treasure. He knows where it is, and the treasure knows how dear it is to Him. The expression of the woman's love drew out the hatred of the enemy, and Judas went off to the priests to ask how much

money they would give him to betray Jesus. They gave him thirty pieces of silver. Then Judas watched for an opportunity to do his dreadful act.

The Passover was kept in remembrance of the night that the children of Israel came out of Egypt. In every house a lamb was killed and its blood was put on the doorpost. The blood was seen on the outside of the house, but they were feeding on the lamb inside. The whole assembly of Israel were to do it, at the same time and in the same way. Not one person was to be missing. It was a night to be remembered for ever.

The disciples ask Jesus where He will eat the Passover. Jesus told them to go to a man in the city, and to say to him : The Teacher says, My time is near ; I will keep the Passover in thy house with My disciples. They did so, and when the evening came Jesus sat down with the twelve disciples. Jesus knew the deep meaning of that Passover. He knew that He was going to give His life a ransom for many, as He had told them. He knew that His blood would be shed to save them from judgment. Yet He wished to eat the Passover with His disciples

for the last time. How it showed His tender love for them, and how He wished to draw their hearts into His thoughts and feelings at that sorrowful time. While they were eating, He said, One of you will betray Me. The disciples were exceedingly grieved, and each one said, Is it I, Lord? Even Judas said, like the rest, Is it I, Teacher? He did not call Jesus Lord as the others did. Jesus said to him, Thou hast said. Judas was a sad picture of the heart of man, when he is under the power of the Devil. Judas sat down to eat with Jesus and with the others who loved Him, while he had the thirty pieces of silver in his bag. He loved money, and the Devil tempted him by the offer of money. He had sold the Lord for those miserable pieces of silver. He did not know that Jesus knew all about it until He said, One of you will betray Me, the one that dips with Me in the dish. He ate out of the same dish with Jesus. Jesus helped him, as we say. He showed him especial kindness. But He said, The Son of Man goeth as it is written of Him, but woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed. The blessed Saviour felt it. He was wounded in His heart that one of them should betray Him. He

was wounded in the house of His friends, for it was a Jew who did it !

Jesus was going to give them another reason for remembering that night. It was the night in which He was betrayed. And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to His disciples, and said, Take eat, this is My body. This was not the lamb ; it was broken bread. Jesus meant them to understand that His body would be given for them. Then He took the cup and gave thanks and gave it to them, and said, Drink ye all of it, for this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. It showed that Jesus had done with the old covenant when He spoke of a new one. The old covenant had to do with the blood of bulls and of goats. But the new covenant was made sure by a more perfect sacrifice, in the precious blood of Jesus, that was shed for many. The first covenant was for Israel only, but the new covenant in the blood of Jesus was for as many as believe in Him. He did this to show that His body given and His blood shed put them in a new place before God. Israel had broken the

old covenant. Jesus would not try to mend it. He gave it up and began a new covenant in His own blood. The old covenant was, Thou shalt do something. They were to obey the law and offer sacrifices ; but under the new covenant God would do it all Himself. The covenant with Israel was for a time ; the new covenant will last for ever. It was the grace of God which brought salvation for all kinds of men. Jesus would bear the sins of many. He would put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself—this was the new covenant in His blood. They were to drink of it. The bread and the wine were to keep them in mind of His death. It was the food of the new covenant. Jesus said He would not drink of the fruit of the vine until He drinks the new wine with them in the kingdom of His Father. He reminded them that they will be with Him in the day of His joy, as they were with Him then in the day of His sorrow. They will share in His joy, under the new covenant, in the kingdom of His Father. And when they had sung a hymn, or a psalm, they went out to the Mount of Olives. Jesus was able to sing praise to God at that sorrowful moment. He was so sure of God's delight in Him that He

could sing ! No sorrow was ever like unto His sorrow, yet He sang praise, for God was His refuge and strength. As they sang with Jesus, it was like a little taste of what it will be to drink wine with Him in His Father's kingdom.

Jesus said to the disciples : You will all be offended because of Me to-night; for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. But after He was risen from the dead, He would go before them into Galilee. Peter said : If all shall be offended, I will never be offended. Poor Peter, he did not know how weak he was. He truly loved the Lord and he thought nothing could make him forsake Him. Jesus said : This very night, before the cock crows, you will deny Me three times. Peter said : If I have to die with You I will not deny You. And all the disciples said the same. They did not know what their blessed Master was going to pass through. They could not die for Him until He first died for them. The wages of sin was death. Jesus paid the wages though He did no sin. He died instead of those who did the sin, they earned the wages. And when Jesus came up out of the grave He took away the fear of death, and He said, I have the keys.

He had the keys of death and of all the unseen world. We do not know what is beyond the grave, but we do know that Jesus has the keys.

Jesus came with His disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and He said to them, Sit here, until I go away and pray yonder. Then He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be very sorrowful. It was those three disciples, Peter, James, and John, that He took with Him on the Holy Mount. There they saw His glory, but here in Gethsemane they were to see His suffering. He said, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. Stay here and watch with Me.

The thought of death was dreadful suffering to the holy mind of Jesus. Death was the sinner's portion—not His who was the Holy One of God. Jesus was so holy that He could not bear the thought of sin, or of death for sin. And yet God made His soul an offering for sin. He was God's sin offering, because it was His Father's will. It was what He came from heaven to do. But it was greater pain than any-one can ever know, for the holy perfect One to be treated as if He was the sinner. Jesus felt it. He went away a little from the three disciples,

and fell on His face and prayed. He said, Father, if it be possible let this cup pass away from Me ; yet not as I will, but as Thou wilt. God spared not His only Son, but gave Him up to die for sinners. No other offering was great enough to show God's displeasure against sin, and nothing else was great enough to show how Jesus loved God. He was obedient unto death. Jesus came back to the disciples and they were sleeping. He said to Peter, Have you not been able to watch with Me for one hour ? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. Jesus went away the second time and prayed. He said, My Father, if this cup cannot pass from Me except I drink it, Thy will be done. And coming to the disciples He found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy. It was night, but Jesus had said to them, Watch with Me. He left them, and went away again and prayed the third time, saying the same thing. Then He came to the disciples and said, Sleep on now, and take your rest ; the hour is come. The Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. They lost that opportunity. They all had said that they would die with Him, and yet

they could not watch for an hour. Jesus saw that they would like to do it, but the flesh was weak. It was proved weak at that moment, and Jesus never asked the flesh to do anything for Him again. They belonged to the weak mortal man that must pass away. Jesus was the one strong Man. He was strong for God. But He was alone. None could watch with Him, none could die with Him. Alone with God He tasted death, for everything on which death came. This wonderful scene in Gethsemane is given to us to show how He was the obedient Man, even unto death. When Jesus began His work on earth, the Devil tempted Him to turn aside from God's will, and to have a will of His own. But Jesus silenced the Devil by the words of God and proved that He was the obedient Man, who would do nothing but the will of God. So at the end of His holy life, when death was before Him—a death for sin—in all the agony and distress of His holy soul, He said to His Father, Not as I will, but as Thou wilt. Before He left His home of glory—where He was the Eternal Son of the Father—He had said, Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God. Jesus did the whole will of God, and He finished His work.

He could say, Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again !

Then Jesus said to the disciples, Rise up, let us go, for he who betrays Me is coming. And while Jesus was saying it Judas came, and a crowd of people with him. They were sent by the chief priests and elders, and they had swords and sticks in their hands. Judas had given them a sign by which to know Jesus. He said, The One that I shall kiss. And he came to Jesus and said, Hail, Teacher, and kissed Him. Jesus said, Friend, wherefore art thou come ? Judas could not answer that. He had done his dreadful deed, and then he disappeared. When they laid hands upon Jesus, one of His disciples stretched out his hand and struck the servant of the high priest so that he took off his ear. Jesus said, Put back thy sword into its place, for they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father and He will give Me more than twelve legions of angels ? But Jesus would not pray for that, because the Scriptures must be fulfilled. How truly Jesus was the King even then. His twelve disciples might

forsake Him, but He could command the armies of heaven. Twelve legions of angels were ready to surround Him. But instead of that He gave Himself up, and He said to the crowds, Are you come out as against a thief with swords and sticks to take Me ? I sat daily with you when I was teaching in the Temple, and you did not take Me. But all this is done that the Scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled.

Then they led Jesus to Caiaphas, the high priest, where the scribes and elders were assembled. But Peter followed Jesus afar off, even to the palace of the high priest, and he went in and sat with the servants, to see the end. The whole council tried to find false witness against Jesus that they might have an excuse for putting Him to death. Many, alas ! were ready to say untrue things about Him, yet they could find no accusation against Him. At last two false witnesses came and said, He said, I am able to destroy the Temple of God and to build it in three days. Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, Answerest Thou nothing ? What is it that these witness against Thee ? But Jesus was silent ; as a sheep before

the shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth. The high priest said, I adjure Thee by the living God that Thou tell us if Thou art the Christ, the Son of God. At that name Jesus answered, Thou hast said, and from henceforth you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven. Jesus did not call Himself the Son of God. It was as Son of Man He was there to suffer ; and it was as Son of Man that He would come again, making the clouds His chariot. Then the high priest rent His clothes, and said, He has spoken blasphemy—that meant speaking evil of holy things—and he said to the others, What do you think ? They answered, He is guilty of death. Then they insulted the blessed Lord in a way that showed their own Satanic hatred, but it also showed up the divine perfectness of the One who could not be moved by their evil. The high priest was forbidden to rend his garments. His doing so showed that the priesthood was given up by God.

We left Peter sitting with the servants in the high priest's palace. It was bad company for one who loved his Lord. Jesus had told him to watch and pray that he might not fall into

temptation. Instead of this he went into the very worst place in the world at that moment. But he wanted to see the end. He was sitting outside, when a maid came to him and said, Thou wast with Jesus of Galilee. Peter denied before them all, and said, I do not know what you are saying. Poor Peter went farther out, away from them, but another met him and said to the others, This man was with Jesus, the Nazarene. And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the Man ! After a while those who saw him there came to him and said, Surely you are one of them ; the way you speak shows it. But Peter cursed and swore, and said, I know not the Man ! Immediately the cock crew, and Peter remembered the word of Jesus ; and he went out and wept bitterly. Peter went out into that cold dark night, and shed bitter bitter tears. He had denied the One he loved best. How truly Jesus said, The flesh is weak. Will Peter ever trust his flesh again ? Will he ever trust his own heart ? He said, I will die with You, and yet he denied his Lord just at the time he would like to have taken His part. But it shows us what the heart of man is One of the twelve betrayed Jesus,

and another, the one Jesus put first among the twelve, denied Him. He did not love money as Judas did, but he liked the praise of men. He had a good opinion of himself, and he wished others to think well of him. This always makes us cowards, and afraid to speak the truth.

MATTHEW XXVII. 1-32.

WHEN it was morning, the chief priests and elders took counsel against Jesus, to put Him to death. Then they gave Him up to Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor. But when Judas saw that Jesus was condemned, he was filled with remorse. He did not think Jesus would be condemned ; he knew they could find no fault in Him, and he did not know that Jesus would give Himself up. He was filled with remorse. That is the most dreadful feeling possible. It was the biting of his own heart, in helpless misery, under the awful power of Satan. He knows how to make men miserable. He tempted Judas by money and the price of a field. He led Judas on to do what he wanted him to do, and then he left him to the bitter accusations of his own heart. And that drove Judas to despair. He did not pour out a broken heart in tears of repentance as Peter did. Peter's was the sorrow of love, but Judas loved money more than Jesus. With him it was the remorse of a man without hope. He

could not undo what he had done. He went to the chief priests and elders, and said, I have sinned ; I have betrayed innocent blood. But they, in heartless wickedness, only said, What is that to us ? See thou to that. They had no pity for him ; Satan had no pity for him ; he had no pity for himself. He threw the silver pieces into the Temple, and went away and hanged himself. Jesus had said, What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul ? The love of gain is deep down in every heart of man, until he learns to have Christ for his gain. Then he counts all things loss for Him.

The chief priests were too religious to put the silver pieces into the offerings of the Temple, so they consulted together what to do with them. They bought the very field where Judas hanged himself. They said it would do to bury strangers in. It was called the Field of Blood, because it was bought with the price of blood. They fulfilled the words of the prophet, and the field is there still—a field cannot be moved away—to remind them of what they did to Jesus. God will not let it be forgotten.

Jesus stood before the Roman Governor. He said the Jews would give Him up to the Gentiles. The Gentile Governor did not love the Jews ; he

despised them for bringing an innocent man to him. He said to Jesus, Art Thou the King of the Jews ? Jesus said, Thou sayest. But when the chief priests and elders accused Him, He did not answer them. The Governor said to Jesus, Do you hear all they witness against you ? But Jesus did not answer a word, so that the Governor was much surprised. He was puzzled what to do. He knew that Jesus had done no wrong, and he knew that the Jews did it only from envy. So he thought of a plan to get out of the difficulty. The Romans had a custom that at the time of that Jewish feast they let go one prisoner. So Pilate said to them, Shall I release to you Barabbas, or Jesus, who is called Christ ? Pilate was a Gentile heathen, he did not know anything about Christ. Barabbas was a wicked man and a murderer. He gave them the choice between God's Man who would give life, and the Devil's man who would take away a man's life. The chief priests and elders persuaded the crowd to beg for the murderer instead of Jesus. They chose the Devil's man. Israel will do that again before the nation believes in Jesus.

When Pilate was sitting on the judgment

seat, his wife sent a message to him. She had had a dream that troubled her. How gracious of God to give that warning to Pilate. She said, Have nothing to do with that righteous Man. Even the wife of the Gentile was obliged to say that Jesus was a righteous Man. Pilate knew it and he would have liked to set Jesus free, but he was afraid to displease the Jews. When they chose Barabbas, he said, Then what shall I do with Jesus, who is called Christ ? They all said, Let Him be crucified. Pilate said, Why ? What evil has He done ? But they cried out still more, Let Him be crucified. Then Pilate took water, and washed his hands before the crowd and said, I am innocent of the blood of this just Person ; see ye to it. That was what the priests said to Judas. Pilate threw the crime back upon the Jews. And all the people answering said : His blood be on us and on our children ! Dreadful words ! They were heard in heaven, and remembered on earth ; and for all these nineteen hundred years since they were said, His blood has been upon them. They are cast off by God, like the men of His vineyard that Jesus told them about, who said, This is the heir, come, let us kill him. His blood is

upon every Jew to-day. And yet—so wonderful is grace—if a Jew turns to Jesus now, as He sits at God's right hand, if he owns Him as Christ and Lord, he is saved by that precious blood. Some of those men of Jerusalem did repent when they saw what they had done; and when they saw that Jesus was risen from the dead, they believed in Him, and were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, in the name of the One whom by wicked hands they had crucified and slain.

Pilate let out the murderer, Barabbas, and gave up Jesus to be crucified. Then the Roman soldiers mocked Him, and put a red cloak on Him, and a crown of thorns, and bowed the knee to Him, and said, Hail, King of the Jews! Those heathen Gentiles despised the Jews and their religion, and they showed their contempt for them in mocking their king. But they did it in their ignorance, they did not know better, and the day will come when all the Gentiles will bow the knee to Jesus, and will say, Hail to the King of Israel.

MATTHEW XXVII. (*Continued*) 33-66.

THEY led Jesus to Golgotha. It was the place of a skull. There was nothing of a man to be seen but a skull. It showed that there had been a man there, but he was gone. Nothing was left of either Jew or Gentile. God looked down on only one Man that day ! They put Jesus on the cross to die. They cast lots for His clothes ; they divided them amongst themselves, and then sat down to keep guard. Pilate put a writing on the cross. It was His accusation : This is Jesus, the King of the Jews. They crucified two thieves beside Him. Their accusation was that they were thieves, and they put Jesus in the middle.

Those who passed by shook their heads, and said, Thou who destroyest the Temple and buildest it in three days, save Thyself. If Thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross. The chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others, He cannot save Himself ! If He be the King of Israel, let Him come down from the cross, and

we will believe Him. He trusted in God, let Him save Him now if He will have Him, for He said, I am the Son of God. Even the thieves who were crucified with Him joined in. They followed the example of those who were learned and religious, as the poor and ignorant often do. When Jesus was on the cross, there was darkness over the whole earth for three hours. The sun hid its face from that deep suffering. When Jesus took the sinner's place before God, He was God's sin offering. The whole creation stood still in darkness while Jesus was made an offering for sin. The enmity of men was hushed, not a dog moved his tongue. It was the judgment of God upon SIN. But it was only the Holy One, who did no sin, who could bear it. Jesus passed through God's judgment alone, in the silence of darkness.

At the end of the three hours Jesus cried out with a loud voice, in the Hebrew language, words which meant, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? Did God really forsake Jesus? Yes, for those three hours of darkness, when he was bearing God's judgment of sin. In His holy anger against sin, God had to turn away even from Jesus, while He was bearing sin

in His own body on the tree. He took that holy body that He might offer it up as a perfect sin offering to God. That was what Jesus meant when He prayed so earnestly that He might not have to drink the cup. It was the cup of God's judgment. Jesus was always His Father's delight. He was God's beloved Son, with whom He was well pleased. He was the only One who could offer Himself without spot to God. God accepted His offering. God heard His cry upon the cross and answered Him. Jesus cried again with a loud voice and gave up His spirit to God. Then the veil of the Temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom—that was God's answer to the cry upon the cross. The veil shut in God. Those who went into the Temple could never see inside the veil. It shut people out from the most holy place where God's ark and the mercy seat were. The veil was made of everything that was beautiful, because it was a type of the body of flesh which Jesus took when He became a Man. When God looked at that veil from the inside, He saw perfect beauty in it. If men looked at it from outside it was beautiful. But it hid God. No man had ever seen God at any time,

till His own Beloved Son revealed Him. God accepted His offering. He tore the beautiful veil in two from the top to the bottom. God did it from the top, from His own side, to show that now He could come out to men, and men could go in to God. He would not be hidden any more. The death of Jesus made a new and living way into the presence of God through the rent veil. He could even take a sinner there. He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, so that God could say, Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more. He would cast all their sins behind His back. It was Jesus only for God, and Jesus only for the sinner !

When the veil of the Temple was torn in two, the earth was shaken, and the rocks were rent ; and the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had died, came out of their graves, after His resurrection, and went into the holy city and appeared to many. Even the dead had to bear witness that the Living One was in the grave ; that Jesus, who was crucified, was the Resurrection and the Life. The centurion was the captain over the soldiers who were keeping guard over Jesus, When he and his soldiers saw the earthquake

and all that took place, they feared greatly, and said : Truly this was the Son of God. Every one who saw Jesus in the sinner's place upon the cross was obliged to bear witness to His perfection. Wicked lips that betrayed and mocked God's Holy One, even they had to tell the truth about Him. The chief priests tried to find accusation against Him—

1. But they found none ;
2. Judas said, I have betrayed innocent blood ;
3. Pilate's wife said, Have nothing to do with that righteous Man ;
4. Pilate said, I am innocent of the blood of the Righteous One ;
5. The chief priests mocking, said, He saved others ;
6. He trusted in God. Quite true ; He was Jehovah the Saviour, and He was the trusting Man !
7. The Gentile said, Truly this was the Son of God.

Women were there, many of them. They were women who loved Jesus. They had followed Him from Galilee, and they ministered to Him. There were many of them, but we are told the names of only three—Mary Magdalene, Mary the

mother of James and Joses, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee. They kept the watch of love.

There was a rich man named Joseph. He loved Jesus in secret, but he was afraid to confess Him openly. He was rich and he had a high position among men. It was not easy for him to follow the heavenly Stranger, as Matthew and the other disciples did, and perhaps he thought, If I keep my place as councillor I may be able to prevent the others from being so cruel to Jesus. But was he able? No, he did not approve of what they did, but he had no power to take the part of Jesus when the others cried out, Crucify Him. But when it was evening Joseph went to Pilate, and begged for the body of Jesus. He did what none of the disciples dared to do, and Pilate gave it to him. Joseph took the body and wrapped it in clean white linen, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock. Only a rich man could have such a beautiful grave. But the prophet had said hundreds of years before, that Jesus would be with the rich in His death, because He had done no violence nor was there ever a wrong word in His lips. It was another proof to men of His perfection. Men gave the Heavenly Babe only a manger. But God would

have Him buried as a King. Joseph rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and went away. He did not stay to watch by the tomb, but two women did, until it was beginning to be the Sabbath Day. Then they went home to keep the Sabbath ; but it was a sorrowful day to them, for Jesus was in the grave all that Sabbath Day. The next day, which was the Sabbath Day, what we call Saturday, the chief priests and Pharisees who were so anxious to keep the Sabbath, went to Pilate and told him that they remembered that Jesus had said, in three days He would rise again. They remembered what the disciples forgot. They begged Pilate to make the tomb very secure until the third day was past. They thought His disciples might go and steal away His body, and that they would tell the people that He was risen from the dead. Pilate showed how he despised them, for he said, You have a watch, go and make it as sure as you can. They went, and put a seal upon the stone, and put some soldiers to watch it. Poor, weak, unbelieving men, how foolish they looked with their seal and their soldiers ! But Jesus lay in the grave all that Sabbath Day. It was the last day of the Jewish Sabbath. It was the end of the old covenant with Israel.

MATTHEW XXVIII.

AS soon as ever the Sabbath was over, when the sun had just risen upon the next day—it was the first day of a new week—the two Marys came to look at the tomb, for all they loved was in that tomb—so they thought. They had seen the great stone rolled against the door of the sepulchre, but they brought spices and sweet-smelling herbs to put upon the body. It was the only thing they could do to express their love. They had ministered to Jesus when He was alive, and they wished to put their offering of love upon His dead body. They said to one another, Who will roll away the stone for us ? But when they came, what did they see ? The great stone was rolled away, and an angel was sitting on it ! His look was like the lightning, and his clothing was white like snow. For fear of him the soldiers trembled and became like dead men. They were men's watchers, but God had His watchers at that tomb. There had been a great earthquake, and an angel of the Lord had come down out of heaven. He rolled

away the stone and sat upon it. No man could roll back that stone, the angel sat upon it. Why did he do so ? That all in heaven and earth might see into that empty tomb. But was the tomb really empty ? Yes, there could be no mistake about it ; there was nothing in the tomb but the clean white linen that Joseph had wrapped the body in. That was left behind. Where was Jesus ? He was risen from the dead. He was called out of the grave by the glory of His Father. He was declared to be the Son of God in power by resurrection from among the dead. God could not leave His Holy One in the grave. He showed His perfect pleasure in Him as a Man when He said to Him, Sit at My right hand. He was the Son of His mother's sorrow, but He was the Son of His Father's right hand. He came out of the tomb before the stone was rolled away. But the angel sat there to keep it open and to declare that He who died was now alive again for evermore. The angel saw how terrified the soldiers were, and he said to the women, You need not be afraid. I know that you are looking for Jesus, the crucified One. The angel knew all about the cross. But, he said, Jesus is not here. He

is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And the angel showed them the empty tomb. How glad those women were that they had gone off so early to see the tomb. What must they have felt to see it empty, and to hear that Jesus was alive again ! They had watched while Joseph laid the precious body there, with so much care; and now they had seen with their mortal eyes the place where the Lord had lain. The angel who rolled away the stone had shown it to them. Then he said to the women, Go quickly, and tell His disciples that Jesus is risen. He goes before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. They went out quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy. They ran to bring the good news to the disciples ! As they were running—their hearts so full of that wonderful message—who do you think met them ? Jesus Himself ! He had seen all their devoted love to Him. He knew all they said and thought about Him, and He said, I will show Myself to those simple women. They do not know much about My great thoughts and plans, but they love much, and they shall be the first to see Me. He said to them, Hail ! They



LAKE OF GALILEE.

came and fell at His feet and worshipped Him. Jesus was that same Jesus whom they knew so well. He said to them, Fear not ; but go, bring word to My brethren, that they go into Galilee ; there they shall see Me. Did the women say : Who are Your brethren, Lord ? No. Jesus had said, He that does the will of My Father, he is My brother, and sister, and mother. The angel called them His disciples, but Jesus called them His brethren. It was women who carried the message : Jesus is alive again, and He calls you all His brethren. Afterwards, when those disciples spoke of those who loved Jesus, they always called them the brethren. While the women were going to Jerusalem to tell the disciples, others were going the same road. The poor frightened soldiers, who were made to watch all night by the tomb to make sure that Jesus did not come out of it, feared for their lives, lest they should be punished for letting Jesus go ! They went to the priests and told them all the wonderful things that had happened, so that even the soldiers were witnesses that Jesus was risen ! Did the chief priests believe in Jesus then ? Oh, no. Jesus had said, Neither will they believe though

one rose from the dead. Their hearts were hardened, and they took counsel together how to get out of the difficulty. Then they thought of money. The only power the world has is the power that money gives, and the Devil always uses people who have plenty of money. So they said, Let us buy these soldiers ; pay them not to tell the truth. The soldiers were very poor, and they were glad to get some money and to do what they were told. So those priests told them they would give them a great sum of money if they told every one that, instead of watching, they had all gone to sleep ! And His disciples had come by night and stolen Him away ! How could they know that, if they were fast asleep ? But the Devil always does say foolish things ! Then the priests said, If the Governor hears of it we will persuade him ; we will not let you be punished. So they took the money and did as they were taught, and even to this day some of the Jews repeat this story. They do not see how foolish it was to believe what sleeping men supposed had happened. How different the plain truth of God, that Jesus had power to lay down His life, and He had power to take it again.

The eleven disciples went out to Galilee. That is where they saw the Great Light, where light sprang up for those who sat in darkness. They went to the mountain where Jesus said He would meet them. When they saw Him they worshipped Him, but some doubted. Jesus came near to them, and said, All power has been given to Me, in heaven and on earth. And now go and make disciples of all the Gentile nations. They were to show them the great light of God's salvation, and to baptize them to the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. And Jesus said, Teach them to observe all things that I have taught you. This story began with the wise men who brought gifts to Jesus. They were Gentiles, but they were wise. They brought gold, frankincense, and myrrh, and they worshipped Him who was born King of the Jews. The story ends with a remnant called out from the rebellious nation of Israel ; a few who were saved out of it, to follow the rejected King—the crucified One, the angel called Him.

Jesus did not go into Jerusalem, where they cried out, Crucify Him. They will not see Him again until He comes in glory. He went out

to Galilee, to the mountain where He said He would meet His disciples. Then He gave them a great work to do while He was away. They were to go out to all the Gentile nations, and to make them His disciples, like themselves ; they were to teach them and to baptize them. That was a new thing for the Gentiles. They knew what it was to be baptized for a place in the kingdoms of the earth. If a man was going to be made a king's councillor, he was baptized for it. But the disciples were to baptize them for the kingdom of heaven. They were to come under a new name, because it was a new rule. It was not the name of Jehovah of Israel and His servant Moses. It was altogether the new thing and the new name that Jesus had come from heaven to make known. Jesus revealed the Father, and He was the Son. The Holy Spirit rested upon Him. All three appeared when Jesus was baptized by John. The disciples were to go and bring the Gentiles under that great name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They were to come into subjection to that name—to be in obedience to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit of God. Whatever Jesus had taught His disciples, they were

to teach to the Gentiles. God would open the door of faith to the Gentiles, that they might believe the good news about Jesus. For He is God's Salvation for every one who believes in Him. Then Jesus said to His disciples, Lo, I am with you always, unto the end of the age. What wonderful grace and love He expressed in those words. Jesus might have said, Those disciples all forsook Me when I was in such dreadful suffering, and all the suffering was for them ; how can I have anything more to do with them ? But Jesus did not say that. He loved His own who were in the world, and He loves them to the end. No one else could love like that ! But Jesus was like no one else. Jesus loves out of His own heart because He is Love. He does not love us because we are nice or good, but because it is in His heart to love poor things who do not deserve it. But we love Him because God first loved us, and He does not despise our little love. He says, I am with you all the days and every day until the end of this present time. Then He will come as King of Glory. He will reign in righteousness. Israel will worship Him as their own Jehovah in the holy mountain at Jerusalem.

God will give Him the Gentiles for an inheritance, and the ends of the earth for His possession. Then it will be known that God is holy, and that He dwells among the praises of His people Israel. Jesus is God's Salvation unto the ends of the earth.

The Father sent the Son,
A ruined world to save ;
Man meted to the Sinless One
 The cross—the grave.
Blest Substitute from God,
Wrath's awful cup He drained,
Laid down His life, and e'en the tomb's
 Reproach sustained.

The new and living way
Stands open now to Heaven ;
Thence, where the blood is seen alway,
 God's Gift is given.
The river of His grace,
Through righteousness supplied,
Is flowing o'er the barren place
 Where Jesus died !