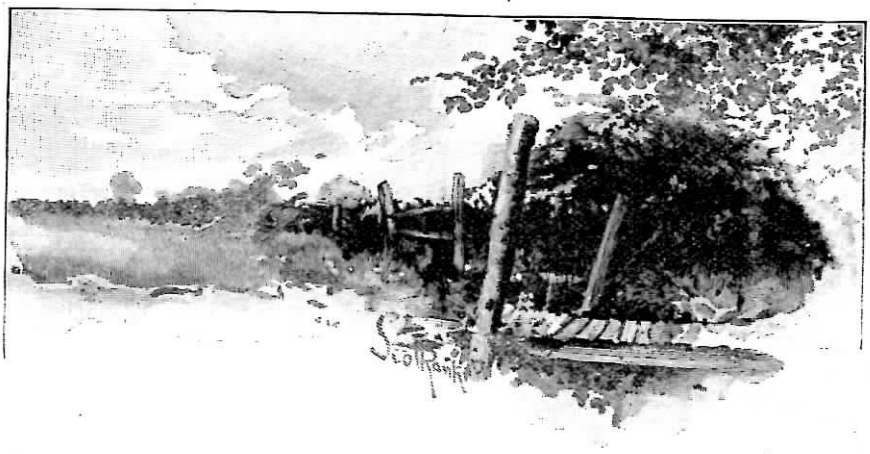


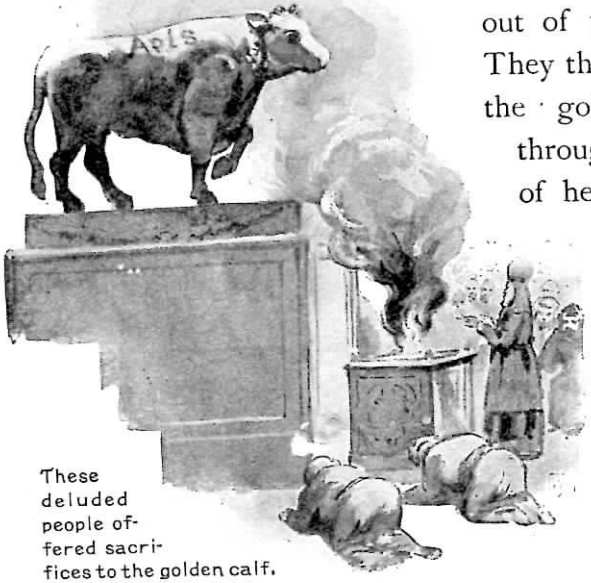
FROM THE SEA TO CANAAN.

THE little food which the people carried out of Egypt was soon consumed, and then with one accord they murmured against Moses and Aaron. They said, "Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger."[1] But, notwithstanding their impatience, the Lord supplied them with manna from heaven, which continued to fall every day, except on the Sabbath, for forty years. They prepared it for the table, and the psalmist says, "Man did eat angels' food."[2]

The minds of the people while in Egypt had been darkened with idolatry, so when Moses remained in the mountain away from the camp many days, they asked that gods be made to lead

[1] Ex. 16:3. [2] Ps. 78:25.

them. Speaking to Aaron, they said: "Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot [know] not what is become of him."[3] Aaron yielded to their request, and prepared a golden calf from the earrings and jewelry of the people. When the people beheld the image, they cried out, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." They then offered sacrifices to the golden calf, and went through the shameful orgies of heathen sun-worship; for the calf was a representation of the Egyptian sun-god Apis. They were in the midst of this daring act, dancing and praising the virtues of the calf which Aaron had made, when Moses returned to the camp. He soon ground the god to powder, and their festival was turned into a scene of mourning for their folly.



These deluded people offered sacrifices to the golden calf.

But the heart of Moses was touched with a desire to see the people reform, and he earnestly prayed for them, and said: "Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not,

[3] Ex. 32 : 1.

blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written."[4] But the Lord said unto Moses: "Whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book. Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee; behold, Mine angel shall go before thee; nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them."[5] Yet they remained near Mount Sinai one year, preparing the sanctuary, and getting ready to march toward the land of Canaan.

When the children of Israel left Egypt there was not a feeble one among them,[6] although the men numbered more than six hundred thousand.[7] The cloudy pillar was a covering from the sun's hot rays by day, and a light in the camp by night. It led them when they marched, and rested over the tabernacle when camped;[8] their clothes did not become old, nor wear out;[9] they were fed from heaven,[10] and the waters ran in dry places like a river to quench their thirst.[11] The Lord did all these things, as He said, "that they might observe His statutes, and keep His laws."[12]

But with food and clothing, health and shelter, all provided by the Lord, they were not satisfied. "Yea, they despised the pleasant land, they believed not His word; but murmured in their tents, and hearkened not unto the voice of the Lord."[13] They complained, and frequently murmured, "because they believed not in God, and trusted not in His salvation; though He had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven, and had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven."[14]

They moved slowly northward from Sinai, and came to the

[4] Ex. 32 : 31, 32.
[5] Verses 33, 34.
[6] Ps. 105 : 37.
[7] Num. 2 : 32.
[8] Ps. 105 : 39; Neh. 9 : 12.
[9] Deut. 29 : 5.
[10] Ex. 16 : 4.
[11] Ps. 105 : 41.
[12] Verse 45.
[13] Ps. 106 : 24, 25.
[14] Ps. 78 : 22–24.

borders of Canaan in about one year—about two years from the time they left Egypt. And from Kadesh Moses sent twelve men, one from each tribe, into the promised land, to see the country and the people. As these men approached the camp on their return, two of them bore a large bunch of grapes between them, on a pole. They also carried figs and pomegranates to show to the people what goodly fruit the land produced. The two who brought this fruit were Caleb and Joshua. In speaking of the land, Caleb said, "Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it."[15]

But ten of the twelve spies gave an evil report of the land. They declared it was "a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof;" that all the people they saw were "men of great stature," and the cities were "walled and very great;" that some of the Canaanites were so large that the men of Israel were only as grasshoppers in comparison to them. Their advice was for Israel to return into Egypt, because they never would be able to take possession of Canaan. Their report caused discouragement in all the camp of Israel, and the people wept aloud all night. In bitterness they cried and said: "Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness! And wherefore hath the Lord brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt? And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt."[16]

How foolish men become when they depend upon themselves for help! What difference did it make if the men in Canaan were giants, and their cities were strong? Was not

[15] Num. 13:30. [16] Chapter 14:2–4.

God able to give victory to those who trusted in him? But when the people ceased to confide in the Lord, they became helpless. In the darkness of their minds, Israel declared that they would rather die in the wilderness than to go forward into Canaan. So the Lord told them that they could return into the wilderness, for there they had chosen to go. "As truly as I live, saith the Lord, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you; your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness, and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against Me, doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I sware to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun."[17]

"And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice."

Their trouble came because they did not believe what God had promised to do for them. It will always be so with those who refuse to trust the Lord. "To whom sware He that they

[17] Num. 14 : 28–30.

should not enter into His rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief."[18] They remained in the wilderness for a period of forty years, during which time they were instructed in the way of the Lord by Moses and Aaron. Near the end of their long sojourn in the wilderness, they were again led to Kadesh, on the borders of the promised land. This time they found no water at the place; and they murmured once more against Moses and Aaron. They declared that these men had deceived the people, and that none of the promises which they had made to them had been fulfilled.

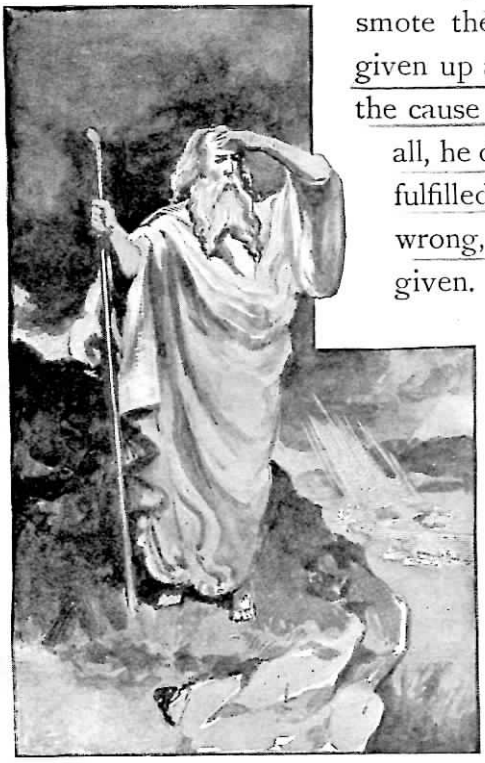
"And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice."[19] For the unkind and presumptuous words of Moses and Aaron, and because Moses smote the rock when he was only commanded to speak to it, the Lord said these men could not lead Israel into the land of Canaan. Still the rock sent forth an abundant supply of good water.

From Kadesh the children of Israel were led to Mount Hor. At this place Aaron died, being one hundred and twenty-three years of age. His son Eleazer was then made high priest in his father's stead.

Leaving Mount Hor, Moses led the people in a circuit round Mount Seir, and finally camped on the east side of the River Jordan, opposite the city of Jericho. Moses knew that the time had come for him to give up the work of his life, yet he had not reached the land which he had longed to see. He

[18] Heb. 3: 18, 19. [19] Num. 20: 10, 11.

had arrived at the age of one hundred and twenty years, yet his natural strength had not abated nor were his eyes dimmed. For eighty years he had endured suffering and hardships in trying to make his people free and happy. In all that time he complained not, except when he smote the rock at Kadesh. He had given up a kingdom and its riches for the cause which he loved. But after all, he died without seeing his hopes fulfilled. He humbly confessed his wrong, and knew that he was forgiven. The presence of Christ had been his strength all those years, and he was not left alone in his last hours.



There in vision Moses beheld the promised land in all its beauty.

Joshua was selected to lead Israel to the promised land; and when all things were arranged, the Lord called Moses up into Mount Nebo, to the hill of Pisgah. There in vision Moses beheld the promised land in all its beauty, but he was told that he could not then go over to possess it. "So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor; but no man knoweth of his sepulcher unto this day."[20]

[20] Deut. 34 : 5, 6.

JOSHUA BECOMES LEADER.

Israel mourned for Moses thirty days, and then the Lord called Joshua to take his place as leader. Said the Lord, "Be strong and of a good courage; for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them."[21] But before crossing Jordan, Israel must again be tested. Joshua sent two spies into Canaan, who soon returned full of courage. They said the Lord had given the country into their hands, for the Canaanites were fainting with fear because of Israel.

When all was ready to cross over Jordan, a number of priests, bearing the ark of the Lord, led the way to the river. That stream was then overflowing its banks; but as soon as the priests' feet touched the river's brink, the water above them stood still, and that below ran off down the stream. In this way the river became dry below where the priests stood, and the people marched through its bed on dry ground. The priests remained in the middle of the Jordan until all the people had crossed over. Twelve men were selected to carry twelve stones out of the river where the priest's feet stood firm. These stones were made into a monument in Gilgal. This monument stood as a memorial to Israel, to remind them of how the Lord opened up the river for them to pass into the promised land.

When the Canaanites heard how the Lord had opened Jordan for Israel to pass over, they were filled with dread. They knew that the idol gods which they worshiped could not hold rivers in their course. Only He who had made the waters could control them. But they had given themselves over to

[21] Joshua 1 : 6.

idolatries until the very land was sick of them. In speaking of the wickedness of the heathen, the Lord said of them, "The land is defiled; therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants." [22]

When Israel crossed over the river, they found food to satisfy all their needs, so the manna ceased. Then Israel's real Leader, who all the while had been in the cloudy pillar, was seen by Joshua standing near the city of Jericho. In His hand was a drawn sword, and Joshua, coming near, asked Him on which side He was enlisted. And He said, "As captain of the host of the Lord am I now come." [23] Through the strength of this mighty One Joshua led Israel to victory and gave them possession of the land.

On a certain day, as they were advancing in their conquest, an aged man presented himself before Joshua, and, standing in his presence, claimed Hebron for an inheritance. He told Joshua that he had been in that land forty-five years before that time, and was ready then to take possession of it, but his brethren would not go. Joshua remembered it all, for it was Caleb who stood before him. Joshua and Caleb were all who remained of the six hundred thousand men who left Egypt. In a short speech Caleb said: "Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh-Barnea to espy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in mine heart. Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt; but I wholly followed the Lord my God. And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's forever, because thou hast wholly followed the

[22] Lev. 18: 25. [23] Joshua 5: 14.

Lord thy God. And now, behold, the Lord hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years, even since the Lord spake this word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness; and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old. And yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me; as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in. Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the Lord spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims were there, and that the cities were great and fenced; if so be the Lord will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the Lord said." [24]

So Hebron was given to Caleb. The very things that had alarmed the unbelieving spies forty-five years before, the Lord overcame at last through this man, who was eighty-five years old. Caleb did not request Joshua to send an army to take Hebron for him. He only asked the privilege of going himself against the giants. He went with his tribe and conquered. He was a man of faith, and forty-five years of murmuring among his brethren had not discouraged him, nor changed his purpose.

Joshua led Israel faithfully till they were settled in the land. He did not seize on some beautiful home for himself, but waited until the people were all located. After that, the record says, "When they had made an end of dividing the land for inheritance by their coasts, the children of Israel gave an inheritance to Joshua the son of Nun among them." [25] Israel then had a national inheritance in the land; yet they were there only to be a light to the world. Their mission was to give the Word of God to others, and so bring about the fulfilment of God's promise to all the nations and families on the earth.

[24] Joshua 14 : 7–12. [25] Chapter 19 : 49.

The history of Israel in their travels from Egypt to Canaan, serves as a lesson to the people of God at all times, but it is of special significance in these last days. Paul says, "All these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."[26] That people left Egypt with great hope, expecting soon to reach the promised land; but they were not acquainted with their own hearts. Their sinful natures led them into a thousand troubles. Had they received every promise of God in fulness of faith, and moved forward without murmuring, victory would have been assured at every step. But unbelief caused them to murmur at all their trials. It darkened their minds and shut out the light of God. The Lord was ready to keep them in all their journeyings, but they did not believe His word. Had they constantly looked in faith to the Lord, they would have shouted in triumph at every step where they mourned defeat. As it was, only Caleb and Joshua, out of six hundred thousand men who left Egypt, reached the land of promise.

[26] 1 Cor. 10:11.

ISRAEL CARRIED INTO BABYLON.

JOSHUA arranged for Israel to be governed by their elders and priests, and the priests were to be directed by the Lord. The people were advised not to leave the heathen to dwell in the land. Said the Lord: "Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against Me."[1] "Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. . . . Ye shall destroy their altars and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire."[2]

In many places temples had been erected for Baal, the great sun-god. And near to Baal were smaller images to represent lesser gods of the heathen. A number of idols near together are called a "grove," or Asherim. Baal was the chief god; Baalim meant the company of small gods. But Israel did not

[1] Ex. 23: 32, 33. [2] Deut. 7: 3–5.

destroy all the Canaanites when they located among them; they also left many images standing. Then the Lord sent an angel to say to them: "I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I sware unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break My covenant with you. And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars; but ye have not obeyed My voice; why have ye done this?"[3] Israel, hearing these words, wept over their negligence, yet left things without a change.

Altho the older people did not depart from the Lord during the lifetime of Joshua and those who had served with him,[4] yet as their children grew up, the psalmist says they "were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works."[5] "And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites; . . . and they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and forgat the Lord their God, and served Baalim and the groves."[6]

Yet they did not all at once become idolaters, for often only one tribe, or a part of one tribe, departed from God. Then judges would be raised up to deliver them from the power of the heathen. So the people continued to be ruled in this manner for more than three hundred years after the death of Joshua.

Their fathers had agreed at Sinai to let the Lord govern them, therefore the kingdom was the Lord's. But Satan tried all the while to turn the government away from the Lord. When the Lord raised up judges who put down idol worship,

[3] Judges 2 : 1, 2. [4] Chapter 2 : 7. [5] Ps. 106 : 35. [6] Judges 3 : 5–7.

Satan tempted the people to demand a king. This they finally did in the days of the prophet Samuel.

This man Samuel had judged Israel many years, and in his day all the lands had been restored to Israel which their enemies had taken from them. But Samuel had by consent of the people appointed his sons to assist him in the work of judging Israel, and they proved to be very covetous. So evil men bribed them to give wrong judgment, and sometimes they punished the innocent and let the guilty go free.

THEY ASK A KING.

Such conduct on the part of Samuel's sons gave Israel an excuse to ask for a king. Therefore the elders said to Samuel, "Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways; now make us a king to judge us like all the nations."[7] But Samuel spoke plainly of the evils which would befall them when they became like other nations. "Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us; that we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles."[8] Then the Lord told Samuel to make them a king, but also told him to say to the people, "Ye have this day rejected your God, who Himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations."[9]

Then Samuel anointed Saul, of the tribe of Benjamin. He reigned over Israel forty years, but did evil most of the time. Saul became so wicked that he could get no word from the Lord in any way. He then visited a witch and had her call up an

[7] 1 Sam. 8:5. [8] Chapter 8:19, 20. [9] Chapter 10:19.

evil spirit that he might talk with it.[10] In this way Satan managed to commune with the king of Israel. Yet Saul thought he was talking with Samuel, who was then dead and buried. Thus the king was made to believe the same falsehood which was told to Eve in the Garden of Eden,—that is, that man does not die, but becomes a god. The woman told Saul that she saw gods coming up out of the earth, and that one was an old man covered with a mantle, "and Saul perceived that it was Samuel."[11] Yet it was not Samuel, but a lying spirit pretending to be Samuel, directed by Satan himself. Saul was told some truth, because Satan's object is to have man believe that the spirits of the dead can talk with the people on the earth. This teaching is the very foundation of all idolatry, and the reason why offerings were made for the dead.

Who then was worshiped in heathen offerings? Let Paul answer, "But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God."[12] When Israel joined with them in their idolatry, "they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, and shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan; and the land was polluted with blood."[13] The next king after Saul was David, from the tribe of Judah. He reigned forty years. In the days of David, Jerusalem began to be an important city. During his reign all Israel were united and idolatry was suppressed.

After David came Solomon, the son of David, who also reigned over all Israel forty years. "God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the seashore. And Solomon's

[10] 1 Sam. 28:7. [11] Verses 13, 14. [12] 1 Cor. 10:20. [13] Ps. 106:37, 38.

wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men."[14] Solomon's understanding was such that all the kings of the earth sought him for the wisdom which God had given him.[15] Solomon was then doing what the Lord desired Israel to do all the time; that is, he was teaching the nations the truth. He built the temple of the Lord at Jerusalem, and brought the ark of God and all the vessels of the sanctuary into the temple, and dedicated them to the Lord. After that the service of the sanctuary was carried on in the temple. In the first half of Solomon's reign the kingdom of Israel reached its highest point of glory.

But Satan overcame the wisest king by causing him to marry idolatrous wives. "For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods; and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. . . . Then did Solomon build a high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon."[16] It seems that he did all this to please the idolaters. He was a great lover of peace, and early in his reign he made a covenant of peace with Pharaoh king of Egypt. Besides Egypt, Solomon united with his court, Moab, Edom, Zidon, Ammon, and many other countries. All praised and flattered Solomon, and continued to do so until he was old. Then his wives, who were idolaters before they came to his court, persuaded him to build these places of idol-worship fo

[14] 1 Kings 4 : 29–31. [15] See 2 Chron. 9 : 23. [16] 1 Kings 11 : 4–7.

them. "Among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel; nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin."[17]

When Solomon yielded to idolatry the Lord told him that the kingdom should be divided after his death, and ten tribes given to his servant, Jeroboam. Solomon endeavored to destroy Jeroboam, but he fled to Egypt and remained there until Solomon was dead. Before his death, however, Solomon repented of his sins, and in his declining years wrote the book of Ecclesiastes.

When Solomon died, his son Rehoboam expected to be made king over all Israel. But the people sent to Egypt for Jeroboam, and when he returned they called Solomon's son and requested him to make the burdens of the people lighter than Solomon had done. But in reply he said they should be much heavier. Therefore, ten tribes made Jeroboam their king, while Rehoboam had only the tribe of Judah and such of the other tribes as dwelt in the land of Judah. He seems also to have had a part of Benjamin,[18] and a large part of the tribe of Levi, as they had charge of the sanctuary service at Jerusalem.

Jeroboam led the ten tribes into idolatry. He made two golden calves, and set one up in Bethel and the other in Dan. He then told the people that it was too far for them to go to Jerusalem to worship, and that the images which he made represented the gods which had brought them up out of Egypt.[19] He built temples for these idols, and ordained feasts for the people to offer sacrifices and burnt incense to them. The division over which Jeroboam reigned was called the kingdom of Israel. That of Rehoboam was known as the kingdom of Judah.

[17] Neh. 13 : 26. [18] 2 Chron. 11 : 1. [19] 1 Kings 12 : 28.

Jeroboam reigned over Israel twenty-two years, and his entire administration was corrupt.

Nor did Rehoboam do any better for Judah. His mother was an idolater, and Solomon had built the god Molech for her at Jerusalem. So Rehoboam had probably been an idolater before he became king. The result was that "Judah did evil in the sight of the Lord, and they provoked him to jealousy with their sins which they had committed, above all that their fathers had done. For they also built them high places, and images, and groves, on every high hill, and under every green tree." [20] Yet all the while there were those who mourned because of the sins of their brethren.

When Jeroboam died, his son Nadab reigned two years. Then came Baasha for twenty-four years, and Ela two years, and Zimri seven days, and Omri twelve years. These five men came down the line forty years to Ahab, who reigned over Israel twenty-two years. Every one of them was wicked, but Ahab was the worst of all. He married Jezebel, the daughter of the king of Zidon, and himself and wife went wholly into idolatry. "And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria." [21] He then made a whole grove of images. "There was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up." [22] They killed the Lord's people, and threw down their altars, and those who worshiped God were compelled to hide away in caves, and in the mountains and deserts. While these things were going on Elijah the prophet prayed for the Lord to withhold rain from Ahab's kingdom, and it did not rain for three years and a half.

[20] 1 Kings 14 : 22, 23. [21] Chapter 16 : 32. [22] Chapter 21 : 25.

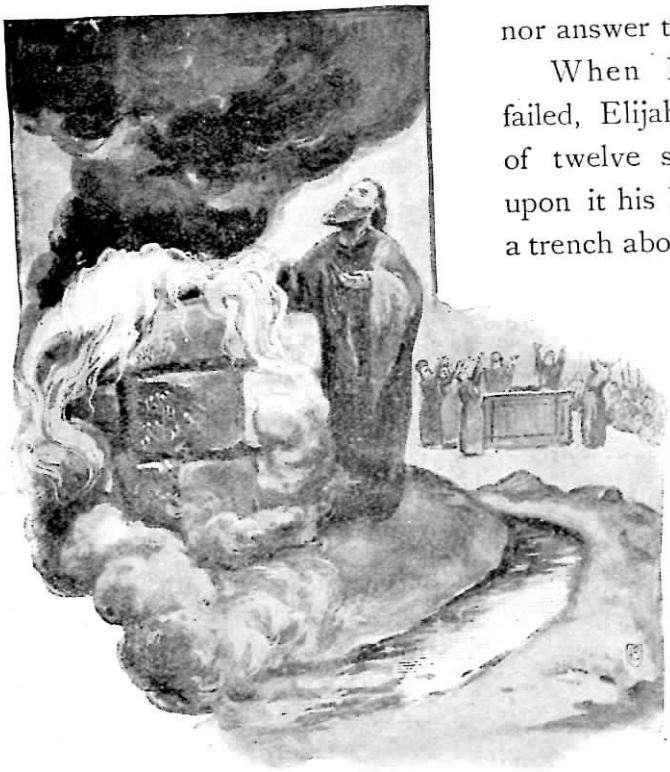
Ahab endeavored to slay Elijah; but the prophet fled, and dwelt with a poor widow who had only enough meal and oil to make one cake. She would bake the cake, and still there would be the same amount of meal left in the barrel. It was the same also with the oil in the vessel. Neither the meal nor the oil became less while she fed Elijah; for the Lord created a new supply every time they ate.[23] When the famine was at the worst, Elijah showed himself to Ahab, and Ahab accused Elijah of being the cause of all the trouble in Israel. But Elijah said that Ahab had made the trouble by forsaking the commandments of God.[24] Jezebel was then feeding four hundred and fifty priests of Baal, besides four hundred priests who served in the worship of other gods.

"And dwelt with a poor widow, who had only enough meal and oil to make one cake."

Ahab and Elijah, with the people, agreed that Baal's prophets should prepare an offering to Baal, and that Elijah would sacrifice to his God, and the one that answered by sending fire should be the God that all would worship.[25] Then the offerings and altar for Baal were prepared, and Baal's priests began their services. They called aloud for Baal to send down

[23] 1 Kings 17: 9–16. [24] Chapter 18: 17, 18. [25] Verses 19–24.

fire, saying, "O Baal, hear us!' but no answer came. Then they called louder, and cut themselves with knives in their efforts to procure an answer from Baal; but Baal was not God, and he could neither hear nor answer them.



"As he ceased praying, the fire came down and burnt up the offering, the wood, the stones, and the water."

When Baal's priests failed, Elijah made an altar of twelve stones, and put upon it his bullock, and dug a trench about it, and poured twelve barrels of water on the wood and in the trench. Then Elijah, praying in faithful simplicity, said: "Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that Thou art God in Israel, and that I am Thy servant, and that I have done all these things at Thy word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that Thou art the Lord God, and that Thou hast turned their heart back again."[26] As he ceased praying, the fire came down and burnt up the offering,

[26] 1 Kings 18: 36, 37.

the wood, the stones, and the water. Then the people called out, saying, "The Lord, He is the God; the Lord, He is the God." When the people saw how they had been deceived, they destroyed the idolatrous priests from among them. But Jezebel's influence soon restored idolatry to power.

"So was Israel carried away out of their own land."

The kingdom of Israel continued two hundred years after Ahab's death, but all of their kings were evil. At last, the Lord said that they had rejected all His commandments, and had become as other nations in worshiping the sun, the moon, and the stars; therefore they should be mingled with them. "So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria

unto this day.[27] Yet the tribes were not wholly destroyed, for some of all the twelve were represented in Judah. Two hundred years after Ahab and Jezebel built up the worship of Baal in Samaria, Manasseh, king of Judah, did the same at Jerusalem. He made altars for Baal and a whole assembly of false gods, and worshiped all the host of heaven, and observed the times set apart to worship these gods, such as Sunday for Baal, and the stated feast days for other gods. He also offered his own sons in the fire to these gods, until Judah did worse than the nations round them.[28]

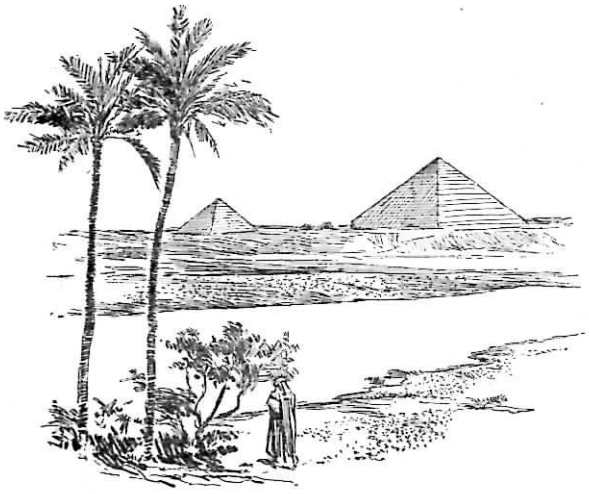
Manasseh died, and after a two years' reign of his son Amon, his grandson Josiah was made king; "and he took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun, . . . and burned the chariots of the sun with fire," "and he brake in pieces the images, and cut down the groves."[29] But Josiah died, and the kingdom of Judah fell back into idolatry again.

Then Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, took the city of Jerusalem, and destroyed many of the people, and carried the rulers who escaped death, into the city of Babylon. Also many thousands of the inhabitants were carried to Babylon. The Babylonians then burned the beautiful temple, and broke down the walls of Jerusalem. They also carried the vessels of the sanctuary and all the riches of the country to the city of Babylon, and left only the poor people to dwell in the land of Judah.

Idolatry was the means which Satan used to destroy both Israel and Judah. It was this dreadful curse which desolated the beautiful land of promise, and brought sorrow and ignorance to millions of homes. Through this means the devil has taught

[27] 2 Kings 17 : 23. [28] Chapter 21 : 4–7. [29] Chapter 23 : 11, 14.

man the most repulsive things that ever corrupted the world. Yet in doing so he has only asked the people to worship the spirits of dead heroes or friends. But this worship destroys the noblest affections of the heart. It causes the mother to rob her own bosom, that she may sacrifice her innocent babe to appease the wrath of a supposedly angry god. It causes men to sacrifice each other in devotion to their gods. It causes the poor slave to be killed, that his spirit may go with his dead master to the spirit world. It leads the heathen widow to be burned or buried alive with her husband, because she has been taught that by so doing her spirit will go with his to dwell among the gods. May our hearts be guarded well against every form of this dreadful foe.



DELIVERANCE FROM BABYLON.

BEFORE Israel was carried into Babylon, the prophet Jeremiah with agony of soul plead with them to turn from their evil ways, saying, "O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people."[1] But instead of heeding his advice, they cruelly beat him, and afterward cast him into prison, where he remained until set at liberty by the king of Babylon.[2]

King Johoiakim of Judah and a number of young princes were carried to Babylon several years before Jerusalem was destroyed. When they were torn away from their friends, it was told them by false prophets in Jerusalem that they would all be sent home within two years. But Jeremiah wrote to them, and in the name of the Lord counseled them to build and plant in Babylon, and pray for the peace of the city, because they would remain there seventy years. "For thus saith the Lord, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I

[1] Jer. 9 : 1. [2] Chapter 37 : 15–21; 39 : 2–18.

will visit you, and perform My good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end."[3]

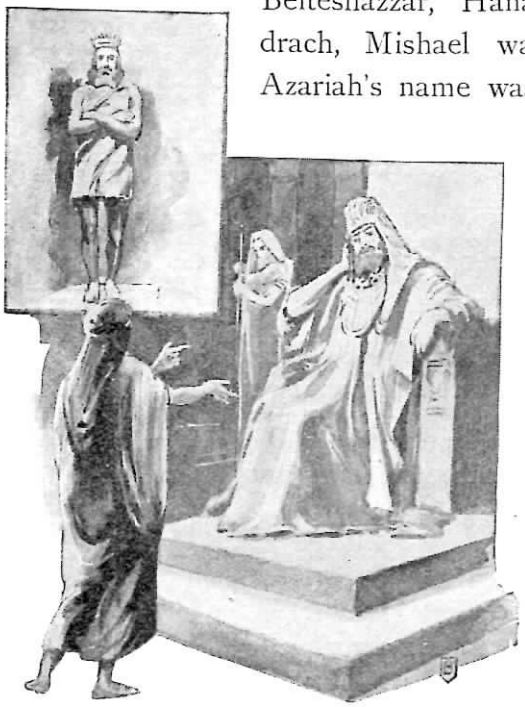
Those who were left in Judah became discouraged, and many moved into Egypt, leaving the country in desolation. It was then that Jeremiah wrote the book of Lamentations, in which he said: "How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people!" "All her people sigh, they seek bread; they have given their pleasant things for meat." "For these things I weep; mine eye, mine eye runneth down with water."[4]

While the prophet wept, his people mourned in Babylon. Their sadness is told in these plaintive words: "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning."[5] Being homesick they could not play, and when asked to sing, they could not do that, because Zion's songs only made them remember the land whence they came. So they hung their harps upon the willows to rest, while they cried for home and liberty.

When the young princes were taken to Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, selected the most promising among them to be taught in all the learning of the Babylonians, with the intention of making them officers in his kingdom. Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were the names of the

[3] Jer. 29 : 10, 11. [4] Lam. 1 : 1, 11, 16. [5] Ps. 137 : 1–5.

men chosen. As their names showed relationship to the true God, they were to correspond to various gods of Babylon, evidently in hope that the young men would forget the true God and worship the gods of Babylon. Daniel was called Belteshazzar, Hananiah was named Shadrach, Mishael was called Meshach, and Azariah's name was changed to Abed-nego.



"Nebuchadnezzar was greatly impressed with the interpretation of the dream."

The king appointed with their daily food both flesh and wine. "But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank."[6] In kindness the prince who had them in charge allowed them to make their own choice of food, and they selected a plain diet. So for three years they studied hard, but refused to eat flesh, and drank only water. On examination they were found to be ten times wiser than those students who ate flesh and drank wine.

Soon after they had been examined, King Nebuchadnezzar was given a remarkable dream, of which he wished to know the meaning. He therefore called in his idolatrous wise men, and

[6] Dan. 1:8.

demanded of them to make known the dream and its meaning. As they could not do it, he ordered that all the wise men in Babylon be put to death. Now as Daniel and his companions had been pronounced the wisest men in all the kingdom, they were arrested to be slain with the others. But as the Hebrew men had not before heard of the dream, they were given time to seek the Lord for an understanding; and as they prayed, the Lord made it all known to Daniel. He then told the dream and its interpretation to the satisfaction of the king.

In his dream the king was shown a large image in the form of a man. Its head was of fine gold, the breast and arms were silver, brass composed its sides and thighs, the legs were of iron, and the feet part of iron and part of clay. While in his dream the king beheld the image, a stone cut out without hands was seen to smite it upon the feet and break it to pieces. Then the iron, the brass, the silver, and the gold all became as chaff, and the wind carried them away. After this, the stone which smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

THE INTERPRETATION.

The image represented four great kingdoms which should rule the world. The head of gold denoted Babylon; the part which was of silver stood as a symbol of the Medes and Persians, which bore rule next after Babylon. The brass represented the Grecian kingdom, which was the third to reign over the nations of the earth. The iron and clay in the image was an emblem of Rome, the fourth mighty empire. The stone cut out without hands, which broke the image to pieces and then filled the whole earth, was the kingdom of Christ.

Nebuchadnezzar was greatly impressed with the interpretation of the dream. "Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon. Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon; but Daniel sat in the gate of the king."[7]

But after a time Nebuchadnezzar became dissatisfied with Daniel's interpretation of the dream. He did not believe that the kingdom of Babylon would be succeeded by another. He made a large image, all of the appearance of gold, and commanded everybody to worship it. This image, representing Babylon, was doubtless intended to express the thought that Babylon would rule the world forever.

When the image was to be dedicated, Nebuchadnezzar called upon all the chief men of his provinces to come and worship it. Daniel, himself counted divine,[8] was not there. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego were present, but refused to bow to the image. The king endeavored to save them, but said that they must worship the image or they would be thrown into a burning fiery furnace. Still these men positively refused to worship the image, and so were bound and thrown alive into the heated furnace. The fire was so hot that it destroyed the men who cast them in.

Immediately the king ran up to a point where he could behold the result, and there he saw four men loose, walking about in the burning flames. Three of them were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, but the fourth was like the Son of

[7] Dan. 2:48, 49. [8] Verse 46.

God. The great Deliverer had come to be with his servants in the fiery furnace, and his power kept the flames from burning them. In great astonishment, Nebuchadnezzar said to his counselors, "Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?" And they answered, "True, O king." But said the king, "Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt." The king wondered to see a man in the furnace who had not been placed there by his command, and was also greatly surprised that all the men were loose, and walking about in the flames, when Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego had been thrown bound into the fire.

Then Nebuchadnezzar approached near the mouth of the burning furnace, and called, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, came forth of the midst of the fire. And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counselors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was a hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them." [9]

When the king and the multitude saw what wonderful deliverance God had wrought for His servants, their minds were greatly affected in favor of the true God. And Nebuchadnezzar said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who hath sent His angel, and delivered His servants that trusted in Him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God." [10]

It may be supposed that the golden image was not worshiped

[9] Dan. 3 : 26, 27. [10] Verse 28.

again that day, for Nebuchadnezzar said these men had "changed the king's word." He there made a decree that nothing should be spoken against the God of the Hebrews. By calmly trusting in God, these men gained a victory which had been of great value to the Redeemer's cause. Through their firmness Satan was defeated, and the knowledge of God and his worship was made known to many nations.

Although Nebuchadnezzar was very much affected by the deliverance of these men, yet he did not then wholly yield himself to the service of the Lord. A few years after that event, however, the king, as he viewed the city he had greatly enlarged and embellished, and the beauty of its palaces and gardens, exclaimed, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of *my* power, and for the honor of *my* majesty?"[11]

While he was yet speaking these boastful words "there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken: The kingdom is departed from thee. And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field; they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times [seven years] shall pass over thee, until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will."[12]

This was fulfilled precisely as it was declared. Nebuchadnezzar lost his reason, and went from his palace, and dwelt in the field, and ate grass as an ox, "till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws." At the appointed time his reason returned, and Nebuchadnezzar ruled again; but he was a converted man. He then wrote a letter which was

[11] Dan. 4 : 30. [12] Verses 31, 32.

addressed to "all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth."[13] In this letter he tells of the wonderful way in which God has dealt with him. And in the last verse he says, "Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and His ways judgment; and those that walk in pride He is able to abase."[14] He had learned in the interpretation of the dream God's wisdom. He had learned in the deliverance from the furnace God's power. But he learned in his own abject humiliation, God's greatness and goodness.

After the death of Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel had a dream, in which he was shown the four great kingdoms of the world.[15] They were presented as wild beasts coming up from the stormy sea. Babylon had the appearance of a lion, with the wings of an eagle. As he watched its movements, he saw the wings plucked out, and it was made to stand on two feet, as a man. The kingdom of the Medes and Persians was symbolized by a bear. It was lifted up on one side, and had three ribs in its mouth, while a voice said to it, "Arise, devour much flesh." The power of Grecia was represented by a leopard with four heads, and upon its back there were four wings of a fowl. The fourth, or the Roman kingdom, was shown under the likeness of a dreadful and terrible beast. It had large iron teeth, and nails of brass, with which it broke in pieces and devoured the other beasts; and it had ten horns. Then another horn was seen to come up among them, before which three of the ten horns were plucked up. And this horn had eyes as the eyes of a man, and a mouth which spoke very great things.

The interpretation of the dream in brief is this: Babylon—

[13] Dan. 4: 1. [14] Verse 37. [15] See chapter 7.

the kingdom represented by the lion with two wings—was to be overcome by the Medes and Persians, which were symbolized by the bear with three ribs in its mouth. Daniel had been in Babylon about seventy years when Cyrus, a Persian general, came with an army and captured the great city, and delivered over the kingdom and all its glory to Darius, who was king of the Medes. This was done five hundred and thirty-eight years before Christ. About two hundred years after Babylon was taken by the Medes and Persians, Alexander, of Macedon, or Grecia, conquered many people and proclaimed himself ruler of the world. He died a short time afterward, and then his kingdom, like the leopard in the prophet's dream, was divided into four heads, and was governed by four of his generals. These ruled till about one hundred and sixty-eight years before Christ was born, when Rome conquered the first division of the Grecian Empire, and began her subjugation of the world. The ten horns on the fourth, or Roman, beast showed that the kingdom would be divided into ten parts. And so it was divided into ten kingdoms, between the years 351 and 476 B. C. These kingdoms are mostly included now in England, France, Germany, Holland, Hungary, Italy, etc., of Europe. They are in existence yet, and will continue in some form of division until the end.

The horn which had eyes, and a mouth speaking great things, represented a power which would rule in some way over the Roman Empire in its divided state. The angel said this power "shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High; and he shall think to change the times and the law."[16] But one power in the world meets all

[16] Dan. 7:25, R. V.

these specifications, namely, the union of church and state known as the Papacy. The Papacy has ruled the nations of Europe and persecuted all who protested against her tyranny until her power to persecute was broken by the influence of the great Reformation. Thus the prophet was shown the course that earthly kingdoms would take until the end of time. Then it was said, "The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him."[17]

DANIEL'S FAITH IN HIS OLD AGE.

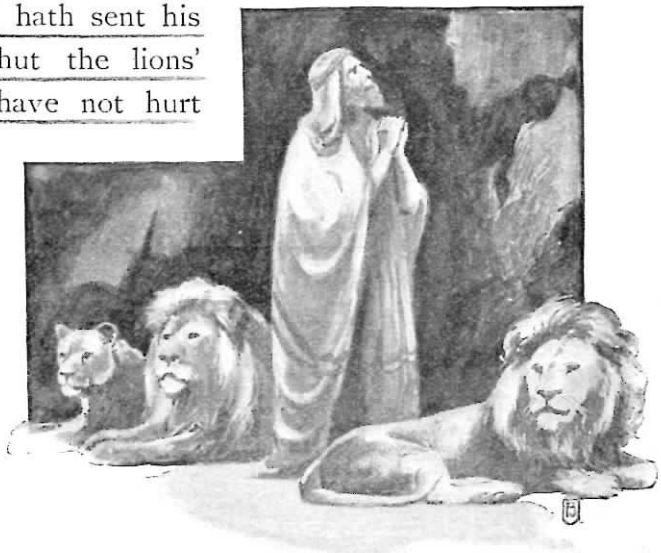
When King Darius came to the throne, he appointed an hundred and twenty princes to rule, but made Daniel president over them. They soon became jealous of Daniel, and agreed to work for his destruction. The prophet prayed to the Lord three times each day, and the princes knew it. They therefore persuaded Darius to sign a decree to throw any person into the den of lions who would pray to any god or man excepting the king, for thirty days.

Daniel knew that the decree was signed, but he continued to pray to God as before, three times each day, with his window open towards Jerusalem. The princes watched him pray, and told the king that Daniel was violating the law. Then Darius understood the wickedness of the princes. When he saw their evil intentions, he endeavored to save the prophet from the lions. But the princes said that he had broken the law and should suffer for it. So Daniel was cast into the den of lions, and,

[17] Dan. 7 : 27.

although he remained in the den one whole night, he suffered no harm whatever.

Very early in the morning, after passing the night in fasting and sleepless anxiety, the king came and called to Daniel, saying, "Is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?" Then Daniel answered, "My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me."[18] Daniel was then taken from the den, and the men who had accused him were thrown in and destroyed by the lions.



"Then Daniel answered, 'My God hath sent His angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me.'"

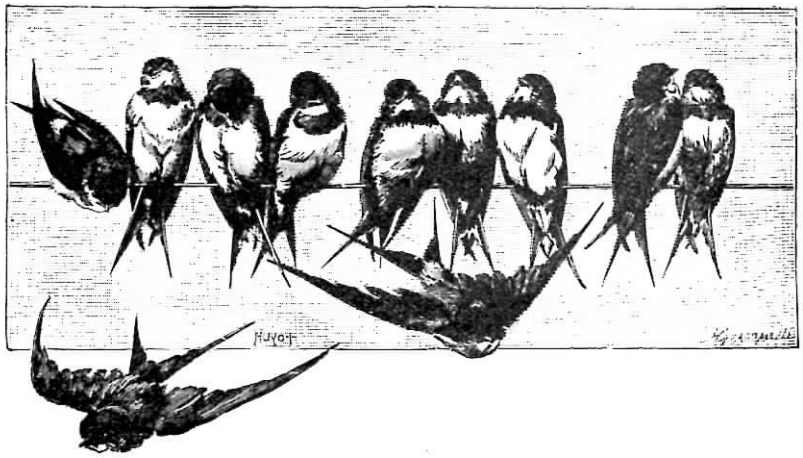
Darius reigned but a few years in Babylon, and then Cyrus the Persian became king. As soon as he was on the throne he ordered the temple at Jerusalem to be rebuilt, and about fifty thousand Israelites moved from Babylon to Jerusalem that same year. More than a hundred years before Cyrus was born, the Lord had called him by name, and said of him, "He is My shepherd, and shall perform all My pleasure; even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid."[19]

[18] Dan. 6 : 20–22. [19] Isa. 44 : 28.

Cyrus must have learned from the Scriptures what he should do, for he said the Lord had charged him to build the temple at Jerusalem.[20] He restored to the prince of Judah all the vessels of the house of the Lord which Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem, and also arranged for much of the expense of building the temple.[21] The people began with good courage to build, yet their enemies opposed the work most bitterly, and when Cyrus died, they caused its cessation altogether. But another Darius was made king, and he wrote a new order for the work to go forward, and in closing he said, "I Darius have made a decree; let it be done with speed."[22] The temple was finished in a few years after this order was given, and the successor of Darius, named Artaxerxes, empowered Ezra to establish officers in all Judah according to the law of God. He also gave to that people as great liberty and freedom as they enjoyed under their kings.

The kings of Babylon robbed and burned Jerusalem and the temple, and destroyed the country, while they tore the people away from their homes. But when the Persian kings came to the throne, they sent the people home, gave back their treasures, built up their temple and city, and made Judah a free province. Thus the Jews were once more given possession of their city and country. They had learned that all their afflictions came upon them because of idolatry and Sabbath-breaking. Therefore they became very strict about these things after they came out of Babylon.

[20] Ezra 1 : 2. [21] Chapter 6 : 4. [22] Verse 12.



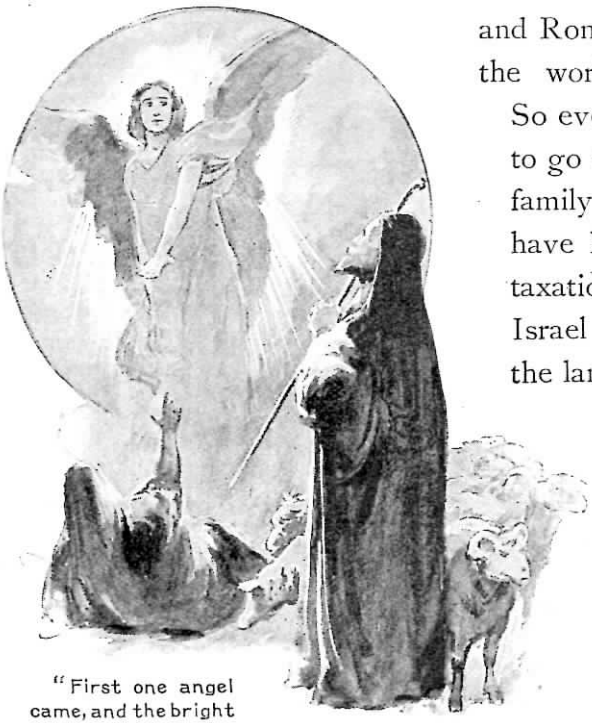
THE SAVIOUR ON THE EARTH.

ABOUT four thousand years after Adam and Eve left Paradise, the Son of God, our Saviour, came into our world as an infant. We have learned of the promise which God made when man fell, that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. We have also read of the faith of Noah and Abraham, of Isaac and Jacob, and how all the children of God, from Adam to Christ, looked for the Redeemer.

One of the prophets had said that Immanuel (Christ) should be born of a virgin;[1] another had told that His birth would be in Bethlehem of Judah;[2] and still another testified that He should descend from David.[3] Mary, His mother, was a virgin when the angel Gabriel said to her, "That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."[4]

[1] Isa. 7 : 14. [2] Micah 5 : 2. [3] Ps. 89 : 35–37. [4] Luke 1 : 34, 35.

These scriptures were all fulfilled in the birth of Christ. His family record according to the flesh runs in a direct line back through David and Abraham to Adam. At the time He was born, His nation, who were then called Jews, were under the dominion of the Romans, and Rome had decreed that all the world should be taxed. So every Jew was compelled to go to the place where his family lineage was kept, to have his name enrolled for taxation; for the children of Israel always held title in the land of their parents.



"First one angel came, and the bright glory of the Lord shone around the shepherds."

Because of this decree Joseph and Mary went from Nazareth, in Galilee, to Bethlehem of Judea, the former home of King David, to be enrolled; for they belonged to David's family. But so many had come to the same place that there was no room for them in the public lodging-house, or inn, so Mary and Joseph lodged in a large cave used as a stable. While they were there, the child Jesus was born. His first garments were swaddling-clothes, and His cradle was a manger.[5]

What a wonderful sight was that! The infant Son of God

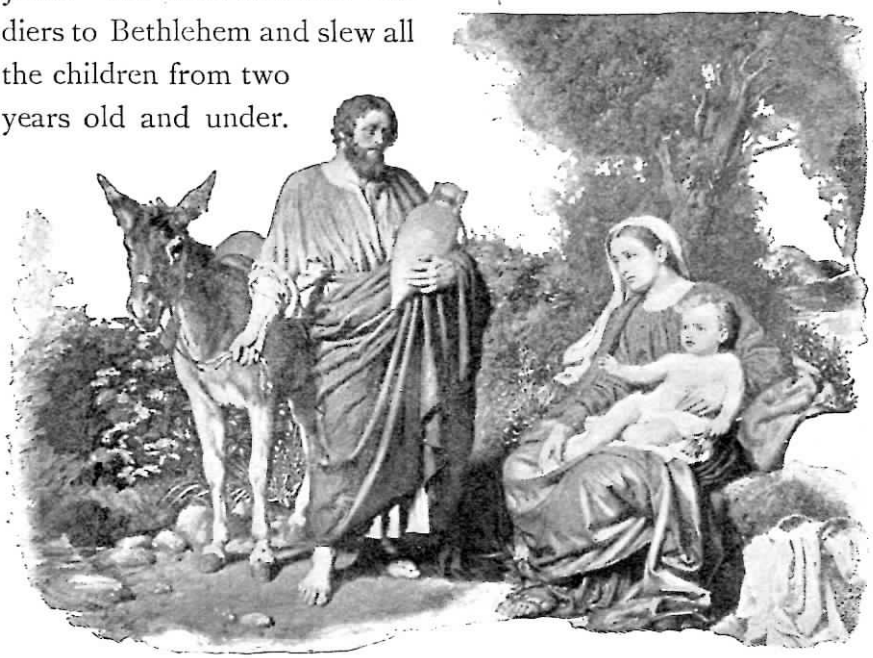
[5] Luke 2: 1–7.

taking His first sleep in human form, cradled in a manger! No one on the earth, save Joseph and Mary, knew who the little One in the manger was. But the angels of heaven knew, for He came down from heaven.[6] So angels came to earth to make known to men that the Redeemer was born. They selected some shepherds who were watching their flocks by night, and to them they told the story. First one angel came, and the bright glory of the Lord shone around the shepherds; and the men trembled in alarm. "And the angel said unto them, Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes, lying in a manger."[7] Then "a multitude of the heavenly host" suddenly united with the one angel, and they all sang together, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men."

When the angels ascended again into heaven, the men went to Bethlehem, and there they found the babe in the manger. And when they had seen Jesus, they went abroad and told of the visit and song of the angels, and of the child which was wrapped in swaddling-clothes. But few would believe their story, few would believe that the Saviour of men was then an infant, born and cradled in a manger. To tell the good news farther away, a shining star appeared to wise men in the East. These men had studied the Scriptures, and understood the meaning of the star; so they started out to find the One whose appearance they believed to be thus indicated. Coming to Jerusalem, they naturally expected to learn all about the new-

[6] John 6 : 38. [7] Luke 2 : 10–12.

born King, and sought King Herod to ask him where the child could be found. Through their visit Herod learned of the place where Christ should be born The Jews had taught that Christ would be made king in Jerusalem, so Herod determined to destroy the child whom he supposed was born to be king of the Jews. He therefore sent soldiers to Bethlehem and slew all the children from two years old and under.



And they "fled into Egypt with the babe."

But an angel had warned Joseph and Mary of Herod's wicked plan, and they had fled into Egypt with the babe. Herod was so jealous because of the birth of another king that he did not search to find Him at all, but destroyed all the children in the place, thinking that certainly the one he specially wanted to put out of the way was among them. This was the way the world received Christ at His birth.

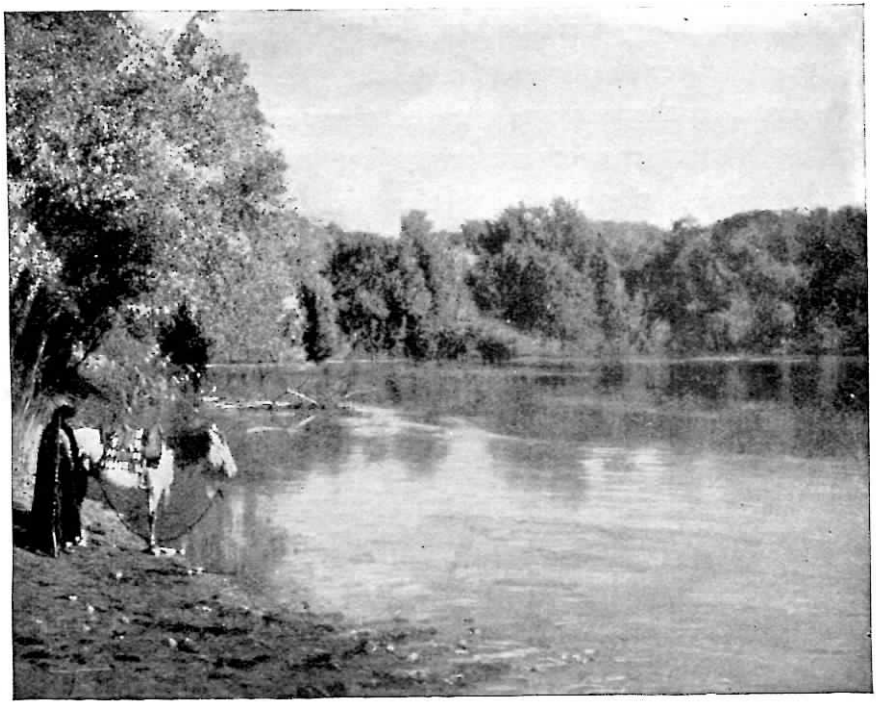
When Herod was dead, Joseph and Mary returned from Egypt to Nazareth in Galilee, and dwelt there. "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him." "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."[8] Yet He quietly worked in Nazareth at the carpenter's trade, as the son of Joseph and Mary, till He was thirty years old.[9]

But when the appointed time came for His mission to be made known to Israel, John the Baptist was sent to prepare the people to receive their Saviour. "As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send My messenger before Thy face, which shall prepare Thy way before Thee."[10] John proved from the Scriptures that the time had come for the Redeemer to appear on the earth; and all who lived in Jerusalem and the regions about Jordan came to hear him. Many confessed their sins to God, and were baptized in the river Jordan.

Jesus knew of the preaching of John, and He also came to be baptized of him, when a great many people were present. It was also at a time when multitudes were anxious to see Jesus, and were even wondering if John himself were not the Messiah. But when Christ came to be baptized, "John forbade Him, saying, I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered Him. And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water; and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him; and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."[11]

[8] Luke 2:40, 52. [9] Chapter 3:23. [10] Mark 1:2; see also Mal. 3:1.
[11] Matt. 3:14–17.

When the Spirit descended upon Jesus, the thousands of Israel who were present heard the witness of John, who testified to them that he had then baptized the Redeemer. John, in speaking of this event, says, "I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God."[12] The great men were there—the scribes,



A Ford on the River Jordan.

and Pharisees, and the multitude. All either saw the Spirit descend, or else they heard the words of John when he introduced the Saviour to them. Yet the Jews would not receive Him, because they expected a great king for their Messiah, one who would sit on the throne in Jerusalem and rule all the nations

[12] John 1:34.

of the earth. But Jesus, whom John had baptized, was a poor laboring man, and they were too proud to own Him as their Saviour. He was humble and meek, and that did not suit their proud hearts. "He hath no form nor comeliness, and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from Him."[13] After the baptism of Christ, He was led by the Spirit of God into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

God had "created all things by Jesus Christ,"[14] but the Redeemer left the glory of heaven and came to this world to save sinners. He became a poor, suffering man, for the purpose of being tempted in every way that man is tempted. We may not be able to understand how the Son of God could come to our world in the form of man, and suffer and be tempted as we are; but we can believe it, for thus saith the Scriptures.

Of Him it is written: "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men."[15] "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us."[16] And again it is written, "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not."[17] "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men."[18]

Paul, writing of how Christ left the riches of heaven and

[13] Isa. 53:2, 3.
[14] Eph. 3:9.
[15] John 1:3, 4.
[16] Verses 1, 14.
[17] Verse 10.
[18] Phil. 2:6, 7.

came to this world, says, "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich."[19] "In all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He

Two Young Girls of Bethlehem.

Pilgrims Entering Bethlehem on Christmas Day.

Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted."[20]

In these great facts is the assurance of our triumph. He "whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting,"[21] yet who was born a brother in the flesh, in little "Bethlehem of Judah,"[22] did this all for us. He suffered for us; He was

[19] 2 Cor. 8:9. [20] Heb. 2:17, 18. [21] Micah 5:2. [22] Matt. 2:1.

tempted in our behalf; He triumphed for us, in order that we, in suffering and temptation, by simple faith, might conquer in Him. For is it not written: "Surely He hath borne *our* griefs, and carried *our* sorrows. . . . He was wounded for *our* transgressions, He was bruised for *our* iniquities; the chastisement of *our* peace was upon Him; and with His stripes *we* are healed"?[23]

Thus the Son of God left heaven and came to our world to live as a man, and to work and suffer as we do. And "He was tempted in all points like as we are." If He could obey God in all points, in spite of the trials which Satan would place before Him, then He would have the victory over sin. The victory was to be gained for every one of Adam's race. Whether man would accept it or not, the Son of God would fight the battle for all, He would win it for all.

Just how these temptations came to Him we do not know. The record in Matthew and Luke tells us of but three temptations, and those at the close of His forty days' fast. These temptations were comprehensive, involving the principles of all temptations without and within; but these were not all. "He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan." At the close of this period Satan again besieged Him with the strongest temptations of all. As Adam and nearly all the race had failed on the point of appetite, Jesus began His trial with fasting, and the last temptations of Satan came to Him when He was weak from want of food.

"And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was afterward a-hungered." Then Satan told Him to command the stones to be made bread, to satisfy His hunger. But

[23] Isa. 53:4, 5.

Jesus was then acting in man's place, and was to know how a starving man suffered who can not create food for himself. All that man can do is to trust God through His Word. So Jesus did the same, and said to the devil, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." [21]

The Saviour trusted all to the living Word of God, and that gave Him the victory. Had Adam and Eve only trusted in God's Word, they would have been safe. If we trust that Word now we shall be kept by it. Jesus suffered the pangs of hunger in the wilderness as fully as those who die of starvation. He can, therefore, sympathize with the poor and starving.

"He was next carried by Satan and placed on the highest point of the temple, and requested to throw Himself down."

He was next carried by Satan and placed on the highest point of the temple, and requested to throw Himself down. The tempter said that if He was the Son of God, the angels would keep Him from being harmed. But Jesus knew that it was wrong to obey Satan in anything, and that it would be tempting God if

[21] Matt. 4 : 4.

He went into danger simply to have the Lord exert His power to keep Him. Therefore He answered the tempter by saying, "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Thus Jesus gained the victory once more through the Word of God. The devil then bore Jesus from the temple to an "exceeding high mountain," and there showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. As the Saviour beheld them in all their splendor, Satan said, "All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me."[22]

Satan had, from the time earthly kingdoms were first formed, constantly used them for wicked works; and on that mountain he offered them all to Christ if He would worship him. He knew that Christ had come to take these kingdoms from him, therefore he offered to yield them all up at once, and told Jesus He need not suffer longer to obtain them. Said he, "All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me." But Jesus replied, "Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."[23]

In every temptation Jesus gained the victory through the Word; and man can have victory by the same means. Satan was defeated. To the fainting Man of Nazareth angels ministered the necessary food, and His strength was restored.

HIS RECEPTION AT NAZARETH.

Shortly after His victory in the wilderness, Jesus returned to Nazareth. At this place He had been known as the carpenter. "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?"[24] It appears that Joseph was dead, and that Jesus had worked as a carpenter

[22] Matt. 4:9. [23] Verse 10. [24] Mark 6:3.

to support His widowed mother. He was a laboring man, and toiled at His trade six days in the week, to make the necessary living for the family of which He was a part. The text says, "He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read."[25] It was Christ's custom while He was a carpenter at Nazareth to attend meetings on the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week, for that was the day which God commanded, and His people kept. And He kept the Sabbath on the same day and in the same manner after He became a public teacher. Christ is the example for His people to follow. "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked."[26]

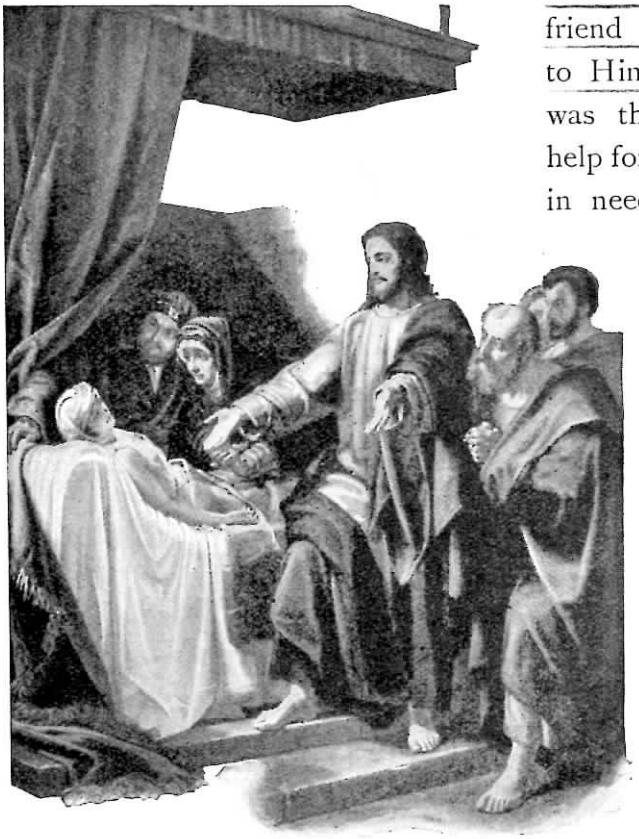
The Saviour did not come from heaven to set up a new religion. His mission was to save men from their sins, and show them how to obey God. He said, "I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me."[27] As the Son of God obeyed the commandments, so should His people obey them. "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."[28] "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."[29]

Jesus Christ did not change the Sabbath to Sunday, but kept the same day which had been commanded in the law. His life brought the righteousness of heaven to our earth for man to see and feel. His Father lived in Him, as He said, "I am in the

[25] Luke 4 : 16.
[26] 1 John 2 : 6.
[27] John 6 : 38.
[28] Matt. 19 : 17.
[29] Chapter 5 : 19.

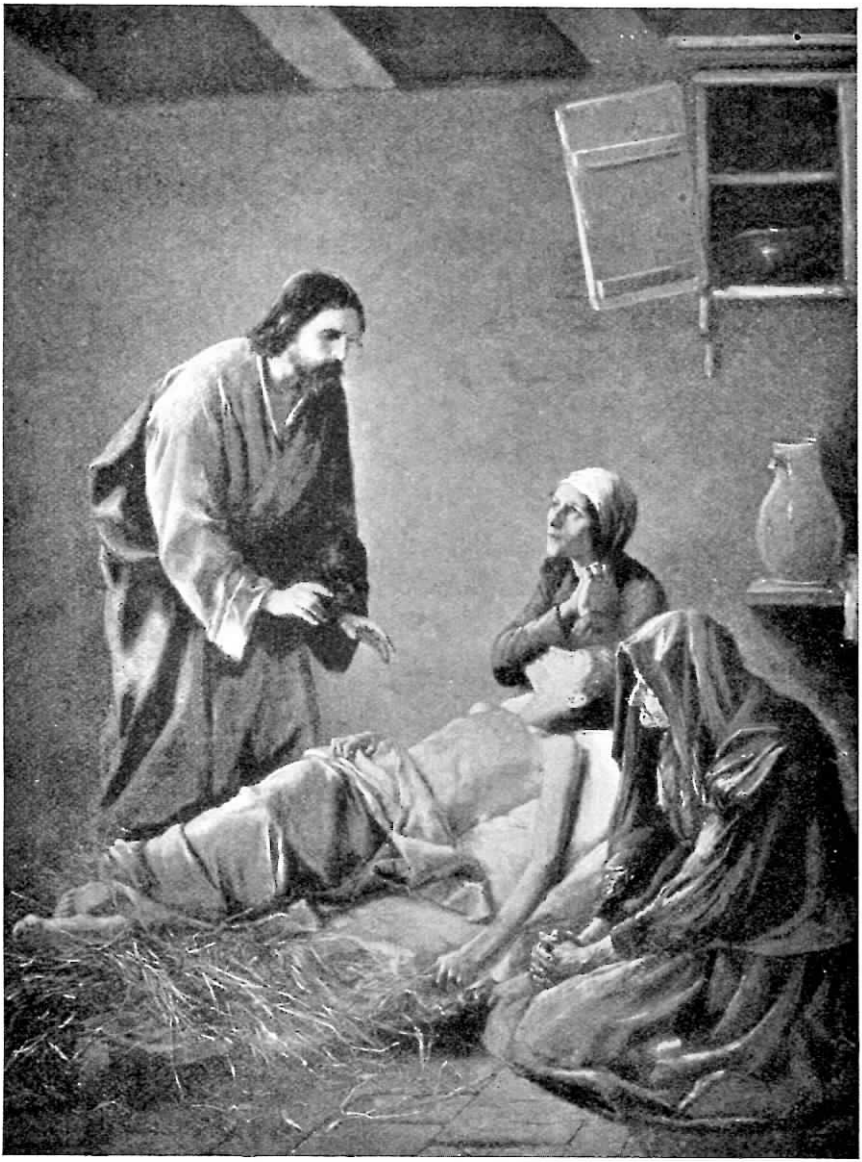
Father, and the Father in Me." He received the love and the law of the Father in Himself, and exemplified them in His human life as an example for all men.

His every word and every act were in righteousness. He was a brother and a friend to all who came to Him. His life work was that of love and help for those who were in need. Sometimes the dead were raised; sometimes the hungry thousands were fed. To help His disciples out of trouble, He quieted the sea and stilled the winds. He restored health to those who were burning with fever, and healed them which had the palsy. By His word the leper became clean; sight was given to them that were blind; the lame were made to walk, the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.



"Sometimes the dead were raised."

When John the Baptist sent messengers to Jesus to ask if



"He restored health to those who were burning with fever."

He were the Christ, Jesus told them to say to John, that "the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the Gospel is preached." [30] He often labored hard through the entire day in His mission of love, and then spent all the night in the lonely mountains in prayer for Himself, for His disciples, and for the people.

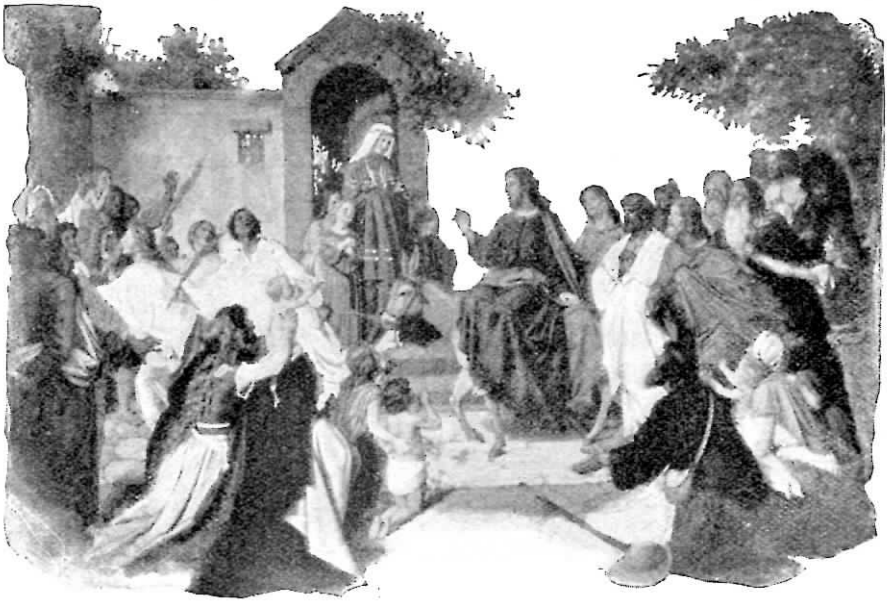
But the rulers and priests hated Christ because of His good works, and the more good He did the more they sought to destroy Him, because His blameless life condemned their evil deeds. Still they permitted Him to continue His labors for three and a half years after His baptism. God kept Him till His work was done. As a crowning miracle, Jesus finally raised to life a man named Lazarus, who had been dead four days. Then the priests decided that Jesus must die. Lazarus lived near Jerusalem, and the news of his death, burial, and resurrection became known to thousands of people in the city and elsewhere. Many Jews were present when Christ called Lazarus to life; they saw the man come forth from the grave bound in his burial clothes; and large numbers believed on Jesus because of this miracle. [31] But some of them went and told the Pharisees what Jesus had done. "Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this Man doeth many miracles. If we let Him thus alone, all men will believe on Him; and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation." "Then from that day forth they took counsel together to put Him to death." [32] "But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus." [33] Yet the common people were planning to make Him king.

[30] Luke 7 : 22. [31] John 11 : 44, 45. [32] Verses 47, 48, 53. [33] Chapter 12 : 10, 11.

THE CRUCIFIED AND RISEN CHRIST.

THE Jews generally believed that the Messiah would reign as king in Jerusalem. And those who had been cured of their infirmities or raised from the dead by Jesus, urged Him to take the throne and enter upon His reign. He had all the while told them that His was not a worldly kingdom; yet the common people demanded that He should be a king. So, on a day when He was about to enter into Jerusalem, in company with thousands whom He had blessed, He asked for a young ass that He might ride into the city. The colt was made ready, and Jesus, seated on it, went on toward Jerusalem. His followers supposed from this conduct that He had decided to let them crown Him king. So all began a shout of joy; and as they went forward, many spread their garments in the road, and others placed palm branches under the feet of the beast upon which the Saviour rode. The whole

throng shouted, "Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord." "The people therefore that was with Him when He called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record. For this cause the people also met Him, for that they heard that He had done this miracle."[1]



"So all began a shout of joy; and as they went forward, many spread their garments in the road."

Doubtless there were in that company, Bartimeus, whose eyes Jesus had opened; the young man to whom He had given sight; the daughter of Jairus whom He had spoken back to life; the son of a widow of Nain; a great multitude of those who had been delivered from demons, and healed from various diseases; and Lazarus, whom He had so recently called from death and corruption. All were proclaiming in glad praise the

[1] John 12: 13, 17, 18.

wonderful things Jesus had wrought for them. Thus they fulfilled the words of the prophet: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy King cometh unto thee."[2]

But the shouting ceased when Jesus arrived where He could look over the city, for there He stopped to weep. As He looked upon Jerusalem, which had slighted His love, He broke forth in the following lament: "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."[3] As the multitude saw a sadness in His heart which they did not understand, they dispersed.

The time was now at hand when the Son of God was to give His life for the sins of the world, and He was anxious to have His disciples understand as much about His death as possible before He suffered. Twelve men had been in training for the Gospel ministry, named Simon Peter, James, John, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James the son of Alpheus, Simon Zelotes, Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot.

He ate the Passover supper with these men in a large upper room in Jerusalem. At the table He told them how He would suffer and die for sin, and that He would be taken by wicked men that night, to be crucified. He also stated that before the

[2] Zech. 9:9. [3] Luke 19:41–44.

morning's dawn one of the twelve would betray Him, and all the others would forsake Him. But Peter would not believe that such things could be possible, and declared that he would go to prison or even to death with Jesus. And all the others affirmed the same thing. But Jesus said that Peter would deny Him three times before the morning cock-crowing.[4]

Judas Iscariot left the room while Jesus was yet talking, and sought the priests and officers that he might lead them to the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus went often to pray; for the Jewish priests and rulers had previously hired Judas, for thirty pieces of silver, to betray to them the Master. There was an orchard of olive trees in Gethsemane, and under the darkness of their branches Jesus went with the other disciples to bear the agony of the burden of the sins of men.

As soon as they arrived in the garden, the Saviour felt that the guilt of the whole world was settling down upon Him. In bitterness He cried, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." The prophet Isaiah had said: "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; and have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all."[5]

The grief which the sinner will experience when he knows he is lost forever was laid upon Christ. In anguish He prayed, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt."[6] He had asked His disciples to watch and pray with Him in the hour of His sorrow, but they were overcome with sleep, and He was left to suffer

[4] See Matt. 26:33–35. [5] Isa. 53:5, 6. [6] Matt. 26:39.

alone. Jesus saw them slumbering, and said to Peter, "What, could ye not watch with Me one hour?" Going a short distance from them, the second time He prayed, "O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done." Three times He prayed, each time more earnestly. "Being in an agony He prayed more earnestly; and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."[7] The prophet wrote of the sorrow and the blood which marked the face of Jesus in the garden, and he said, "His visage was so marred more than any man."[8]

But an angel came into Gethsemane and gave the Saviour new strength, by which He was enabled to go forth to His trial and crucifixion. He arose from the ground, and, with the blood-stains yet on His face, He awoke the disciples just in time to meet Judas Iscariot, with priests and a company of men. Judas stepped forward and saluted Jesus with a kiss, that the officers might know which man to take. The only reproof which Jesus gave was, "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" "betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?"[9]

Peter, in his indignation at seeing his Master and himself thus humiliated, drew a sword and cut off the high priest's servant's right ear. The ever-merciful Lord reached forth the hand which had ever brought comfort, touched the man's ear, and healed it. Turning to Peter, He said, "Put up again thy sword into his place; for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword."[10] Thus our Lord, who elsewhere declares that His kingdom is not of this world, here teaches that His truth or cause is not to be defended by resort to arms.

The Redeemer permitted Himself to be bound, and when

[7] Luke 22 : 44. [8] Isa. 52 : 14. [9] Matt. 26 : 50; Luke 22 : 48. [10] Matt. 26 : 52.

the disciples saw that He was in the hands of the officers, "they all forsook Him and fled." Afterward John returned and "went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest."[11] Peter also "followed," but afar off, and entered into the palace. There the

"At the moment of the last denial, the crowing of the cock was heard, and Jesus turned and looked upon His disciple."

proud disciple was accused three times of having been with Jesus; but each time he denied it, and the third time with an oath declared, "I know not the Man." At the moment of the last denial, the crowing of the cock was heard, and Jesus turned

[11] John 18: 15.

and looked upon His disciple. That look of sadness and pity brought to Peter's remembrance the words of Jesus which foretold that he would deny the Lord. And Peter went away in sorrow for his sin, and "wept bitterly."

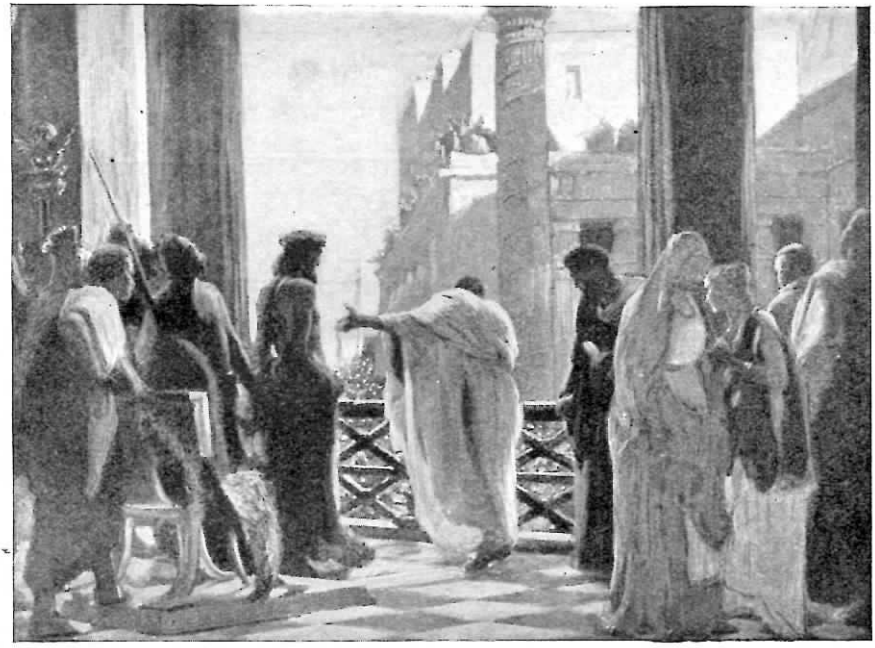
While the priests awaited the coming of the day, Jesus was made the sport of cruel men; some spit upon Him, and others smote Him. They mocked and insulted Him with false and cruel speeches, to cause Him, if possible, to manifest anger; but in love He withstood it all.

When morning came, Jesus was taken before Pilate, the governor, whose mind was to set his Prisoner free. But the priest told Pilate that if he did not condemn Christ to be crucified they would accuse him to Cæsar, the emperor of Rome, as Cæsar's enemy. Pilate was made to fear that Cæsar would deprive him of his office, and perhaps take his life, unless he yielded to the wishes of the priests and people, and crucified Him who was King of the Jews. "When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just Person; see ye to it."[12] But Pilate at last became so cowardly before the multitude that he condemned Jesus, and scourged Him upon the bare back, until His body was wounded and bleeding with many stripes. Jesus was then, in a fainting condition, turned over to the Roman soldiers to be crucified.

A crown of thorns was placed on the Saviour's head, and then in mockery the Romans called Him "King of the Jews," and spit upon Him. Some one smote His head with a reed, while He wore the crown of thorns. The thorns were driven

[12] Matt. 27 : 24.

into His flesh, causing the blood to flow down upon His face. By this shameful treatment, Satan hoped to arouse Jesus to anger, and cause Him to speak an unkind word, or to refuse His love to some sinner. Sinful men, in their blindness, were made to abuse their own Saviour, to try to crush out His love for them. But Jesus knew who was causing all the affliction, and



Pilate Showing Christ to the Multitude.

He only loved and pitied the men who persecuted Him. His righteousness was stronger than the power of Satan, and His love for sinners so great that it could not be broken.

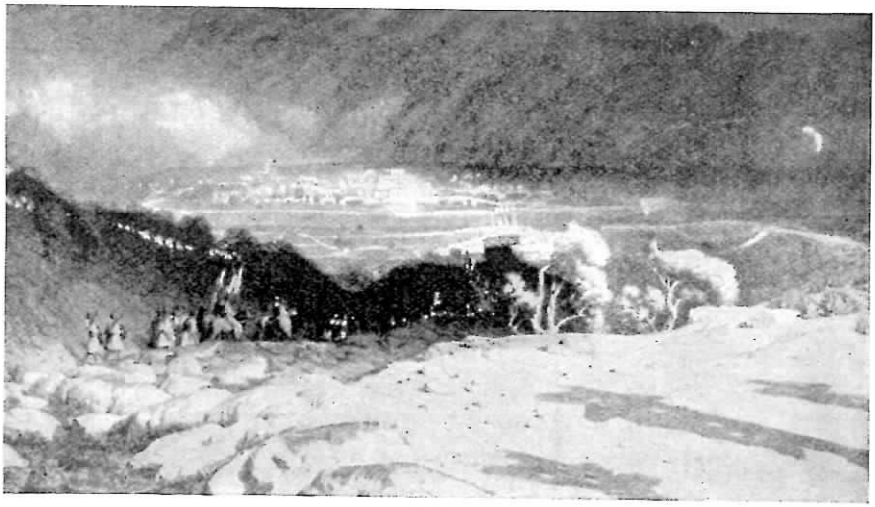
When Satan saw that he could not destroy the Saviour's love for sinners, he then instigated them to go on with the crucifixion. An effort was made to have the Son of God carry

His own cross to the place where He must die; but He was by this time so physically exhausted that He fainted under the load. The soldiers then compelled a stranger to bear the cross to Calvary. There the Redeemer was stretched upon the hard wood, and great nails were driven through His hands and feet, which were thus made fast to the timber. As they drove the nails, and His flesh was quivering in agony, Jesus prayed in sorrow and love, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." The cross was then raised up with the Saviour suspended upon it. The sacrifice was complete in His death. Upon the cross the Son of God gained His great victory over Satan by dying for sinners. The multitude and the priests remained by the uplifted cross to mock at the Saviour's dying agony. But Jesus uttered no complaint. At the sight of the crucifixion, the earth quaked, the rocks were rent, and the sun was veiled in darkness and refused to give light to the world till the sufferings of Christ were over.

When the Saviour hung upon the cross, He knew that His life had been without sin, and that His victory over Satan was complete; yet He had taken man's place, and must die as though He were lost. In the sinner's stead He must feel in the darkness of the sins He was bearing the hiding of the Father's presence, and pass into death without the joy of the Holy Spirit to comfort Him. When the last trying moment came, and the presence of the Father was withdrawn, Jesus called in a loud voice, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" The world had forsaken Him; His disciples had fled; the sun had refused to shine, and at last the Father withdrew His presence. In this awful darkness Jesus still trusted that all was well, and cried out, "*It is finished.*" "Father, into Thy hands I commend My

Spirit"—*and He was dead!* The great offering was made; the Lamb was slain, and the sufferings of Christ were ended.

As the Redeemer yielded up Himself to death, "the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent."[13] The rending of the veil showed that the priestly service in the earthly temple, or



"The world had forsaken Him; His disciples had fled; the sun had refused to shine."

sanctuary, was forever ended. Type had met antitype. The shadow had reached the substance.

When the captain and the soldiers saw Jesus die, and beheld the darkened heavens, and felt the shaking of the earth, "they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God."[14] "And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned."[15]

After the crucifixion, Joseph, a rich Jew of Arimathea,

[13] Matt. 27:51. [14] Verse 54. [15] Luke 23:48.

begged the body, and, assisted by a ruler named Nicodemus, took Jesus from the cross and buried Him in his own new tomb. The grave had been cut out in the side of a rock, and a great stone fastened to the door, and there the Saviour was placed to rest.

But Joseph's tomb, though new and strong, could not long retain the Son of God. His righteousness was stronger than the power of death which held Him. "It was not possible that He should be holden of it."[16] Christ had said, "I lay down My life for the sheep." He not only lay down His life so that man could receive it, but He said, "I lay down My life, that I might take it again."[17]

Jesus had often told His disciples that He was to die, but that He would rise again the third day; yet they could not believe it. They thought all the while that He was to reign in Jerusalem as king. So when He was crucified, all their hopes were gone, and in discouragement they went away to mourn and weep. His enemies sealed up the tomb, and placed around it a guard of Roman soldiers, pretending to believe that His disciples would steal away His body in the night, and then say that He had risen from the dead.[18] Doubtless Satan, the prince of death, also set a strong guard of wicked angels around the grave, with orders to keep Him from coming to life again.

But God had set a guard over the sepulcher of His Son, which was stronger than all His enemies. And on the morning of the third day the angel descended from heaven, and before His glory the Roman soldiers fell like dead men. That mighty messenger rolled back the stone from the tomb.[19] Then Jesus came forth from death, a complete conqueror over Satan and

[16] Acts 2 : 24. [17] John 10 : 17. [18] Matt. 27 : 62–66. [19] Chapter 28 : 2–4.

the hosts of evil. In His resurrection the victory over death was gained, that man might be redeemed from its power.

The elders and the priests were greatly alarmed when the soldiers reported in the city of Jerusalem that Jesus had risen from the dead. They were afraid of the people if the report should be believed, so they hired the soldiers to say that His disciples stole away His body in the night, while they slept. But God provided other witnesses who testified to the resurrection of His Son. These were many saints who had been sleeping in their graves. The testimony says, "And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many."[20] So while the soldiers were telling that His disciples had stolen the body of Jesus, the risen saints went into the city and testified that Jesus had come to life, and that they also had risen with Him. And the people could not deny the testimony of these resurrected ones. The Saviour went into the grave and took the keys of death, and He says, "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell [the grave] and of death."[21]

Some sorrowing friends came to the tomb on the morning of His resurrection to anoint His body; but there were angels waiting to tell them that He was risen. And Christ Himself appeared early at the sepulcher, and made Himself known to Mary Magdalene, who went and told His disciples that Jesus was alive again; but they would not believe it.[22] Later in the day He met two acquaintances and made Himself known to them. When the evening came, the disciples shut themselves up in their

[20] Matt. 27 : 52, 53. [21] Rev. 1 : 28. [22] Mark 16 : 9–12.

room for fear of the Jews, and were eating when Jesus appeared among them. "But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit."[23] To remove all doubt of His resurrection, Jesus showed them His hands and His feet, and they examined the prints which the nails had made. He also ate in their presence, to convince them of His resurrection. So they believed, and were made to rejoice again.

"But there were angels waiting to tell them that He was risen."

Before His death Christ could not make His disciples understand why He must die to redeem man. Their notion that Christ must reign as king in Jerusalem kept them from seeing the truth. But after His death and resurrection their minds began to open to the subject. He therefore taught them at different times for forty days, speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God.[24]

But as the close of His sojourn on earth drew near, He

[23] Luke 24 : 37. [24] Acts 1 : 3.

called His followers together, and told them to tarry in Jerusalem and pray for the Holy Spirit until they should receive power from on high. "And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight."[25] That cloud which Jesus entered was a company of angels, a triumphal escort of the mighty victors. As the holy cavalcade reach heaven's gates, the escorting angels cry, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in."

The angels within the gates inquire, "Who is this King of glory?" The angelic escort in holy triumph break forth in glad refrain: "The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in." Again, that they may hear the joyful reply, the angels within ask, "Who is this King of glory?" And once again comes the jubilant and eternally victorious reply: "The Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory."[26]

Thus the Son of God returned again to heaven, and He is there to appear in the presence of God for us.

[25] Acts 2 : 9. [26] Ps. 24 : 7–9.

PREACHING OF THE APOSTLES.

THE crucifixion and resurrection of Christ prepared the way for the Gospel to go with great power to all nations. The apostles were commissioned to give the glad news to the world. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."[1] The Gospel by Luke tells it in these words: "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."[2]

[1] Matt. 28 : 18–20. [2] Luke 22 : 46–49.

After the ascension of the Saviour to heaven His disciples returned to Jerusalem, and there waited for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit which He had promised they should receive. But while they tarried, earnest prayer was made by them all. In humility they confessed their sins and sought the Lord until every heart was made clean and every soul was free. "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."[3]

The Jews were at this time attending the feast of Pentecost from every nation under heaven. They knew, too, that their rulers had condemned Jesus; and much had been said about His resurrection from the dead. So this occasion seems to have been chosen that the Jews might have another chance of accepting the Saviour. They had been first to condemn Him, and now they were to have the first opportunity to acknowledge Him after His ascension to heaven.

Because the apostles were speaking in many languages at the same moment, some made light of it, and said they were drunken. But Peter answered this accusation, and said that they were not drunken, as some supposed; but God had fulfilled His word, spoken by the prophet Joel, in pouring out His Spirit upon His servants. He then affirmed that Jesus, whom they had beaten, condemned, and crucified, was actually the Son of God, the true Messiah, foretold by all the prophets. And after

[3] Acts 2 : 1–4.

giving many proofs from the Word of God that they had with wicked hands crucified the Just One, he said: "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear."[4]

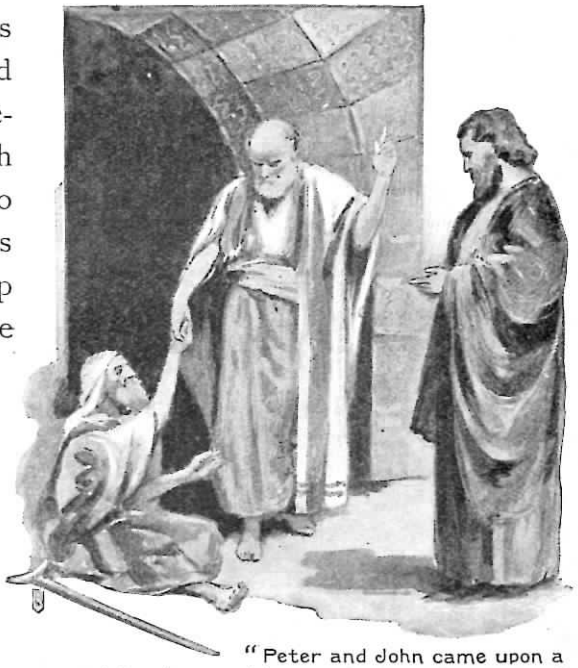
But the power of the Spirit of God was not confined to the apostles, for while Peter told the glad old story of redemption, his words pierced the hearts of the people, and many believed. The weight of their sins became too heavy for them to bear, and in anguish they cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Then said Peter: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."[5]

To repent of sin is to hate one's evil ways and turn from them, but this can be done only by the help of the Lord. It is the Spirit of God that convicts the sinner, and causes him to cry out for relief from guilt. He becomes anxious to know the way to a better life, and earnestly calls out, "O tell me, what must I do to be saved?" But salvation from sin can be found only in Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified One. It is in His name that the people were offered pardon by the apostles. "Then they that gladly received His word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."[6]

The people saw from the teaching of Peter that Jesus, whom they had crucified, was at that moment in heaven, offering to forgive all their sins. He could even save them through

[4] Acts 2:32, 33. [5] Verses 37–39. [6] Verse 41.

His death of shame which He had suffered on the cross. They were made to look upon the death of Christ as their only way to life, and they gladly accepted it as the means of being saved. By the act of baptism they showed that they believed in His death, His burial, and His resurrection. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."[7] As Christ died and was buried, so should the sinner give up his life of sin and be buried in baptism. As Christ rose from the dead into a new life, so should one baptized arise to live a new life. He leaves off his old life of sin and lets the new life of Christ come in to rule all his actions.



"Peter and John came upon a poor, helpless beggar lying at the Beautiful Gate of the temple."

THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL.

Shortly after the day of Pentecost, Peter and John came

[7] Rom. 6:3, 4.

upon a poor, helpless beggar lying at the Beautiful Gate of the temple. He asked a gift of them, but as they had no money to give him, Peter said, "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk."[8] And immediately the man received strength, and entered into the temple with them, "walking, and leaping, and praising God." Soon a multitude of people gathered around and listened in amazement to the beggar, as he told of the wonderful thing which had been done for him.

This circumstance gave Peter another opportunity to preach Christ to the multitude. Some were claiming that Peter and John had healed the man; but the apostles denied having any power or holiness by which such works could be done. The beggar had believed on Christ, and had received health and joy in His name. The impotent man had been healed by the power of the risen Christ. It was a convincing proof to all that Jesus Christ lived, and that the rulers had not stopped His work of mercy and love, even though they had crucified Him. Peter said to the people: "Ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. And His name through faith in His name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know; yea, the faith which is by Him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all."[9]

But as it displeased the priests and rulers of the Jews for the apostles to preach and heal in the name of One whom they had condemned and crucified, they arrested Peter and John and brought them to trial for healing in the name of Jesus

[8] Acts 3:6. [9] Verses 14–16.

of Nazareth. Being requested to speak in his own defense, Peter preached the Gospel, saying: "If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at naught of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."[10]

The man who had been healed was standing in their presence, and the priests could not deny the words of Peter; yet they commanded the apostles to teach no more in the name of Jesus. But man could not stop the work of God. Even when the ministers were put in the prison, the Gospel was proclaimed. Finally the Jews determined to put an end to the apostles' preaching, so they brought to trial a worthy Christian named Stephen, and called together the whole council of seventy elders to sit in judgment upon him. Men were hired to swear falsely against Stephen, and he was stoned to death. So the nation of Israel rejected the Gospel of Christ and entered upon the work of slaying Christians.

After Stephen's death, officers went from house to house and took both men and women from their homes, and put them in prison for believing in Jesus. This treatment scattered the followers of Christ into different parts of the country, but it did not check the Gospel; for "they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word." Philip, one of the

[10] Acts 4 : 9–12.

deacons from Jerusalem, went to Samaria, and there preached Christ to the people. Many in that city believed and were baptized. The sick were healed, the lame made whole, and a large church established at the place.

From Samaria Philip was directed by the Holy Spirit to go southward and toward Gaza. He obeyed, and while traveling on the way he saw an officer of the queen of Ethiopia, returning homeward from Jerusalem. He was riding in a chariot, and reading in the Scriptures where the prophet said of Jesus, "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth."[11] The officer did not understand this scripture, so he requested Philip to ride with him and explain it. Therefore Philip took a seat in the chariot, "and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus." The story of redemption was told to the Ethiopian. As they journeyed onward, a certain water was reached, and the man said, "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he

"The officer did not understand this scripture, so he requested Philip to ride with him and explain it."

[11] Isa. 53:7.

answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still; and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him."[12]

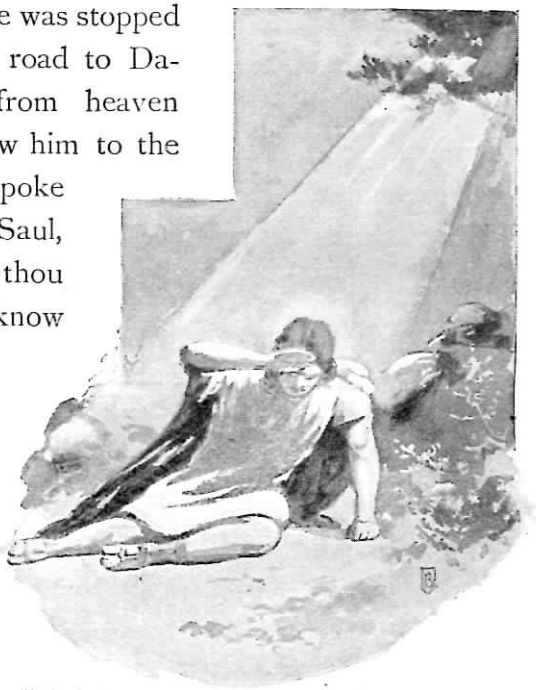
This account shows that the minister and the person to be baptized should go into the water together, and that the one who is baptized is buried in the water, and then immediately brought forth, as though he had come into a new life. In describing baptism, Paul says, "Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead."[13] The eunuch whom Philip baptized returned to his home in Ethiopia, a country in Africa, and there told the wondrous story to his countrymen. Thus the Gospel was spread far away from Jerusalem, and the more men opposed it, the wider it became known.

One of the council that condemned Stephen was a young man of much learning, whose name was Saul. He was a bitter enemy to the cause of Christ, and when Stephen was put to death, Saul held the clothes of the men who threw the stones. But Saul, as a member of the council, had heard the strong argument which Stephen gave for believing in Jesus. He also listened to the touching words, and felt the Spirit's power as Stephen gave his dying testimony. For God opened the heavens and permitted his faithful servant to behold Jesus standing by the throne of the Eternal. Saul also heard the words of Stephen as he prayed the Lord to have mercy on his persecutors.

The young man never could get the words of Stephen out of his mind. Let him try ever so hard to ignore those solemn truths and that tender, humble prayer, they would remain. So

[12] Acts 8: 36–38. [13] Col. 2: 12.

he endeavored to erase them from his memory by cruelly treating the Christians. "And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem."[14] But he was stopped in this course, for on the road to Damascus a bright light from heaven blinded his eyes and threw him to the earth. Then a voice spoke from heaven, and said, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" Saul called to know who was speaking, and the answer came, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest."

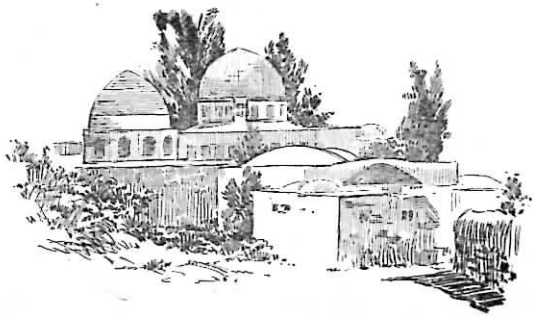


"A bright light from heaven blinded his eyes and threw him to the earth."

Then Saul asked Jesus what he must do, and he was told to proceed to Damascus, and there he would learn his duty. So his companions took him by the hand and led him into Damascus. And he had no sight for three days; he neither ate nor drank; but he prayed earnestly. In this condition he was visited by a disciple named Ananias, who laid his hands on him, and forthwith he received his sight, and was baptized. Saul was then informed that he

[14] Acts 9: 1, 2.

was chosen of the Lord to preach the Gospel of Christ. This ministry he gladly accepted, and afterward became known to the Christian world as the apostle Paul.

After he became a follower of Christ, he did all that was possible for man to do in preaching the Gospel to the world. He did not confine his work to the Jews, but traveled thousands of miles among the nations, and preached Christ, often laboring day and night. The time of his active work in the ministry was about thirty years. He was then put to death for his faith, at Rome. This man wrote more than half the books of the New Testament, and perhaps no man ever labored harder for Christ. All the apostles left their homes and gave up everything for the cause which they so dearly loved. Paul said of his trials, "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy."[15] Nearly all of them were put to death for their faith; but they are only resting for a little while, till Jesus comes, and then they will receive starry crowns of unfading glory.

[15] Acts 20:24.