

THE GREAT SERVANT

SIMPLE LESSONS
ON THE GOSPEL OF MARK

This is My beloved Son. Hear Him !

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AN ARCH.

THE GREAT SERVANT.

MARK I. 1-13.

“Lo I come, to do Thy will, O God.”

WOULD you like to hear something that was said in heaven, long, long ago?

It was the most wonderful utterance that angels ever heard! The words were: “Lo I come, to do Thy will, O God!” Who said those words? The Son of God; and those few words told all that God would do for men, and for His own glory; for the Son of God—Jesus—was able to do all God’s will, and He knew it perfectly. So He offered Himself as a sacrifice and an offering acceptable to God.

We have been talking together about the Gospel of Matthew,* and the next book in the New Testament is the Gospel of Mark.

Mark tells the story about Jesus in a different way to Matthew. Why is that? Because God’s Holy Spirit gave Mark a different view of Jesus. If I hold up this prism to the light you see one side of it. If I turn it round you

* See “The Hope of Israel.”

get another view, and another, but it is the same prism, though you get only one view of it at a time.

The Person of the Lord Jesus Christ is so great and wonderful that we can only get one view of Him at a time, but He is the same Person, and the view that Mark gives of Him is that of God's Great Servant, who said, when coming into the world, Lo I come, to do Thy will, O God ; and what makes it so wonderful is, that it was God's Son, who was equal with God, who came into this world to be God's Servant !

Mark was not one of the twelve disciples, but he liked to minister to some of them. Mark was their servant. At first he did not give up his country and kindred and father's house as Abram did. So Mark turned away from the work of the gospel for a time, but afterwards, when the Holy Spirit taught him "the gospel of the glory of the blessed God," then Mark became a profitable servant. What is the gospel of the glory ? It is the good news that there is a SAVIOUR in the glory of God ! The gospel of the cross teaches us of the wonderful WORK that Jesus did. Nothing that we can think of could be half so great as that. The

gospel of the glory teaches us what a glorious Person it was who did the work.

When the Lord Jesus went up to God's right hand He sent down the Holy Spirit, to tell us that He is alive up there in the glory of God—a SAVIOUR for every poor sinner who looks up to Him in faith.

The Holy Spirit taught this to Mark, and he learned, in a deeper way than he had known it before, that Jesus was the Son of God, and that He was sitting down at the right hand of God! That good news made Mark a good servant, and the Holy Spirit was able to use him to write about the Perfect Servant. For Jesus, who was the Son of God, came down here to be the Servant of God among men. He came to do the will of God because He loved God. No one can be God's servant unless he loves God. God's thought of a servant is one who says: "I love my Master." That is the way to be a good servant, and this is the view that Mark gives of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We read in Matthew's gospel how Jesus was born in Bethlehem, and His star was seen in the east, and how He lived at Nazareth, and of His mother and Joseph. Mark does not tell us any of these things; he tells us what Jesus

did when He came to full age. It was the age at which God allowed men to serve in His house. God had spoken of Jesus as His righteous Servant who would come, and who would instruct many in righteousness. He came to teach people about God that they might know Him. God likes us to have right thoughts about Himself, so He sent His own beloved Son into the world, to put away all our wrong thoughts and to teach us to think truly of God. He brought into the world something that was not in the world before. It was the true knowledge of God. It was good news to every one who received it. It made them glad, and that is why it is called the glad tidings.

The beginning of the glad tidings was Jesus Christ the Son of God. He was the beginning. He never had a beginning. He was always the eternal Son with His Father, before ever the world was made! God is the only One who has no beginning. He always was and always will be God. But He can make a beginning for men. The first beginning was when God created the world, and He created a man to live in it.

The second beginning was when Jesus came

into the world. It was a much greater beginning than the first. For Jesus, who was the eternal Son of God, came down here to be a Man, and to make a new beginning for men. He was the beginning of a new creation which is after God's own heart, and is entirely for His pleasure ; and that is why it is called the gospel, or good news about God. Jesus Christ the Son of God was like a grand Arch that holds up everything that God has prepared for men. He is the beginning and the end of it--He is the First and the Last.

The prophet had written that God would send a messenger before Jesus to tell people that He was coming. The messenger would be a voice crying in the wilderness, calling people to repent and to confess their sins. But, you say, God led His people out of the wilderness into the promised land? You are right ; they were in the good land, but at this time they had been unfaithful to their own true God, so He allowed them to be in bondage to the Gentiles, the Emperor of Rome ruled over them. They were a people who had lost their way—they lost God's way. So the Voice called them back to the wilderness, and back to the river Jordan, that they might have a

new beginning with God. When the children of Israel crossed the Jordan with Joshua, they learned that the living God was among them. He dried up the river for them to walk through on foot. The voice called them back to the living God, so John came baptizing in the wilderness, and he preached two things: one was the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, and all who went out to John were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. They went out to John. He was a man dressed in camel's hair, and his girdle was made of its skin. The camel is a beast of the desert, and is man's patient, willing servant. John's clothing and his food were all found in the wilderness—it was what God provided for him there. He ate locusts and wild honey. The rich men of Jerusalem saw at once that he was a man, like Daniel, who would not eat the dainties of the king of Babylon.

But John preached a second thing. What was that? He said: 'There cometh One after me mightier than I am. I am not worthy to stoop down and untie His shoes. I have baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Ghost. What a wonderful

preaching that was ! How earnestly they must have expected this mighty One to come ! What John said about judgment is not told here—we read it in Matthew's gospel—for the glad tidings of Jesus Christ the Son of God is all pure blessing, and Mark is in haste to tell us about Him, so he says no more about what John preached, for Jesus came from His humble home at Nazareth and was baptized by John in the Jordan. The One who was mightier than John had come !

As Jesus was coming up out of the water He saw the heavens opening and the Spirit, like a dove, descending upon Him, and a Voice came out of heaven which said : Thou art My beloved Son ; in Thee I have found My pleasure. The voice in the wilderness had said that the mighty One would come, but the Voice out of heaven declared, that God was well pleased with Jesus and that He was God's own beloved Son !

Why did God's Holy Spirit come like a dove ? To show that Jesus came in that soft and gentle way. It was the way of holy love and trust. The dove is the most gentle and pure of all God's creatures. It is spoken of in the Bible as an emblem of holy love, and also of the

sorrow of lonely love. It is a gentle, confiding bird, that makes its home with men.

You may remember in the story of the ark, how Noah sent out a dove to see if the water of the flood was dried up, but the dove could not find a spot where her little foot could rest on in all that place of death and judgment. She kept on wing and soon came back to the ark. After seven days Noah sent her out again, and in the evening she flew back with an olive leaf in her mouth. God taught Noah, in this sweet and touching way, by the dove, that the water of judgment was gone, and that Noah might go out on the new earth, in peace. The third time the dove went out she found a place where she could make her nest!

The Holy Spirit had never found a place on earth to rest until Jesus came, but when heaven opened to Him, the Holy Spirit came down on Him, like a dove, to show that Jesus came in that way. It rested on Jesus—men could see it. He came in the way of gentleness and peace and love. Jesus did not come in judgment, like the water of the flood, to destroy wicked people. He came down from heaven in holy love to win them. And, like the dove,

Jesus found no rest in this evil world. He was alone in it. Yet He came so softly among men, in the gentle ways of heavenly love. And as He stood by the Jordan, in the beauty of His dove-like character, the heavens burst open to declare that all God's pleasure was found in Him !

“ A mourner all His life was He.
The dying Lamb at last ! ”

Immediately the Spirit drives Him into the wilderness. Why immediately ? Because He was in haste to glorify God ! Jesus was in the wilderness for forty days, and He was tempted by Satan. He was with the wild beasts, and the angels from heaven ministered to Him. This world was all like a wilderness to Jesus—untamed men were in it—but heaven was open to Him, and the angels of God were His servants. The wild beasts were in the presence of their Creator. They did not roar against Him. The Devil is called Satan, because he came as the adversary : that is what the name Satan means ; he was against God's holy servant, Jesus. Why did he tempt Jesus ? Because he wanted Jesus to have a will of His own instead of doing only God's will.

Satan had taught the first man to do what he liked, and to have a will of his own ; but Jesus answered all his temptations with the word of God. He did the will of God with His whole soul, and Satan had to go away ; he was a conquered enemy.

John was outside the land of Israel, and so was Jesus. It reminds us of how Moses took the tent outside the camp of Israel when they made a calf of gold, and God was dishonoured in the camp. Then all the people who wished to know what God's thoughts were, went outside the camp to Moses, for God spoke to Moses there.

It was the same wilderness where John was baptizing, and the people went out to him and confessed how they had lost their way because their hearts were gone after idols. Their good land was in the hands of the Gentiles—they were in bondage to the Romans—the wicked king Herod had his throne in their city. Those who wanted to hear about God went away from Jerusalem to listen to the voice in the wilderness ; and those who were baptized by John saw the mighty One who came out of heaven, and they saw the Spirit descending on Him, and heard the other Voice that

sounded out of heaven, that said : Thou art My beloved Son in whom I have found My pleasure.

“ Little hearts, O Lord, may love Thee,
Little minds may learn Thy ways,
Little hands and feet may serve Thee,
Little voices sing Thy praise.”

MARK I. 14-45.

WE read in Matthew how Herod put John the Baptist in prison. Jesus knew it, and He came at once into Galilee preaching the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. He said, The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe the glad tidings. The Holy Spirit is so occupied with what Jesus began both to do and to teach, that He does not let Mark stop to tell us any more about John the Baptist. He used Matthew and other writers to do that. But here, as soon as John's voice was not heard any more, Jesus, the One mightier than John, began to preach the glad tidings of God's kingdom. What did He mean by saying the time is fulfilled? It was the time the prophets had spoken of; it was come, because Jesus was come; there was nothing more to wait for. Daniel had told that after a certain time Messiah would come; and so long ago as Jacob's time, when he was blessing his sons, he said that Jesus would come out of the tribe of Judah; and Matthew told us how He came as

king to Israel ; but in Mark's gospel Jesus is the Preacher. He is the One who has come from God with good news about God's kingdom—the time for it was come. We read before how Jesus spoke about the kingdom of heaven. He taught His disciples how to be under the rule of heaven while they were on earth. If their king was in heaven, for He was cast out of Jerusalem, they could not belong to the kingdoms of this world. But the glad tidings were that God would have a kingdom in the souls of men. God would rule there—how wonderful!—so that the rule of Satan in men's souls would be destroyed. Satan cannot rule in the soul where God is ruling. The kingdom of heaven put the disciples outside the kingdoms of this world, and the kingdom of God puts the kingdom of Satan out of men's hearts. There is a little hymn that expresses it :—

O ! for a heart submissive, meek,
My dear Redeemer's throne,
Where only God is heard to speak,
Where Jesus reigns alone !

That is the rule of God's kingdom in the heart.

Jesus overcame Satan in the wilderness, and then He went on to overthrow the kingdom of Satan, by preaching to men the good news

that God had a kingdom ; and Jesus did more than preach about it, He brought the power of God's kingdom down here among men. So, as He walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon and Andrew, casting a net into the sea : they were fishing. Jesus said to them, Come after Me, I will make you to become fishers of men. At once they left their nets and followed Jesus. The good news of the kingdom made them do what Abram did when the God of glory called him. How was that the power of the kingdom ? It was the power of God's Great Servant drawing men into God's service. Jesus cast out His net for them. He drew them to Himself. He could command their affection. Their hearts opened to God's Beloved. " Draw me ; we will run after thee." They did not stop to think ; they obeyed the word of Jesus immediately ; their hearts were like the chariots of His willing people ; they went after Jesus ; He attached them to Himself. Going on a little way, He saw James, the son of Zebedee, and John his brother. They were in the ship mending their nets. Jesus called them, and they left their father in the ship with the hired servants, and went after Jesus. They came under the power

of Jesus—they answered to His call. He was Himself the glad tidings ; they went after Him and they found the kingdom of God. They went with Jesus to Capernaum, and on the Sabbath day He taught in the synagogue. They were astonished at His teaching, for He taught as One who had authority. That was not the way the scribes taught them ; the scribes could only say what was written in the law—they were not living examples of what they taught. Jesus was the living example of His teaching. His words came with authority and life, for all He did expressed what He taught.

But in their synagogue there was a man with an unclean spirit. How shocking ! In the very place where the scribes taught the law, and where they came to learn about God, an unclean spirit—that means a spirit of the devil—came in amongst them. When he saw Jesus he cried out, What have we to do with Thee, Jesus of Nazareth ? Art Thou come to destroy us ? I know Thee, who Thou art, the Holy One of God. The evil spirits knew that Jesus was holy, and that they were unclean. They could not bear His holy presence, and they felt that He must put away from His

presence what was unclean. Jesus was there among men as God's Holy One. He was always against the sin that He came to put away; the unclean spirits knew that.

Jesus rebuked the spirit and told him to be silent, and to come out of the man. The unclean spirit tore the man, showing his rage and hatred to man, and uttered a loud cry and came out of the man. What a terrible picture of Satan's power and of Satan's rule in the heart of that poor man! How wonderful the change for him to be delivered from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God. The people in the synagogue were amazed. They said it was something new. Of course it was! No one had come before with authority to command unclean spirits, but they had to obey Jesus. He overcame Satan in all his temptations during those forty days in the desert, and now Jesus was destroying his power over men, and showing them how the glad tidings of God's kingdom delivered them from the power of Satan. Then Jesus went with those four disciples into Simon's house, and Simon's wife's mother was ill of a fever. Jesus knew that she was ill, but He let them speak to Him about her, and He went up to her and took

her by the hand and raised her up, and the fever left her immediately. How near He came to His afflicted people. It is not told here what He said, but all that He did to her. He raised her up with His own hand ; that was His blessed service to that poor woman, and she used the new life that He gave her, to serve Him ! When the evening was come, and the sun was gone down, they brought all their suffering ones to Jesus, so that the whole city was gathered at the door. The Sabbath day was over and Jesus was still working—there was no rest for Him where sin and Satan were. He healed their many diseases and cast out many devils. But He would not allow the devils to speak, because they knew, without being told, who Jesus was. They knew that He was the Holy One of God, and they felt that their uncleanness must vanish from His holy presence. Jesus would not accept the devil's testimony as to who He was. The devils believe and tremble. They do not believe to love and trust ; that is what a saved sinner does.

In the morning Jesus rose up a great while before day and went away into a desert place and prayed. Why did He go to a desert

place? To be alone with God. His heart was grieved and distressed at the misery of Israel; their sickness showed how they had sinned against God, and the devil had taken possession of their bodies, as well as of their souls. Jesus was alone in that crowd. There was not one like Him, not one who felt as He did the dishonour done to God. Jesus went away to be alone with God. Before the day began for men He was pouring out His soul to God about them all. He carried all their sorrows in His heart, but He got God's answer to it all. He told God everything. He put His trust in God, and God guided Him through this evil world with His eyes upon Him. His eyes of delight were upon Jesus from one day's end unto the other. Jesus spent His life in the favour of God. He longed that God might be glorified, and that the power and grace of His kingdom might rule in the hearts of men. Jesus was God, yet He prayed as a dependent Man who turned to God for everything. God heard His prayers, and God gave Him counsel. Jesus is a beautiful and perfect example of God's Servant. He loved God; He trusted God; He prayed to God; He was guided by no one else but God; and He perfectly obeyed God.

He told His disciples to pray to their Father in secret. It was what He did Himself.

When Simon and those with him found Jesus they said, All seek Thee. But Jesus answered, Let us go into all the country towns, that I may preach there also ; that was what He came for. All must hear the glad tidings from the lips of Jesus. He preached in their synagogues in the whole of Galilee and cast out devils.

Then a leper came to Jesus ; he was in great distress ; he fell on his knees, beseeching Jesus and saying : If Thou wilt Thou canst cleanse me. He believed that Jesus was able to do what no other man had ever done, for only God could heal the leper. Leprosy was the worst kind of disease, breaking out all over the body and eating away the life of the body, just the way sin does to the soul, so that it is spoken of in the Bible as a type or picture of SIN. And we know that no one can put away sin but God. How did Jesus treat the wretched leper ? He was moved with compassion for him ; and He stretched out His hand and touched him ! No man would venture to touch a leper, because if he did he would get the leprosy. When the prophet Elisha was

asked to heal a leper, he did not touch him or go near him ; he sent him a message from God, to go and wash seven times in the river Jordan, and then he would be clean. But the Holy One of God could come near enough to the leper to touch him, for no soil of sin could come on Him ; so Jesus said to him, I will, be thou clean ; and immediately as He spoke, the leprosy went away. The man was healed, and he was clean. Jesus told him not to talk to other people about it, but to go to the priest and offer an offering as Moses had taught them for the cleansing of the leper. His doing so would be a testimony to them that God had visited His people.

Oh, how the leper, the lame and the blind,
Weary ones troubled in body and mind,
Oh, how they gathered a Saviour to find,
Trusting in Jesus the Lord !

MARK II.

IN the last chapter we read how Jesus cleansed the leper, and told him not to tell any one about it. He did not obey Jesus in that, for he spoke of it to every one, so that Jesus could not go openly into the city. He stayed outside in desert places, and they came to Him from every side. After some days Jesus went into Capernaum again, and the people heard that He was in the house. Most likely it was Simon's house. But such a crowd came that there was no room even at the door, and Jesus spoke the word to them. There were four men who had some one whom they wished to bring to Jesus ; he was paralyzed, he could not walk or do anything for himself, so he could not go to Jesus, he had to be carried, and those four men carried him just as he lay on his little mattress. But they could not go in by the door because of the crowd. Could the crowd keep this poor sick man away from Jesus ? No ; those men had faith in Him, and men who have faith can always see a way to go to Jesus that no one else sees. They

went up on the roof and made a hole, large enough to let down the sick man on his couch, near where Jesus was. He knew all the trouble they were taking to bring their sick friend to Him. He saw their faith, and He said, Child, thy sins are forgiven. Was that what they came for? No; they wanted the man's body to be made well, but Jesus knew that his soul was in greater need even than his body. There were scribes sitting there and reasoning in their hearts. Were they thinking what a touching sight it was, when this cripple was let down from the roof into their midst before Jesus? Were they rejoiced to think that Jesus would make him well? No; their cold, hard hearts had no such feeling for that suffering man. Jesus knew all the reasoning in their hearts; He knew they thought He had not power to remit sins, so He said to them: Why are you reasoning in your hearts about these things? Which do you think it is easier to say. Thy sins are remitted, or to say, Arise, take up thy couch and walk? It was just as easy for Jesus to heal the soul as the body. So, that they might know that the Son of man had power on earth to remit—that is, to forgive—sins, He said to the crippled

man : To thee I say, Arise, take up thy couch and go to thine house. How surprised the cripple must have been ; he might have said, How can a cripple get up and carry his couch ? But he was raised up immediately and took up his couch and went out before them all ; he was able to walk, and to carry the couch that carried him before ! Happy man, his sins were put away, his pains were gone, and he had a new power ; he was to go home to his own house to tell what Jesus had done for him. The leper was sent to God's house to be a testimony to the One who was able to make him clean. The cripple was sent to his own house to show the new power of a forgiven man, for Jesus had healed both his soul and his body.

The people were all amazed and glorified God. The kindness and love to man of a Saviour God had appeared. They said, We never saw anything like this before. It was true ; men never had seen such works of power. It was the power of God's kingdom that Jesus had told them about. It was truly glad tidings to that sick man to hear that Jesus could put away his sins ; he was to tell it in his own house to make them glad.

Jesus went out again by the sea. His heart was more free there than in those wicked cities, and He taught all who came to Him. As He passed by He saw Levi, the son of Alphaeus, collecting taxes. Jesus said to him, Follow Me, and Levi rose up and followed Jesus. His other name was Matthew the tax-gatherer. He was so happy to follow Jesus himself that he wished all his companions to do the same. A wonderful sight was seen in Levi's house that day, for many taxgatherers and sinners were sitting at table with Jesus and His disciples. They might well say, We never saw anything like this before ; and as they sat with Him, and heard His words to them, they felt what a blessed thing it was to follow Jesus. There were many of them, and they followed Him.

The scribes and Pharisees saw it all, and all they could do was to find fault with Jesus ! They felt themselves too good to sit down with sinners. They were self-righteous. They could not understand the grace that was in Jesus. They never tried to turn a sinner from his evil ways. They thought themselves too good to have anything to do with sinners. Jesus said to them that He had come all the way from heaven to call sinners ; it was to

those who had need of a Saviour that He said, Follow Me. He did not say it to self-righteous men like the Pharisees. They did not want a Saviour ; they would not hear His call. They were like people who did not want a doctor. But when people are in pain, and know that they are ill, how glad they are when the doctor comes, and how they thank him for doing them good. So it was with these sinners : they were like people who said, Who will show us any good ? They were so thankful to find a Saviour, and so glad to hear His call. Then they asked Jesus about fasting. Those who were taught by John the Baptist used to fast, and those the Pharisees taught fasted, but the disciples of Jesus did not fast. Jesus said to them, How can they fast while the Bridegroom is with them ? Fasting was a sign of sorrow. It was right to fast before God and to be sorry for their sins. It was right to repent with prayer and fasting, as John the Baptist taught them ; but if they were truly doing so to God they would have known that the Bridegroom was there. The Lord Jesus was the Bridegroom. His presence made them glad, not sorrowful ; they ought to have heard His voice as the sinners did.

But it was no use for the Pharisees to try to put a bit of the new thing of God's kingdom on to their old Jewish things. No one could put new wine into old bottles. In those days their bottles were made of the skins of animals, and they soon wore out ; so that if they put strong new wine into the old skins it would burst the bottles, and both the wine and the bottles would be lost for them. So the new wine must be put into new bottles. Jesus meant that the kingdom of God was too great and too strong and powerful to be added to anything that came before. Those things could wear out, or get old or be broken, but the kingdom of God was eternal—the law and commandments were for time ; they were given to the children of Israel to show them the right way. But Jesus came with the good news of the kingdom of God ; that was the new thing that would last for ever. Everything we get in Jesus is eternal, because He is eternal, and when He gives the new wine He makes the bottles new to hold it. Those who heard the glad tidings found that He was the Bridegroom. His presence was like new wine to them. His company and His teaching made everything new to those sinners who followed Him. But

Jesus said, the Bridegroom would be taken away; they would not have Him down here always; then they would fast; and if He were taken away all must be new for God. The Pharisees were so occupied with the old bottles—that was the outside things that men could see, their Jewish things—that they had no wish for the new wine that Jesus had to give, and they missed the joy of the Bridegroom's presence.

On the Sabbath day Jesus went through the cornfields, and as the disciples walked along they plucked the ears of corn. The Pharisees said they were doing what was not lawful on the Sabbath day. Jesus said to them, Do you not know what David did when he was hungry and rejected? and how the high priest of that day understood that it was a greater thing to feed God's chosen king, than to keep the rules of the temple? He said, the Sabbath was made for man; it was a day of rest for man; and so Jesus, the blessed Son of man, was Lord of the Sabbath. He has a right over everything. He will bring in God's great Eternal Sabbath, when He is set over all the works of His hands. God will rest in His love. When His love has finished all

that it has planned to do, when all is very good under His eyes, there will be nothing more for love to do, then God will rest in His own love.

God's counsels all fulfilled in Thee,
His work of love complete ;
The heavenly host shall rest to see
Earth blessed beneath Thy feet.

MARK III.

JESUS went again into the synagogue. There was a man there whose hand was withered. It was dried up and had no feeling in it. I think the people in the synagogue had withered hearts, for they had no pity for the man, but they watched to see if Jesus would heal him on the Sabbath day. They wished to have something to say against Jesus! He knew their evil thoughts and took no notice of them, but He said to the man, Stand up and come into the midst; that all might see him. Then Jesus said to those in the synagogue, Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath day, or to do evil? to save life or to kill? They did not answer that question. Jesus looked round on them with anger. He was displeased and grieved at the hardness of their hearts. Then He said to the man, Stretch out thy hand; he did so, and it was quite well immediately. The Pharisees went away at once to take counsel with the Herodians how they could destroy Jesus! They were quite ready to do evil on the Sabbath day, and even to kill. No wonder

they could not answer the question that Jesus asked them. It shows the sad state the people were in. Their synagogue was the place where the law was read ; all the religious people went there, and the Pharisees took the chief places in it. Yet the time Jesus was there before He found a man with an unclean spirit in their synagogue, and this time it was a man whose hand was useless ; yet those religious men would rather have it so, than that Jesus should do good on the Sabbath day. He had come as the Healer of Israel, casting out the evil spirits and healing their sin-stricken bodies. They did not understand what He said about being Lord of the Sabbath. His grace was greater than the covenant with Israel. They did not keep the covenant. Everything had failed in the hands of men. Jesus was going to bring in a new covenant. He would make it Himself and keep it in His own hands so that it could not fail. He was God's Ark of the covenant. As Son of man He would hold everything in safe keeping that God had prepared for men. The Pharisees were the old bottles that could not hold the new wine, so Jesus left them and went out with His disciples to the sea-side.

There a great multitude heard what He did, and they came to Him. He told His disciples to bring a little ship for Him to get into. The crowd was so great that they pressed upon Him, and those who had plagues tried to touch Him ; and the unclean spirits fell down before Him, and cried, saying : Thou art the Son of God. But Jesus rebuked them. He would not allow the unclean spirits to say who He was. Those suffering people must learn for themselves who Jesus was, by seeing what He did. He had come to undo the works of the devil, to destroy the kingdom of Satan, for He came to do the will of God, and to proclaim the kingdom of God.

Afterwards Jesus went up the mountain and called some to Himself. They went to Him, and He chose twelve men that they might be with Him, and that He might send them to preach, and to have authority to heal diseases, and to cast out devils. God's great Servant had power to make men His servants. He could give them authority to do as He did. God often gave His commands to His servants on the mountain. It was a place where they were alone with Him and away from the works of men, and it was where Jesus prayed all night.

There He named His twelve disciples. He gave Simon the surname of Peter, which means a stone. James and John He surnamed sons of thunder. It was a mark of favour to those three, as we give a pet name to a child. The others were Andrew and Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alpheus, and his brother, who is also called Jude, Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus afterwards. They all went home with Jesus. He took them first to the mountain, and then to a home, for He chose them to be with Him, that they might learn how to follow Him in the way of the will of God. It is wonderful to think that Jesus chose Judas to be with Him, though He knew that he would one day betray Him. It was God's will, in order that men might learn by the story of Judas what is in their own hearts, and that even being in company with Jesus did not make a man get like Him, unless he really followed Jesus from his heart. Jesus called the other disciples to follow Him, and each one answered to His call—they followed Jesus. We do not hear that Judas was called; he followed with the others, and was called after his own place, Iscariot, so he did not leave all

to follow Jesus as the other disciples did. But Jesus chose him to be one of the twelve, and gave him a part in the service. Jesus knew all their hearts when He chose them, and the names He gave them expressed the kind of servant each would be; their characters are told, and Judas the betrayer! that was his surname! Then Jesus and His disciples went into a house, and again a crowd collected, so that they did not get time even to eat. What a wonderful Servant Jesus was. The work of God was so important that He did not take time to eat. His relations did not understand it; they said, He must be out of His mind. It is the way the men of this world try to account for what is of God. They do not understand grace, and when they see a man devoted to God's service they think he is out of his mind. The scribes also who came from Jerusalem said, It is by the prince of the devils that He casts out devils. This was a shocking thing to say, and only proved how far away from God those scribes were.

Then Jesus spoke to them in parables. He said, How can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself it cannot stand. It was a foolish thing to think that

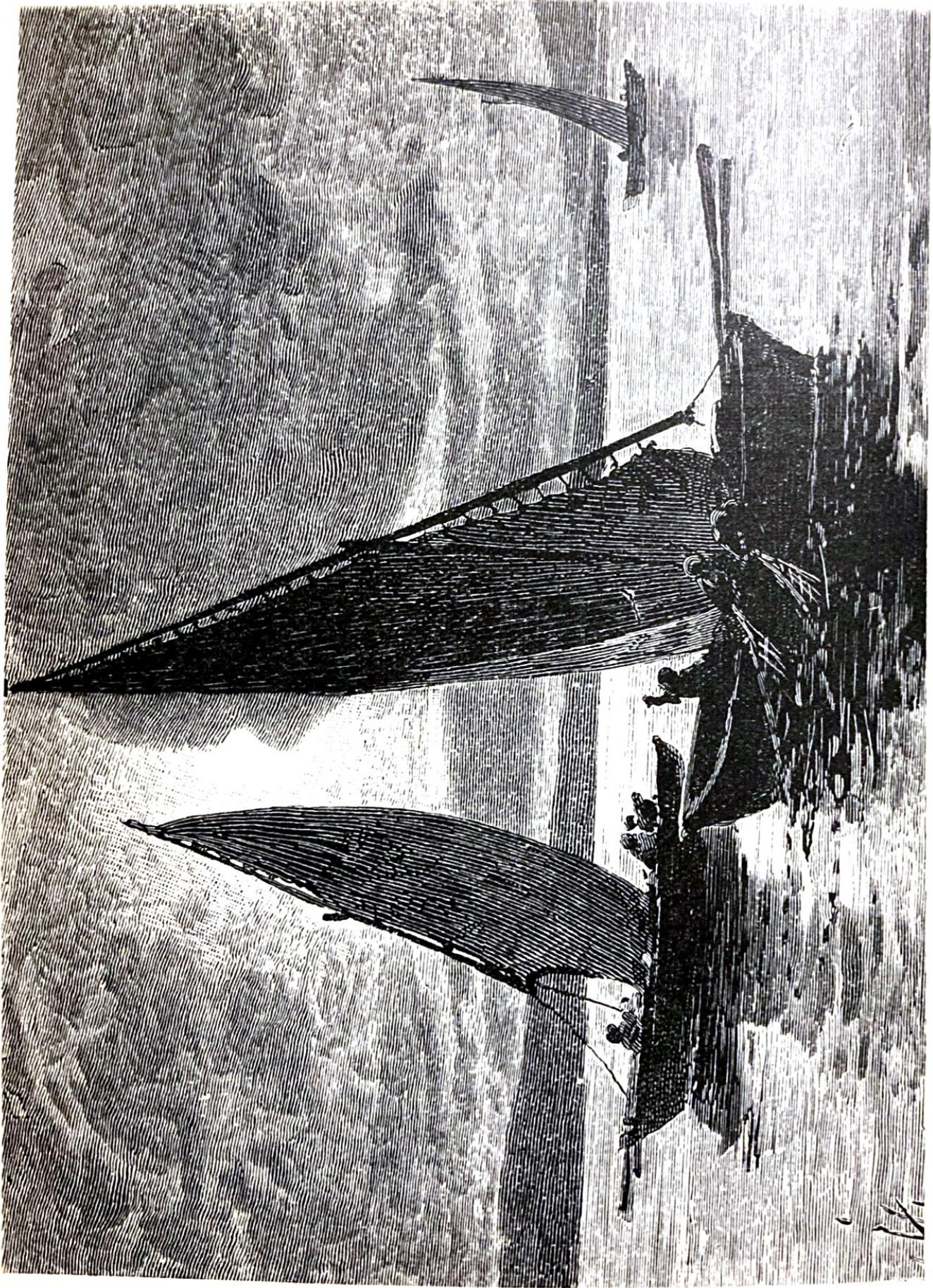
Satan would destroy his own kingdom, or his own house, and no one could go into the house of a strong man and plunder his goods until he first binds the strong man, then he may plunder his house. Jesus called Satan the strong man. He meant that no one could upset the kingdom of Satan unless he first conquered Satan. The devils knew very well that Jesus had bound the strong man ; they knew that Jesus was stronger than he, and that He would destroy the kingdom of Satan. Then Jesus said that His grace was great enough to forgive all sins, but if they spoke evil of the Holy Spirit it never would be forgiven ; it would be an everlasting sin, because they said He had an unclean spirit.

Just then His brethren and His mother were outside, calling for Jesus. But a crowd of people were sitting round Him. What a sight that was ! Jesus in the midst of a crowd of needy sinners, yet how blest they were to be sitting around Him in that quiet way. He was not the least disturbed by all the naughty things the scribes were saying of Him, but when they told Him that His mother and His brethren were seeking Him, Jesus answered, Who is My mother or My brethren ? Then looking all around Him, His eyes resting on

each one in that circle who sat around Him, He said, Behold My mother and My brethren : For whosoever shall do the will of God, he is My brother, and sister, and mother. Jesus was God's servant in the world. No one but God had any claim on Him. He did not acknowledge His brethren ; they had just shown that their hearts were not with Him in the work of God. He would not call them His relations unless they were of one mind with Him. There was only one way in which men could be related to Him, and that was by doing the will of God as He did. They would be like those who clustered round Him and who heard His words. They would be related to Him ; the will of God would be their mighty bond.

In saying this Jesus broke His link with Israel, because they were not doing the will of God. They had refused His grace ; they said His mighty works were done by the devil. They would not have His new wine which was able to cheer the heart of God and man. They refused the grace that came from heaven, and they refused the One who brought it.

How perfect a Saviour is God's blessed Son ;
How great and eternal the work He has done.
God's glory maintained by His death on the tree,
While mercy flows freely for you and for me.



FISHING BOATS.

MARK IV. 1-20.

IN the last chapter we read how Jesus was distressed at the hardness of their hearts; how they took counsel together against Him. He left their synagogue and went into a house. There a company of people sat around Him. They were those who liked to be with Him, and how they must have loved Him as He looked all around on every one of them and said, These are My brethren, because they were following Him in the way of the will of God. He could say to them: Trust in Him at all times; as He did Himself, for God is a refuge for us. They were the saved ones out of Israel who received the good news of God's kingdom.

Again Jesus began to teach by the sea. It was not the synagogue, and it was not in any of the cities of Israel. He went outside Israel's cities to the sea shore, and so great a crowd went out to Him, that Jesus went into a ship, and He spoke to them from the ship, while the people were close to the sea, on the land. Jesus had left all the outside things: they could not hold His new wine. The Pharisees

were so taken up with the outside things that they were missing the inside things. God's kingdom had to do with inside things, that is, what was in their hearts. God looked into their hearts, and He saw that while they spoke so much about keeping the Sabbath day outwardly they had evil thoughts inside in their hearts, and they wished to kill Jesus! That was not remembering the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Jesus was going to teach them about the hidden things of the heart, and He spoke in parables. A parable is something that a person does not understand unless his eyes are opened. But you say, We can all open our eyes. Yes, that is the outside thing; you can open your eyes and you can hear with your ears. But, when God speaks in His holy Word about opened eyes and hearing ears, He means much more than that. God can open the eyes of the heart, and make people see things as He sees them, and that is what He calls opened eyes. Do you remember the story of Balaam, who was promised a great reward if he would curse Israel, and how his ass saw the angel in the way, and Balaam did not see the angel? At last the Lord opened the mouth of the ass, so that he spoke to Balaam and

reproved Balaam for being so unkind to him ; he said, Am I not your ass ? and you have beaten me three times for nothing ! Then the Lord opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw how God looked at his conduct. Three times he beat his patient ass, and three times he went to curse Israel. God made the story of the ass like a parable to Balaam, and when his eyes were opened he could see what God meant by it. As the ass belonged to him, so God's people belonged to God, and He would not allow His people to be treated as Balaam treated his ass. The next time the king of Moab brought him to the hill top to curse the children of Israel, Balaam said, How can I curse whom God has blessed ? Then he lifted up his opened eyes and saw all the tribes of Israel in their tents. They looked like a people whom God had blessed. So Balaam took up his parable ; he said he was a man with opened eyes. He had seen with the seeing of God. His eyes were opened to see the people of God, as God saw them, and not as the king of Moab saw them.

So Jesus spoke in parables. Those who had opened eyes and opened hearts understood Him. But those who were like the scribes and

Pharisees, shut their eyes and hardened their hearts, so that they could not take in the glad tidings of God's kingdom.

Jesus said, Hearken—listen to what I am going to teach you. It was most important that they should pay attention to what He was going to say. He said, Behold the sower went forth to sow, and as he sowed one seed fell by the wayside, and the birds came and devoured it. Another seed fell on rocky ground where there was not much earth; it was not covered up; it was exposed to the hot sun, it had no root, and it withered, it did not grow at all. Another seed fell among thorns, and was choked by the thorns. But some seed fell on good ground and it was covered up deep down in the ground; it grew and grew until it brought forth fruit, so that one seed would bring thirty more seeds, or sixty, or a hundred. It gets more and more!

Then Jesus said, He that has ears to hear, let him hear. It was not enough to listen to what He said to them; they were to hear it in their hearts, and to keep it covered up there till it took root in their hearts, like the seeds that were sown in the good ground. When Jesus was alone with those who sat around

Him, and with the twelve disciples, they asked Him to explain the parable about sowing the seed. Then Jesus told them why He spoke by parables. He spoke for those who had opened eyes and opened ears. He said, It is given to you to know the mystery of the kingdom of God. A mystery is something hidden ; it is not seen by men ; hidden things belong to God. His great thoughts are all a mystery to the small minds of men. The most learned man that ever lived could not understand one single thought of God, unless God revealed it to him. God did reveal His thoughts to men. But a man could only take in one of God's great thoughts at a time. So He taught Abel one thing, and Noah another, and Abram another. But God had great and wonderful thoughts that He kept hidden ; they were too great for men to understand. When Jesus came from God, He brought God into this world. He knew all God's great thoughts, for He was God. But He could only teach them a little bit at a time, as they were able to hear it. So gentle was His way with them, He taught them line upon line, here a little and there a little, as we teach little children their A, B, C—a few letters to-day and a few more

to-morrow. It was a wonderful thing for those people to have Jesus for their Teacher, and that He should teach them the hidden things of God's kingdom. He said those who were outside could only be taught by parables, because they had eyes but they did not see, and they had ears but they did not hear. They had spoken against the Holy Spirit. He could not give them opened eyes if they said His good works were done by the devil. There was no good ground in their hearts for the words of Jesus. They did not receive His words in their hearts. But Jesus said that those who were inside with Him ought to know what the parable meant, because the dropping of His word into their hearts was the beginning of everything for them. If they knew that, they ought to understand all parables, for the entrance of His words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple. Then Jesus explained to them the way that people listened to the word. He said, 'The sower sows the word. Jesus was sowing the knowledge of God in the hearts of men. Some heard what He said, but Satan came at once and took away what was sown in their hearts, the way a bird picks up a seed that is dropped on the road.

They let it go. Then some people hear it in an outside kind of way, only with their outward ears, and it gets mixed up with other things, so that it does not go down into their hearts. It is like the seed that had no root because it had no soil to grow in. But there were some, there are many, who not only hear the word but receive it; they take it in, they keep it as if it were something very good and precious, and they bury it deep down in their hearts, like the way the gardener buries the seed in the good ground. So the words of Jesus would grow in their hearts, and there would be what He called fruit for Him.

Precious Name, the name of Jesus,
Son of God most high,
Who in love to guilty sinners
Came to die!

Precious Name, the story telling
Of His humble birth,
Of His lonely pathway trodden
Here on earth.

Precious Name of Him the Saviour
Come the lost to save,
In His grace, for ruined sinners
All He gave.

Precious Name enthroned in heaven,
Still that name He bears.
On His brow the crown of glory
Now He wears.

MARK IV. 21-41.

HOW does the seed grow in the heart? By the Holy Spirit. He makes the words of Jesus take root and grow and live in the heart, because the word of the kingdom is Jesus Himself. It was Himself that He was teaching those people; it was the knowledge of God. He called them to be with Him that they might learn how He pleased God all the day long, and how He did God's will because He loved God. When Jesus spoke of sowing the seed it was a parable, to show that some did not open their ears and hearts to His teaching. They let it go, or let it get choked and forgotten, because their hearts were full of other things; but, "God so loved the world that He gave His Son." When a word like that takes root in the heart of a child, it is wonderful how it grows and grows, till the heart gets quite full of thoughts about God's great love. There was a little child who was too young to read herself, but she was very fond of hearing the parables of Jesus told to her. She said, Jesus came all the way down from

heaven to make people good and to tell them beautiful stories ! That was her baby way of saying it, but it shows how even a baby's mind can feel the beauty of the parables of Jesus.

When we know Jesus as our Saviour and our Lord, then we understand the deep meaning of His parables. Jesus said, Men do not light a candle and then hide it under something that they use for their daily work, or they do not put it under the bed that they go to sleep on ; they put it in a place where the light can be seen, by night or by day. So the light of God shows all the hidden things, and all the secret things. Nothing is hidden from Him ; and again Jesus said, If any one has ears to hear, let him hear ; but to the disciples He said, Take heed what you hear. It was of the greatest importance how they heard, and how they used the light and truth that God was giving them. If they measured it with a large measure, they would get a large measure. It was like the people who gathered the manna that God used to scatter all around their tents every morning. Some gathered much, and some gathered little. But Jesus said those who heard His teaching should have more added to what they received. Those who

received most would get more, but those who only heard and did not receive it, would lose what little they had. They would be like the seed that had no root. What encouragement to pay attention to the teaching of Jesus, to know that the more they took in, the more they would be given ; but those who were not taking heed to what they heard, would lose the blessings of the kingdom of God.

Then Jesus said the kingdom of God was like something. It was as if a man cast seed upon the earth and went to sleep. He seemed to take no notice of the seed, yet it grew. He did not know how. So it is in the earth when men sow seed : first the green blade comes up, then the ear with the little grains in it, and then the full corn in the ear. We do not know how a little seed comes to be the pretty yellow corn that grows in the fields, but we see that it does, and Jesus said when the full corn was ripe he sends the reaper, for the harvest is come.

What is the difference between this parable and the first one, when Jesus said, A sower went forth to sow ? In the first Jesus meant that He was the Sower. He was sowing the truth about God's kingdom everywhere. All kinds of people heard Him, but there were

many different kinds of hearers. The seed that Jesus sowed, sometimes fell on careless ears, and some fell on crowded hearts, where it had no room to grow; but Jesus found some good ground, that God's Holy Spirit had made ready for the good seed. In this chapter Jesus was telling them what the kingdom of God would be like when He had gone back to heaven. He would leave the good seed on the earth, He had sown it in many hearts, and though He was away it would go on growing, for it was good seed. His disciples would tell what they had learned when they were with Him, and those who heard from the disciples would tell it to other people. God's kingdom would go on, like a field of corn getting ripe for the harvest, and then the Lord Jesus, who sowed the good seed at first, would command the reaping, for God's harvest would come.

Then Jesus compared the kingdom of God to something else. It would be like a grain of mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds, and yet it mounts up and becomes greater than all the herbs of the field, and it has great spreading branches, so that the birds come and lodge under its shadow. You remember the birds devoured the seed that fell by

the wayside, as Satan takes the word out of the heart. Jesus spoke the word to them by many parables as they were able to hear ; but in private He explained them all to His disciples. It is a happy thing to be in private with Jesus, so that He can explain things to us.

What is the meaning of the parable about the mustard tree ? It is a picture of what the seed sown on the earth would grow to while Jesus was away. It began very small. It was hidden in men's hearts at first, for the kingdom of God was an inside thing. But Jesus knew that men would make it a great outside thing, so that it would make a great show on the earth ; the men of the world would belong to it ; they would use the gospel to improve the world, so that like the great branches of the tree, where the birds could roost, people might come under the shelter of the tree, though the birds had devoured the seed that was sown in their hearts. If there is no inside thing for God, there will be nothing for God's harvest. It is only the ripe corn that grows in the good ground that Jesus will reap. He could not reap a big tree ; trees are cut down and burned in the fire ; the mustard tree was not a good thing.

When the evening of that day was come,

when Jesus had said all those things to His disciples, He said they would go over to the other side of the sea. And having sent away the crowd, they took Jesus, as He was, with them in the ship. Jesus was tired ; He had been teaching all that day. He did not even take time to eat. But tired as He was, He went with them in the ship, for He had a work to do on the other side of the sea.

They were on the Sea of Galilee, and Jesus was in the ship with them. But a great storm of wind came, and the waves dashed over the ship, so that it was getting filled with water. Where was Jesus ? He was asleep on a pillow. He was God's blessed Servant who had not where to lay His head in this world, yet He found a pillow in the ship with His disciples, and He slept in the storm. He could say, I lay Me down in peace to sleep ; the wind and waves could not disturb His peace. It was the peace of God ; and as Jesus slept on the pillow in that storm, He was a beautiful picture of the kingdom of God. It is sown in peace for those who make peace. He came to make peace. His presence was peace. But the poor disciples were frightened ; they thought that He did not care, and they thought that they

were perishing. How could they perish if He was in the ship? How could they think that He did not care? They awoke Him, and Jesus said to the sea, Peace, be still; then the wind ceased and there was a great calm. Jesus said to them, Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have not faith? But they feared with great fear, and said one to another, Who is this that even the wind and the sea obey Him? They thought He must be a great One to command the wind and waves, but it was a greater thing to sleep amid the storm than even to hush the storm. The Lord Jesus was showing His disciples that storms would come. While they were in this evil world Satan would terrify them by many things. But He would be with them. He would be as near to them as He was in the ship; they must not think He did not see, or that He did not care. They were to have faith in Him. If they looked up to Him, they would always find that there is no storm in His presence. He would put them into His peace—the peace of God would keep their hearts and minds through all the winds and waves down here.

It reminds us of what Jesus said about the one who sowed the seed and went to sleep; he

seemed to take no notice of the seed. But he really thought about it night and day! So Jesus went to sleep. He seemed to take no notice of the danger that His disciples appeared to be in. He was teaching them how to trust Him while He was away from them and when they might think that He was taking no notice of them. The Lord Jesus is not here now. He is in heaven, and He is watching day and night over His little ones. He knows if His good seed has taken root in a young heart, and He is looking for what He calls fruit from the good seed ; the fruit does not come unless the seed has taken root. So when the words of Jesus take root in our hearts, the Holy Spirit makes us love God, and we like to do His will.

The ripe corn had much fruit. The mustard tree had none! Jesus was in one ship with His disciples, but there were other ships on the sea with Him. They felt the good of His presence that night. The storm was hushed for them also. The presence of Jesus is like the sun. Nothing is hid from the heat of it.

He everywhere hath sway,
And all things serve His might ;
His every act pure blessing is,
His path unsullied light.

MARK V. 1-34.

WE were speaking of Jesus in the ship with His disciples as a picture of the kingdom of God in this world. There are winds and waves from outside, but inside the peace of God makes a great calm in the heart.

In this chapter we are shown a picture of the kingdom of Satan, and we see what the devil can do to a man. They went to the other side of the sea, as Jesus told them, to the country of the Gadarenes. Immediately when Jesus went out of the ship a man met Him. This man was possessed by an unclean spirit; he lived among the tombs in the place where death was, and no one was able to bind him, even with chains. Men tried to tie his hands to prevent him from doing harm to himself and other people, but he tore the chains in two and shattered the fetters, and no one was able to subdue him. Night and day he was in the tombs and in the mountains, crying and cutting himself with stones. The torment of his mind was so dreadful that he would like to have killed his body. He saw Jesus afar

off, and he ran to Him and bowed down to Him. Jesus said, Unclean spirit, come out of the man. Then he cried with a loud voice and said, What have I to do with Thee, Jesus, Son of the most high God? I adjure Thee by God, torment me not. Jesus said to him, What is your name? and the spirit said, My name is Legion, for we are many. Then the evil spirits begged Jesus not to send them away out of the country. They asked to be allowed to go into some swine that were feeding near there. Jesus let them go into the swine; there were two thousand of those unclean animals. The unclean spirits went into the swine, and they immediately rushed down a steep place into the sea, and all the swine were choked in the sea. The men who were feeding the swine went into the city and told all the people what had been done, so that they went out to see for themselves. When they came to Jesus they saw the man who used to be possessed by the devils. What was he doing? He was sitting down before Jesus, and he was clothed, and he was in his right mind. How wonderful the change; but when they saw him they were afraid! What were they afraid of? Of the power of God. They were more afraid of the

power of God that cast out the devils, than they were of the unclean spirits, or of that wild man whom no one could bind, not even with chains! They begged Jesus to go away. They would rather have their swine and the legion of devils than Jesus!

Jesus did go away. He had done what He came across the sea to do. He knew all about that man when He said, Let us go to the other side. Jesus knew that he was tormented by the unclean spirits, and He came across the sea that stormy night on purpose to save that one man. It was the end of the day, when men's work is done, but Jesus still had more to do. He had a soul to save on the other side of the sea; he was a wretched madman who had his dwelling with the dead; he could not rest by day or by night, crying and cutting himself with stones. What a picture he was of the kingdom of Satan; he was possessed by devils; he was under their rule and bondage. But in a moment all was changed; the same man was sitting still, quiet and clothed in the presence of Jesus, and his mind was all right—the peace of God had taken possession of him. Grace had subdued him. Jesus had tamed him by His love, and put him under His own

authority, so that his mind was set right. He learned God's way of thinking, for Jesus was now his Lord and Master. He had been under Satan's rule, and it was torment to mind and body. Jesus hushed the terrible storm that raged in that man's mind and brought him into a great calm. And as he sat before Jesus, and looked at Him, and heard His words, what did he feel? He felt one great wish,—to be with Him; he begged to be allowed to stay with Jesus, to be with his Deliverer, his Saviour, that was all he wished for! What did Jesus say to him? You shall be with Me in the path of the will of God, but you must go home to your own house, and to your own people, and tell them all that the Lord has done for you, and that He has had mercy on you.

Jesus had done a great work for him. Now he was allowed to go and do a little work for his Lord. He went away and proclaimed all that Jesus had done for him, so that all the people wondered. The servant who most delights to be with Him is the one that Jesus sends to speak of Him while He is away. What good news was heard in his home that day, as he told all that Jesus had done for him!

Why did the devils call God, the Most High God? God is the Most High God over all the earth, that is what the devils know of God; they do not know the other blessed names that God calls Himself to His people. They do not know Him as Saviour, or as Lord, or as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus crossed the sea again, and a crowd came to Him by the sea. There another kind of distress met Him. A man who was a ruler of the synagogue, his name was Jairus, came and fell down at the feet of Jesus, beseeching Him much, and saying, My little daughter is dying; I pray Thee to come and lay Thy hands on her that she may live. That man had faith in Jesus; he knew that His hand could give life to his dying child. Jesus answered his faith and went with him. As Jesus was on His way to the ruler's house a crowd followed Him. But there was a sick woman in that crowd; she had been ill for twelve years; she had gone to all the doctors, and spent all the money she had on trying to get well, but she was getting worse instead of better. What a sad case hers was—her money was spent, her strength was gone, and she had no hope of getting well. She was almost as bad as the

little girl who was dying in the ruler's house. But the woman had heard about Jesus, a good seed had dropped into her heart, and she believed in Him. A thought came into her heart, that if only she could get near enough to Jesus to touch His garment, she would get well. That was faith; she had it for herself alone; it was an inside thing. She did not tell any one, but she came in the crowd behind Jesus and just touched His clothes, and immediately she knew that she was well. She did it secretly. She thought, that in that great crowd no one would see her, and she would like to have gone quietly home to enjoy her good health. But Jesus knew all about her; He knew that she said in her heart, If I could but touch Him, and He knew that His power had made her well. So He said, Who touched My clothes? The disciples thought it was only the crowd that had come near to Jesus; but He knew every one in that crowd, and He turned round and looked at her. He chose to see her that had done this thing; and what was better still, Jesus chose that she should see Him, that she should look in His face and see how He felt about her. She only wanted to come behind Him and to touch His clothes.

All she thought of was to be made well. But Jesus wished her to know the One who made her well. She was to see His face, and to hear His voice. She came, frightened and trembling, before the Great One who had read the secret thoughts in her heart. She fell down before Him, and told Him all the truth. Then Jesus said to her, Daughter, thy faith hath cured thee ; go in peace, and be well of thy plague. What comforting words those were, how they filled her heart with peace ; and as she went home that day she could say : He called me Daughter, as if I belonged to Him. I am His. It was such a little thing, just to touch His clothes, and yet He called it faith in Him. But God does not expect us to do great things. He does all the great things Himself. It was the little thing she did which pleased the Lord. He turned round to see her that had done this thing. She found that He knew her. He was looking for her—that touched her heart. What could she do but fall down before Him and tell Him everything ! He had read her secret thoughts about Himself. She could have no secrets from Him, He had gained all her confidence, He knew all about her, and He loved her. This is like the way Jesus treats

a sinner now who comes to Him in faith ; some people are content to know that He has saved them. But the sinner that falls down before Him and tells Him what He has done, finds out how Jesus feels about him, and that puts great peace into the heart. The one who does not go to Jesus and tell Him all the truth, is never quite sure ; he is often frightened and trembling. He is like those people in the ship who did not know who Jesus was ; he might say, Jesus has put my sins away. But have you ever told Him so ? Have you ever thanked Him ?

Oh, Who is He among the throng,
Who so serenely walks along ?
Love's radiance in His face ?
'Tis Christ—the Lord, God's blessed Son,
Responding to the call of one,
Who needs His healing grace.

And one there is amid that crowd,
Beneath the weight of suffering bowed,
Unknown to all beside.
For twelve long years she bore her pain,
Spent all she had, could nothing gain,
'Till Jesus she descried.

But when she sees Him drawing near,
How bounds her heart with hope and cheer,
Resolved the crowd to brave.
To touch that Great One's garment's hem,
She knows is to be whole ; and then,
The touch of faith she gave !

Instant the cure ! her ills depart.
What joy, what comfort, fills her heart,
She would not have it known.
She little thought that feeble touch
Had cheered her Saviour's heart as much
As it had healed her own !

He felt the "virtue" flowing o'er—
That He was trusted—which was more.
Than aught she e'er could *do*.

And can He let the healed one go
Without a word, or look, to show
That He had loved her too ?

He will not heed the callous press ;
He longs to hear her lips confess
The secret of her soul.

To tell Him, is to get release.
His gracious answer, "Go in peace,
Thy faith hath made thee whole."

Lord Jesus ! Thou art now the Same
As when that lowly woman came
To have her pain removed.

Since Thou ascendedst to Thy throne,
How many a heart unseen, unknown,
Thy healing power has proved.

Yes ! now the streams of virtue flow
Unhindered,—for our sin and woe
Have all been borne by Thee.

God's glory in Thy face doth shine,
While righteousness and grace combine
To set the sufferer free !

The feeblest look of faith on Thee
Secures salvation full and free,

And gives Thee joy and cheer.
As much, in glory bright above,
As in Thy walk of lowly love,

The Man of Sorrows here !

F. I. E.

MARK V., 35-43. VI., 1-13.

JESUS was still on His way to the ruler's house, but a messenger came to say that his little girl was dead : they thought he need not trouble Jesus to go to his house. Jesus knew what the messenger said, and He did not give the poor father time to answer. He said quickly to him, Fear not, only believe. Jesus knew that Jairus had faith, and He wished to make his faith strong. He went on to the ruler's house, He would not allow any one to go in with Him but Peter and James and John, those He had surnamed to be His servants. He found all the people weeping because the little girl was dead. Jesus said, Why do you weep like this ? The child is not dead, she sleeps ; and those unbelieving people laughed. They thought they knew better than Jesus did. But He turned them all out, and then took only the father and mother of the child and His three disciples with Him, and went into the room where the child was lying. Then Jesus took the hand of the dead child in His own hand of power and said : Talitha koumi !

Those were the words that a Jewish mother would say to awake her child in the morning. As your mother might say, Awake, my child. But the Holy Spirit gives us the meaning of them when Jesus said those words. They meant, I say to you Arise. It was not her mother's voice this time, it was the voice of Jesus that said, I say to you, Arise ; and immediately the child arose and walked. The dead could hear the voice of the Son of God, for He was the resurrection and the life. He could give life. He could command her soul to live ; and what is the next thing ? He desired them to give her something to eat. Why did Jesus tell them to give her something to eat ? Because the life that He gives must have the food that suits it. When God made man and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, the next thing the great Creator did was to plant the tree of life in the middle of the garden. There was always fruit on that tree. It was planted there for man. But the woman listened to the advice of the serpent and took the only fruit that they were told not to eat. Why did God tell Adam not to eat the fruit of that tree ? Because God knew that the knowledge of good and evil was

not good for man—all the other fruits were good for food, but God knew that man could not feed on that fruit without getting harm. God knew all about good and evil, and He knew that the knowledge of it was too much for man, he was not able for it; man was not strong enough to feed on that fruit, it would put him out of his true place before God. God made man in His own image, and put him in a place where everything was pleasant to him, and where everything suited him. It was all very good. God expected man to take care of that place and to keep it very good. All the living creatures were put under him. He named them all. But the man must first take care of himself. If he did not keep himself right, how could he be God's caretaker on the earth? So God said to him, Do not eat that fruit, it will not do you good; the knowledge of evil will bring death—the wages of sin is death. But they wished for it and they took it. I will tell you a little parable that you can understand.

Suppose I put a large heavy book on the mantelpiece, and I say to you, Do not try to touch that book; it is too great for you, you are not strong enough to take it in hand, it is

not suited to you, and it will only do you harm. But when I go out of the room you begin to wish to take the book in your hands, so you stand on the fender and take it in both hands. It causes you to fall with such a dreadful fall, that you become a cripple for life. You never get well of that fall, you never stand on your feet again! When I come back to the room, I say, Oh, my child, you have ruined yourself. I knew it was too great for you, you had not strength to tackle with a book like that, and you never will recover from that fall. You will bear the mark of it all your life. It seemed to you a small act of disobedience; but if you had trusted me, and believed that I was thinking only of your good, you would have said, No, I will not touch what is too great for me. In this story it was the body that fell, but the first man fell in his soul.

In that new beautiful world Adam ought to have shown to all around him how good God was! But the serpent made Adam and Eve discontented and taught them to wish for something else. Adam did not continue in God's goodness. He lost his place with God by disobedience; he put himself at a distance from God. How did he show that he was

fallen in his soul? He and his wife hid from God. They found out that there was evil in themselves; their first knowledge of evil was in their own hearts. They disobeyed the God who made them; and they felt that they had nothing to cover them from the eyes of the holy God. . The first man ruined himself and all the men who came after him, because they were all born at a distance from God. But,—

“ God, in mercy, sent His Son
A ruined world to save ! ”

Jesus came to take away the distance, and to bring us to God. He found nothing around Him down here but sin, and suffering, and death. But He expressed God so perfectly that He could say: He that has seen Me has seen the Father. Jesus brought life into the place of death. As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive. He said, The child is not dead, but sleeps, because His voice would awake her out of the sleep of death. Those who saw it were astonished with great astonishment. But Jesus said they were not to tell people about it.

Why did He say so? Because He would not have His works of power spoken of to those who did not believe in Him. Life from the

dead was a wonderful thing that each one must learn in his own soul. It was like the things that Jesus explained to the disciples in private ; the things of the soul are only learned in private with Jesus. He did not allow the unbelieving crowd to go into the room where the dead child lay. But what a blessed thing it was for Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother of the child.

They were allowed to be with Him. They saw what He did. They heard what He said, and they learned in their souls, that Jesus was the resurrection and the life, and that He will say, " Arise," not only to the children of Israel, by and by, but all, both small and great, will stand before Him. For all who are in the graves will hear His voice.

Jesus went again into His own country. He had left them before because their hearts were hardened. They could not understand His grace, they had no place in their hearts for the new wine of God's kingdom.

But Jesus gave them another opportunity. He went into their synagogue on the Sabbath day, and they were amazed at His teaching. Did it make them believe in Him ? No ; they said, " Whence has this man this wisdom, and

how is it that such miracles are done by His hands ? ” They said, “ Is He not a carpenter, the son of Mary, and His brothers and sisters are here with us, ” and they were offended in Him. What did Jesus say to them ? A prophet is not despised except in his own country, among his own relations and in his own house. What grace in Jesus to call it His own country, and to speak of those unbelieving people as His own house. But it was true. He was the Prophet come from God ; they did not know Him, and so they missed the blessing. He could not do any miracles there because of their unbelief. Why were they offended in Him ? Because He took a servant’s form. He could have come as a rich man, all riches belong to Him, for He was Son of God, and Lord of all. He could say, The cattle upon a thousand hills are Mine. But He chose to come as a poor man, and He took the form of a servant to do the will of God. And all day long Jesus was serving men ; even when the day was over, He was still serving ; He went about doing good. How beautiful that was ! But their eyes were blinded, they could not see, what angels saw, the heavenly beauty of the heavenly Man,

who was in the form of God, but who chose to take a servant's form. Those proud men of the earth could only see the servant's form, that was His outside appearance. If they had opened eyes they would have seen that underneath it, was all the power of God and the glory of God. They ought to have learned who Jesus was from what He taught and what He did. They wondered, but they did not believe. We can understand why Jesus would not allow them to tell of His miracles, because nothing but faith would please Him. He did not want them to wonder at His miracles. He wished them to believe in Himself as the beginning of the glad tidings of God's kingdom. God could send an angel to do miracles, but Jesus came Himself and lived down here among the poor, that they might know Him, and if they knew Him they would know God. He came from God, to bring all the kindness of God down to men. They did not believe in God's kindness. Men know that God is great, but they do not believe that God is good. Jesus brought God's kindness and love to man into this world. He went about doing good to show men how God cared for them. Wherever He went goodness dropped

from His hands and from His lips. Even there, where He wondered at their unbelief, He laid His hands upon a few sick people and healed them. He could not see anyone in pain without making him well. Then He went all round among the villages teaching. And He called the twelve disciples and began to send them out to preach, by two and two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits, so that they could cast them out ; and He commanded them to take no bread or money or any more clothes than what they had on. They were to carry nothing but a staff in their hands. They had seen the kind of servant that Jesus was ; they were to be like Him in their service, and like men who were servants of God and not of men. If any one took them into his house, they were to stay there until their work was done in that place. But if any one would not take them into his house, they were to shake the dust off their feet, as a testimony against that house that the messengers of Jesus were not received there. The disciples went forth, two together, to each place, and they preached that men should repent, and they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many sick people, and healed them.

The gentle soul had flown away,
Tranquil upon her couch she lay.
“ Too late ! our little maid is dead,
Trouble no more the Lord,” they said.

A touching sight to gaze upon,
By silent Peter, James, and John ;
Alone with Him, whose quickening breath
Brings life into the place of death !

“ Talitha koumi ” ! Maid, arise !
Then opened wide the sleeping eyes ;
And light came to dispel the gloom
That tinged the curtains of the room.

“ Talitha koumi ” ! Lord divine,
That resurrection word is Thine.
From day to day, from hour to hour,
Teach us to know its conquering power !

MARK VI. 14-56.

HEROD, the wicked king of Judea, heard the fame of Jesus. His name had become public, and the conscience of Herod was troubled. He said, He is John the Baptist. He is come to life again, and that is why He does these miracles. Others said Jesus was Elias, or one of the prophets. They were careless about it, but Herod was afraid. He said, It is John whom I beheaded ; he is risen from the dead. No wonder that Herod felt afraid, for he had seized John, and bound him in prison, because John told him that it was wrong of him to marry his brother's wife. This made his wife very angry, and she tried to kill John ; but Herod was afraid to kill him, because he knew that John was a just and holy man, and he liked to hear him, and even to do things that John told him. But Herod did not love God, nor His servant John, and when his birthday came, he made a supper for all the people in his palace, and his wife's daughter danced before Herod, and pleased him so much, that he said she might ask him

for anything she liked, he would give it to her, even if she asked for half of his kingdom ; he did not call Judea God's kingdom.

The girl asked her mother what she should ask the king to give her. The mother was wishing to kill John, so she said, Go and ask for John the Baptist's head ! The girl obeyed her wicked mother. The king was sorry ; he had put John in prison and bound him, but he was afraid to kill him ; yet he had promised the girl before all the people of his court, and he was ashamed not to do what he had so foolishly promised. So he sent one of his soldiers, and he went to the prison and cut off the head of John the Baptist, and brought it on a dish and gave it to the girl, and she gave it to her mother.

What a terrible picture it was of men and women who hated goodness and loved to do evil ! Herod knew John was a holy man, and he was glad to take his advice sometimes. But he was like Ahab, the wicked king of Israel, when his wife Jezebel stirred him up to kill the prophets of the Lord.

When the disciples of John heard that he was killed, they went and took his body and laid it in a tomb. And when Herod heard of the

wonders that Jesus was doing, he said, It must be John whom I beheaded; he is risen from the dead !

We read about Jesus sending out His disciples by two and two to preach, and to do good as He did. These sent ones came back to Jesus, and told Him what they had done and what they had taught. And Jesus said, Come away into a desert place and rest a little ; because so many people were coming and going that they did not even get time to take their food. Then He went with His disciples into a desert place by ship. He wanted to be quiet and alone with them. But the crowds saw Him going away in the ship, and they ran on foot, out of all the cities, and got there before Jesus. So that when He came out of the ship He saw a great crowd waiting for Him. Did He say, Go away, poor people, we have come here for a little rest ? No ; there was no rest for God's great Servant in this world of want. Jesus was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep who had no shepherd. They had no one to lead them into green pastures or beside still waters ; but Jesus was the Good Shepherd, and He began to teach them many things.

The disciples came and said to Him, This is a desert place ; and it is late, send away the people, that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves ; for they have nothing to eat. What did the Good Shepherd say ? He said, You give them food. But they answered, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennies' worth of bread to feed them with ? Jesus said, How many loaves have you ? Go and see. They said they had five loaves and two fishes. Then He ordered them to make the people sit down by companies on the green grass. We do not expect to find green grass in a desert, but the Good Shepherd could make green pastures even in a desert. They sat down on the grass in rows of a hundred, and rows of fifty. Then Jesus took the loaves and the two fishes in His hands, and looked up to heaven—the heaven that was always open to Him—and He blessed and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the people. He also divided the two fishes amongst them all. And they all ate and had enough. There were five thousand men fed by those five loaves, and yet they gathered up twelve baskets full of what was left of both the loaves and the fishes. In this miracle Jesus was

showing His disciples how to feed His people. They would find that they need never say there was not enough, because if they took it from His hands, it would always be more than enough. Each one of those twelve disciples had a basket that he could carry in his hand, full of what was left after all those hundreds of people had eaten enough ; so they really had more for themselves of both the bread and the fish, after feeding the multitude, than they had before, or than if they had not fed them. This is God's way of giving ; He says, He that watereth shall be watered himself. The gifts of God are so full of blessing, that even when they are given to a man to use for someone else, he gets great gain himself. The disciples were to do as Jesus did ; they were to take everything from His hands ; they were to look up to heaven, and bless God ; so they would be able to pass on to others what God gave to them.

Children, go tell one another
Of the One who loves so well.

Jesus desired His disciples to get into the ship and to go on before Him to the other side, to a place called Bethsaida, while He sent away the crowd. And when He had dismissed

them all, He went up into the mountain to pray. That is where Jesus spent the night ; that was the home that He went to, when He sent all the people to their homes. Jesus was the Great Shepherd of the sheep ; He was always doing good, and always praising God. But the disciples were out on the sea, and Jesus was alone on the land, and He was watching them. They were rowing very hard, because the wind was against them. We could fancy Peter or John might say, I wish Jesus was here to make a great calm ; but they do not seem to have thought of Him ; for about the fourth watch of the night, that is, what we should call the early morning, Jesus walked upon the sea and came near to them, as if He was going to pass them. They all saw Him and were troubled. They did not know who it was, and they were frightened, because He walked upon the rough waves of the sea. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, and said : It is I, be not afraid ; and as soon as He went into the ship, the wind fell. They were astonished at the effect of His presence. Did they not know that the presence of Jesus would make them safe, no matter what was against them ? Whether it was wind or

waves, disease or death, hunger or devils, the moment Jesus came all troubles and dangers had to disappear. His presence was salvation for them. They ought to have learned that from the miracle of the loaves; but they did not understand, because their hearts were hardened. What grief it was to Jesus to feel that even His disciples did not understand the deep meaning there was in all He did. They did not really know who Jesus was as the Sent One of God. He could walk above the rough waves of the sea, and say, It is I, be not afraid. He could even make them able to walk on the waves if they had faith in Him. He was on the mountain praying for them, He stood on the shore watching them, and when they were in trouble He came to them. He would never leave them or forsake them. Why did Jesus walk on the sea? To show His disciples what they could do if they had faith in Him. He could give them food, and He could give them power. With Him they would be carried above all the troubles of this world. In God's kingdom there is no want and there is no fear. Jesus was teaching His disciples how to be God's servants in this world.

They landed at Gennesaret, and the people in the country and in the villages brought their sick ones to Him. They begged to be allowed only to touch His clothes, and as many as touched Him were made perfectly well.

The name of Jesus had become public ; there was no excuse for anyone not to know Him ; even Herod, in his palace, had heard of Him. If they knew His name they would put their trust in Him as all those sick people did. Why does God let people have pain and sorrow ? To make them want Him. God likes His creatures to want Him, and to come back to Him. Many people forget God. A fool is one who says in his heart, There is no God. All the sad things that happen in the world are used by God to save souls, by making them want Him. They cry unto Him in their trouble, and He always hears them. It is very kind of God to let things happen to remind people of Him. He would like every one in the whole world to come to Jesus now, that He might say, " Your sins are forgiven," as He did to those who came to Him when He was down here.

It was pain and sickness that made the crowds come to Jesus. They knew He would

make them well ; they wanted to be made well, and they were better off after they came to Jesus, than if they never had been ill. The people who were not ill did not want Him. There was a young fisherman, one cold winter, who was out at sea for a great many nights. He caught a great quantity of fish and he made so much money that he did not mind the cold and hardship. But it made him very ill, so that he could not go out fishing any more. He used to say : I thank God every day that He did not let me go on forgetting Him. I never should have found out what a Saviour Jesus is if I had not been so ill.

The night was wild, and stormy winds
To fury lashed the sea ;
And up and down a little ship
Was tossing restlessly.

Amid the storm a sight was seen
So strange ; what could it be ?
The boatmen saw approaching them
One walking on the sea !

No wonder they were all afraid,
And raised a frightened cry,
Till Jesus kindly calmed their fears,
And told them—" It is I."

MARK VII.

ALL the acts of power and blessing that Jesus did showed two things very plainly. One was the goodness that is in the heart of God; the other was the badness that is in the hearts of men. The presence of Jesus on the earth was like a light that showed what God felt to men, and it showed how men felt to God. Jesus was pouring blessing all around Him. Every needy one who came near Him felt it. But the proud men of Jerusalem shut their hearts against Him: they did not seek the blessing for themselves, and they had no pleasure in seeing all those sick people made well. All they could do was to find fault. They came from Jerusalem to complain to Jesus that His disciples did not wash their hands before they sat down to eat. The Pharisees and all the Jews were very particular about washing their hands and the outside of their cups, and all the things they used for the comfort of their bodies. They asked Jesus why His disciples did not do what the elders told them to do, for they eat bread with

unwashed hands ? The answer that Jesus gave them showed very plainly what God thought of those Pharisees and scribes. He said it was true of them what Isaiah the prophet had written : This people honour Me with their lips, but their heart is far away from Me ; that is what a hypocrite does. In vain do they worship Me, teaching the commandments of men. Jesus said they left the commandments of God, they set them aside, they did not obey them, but the things they were teaching were only the commandments of men. They were all about washing of vessels and things like that, outside things, that men could see. But the holy commandments of God about honouring their fathers and their mothers, those were inside things that they did not teach. What they taught made the word of God have no effect upon the children, because they said, if a child gave something to the priest, he need not take care of his parents. God had said, Honour thy father and thy mother ; it was the first commandment with a promise in it, and God would not accept a gift from a child who was not caring for his father or his mother. Obedience is better than sacrifice. God always puts obedience first ; His word can never

change. Those Pharisees were teaching the words of men and not the words of God.

Then Jesus called the crowd to Him and said, Hear Me, all of you, and understand. They were all to pay attention while He explained to them about what was outside a man and what was inside ; the inside things are in the heart. It was not anything from outside that made a man unclean.. It was the evil that was in the hearts of men that made them unclean. The Pharisees did not understand that ; they were quite content to wash their hands. They did not know that Jesus could see into their hearts. So Jesus said, If any one have ears to hear, let him hear. When Jesus went into the house, away from the crowd, His disciples asked Him about the parable. Jesus said, Do you not understand that it is not what you eat that makes you unclean, but what comes out of the heart ; that is where naughty thoughts come from, and naughty words, and wishing for things that do not belong to us : pride and foolishness and all those things come out of the heart. It is the naughty heart that makes a person unclean. Jesus put out the inside evil, He made the heart clean, He taught people to love God and

to obey Him with the whole heart, as He did Himself. The commandments of men taught them to wash hands and to make the outside clean. It was what men could see and do, but it is a greater thing to have the heart made clean. Jesus undid the work of the devil in their hearts. Then He left those people to think of what He had said to them, and He went away into the borders of Tyre and Sidon.

Those were Gentile cities. He went into a house ; He did not want anyone to know that He was there. But He could not be hid. For there was a woman there whose little daughter had an unclean spirit. That poor child was an example of an unclean heart. The evil spirit was making the heart of that child full of evil thoughts and words. Would it do her any good to wash her hands or to keep the commandments of men ? No. It was God's way to make the inside clean, to make the heart obey Him ; then the outside would be clean.

That woman heard of Jesus. He could not be hid, even from a Gentile who was in distress. Her faith found Him out, and she came and fell at His feet and begged Him to cast the devil out of her child. But Jesus said, The

children must first be filled ; it is not right to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs. What did He mean ? He meant that the people of Israel were God's children ; they must be served first. Jesus came to bless them. She was a Gentile, and her people were the enemies of God's people. The woman was not surprised at being thought no better than a dog ; but she got a wonderful thought about God from what Jesus said. She thought, What a heart God must have to call His people children ! When I think of the way I love my little girl, is it possible that the great God can love His people as a father ? and she thought, I would be glad to be a little dog to get a crumb of such blessing as that ! So she answered, Yes, Lord, for even the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs. Jesus was pleased with her answer. It showed how truly she believed in Him. She felt that she did not deserve it, but that He was so rich in blessing that He would not refuse her a crumb. He said, Because of that word, go thy way ; the devil is gone out of thy daughter. She went to her house and found the child lying on the bed—the devil was gone, and she was at rest. Jesus had put out the evil

spirit and made a great calm in that little girl's heart. Jesus had gone there on purpose to bless that one little girl and her mother ; and then He went back to the Sea of Galilee to the place where the man was who once had the legion of devils and who was now telling the people what great things Jesus had done for him. They brought a man to Him who was deaf and dumb, and they prayed Jesus to lay His hand upon him. A man who is born deaf is always dumb ; he cannot hear when others speak. Jesus had said, He that has ears to hear, let him hear. He called on all to listen to what He was telling them about God's kingdom. This man could not hear the teaching of Jesus ; his ears were shut and his tongue was tied ; he could not speak to Jesus ; he was like the crowd of sick and helpless ones that other people had to bring to Jesus. So some one brought him, and prayed to Jesus for him ! Jesus took him away from the crowd, that he might be alone with Himself. Then He put His fingers to those shut ears, and He spit and touched the man's tongue ; then Jesus looked up to heaven and groaned, and said to him, Be opened. Immediately his ears were opened, and the

band of his tongue was loosed and he was able to speak. Why did Jesus look up to heaven and groan? Because His heart was full of sorrow at the state of the man. He was touched with the feeling of his infirmity. He looked up to heaven, where all blessing must come from, and He groaned to God. He looked away from the misery of the man, up to God, who gave men ears that they might hear Him, and tongues that they might praise Him!

Sin had shut his ears and tied his tongue. Jesus felt it, because it was just like the Jews. Their hearts were shut to the glad tidings that Jesus came from heaven to tell them of. It was a groan of pity, and it was the deep sorrow of love that could not tell itself out to hearts that were hardened like those deaf ears. It was God's judgment on His rebellious people. He had said they would not be able to hear with their ears. God's great Servant felt the judgment that was upon His people. He groaned to heaven. He was going to bear the judgment by dying on the cross, so He had a right to say, "Be opened." Jesus can open the heart of a sinner now. He can make a sinner hear His voice when He says, "Come unto Me." Jesus says it to him when he is

alone, when no one else can hear ; and when the sinner has heard the voice of Jesus, his tongue can speak His praise. The people who saw what Jesus had done for that man were greatly astonished and said, He does all things well. He makes the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak.

All worlds His glorious power confess ;
His wisdom all His works express.
But oh, His love ! What tongue can tell,
How Jesus has done all things well.

MARK VIII. 1-21.

AGAIN we hear of a great crowd being with Jesus, and He knew that they had nothing to eat. He even knew where they all lived, and that some had come from a long way off. Jesus called His disciples to Him. He would use them. He would let them have a share in His work. He said, I have compassion on these people, they have been with Me for three days, and they have nothing to eat. If I send them to their homes fasting, they will faint by the way, for some of them are come from far. How wonderful the way Jesus thought of them, and what feeling He had for them. We might think the disciples would say: We also have compassion for them; you have taught us to feel for them as you do, and you have taught us that no matter how little we have, you can always make it enough. We remember how you fed the five thousand people with five loaves, and how much was left. But the disciples did not think of that; they soon forgot His works. They were always looking down; they looked at the

desert, it was a poor place ; they could get no bread there. If they had learned from Jesus how to look up to heaven, they would have been able to understand that every good thing comes down from above, and it would have helped them to have faith in the One who came from heaven. But they could only think of buying something from this world ; so they said, Where could we find bread in this desert place ?

Jesus said, How many loaves have you ? and they said, Seven. He commanded the people to sit down on the ground ; then He took the seven loaves and gave thanks for it, little as it was, and He broke the bread and gave it to the disciples to hand on to the people. They also had a few small fishes, and when Jesus had blessed, He told them to give them also to the people. They all ate and were satisfied. Jesus could satisfy the poor with bread, even in a desert place ; and they gathered up seven baskets full of what was left. This was the second time that Jesus had shown His disciples that there was grace and power in Him for every kind of want. They could never say there was not enough if He was there, or that it was a desert place if Jesus was with them.

His grace would satisfy their hearts and give them plenty more to hand on to others. He was teaching them how His heart was overflowing with lovingkindness towards them. He was never tired of doing good to them. The number seven is used in the Bible as a figure of what is perfect, and the seven baskets full were like the overflow of the perfect love and perfect service of Him who came as the beginning of the glad tidings of Jesus Christ the Son of God. They not only had enough, but they all went away with this comfort in their hearts, that Jesus had plenty more to give. He knew them perfectly, and He felt for them perfectly. He knew they wanted food: He would not let them faint by the way. He served them perfectly. He satisfied them in that desert place, and as He sent them away they must have felt, What a rich Saviour we have. He cares for us in His heart, and He serves us with His hands.

Jesus went away in a ship with His disciples ; but the Pharisees of that place came to Him to dispute with Him, and to tempt Him. It was like Satan to wish to tempt Jesus. Satan had said to Him, If you are the Son of God, do something to prove it ; and so those

Pharisees tempted Jesus, by asking Him to give them a sign from heaven. Jesus groaned in His Spirit. He felt how terribly hard their hearts were, when they could not understand that He was God's sign from heaven. He said, Why do you seek a sign? God Himself had given them a sign. It was a great and wonderful sign, His own beloved Son was there, doing all things well and making God known by everything He did. God could give no sign so great as that, and He would give them no other sign. Jesus left them and went into the ship again, to go to the other side of the sea. When He was in the ship with the disciples, He said, Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod. What did Jesus mean? The leaven of the Pharisees was pride of religion; they were careful to do what the elders told them—what Jesus called the the commandments of men; they were proud of being so religious, but they did not know God, or they would have believed in His Son. They would not listen to the good news of God's kingdom, so they could not see God's great sign.

The leaven of Herod was the pride of the world, the riches and honours that belong to

this world. Jesus warned His disciples against both,—the pride of religion and the pride of worldly honour. He was showing them that they could find everything in Himself. They ought to have understood that; but instead of understanding what Jesus meant, they began to reason together about bread; they thought Jesus knew that they had forgotten to bring bread; for they had only one loaf in the ship. We might think they would say, Never mind, if Jesus is with us in the ship, He can make one loaf enough for us all. But Jesus knew their thoughts; it grieved Him to see how dull and slow His poor disciples were. He said, How is it that you do not understand? why are your hearts still hard? you have eyes but you cannot see, and ears and you cannot hear, and do you not remember? When I broke the five loaves and fed five thousand, how many baskets full did you gather up? and they said, Twelve. And after seven loaves had fed four thousand, how many baskets of fragments did you take up? They said, Seven. And He said to them, How is it that ye do not understand? They were thinking of bread to feed their bodies, but Jesus was teaching them how He could feed their souls. God had said,

Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God shall man live. Their souls would live by every word of God, and that was the way to know how God would take care of their bodies.

In this chapter we read how Jesus fed the multitude a second time. It is a great thing for God to speak to us once, but when He says a thing a second time, it shows that He means something very great. The first time Jesus was showing His disciples what He would be to them while He was with them on the earth, and He went up on the mountain and prayed for them.

But when they gathered up the seven baskets full, He wished them to understand what He would be to them when the Bridegroom was taken away from them. Jesus was going back to heaven, but He would feed their souls from heaven, and He would make them able to feed the souls of those who wished to be taught about Himself. They were to look up to heaven, and to expect everything from Him. They were not to turn to the world for food, or comfort, or strength. The people of the world would not hear the words of Jesus, they were all against Him. Jesus was God moving about among men. He was doing great

wonders and showing how His mercy endureth for ever ; but the Pharisees followed their own thoughts, they went in a way that was not good. It was not God's way, so they could not see God's sign. Jesus said, Do not let their leaven into your hearts. Leaven is a bad thing that gets mixed up with what is good. Even the disciples were very slow to understand the teaching of Jesus, for they thought He was speaking of bread to feed their bodies, because they had only one loaf in the ship. So Jesus said, Take care not to let their way of thinking into your hearts. Do not turn to those people who are against Me ; keep your eyes looking up to Me in heaven, and you will find that My grace will be enough for every kind of need. You do not want a little bit of Herod's world, or a little bit of the Pharisees' world. If they loved Jesus they would not let those men's unbelieving thoughts into their hearts. It was not only the wonderful things that Jesus did for them when He was with them, but He wanted them to believe what He would be to them even when He was gone back to heaven. While He was with them in the world they learned how to go to Him for everything. If any one was ill, their first

thought was to bring him to Jesus. If a little girl was dying, her father would go to Jesus. If a little girl was tormented by the devil, the mother knew that Jesus was the only One who could cast the devil out of her child. Every one who cried to Him in his trouble was delivered out of his distress: they found that it was worth while to be in a desert place to be fed by Jesus!

There is a hymn that little children sing, which says:—

I think when I read the sweet story of old:
How, when Jesus was here among men,
They brought little children as lambs to His fold,
I wish I had been with Him then.

But Jesus wanted them to understand that He would be just as near to them when He was gone back to heaven. They were to look up to Him just the same, and they would find He was the same Jesus. He would love them and care for them just as much as He did when He was down here. They would always find He was able to make their hearts so full and happy that they would be like the seven baskets full, and they need never faint by the way.

Jesus, who made our heaven secure,
Will here all good provide;
While He is rich, can we be poor?
Christ who for us has died!

MARK VIII. 22-38.

WHEN Jesus came to Bethsaida, they brought a blind man to Him, and begged Him to allow the blind man to touch Him.

When people cannot see, they like to feel with their hands—they know things by feeling. The man could not see Jesus, but he wished to come near enough to Him to touch Him. Perhaps he said to himself, like the poor woman, If I but touch Him I shall get well. How did Jesus answer their request? He put out His own hand and touched the blind man. Jesus took him by his hand and led him out of the town, just as He did to the deaf and dumb man. He took him away from the crowd, that he might be alone with his Saviour. It is a lonely thing to be blind and not able to see the sun. God could say to a dark world, Let there be light, and He could say to blind eyes, Let there be light, and even to blind hearts. The light comes from Himself. So Jesus spit on his eyes, and laid His hands upon him, and asked him if he could see anything. The man looked up and said, I see men like trees

walking. He did not see them very plainly ; but it is like the way people think first of themselves. The mercy of God may make us great in our own eyes because God is so good to us. But to see men like trees walking was too much like the Pharisees' way of thinking ; so Jesus laid both His hands again upon the man's eyes. He closed his eyes to the greatness of men, and then Jesus made him look up ; he looked up above the men who looked so tall, and above the trees, and then he was able to see every one clearly. He saw Jesus, the Man of God's right hand. He was the Man that God made strong for Himself, and that sight put every one else in his true place. The first touch made him able to see as men see, but the second touch let the light of God into his soul. It showed the blind man who Jesus was, and he was no longer blind. Then Jesus said to him, Do not go into the town, or talk about it to any one in the town. The light of God had shined into his heart, and he must keep it with God, he must not let it get mixed with the thoughts of men, or with the news of their town ; he was to go home to his own house ; he was to carry the light of God there, for when God blesses a

man, He means his house to be blessed. That blind man could say :—

God made the rolling thunder,
The lightning's forkèd flame ;
His works are full of wonder,
All glorious is His Name.

But things that are far greater,
His mighty hand hath done ;
And sent us blessings sweeter,
Through Christ His only Son.

Then Jesus went with His disciples into the villages outside the country of the Jews ; and as He walked with them He asked them a very touching question. He had done great wonders among men, and they had seen His works of power, and now He wanted to know what they said about Him ; did they know who He was ? The disciples answered, Some say You are John the Baptist. That was what Herod said ; and some said that He was Elias ; and other people said He was one of the prophets. They were all like the blind man, when he could only see tall men ; they saw the goodness of God to men, but they kept their eyes on men. They did not look up to see where the goodness came from ; if they did they would have been able to see clearly who Jesus was. Then He said to His disciples, What do *you* say.? Peter

at once answered, Thou art the Christ. Peter knew that Jesus was the Sent One of God. He had heard the call of Jesus and he had followed Him ; and he believed that all the promises of God would come true in Him. Jesus said they were not to tell that to those people who thought He was only one of the prophets. If they did not learn who He was from Himself, it was no use for them to tell them that He was the Christ.

Then Jesus began to teach them that He, "The Son of Man," must suffer much, and that He would be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and scribes. They were all the great men of Jerusalem ; they walked like trees upon the earth, but they were against the Son of Man ; they did not know the Christ of God. This was very sorrowful teaching to the disciples. They believed that Jesus was the Christ, they knew He was the Man of God's pleasure, and they could not understand how God could let Him suffer and be killed by wicked men. Jesus spoke about it openly, so that Peter began to rebuke Him ; he tried to stop Jesus from talking about His death. But Jesus turned round and saw His disciples listening. He did not want them to get Peter's

thoughts about it, so He rebuked Peter, and said, Get away, behind Me, Satan; for your thoughts are not on the things of God, but on the things of men. Jesus called him Satan because he was speaking the mind of Satan at that moment. Satan knew that Peter loved the Lord, and he made him think that he was showing his love by saying that Jesus must not go to the cross. Peter did not know then how Satan can use the thoughts of men to express his own mind, and to blind their hearts to the glory of God. Satan wished to make Jesus turn away from the cross, but he could not. Jesus would not listen to him. He came to do the whole will of God, and if Peter's mind had been on the things of God, he would have known how the glory of God shone out in the sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then Jesus called the crowd along with His disciples, and said to them, Whoever wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and let him take up his cross and follow Me. That was the thought of God that Peter did not understand; for men do not like to deny themselves, and they do not like to go to the cross; but that was the way to follow Jesus into His

glory. Then He said, For whoever shall wish to save his life shall lose it, and whoever shall lose his life for My sake and for the Gospel's sake shall save it. What did Jesus mean by losing their life for His sake and for the sake of the Gospel? He meant that if they really wished to follow Him they must be willing to give up their life; that is, the life that they were living as men in the world; they were to give up the things that men like, to refuse the things of men. They were the things that Satan could use to keep them from following Jesus; and if they lost that life for the sake of being with Jesus, and for the sake of the glad tidings that He taught them, their souls would live for ever with Him. For what good would the whole world be to them if they lost the life of their souls? There was nothing that a man could give in exchange for his soul. It was better to gain the life of the soul than to possess the whole world. Jesus was teaching them about His sufferings. He was going to die on the cross for them, and it was like saying, Do you love Me enough to follow Me even to the cross? For whoever shall be ashamed of Me in this sinful generation of men whose hearts are full of idols, of him shall the Son

of Man be ashamed when He shall come in the glory of His Father with the holy angels. If they knew who Jesus was, and that He would come in the glory of His Father, they would think it was a small thing to lose their life in this world for His sake. But it would be a very great and blessed thing to be with Jesus when He comes in glory with His holy angels, and to know that He will not be ashamed of them then:

How full of grace and truth
Was Jesus here on earth ;
It is our deepest joy to tell
His priceless worth.

How great that moment was,
When Jesus Christ was here,
With all the grace of God for us
In man brought near !

His fulness was for all
Who sought His blessed face ;
How welcome they to His full store,
To grace on grace.

MARK IX. 1-13.

WHEN Jesus had spoken of His death, He saw that it made His disciples sorrowful, so He said to them, Some of those who stand here will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God come in power. Jesus would show it to some of them, not yet to all. But those who, like Peter, were grieved at the thought of His death, would be allowed to see what was the glorious end of all His teaching in this world. He had preached the glad tidings of the kingdom. He had told them it was worth while to lose their lives as men, for the sake of those glad tidings, and He had shown them the good of the kingdom. He had healed all their diseases of mind and body. He forgave all their sins and healed all their diseases. He showed them how faith in the kingdom of God delivered them from the kingdom of Satan. Now He was going to show them the kingdom of God coming in power. Seeing it would deliver them from the fear of death and of the shame of the cross. It would show them how well worth while it was to lose their lives as men of this world.

They were to taste the power of God's kingdom. It was the power of eternal life, before they tasted what it is to die.

Six days after Jesus had said this, He took His three disciples, the surnamed ones, Peter, James, and John, up on a high mountain, that they might be alone with Him. And He was transfigured before them. That means that His appearance was changed. His clothes became shining exceeding white like snow ; no one on earth could make anything so white. And there appeared to them Elias, with Moses, and these two men of God were talking with Jesus. They were both examples of the power of God's kingdom, because they were men who were alive from among the dead. God had sent a chariot of fire for Elijah, and he was caught up to the heavens without dying. Moses was God's faithful servant ; he died alone with God, and his body was kept by God, that he might appear on the high mountain with Jesus. Both those men had suffered from the men of this world, because they were faithful to their own true God. They did not count their lives dear to them, because they had respect to the great reward. God was not ashamed to be called their God, and Jesus was not ashamed of them

as they stood beside Him in His glory. And they talked with Him. The disciples were afraid of the glory. It was night, and there was nothing to be seen but the light of heaven that shone out of Jesus. It made them afraid. But Peter said, Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles, one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. Peter did not know what to say, but he wanted to keep those two favoured men along with Jesus. But that was not God's thought, and the answer Peter received was a cloud that overshadowed them. And a Voice came out of the cloud which said: This is My beloved Son. Hear Him. And suddenly, as they looked around, they saw no one any more but Jesus alone with themselves. Moses and Elias disappeared. They might see His glory, and even talk with Him in His glory, but the glory all belonged to Him. He would not dwell in a tabernacle made by hands. This was to teach the disciples who Jesus was. They were eye-witnesses of His majesty. They heard Him receive from God the Father honour and glory when the Voice came to Him from the place of highest glory. They could never forget who Jesus was. He was God's beloved Son. They

were to hear Him only; they were to follow Him only; and like Moses and Elias they would find a great reward when Jesus comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.

There where Jesus, Jesus only,
Fills each heart and tongue;
Where Himself is all the glory,
And His love the song!

As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus said to them that they were not to tell any one what they had seen until He—the Son of Man—should be risen from among the dead. The disciples did not understand what rising from among the dead could mean. Jesus had told them that He would be killed, and after three days He would rise again. They reasoned about it, but they could not understand it. Had they not just seen Him in His glory? It was hard to believe that He could die! The three disciples were allowed to see the kingdom come in power for a moment to strengthen their faith, but it had not really come yet. It could not come until Jesus had died and risen again. The disciples believed that there would be a resurrection day, when all the dead would be brought to life again. But they did not understand that Jesus would die and go into the place of death;

and that He would rise out of death alone ; that He would be called up, out from among the dead, by the glory of the Father. That same Voice that they heard on the mount, saying, " This is My beloved Son," would call Him out of the grave alone ; for Jesus was declared to be the Son of God with power by His rising out of the grave and going up to God's right hand. God set Him there as the Leader and Saviour of His people.

When Matthew told about the wonderful sight upon the mountain top, he said it was the Son of Man coming in His kingdom. They were to see His own glorious Person as Son of Man, and to hear the Voice saying that He was God's beloved Son, in whom God had found His delight. His face shone as the sun. He was the Hope of Israel.

But in Mark it was the kingdom of God coming in power that they saw, because that was what Jesus preached down here. He was God's great Servant, always doing His will, and teaching it to men. He had done it perfectly, and now God glorified His Servant Jesus, before their eyes, for a moment, that they might see what He would do perfectly by and by when He raised Him to His own right hand. The

power of God's kingdom was seen in Him ; but it was the glory shining through the servant's form. His raiment became white and shining. He clothed Himself with light as with a garment. He was all light, and the bright shining of His light ought to have lightened His disciples, and made them able to see the power that was in Him. When He was risen from the dead, and when He went up to His Father, He sent down the Holy Spirit to tell them about His glory up there. Then they understood it for themselves, and then they could speak of it to others. Until they learned the deep meaning of His death, and His rising again, they were not able to tell of His glory. They saw His sufferings, and afterwards they spoke of His glory. The disciples asked Jesus why the scribes, who had the holy writings of the prophets, said that Elias must come before Him ? Jesus answered that Elias had come and they had rejected him. He meant that John the Baptist came in the spirit and power of Elias, and they refused his teaching and killed him. The scribes ought to have known that, for it was written in the prophets that they would do so. It was also written that the Son of Man would suffer much, and be set at nought by them. The scribes

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could quote the words of the prophets, but they did not understand the mind of God, they did not know the One of whom the prophets wrote. How it ought to have touched the hearts of the disciples to hear Jesus say that He must suffer much, and be despised and ill-treated by men ; and this was the second time He had told them of it, as He was on His way to Jerusalem for the last time.

Everlasting glory unto Jesus be !
Sing aloud the story of His victory !
How He left the splendour of His Home on high,
Came in love so tender on the cross to die.
Sing aloud, and never cease to spread His fame.
Triumph now and ever, in the Saviour's Name.

Why did Moses and Elias appear with Jesus on the holy mount ? That they might be witnesses of His glory, and also that the disciples might understand how Moses and Elias would not be their teachers, now that Jesus had come. As John the Baptist said, One mightier than they had come. God had spoken by Moses, he was sent by God to lead His people out of Egypt. Moses loved the glory of the Lord ; he began with it when he saw the burning bush upon Mount Horeb. Moses turned to see the great sight ! and God spoke to him out of the

burning bush, and said, 'Take off your shoes, tread softly here, for it is holy ground. That was Moses' first lesson ; he learned that God is holy.

When the children of Israel made the calf of gold, and called it a god, Moses trembled for them. He thought the fire of God's holiness would destroy them ; so he called them all to the foot of the mountain, and God spoke out of the fire, He said, 'You shall have no other God but Me ! The people were afraid because of the fire ; they felt as Adam did when he hid himself from God. But Moses stood between them and God that day. He prayed for them. He was the mediator between the holy God and unfaithful Israel. He asked God to get glory to His own great Name by showing mercy to His people. God answered his prayer, and gave him the book of His covenant with Israel. Moses was allowed to stand on the mount with Jesus, and to talk with Him about the better covenant that Jesus would make in His own blood. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all. The covenant by Moses was for Israel. The covenant by Jesus Christ is for all.

My song shall be of Jesus,
His mercy crowns my days;
He fills my cup with blessing,
And tunes my heart to praise.

My song shall be of Jesus,
The precious Lamb of God,
Who gave Himself a ransom,
And bought me with His blood.

Elijah was a prophet. The meaning of his name is, Whose God is Jehovah. What a wonderful thing to be called by a name which told every one that the great Jehovah was his God! He was God's prophet at a time when the people were worshipping false gods called Baal. When other lords were ruling over Israel, Elijah stood alone for the one true God. Like Moses, he went up to the mountain to pray for God's people. One day he called the people together and said to them—Now you pray to your gods, and I will pray to Jehovah—He is my God; and the God that answers by fire will be the true God. Then the prophets of Baal offered sacrifices, and cried to Baal to send fire to burn up the sacrifice. They cried, "O Baal, hear us! O Baal, answer us!" But of course there was no answer; they prayed to a god that could not save. Elijah mocked them for praying to a false god, who could not see, or

hear, or answer them. He said, Cry louder ; perhaps your god is asleep ! The poor foolish people did cry louder, and they cut themselves and made the blood gush out. The devil always makes people hurt their bodies. But God is the preserver of the body. He made it after His own image.

When Elijah had shown them that Baal could not answer them, he told all the people to come close to him, away from the prophets of Baal. Then Elijah built up the altar of God that was broken down ; he built it of twelve stones. Why was that ? To show that the whole twelve tribes of Israel were united in confessing their one true God. If we had been there, we should have said, But Israel is divided, only ten tribes are worshipping Baal. The true God is still known at Jerusalem. Yes ; but God does not see His people divided ; and if ten tribes go wrong, the other two tribes must feel it. They share in the disgrace, they confess the sin as if it were their own, and they are glad to take their place with those who are brought back to what is true.

Then Elijah put a burnt offering on the altar for the twelve tribes, and he told them to pour water on it ; and he said, “ Do it again, and

again three times," so that the water ran all round the altar. Then Elijah stood by the altar and prayed to his God. He called Him the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Israel, and he asked Him to let it be known that He was God in Israel, and that He had turned back the hearts of His people to Himself. Then the fire of Jehovah fell upon the burnt offering and consumed it. So powerful was the fire that the wood, and the stones, and the dust were burnt up, and even all the water that filled the trench round the altar was dried up. The true God answered by fire! The people saw it, and they fell on their faces, and said Jehovah, He is God! Jehovah, He is God! Then they destroyed all that belonged to Baal.

So Elijah was used by God to bring back the people to the One true God, just as Moses was sent to bring them out of Egypt. They were God's servants on the earth for a few years, and when their work was done they disappeared. But Jesus lives for ever and ever, and all power and glory is seen in Him. The disciples were like the blind man when he could only see men like trees; they would like to have kept those two men who seemed so great, to keep them along with Jesus. But when their

eyes were opened, they saw clearly that it was "Jesus only with themselves." When God spoke out of the fire to Israel, He said, You shall have no other God but Me. Now God is speaking out of the glory, and the Voice that came from heaven to them is speaking still to us, and saying to every one : This is My beloved Son. Hear Him.

MARK IX. 14-50.

WHEN Jesus came down from the mountain, He found a crowd round the disciples, and the scribes were disputing against them. When the crowd saw Jesus, they were amazed, and ran to Him and saluted Him. Then Jesus asked the scribes what they were disputing about; but a man out of the crowd answered and said, Teacher, I brought my son to Thee, because he has a dumb spirit, and it seizes him, and tears him, and makes him foam and gnash his teeth, and he is withering away.

What a dreadful picture of the power of Satan! Gnashing of teeth is a sure mark of Satan's power; it could not be known in the kingdom of God. This man had asked the Lord's disciples to cast out the devil, but they could not. Jesus said, Oh, unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me. They brought him to Jesus, and the spirit tore the poor young man, and he fell on the earth and rolled about in helpless misery. Jesus asked his father how long he had been like that.

The father said, From a child ; and it has often cast him into the fire ; and into the water, to destroy him ; but if Thou canst do anything, have pity on us, and help us. Jesus answered him. The “if thou canst” is—if thou canst believe : all things are possible to him who believes ! What a wonderful thing for that poor man to hear ! If only he had faith, if he believed in Jesus, he could count on all the power of God ! The power of God was there in Jesus, but the disciples had not faith to use it.

When the poor father heard what Jesus said, he cried out with tears and said, “ Lord, I believe ; help Thou my unbelief.” Then Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and said : Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I command thee to come out of him, and to enter no more into him. The spirit was deaf, yet he had to hear the voice of Jesus. Then he cried out and tore him, and came out, but the young man seemed to be dead. So that the people said, He is dead. Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up. How often the hand of Jesus was stretched out to His suffering people to lift them up and give them a new power ! How perfect a picture it was of God’s salvation. Not only was the devil cast out, but he should enter no more into him !

When the disciples were in the house with Jesus, they asked Him privately, Why could not we cast out the unclean spirit? Jesus said, This kind can go out by nothing but by prayer and fasting. If they had faith in God, and were praying to Him, all things would be possible to them; and they would deny themselves, they would refuse things that pleased them as men, because their minds would be on the things of God, and not on the things of men. That was the only way to have power over Satan, and it was the way to be able to use the power of God.

Then Jesus left the house, and went through Galilee; but He did not wish the people there to know it, because He taught His disciples again about His death. It was the third time He had told them that He would be given into the hands of men, and they would kill Him, but He would rise again on the third day.

The disciples did not yet understand, and they were afraid to have it explained to them, because they were not ready to lose their life for His sake. Jesus knew all that was in their hearts, and when they came to Capernaum, and He was in the house with them, He said: What were you reasoning about by the way? Jesus

was on His way to the cross, and He had been telling them about His death. No wonder they could not answer Him, for by the way they were reasoning about which of them would be the greatest; they were not fasting. What a contrast between them and Jesus! Their minds were on the things of men, while His every word and movement expressed the thoughts of God. He saw that they were ashamed to answer Him; so He sat down and called the twelve disciples to Him, and then He said: If any one wishes to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all. That was a new way to be the greatest, but it was God's way.

Then He took a child and set him in the midst of them. The child was not great, and was not wishing to be first. Jesus took him up in His arms, He folded His arms of love around that little child, and said, Whoever shall receive one of such children in My name, receives Me; and whoever receives Me, receives Him who sent Me. It was better to be loved by Jesus than to be great among men. It was happier to be little, and to have the arms of Jesus round them, than to be what men call first. The little child had no great name of its own; it would be received

in the name of Jesus. How truly great that would be, for whoever received Jesus really received the great and blessed God, who sent His own beloved Son into the World, and He would reward those who received the little ones of His kingdom, for they were loved by Jesus. But John said, Teacher, we saw one casting out devils in Thy Name, and we forbad him, because he did not follow us. Jesus said, Do not forbid him, for no one can do a miracle in My Name and then go and speak evil of Me. He that is not against us is for us. What grace in Jesus to say "us." He would put His disciples so near Himself that those who were against them were against Him. It was like what He said about the little child being received in His Name. He would bring the disciples under His Name, and under the protection of His arms, that they might feel like little children with Him. John did not know then how great it was to be a little child in the arms of Jesus: but afterwards, when Jesus was gone back to heaven, it was John's great delight to call the people who loved God his little children; it was what Jesus called them. And when John was dying, and going to be with the Lord Jesus, it is said that his last words were: Little

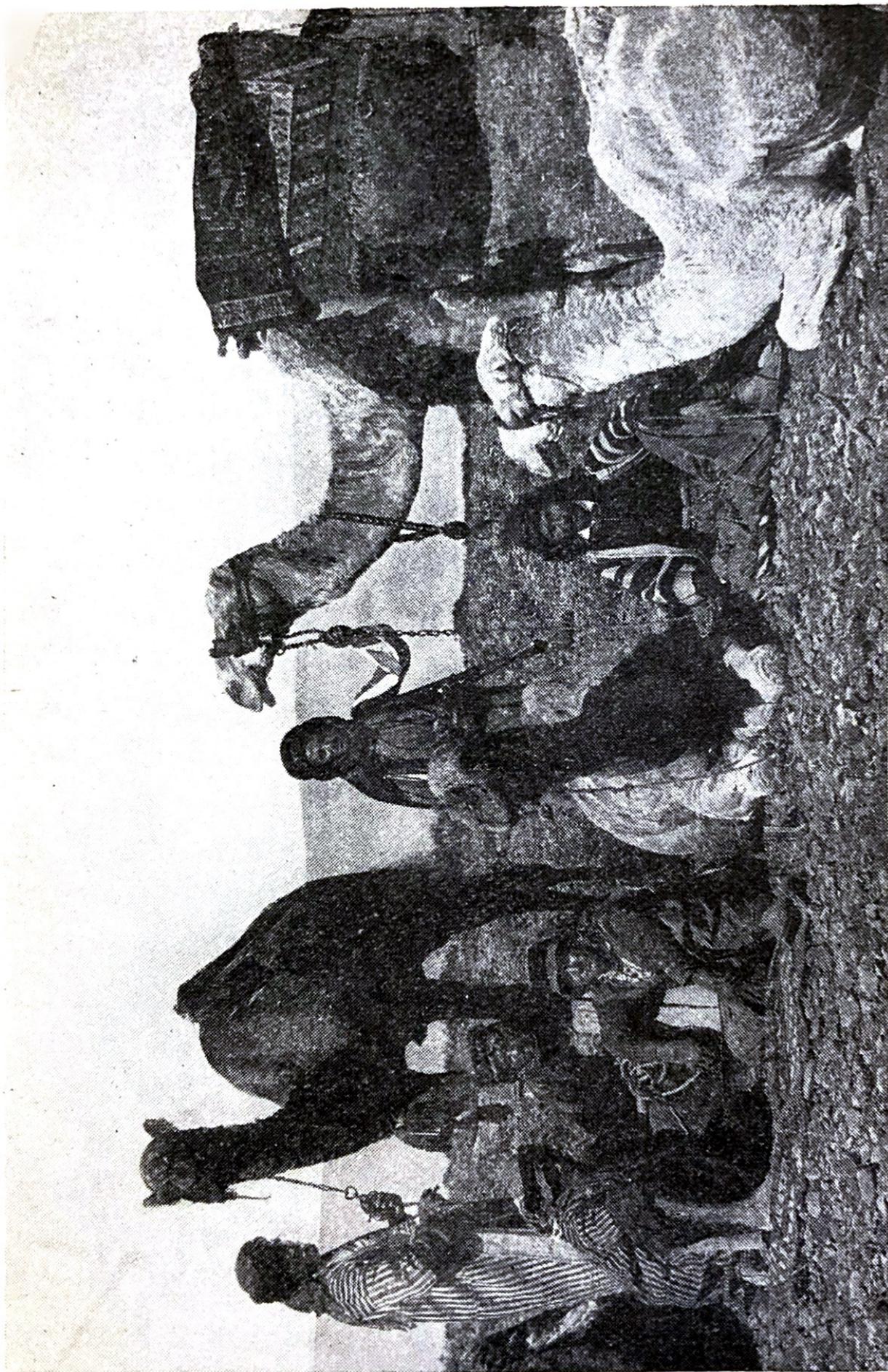
children, love one another. Jesus also said that if any one gave them a cup of water to drink, in His name, because they belonged to Christ, he should not lose his reward; and if any one hindered one of His little ones who believed in Him, it would be worse for him than if he were drowned in the sea. The Lord Jesus had spoken about following Him. He wished them to be in such downright earnest in following Him, that they would deny themselves by dropping off everything that would delay them on the road. It was better to enter into life with one hand or one foot, than to keep their two feet and go to hell where the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched. And so, if they were in earnest about entering the kingdom of God, they would rather lose one of their eyes than miss their way to it. He meant by this that they would be ready to leave whatever was most precious to them as men in this world, if it prevented them from following Him. They would not let anything stop them, or turn them back.

One time a ship was wrecked in the harbour close to land, and the sailors were told to swim to shore if they could. A boy was on board who had many pretty things in his cabin,

presents from his dear mother and sisters. He did not like to leave them behind, so he filled all his pockets quite full, and being a good swimmer, he jumped into the sea. But he could not swim, his pockets were so heavy that he was sinking! So he thought, If I save my watch and all my precious things, I shall be drowned. It is better to lose them all and to save my life! Wise boy! He then threw off his jacket and swam quickly to the shore. This is only a little picture to show you what a person does who has but one thought in his mind. He wanted to save his life, and the most precious thing he had must be dropped into the sea, lest it should cause him to lose his life. And so it is with one who believes what Jesus said, that it was better to enter into life without any of the things that we value as men, than to lose the blessing of the kingdom of God.

Then He said, Every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt. Fire is that which tries things, it proves if a thing is good. God tries every man's work, to prove that it is good. Salt is that which is good itself, and it keeps other things good. They were to have salt in themselves, the grace of God's kingdom was to rule in their hearts.

In this way they would be at peace with one another, because if they were faithful to God they would not be selfish. How could they have salt in themselves? By prayer and fasting, as Jesus told them. One who is praying to God is thinking of what is good, like the salt, and that makes him turn away from all the badness and selfishness in himself, like the fasting, the good keeps away the bad; and one who is praying and fasting is kept from the things that make men not at peace with one another. Jesus was warning them of the things that would hinder or spoil the gracious rule of the kingdom in their hearts. He said, If the salt lost its savour, they could not bring its savour back, but each one was to have it in himself. In the Old Testament they were told to put salt with their offerings, which were to be seasoned with salt; and so when grace is ruling in the heart, there will be the savour of it. There is a sweet savour about a person who is always choosing good and refusing the evil; he is entering into life, for he is following Jesus.



GROUP OF CAMELS IN DESERT.

MARK X. 1-31.

JESUS left Capernaum and went into the coasts of Judea, beyond the river Jordan, and again the crowds came to Him, and He taught them as He always did. It seemed as if His work was done, when God proclaimed from the cloud of glory that He was well pleased with His Son who had done all things well. But His work was not finished. He came down from the mountain to go to the cross. His home was the glory. He had a right to stay there, but He came from the glory to die in order to bring us into that glory. He was the Just One who was going to die for all the unjust ones. But as long as He was in the world He was the Light of the World. So if the crowds came to Him, He taught them in His own gentle, gracious way, as they were able to hear Him. The Pharisees did not want to learn from Him ; they came to disturb and to tempt Him. They did not like to see the crowds listening to the message of grace ; so they asked Jesus about the law of Moses. Was it lawful for a man to put away his wife ? Jesus asked them what

did Moses command, and then said it was because their hearts were so hard that it was necessary to give them a law written on stone ; but what Jesus taught them was the law of love. He would write it in the heart. When God made man and woman at first, He said, a man was to be so joined to his wife in love that he would leave his father and his mother, and be so joined to his wife that they would no longer be like two people, but like one, for they would be joined together by love, which is so much stronger than a law ; they would have the same mind and the same judgment, and that would make them like one person instead of two. Jesus said what God has united, man must not separate. When they were in the house, the disciples asked Him about it, so Jesus said that whoever puts away his wife and marries another commits a great sin ; and if a woman put away her husband and married another, she would commit a great sin.

Then they brought little children to Jesus, that He might touch them. The children did not know anything about the laws that the Pharisees talked of ; but they could enjoy the love of Jesus, their hearts were not hardened. The disciples wished to send them away, but

Jesus was much displeased, and said, Suffer little children to come to Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God. How wonderful that God's kingdom should be made up of little children! Jesus explained to them how it was so. He said, Verily I say unto you, whoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall not enter into it. Then Jesus took the little children up in His arms, and put His hands on them, and blessed them. A great man was reading this chapter one day, and when he came to this verse he said, O to be a little child! He felt that he could give up all his learning and every thing to be taken up in the arms of Jesus and to be blessed by Him like that. There is nothing so weak and helpless as a little child, but God chooses weak things that all the power may be His own. The kind of strength that men have does not help them to go into His kingdom. But the people who have no strength of their own, like the little children, they find how great the power of God's kingdom is. And those who have faith in God find out how in their own weakness God can make them strong, because His strength must be greater than man's. When Solomon was crowned King over Israel, he said to God, I am only a little

child. I do not know how to go out or to come in. God was pleased that Solomon felt like that. It was so great a thing to be God's king and to rule over His people, that Solomon felt like a little child without any power of his own. How did God answer him? By giving him great wisdom and understanding. God made him a great man by giving him a wise heart and a large mind. Solomon knew more than anyone else in the world. I wonder if you remember the first thing he did that showed his wisdom? When the woman lay upon her baby in bed and it died, she got up and took a living baby away from its mother, and put her own dead baby in its place. How did Solomon find out which was the real mother of the baby? By ordering them to cut the living baby in two, and to give half to one woman and half to the other. The real mother was in great distress at the thought of her dear baby being cut in two! She would rather let the other woman have it than that it should be hurt. But the woman who was not its mother did not care. So Solomon said, She is the mother of the child, for she loves it, the other woman does not love it. It was God who put love into a mother's heart, and the first proof of His wisdom is that it understands love.

Every little child knows who loves him, and God would like us all to be like little children to know His great love !

As Jesus was going on to Jerusalem, a young man ran up to Him, and kneeled to Him, and said, Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life ? Men always think they can do something to make them deserve God's good gifts ; they would like to be told to do something for God ; but men's thoughts are so different from God's thoughts. All the doings of men are only bits of a broken law that they are not able to keep. Jesus said to him, Why do you call Me good ? No one is good but One, that is God. You know the commandments, about not killing, or stealing, and about honouring your father and your mother. Jesus only spoke of the commandments that had to do with men, about behaving well to his neighbour, so the young man said, Teacher, I have kept all these from my youth. He was a good Jew, he had lived in all good conscience as a Jew, like the wise son who obeyed his father and his mother. Jesus might have said to him, Thou shalt not covet, but He chose a sweeter and more perfect way of showing him that he did covet. Deep down in his heart that good

young man loved the world and the things of the world. Jesus looked on him—a look of love. He liked to see a young man who loved what was good, and who wished to enter into life. Jesus loved him. He would draw him with the cords of love. So He said to him, One thing thou lackest, Go and sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven, and come, take up the cross, and follow Me. It was a new thought for a Jew to have to give up his riches; he had never heard of that before; the Jews thought that if they had the riches of the earth, it was a proof that God was pleased with them, and so it was while it was the riches of the promised land that they enjoyed. It was a good land; the Lord their God cared for it, and His eyes were upon it from the beginning of the year unto the end of it. But when Jesus was down here, their land was trodden down by the Gentiles, and the Jews were content to have it so; they did not come to Jesus to learn God's way of salvation from their enemies. This young man did come; he kneeled to Jesus, he called Him Teacher; he wanted to learn how to enter into life. He wanted something more than to be a good man among men. He wanted to have eternal life.

Jesus looked upon him and loved him, but He could see into his heart, and He saw there that he loved his riches. Jesus invited him to come with Him, to follow Him. But He was going to the cross. It made the young man sorrowful to hear that ; he went away grieved, for he had great possessions. The only One in the world who was Good was going to the cross. He was going to give up all He had—for sinners. How could a man with great possessions follow Him ? There was only one way, and that was, to become like a little child with nothing of his own, to be taken up in the arms of Jesus, and in His arms he would find all the riches and power of God's kingdom.

But he went away sorrowful; it would cost him too much to follow Jesus. Jesus saw him go away. He knew that he was sorrowful, and looking round on His disciples He said, How difficult it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God. The disciples were astonished to hear Him say that. So he said again to them, Children—if they were children they ought to have understood what He was saying—how difficult it is for those who trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a

needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. Why did Jesus say that? Because a rich man has treasures on the earth and he does not want to have treasure in heaven. People think that if they can go to heaven when they die, they may as well have their treasures here until they die; but Jesus was teaching them how to have treasure in heaven before they die; that was what He called entering into life. Even the disciples did not understand Him; they were exceedingly astonished, and said to one another, How then is it possible to be saved? Jesus knew what they were saying, and He looked on them, a look of pity and love, and then He said, It is impossible with men, but not with God, for with God all things are possible. Jesus had said before, All things are possible to him that believes. Faith in God was that wonderful new sight that Jesus gave to blind men, so that they could see the works and ways of God, that other men could not see. Faith made a man able to lay hold of the "all things" of God, the things that are impossible to men. Faith was like a hidden key to all the treasures of heaven that Jesus wanted the rich young man to have.

Then Peter began to say to Jesus, We have

left all and followed Thee. How did Jesus answer Peter? He said, Verily I say to you—that meant, you may be quite sure of what I say—there is no one who has left house, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands for My sake and for the sake of the gospel, who will not receive a hundred times as much now in this world; he will get even down here, houses, and brothers, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions, for it was the time of taking up the cross; and in the coming time he will have eternal life, but many that are first shall be last and the last shall be first. God always put the Jews first, but if they had not faith to follow Jesus and have treasure in heaven, the Gentiles might be first and the Jews the last.

Christ, the Saviour of sinners, came
 'Into the world to save.
Sing His glory, His worth, His fame.
 Jesus alone can save.
No other Name is given,
Search through earth and heaven.
 Jesus alone, Jesus alone,
 Jesus alone can save.

Suffer the children, forbid them not.
 Jesus alone can save.
He will cleanse them from every spot.
 Jesus alone can save.
Now His work's completed,
He is in glory seated.
 Jesus alone, Jesus alone,
 Jesus alone can save.

MARK X. 32-52.

WE were reading yesterday about God's wonderful multiplication table, how Jesus said if His disciples gave up one thing for His sake He would multiply it by one hundred. God often said He would multiply His mercy to them. Peter did not understand it then, but when Jesus went back to heaven, and when He sent the Holy Spirit down here, to remind the disciples of all that Jesus said to them, then Peter understood it, for God multiplied His mercy to Him in a great many ways. One time Herod put Peter in prison, and he intended to kill him the next day. But Peter had learned from Jesus how to sleep in a storm, the peace of God was in his heart, and he was fast asleep in the prison, though he was chained with two chains. They chained his hands to a soldier on each side of him, and put some soldiers at the door to keep the prison safe. It was quite impossible that Peter could get away with two soldiers chained to him, quite impossible with men, but Jesus said nothing was impossible with God! In the middle of the night, when Peter

was so fast asleep that he thought he was dreaming, an angel came into the prison, and a light shone in that dark place. The angel touched Peter, and roused him up, saying, Rise up quickly. How could he with all those chains? The chains fell off his hands; the chains remained on the hands of the two soldiers, but Peter was free. The angel said, Put on your coat and your shoes, and he did so. The angel said, Cast thy garment about thee and follow me. How the angel took care of him; he would not let him leave his cloak behind. Peter followed, but he did not know what was happening; he thought it was a dream. They passed the first guard of soldiers, and then the second guard: they were put there to keep Peter safely in the prison. Then they came to the great iron gate of Jerusalem, but it opened to them of itself. How wonderful! When Peter thought of it afterwards, it must have reminded him of the words of Jesus that the gates of hell could not prevail against Him, for Jesus holds the keys of death and hell. The angel led Peter through the open gate, and brought him down one street of the city, and disappeared. Then Peter came to himself and understood it all; he said, Now I know certainly that God has

sent His angel to deliver me from Herod and from the Jews who wished to kill me. Peter went to the house where the brethren were praying for him; they were too anxious about Peter to go to bed; they were praying for him all night. How thankful they were to see him and to hear how God had done what was so impossible to men. Peter knew that night how God multiplied His mercy to him, and he found also that brothers and sisters were multiplied to him in that house, where they loved him, and stayed up all night to pray for him.

They were in the way going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus went before them. Wherever Jesus puts His people He always goes before them; and if He has not gone that way Himself it is not His way. When God led His people through the river Jordan, the Ark of the Covenant was carried before them; when the Israelites disobeyed God's holy law, He said the book in which it was written should be put into the ark for safety. The ark of gold was a type of Jesus. He kept everything safe for God. And, as the Ark passed through the deep river, and left it all dry land for the Israelites to pass over, so Jesus went on before His disciples in the way that led Him to the cross. They were amazed,

for they knew that the people of Jerusalem wished to kill Him, and though they followed Jesus they were afraid.

Jesus drew the twelve disciples to Him. He wanted them to keep near Him, that they might feel the safety of His presence, and He told them again what was going to happen to Him. He said they were going up to Jerusalem. Jesus had no thought of turning back, though He knew that He, the blessed Son of Man, would be delivered up to the chief priests and scribes and they would condemn Him to death, and give Him up to the Gentiles. They would mock Him and kill Him. But after three days He would rise again.

The two disciples, James and John, came to Jesus and said, Teacher, will you do for us whatever we ask for? Jesus said, What do you ask for? They said, That we may sit one on Thy right hand and the other on Thy left hand in Thy glory. They believed in His glory, but they wanted glory for themselves, they wished for a place of honour with Jesus. He was not displeased at their request, but He said, You do not know what you are asking for. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized

with? They said, We are able. Jesus meant His sufferings; that was all He had to give them then, for He was on His way to the cross. So He said, You may have a share in My sufferings and in My path of obedience, but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give; that will be given to those for whom it is prepared. Jesus did not wish them to be thinking of a place of honour for themselves, while He was taking the lowest place of all. He would have liked them to be in sympathy with Him and to have understood His feelings as He was walking up to Jerusalem, for He was going straight to the cross! The other ten disciples were displeased with James and John for asking to have the highest place. They also wished to have a place of honour.

James and John had left their father Zebedee mending his nets, but their mother was one of the women who followed Jesus from Galilee. She taught her sons to wish to be beside Him in His glory. Jesus called the disciples to Him. How often He called them to His side, as if to say, Come near to Me and learn by Me. They were thinking of what they would gain by the glory. Jesus was thinking of what would be for God's glory. He served God perfectly. His

service went on to death. He set His face that way. He would not turn back. He knew that God would be glorified by His death, and Jesus wanted them to have God's thoughts about the cross instead of men's thoughts. He said, You know that the Gentiles have their great men who rule over them, but that is not the way for you. The greatest among you will be the one who serves you most, not the one who rules over you. And whoever wants to be the first among you must be a slave to all. That was the rule of love, it was the law of God's kingdom. The one who took the lead in service would be like the Lord Jesus, who said, The Son of Man came not to be ministered to, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many. Jesus took the lead in service—He was first in that—as He took the lead in love, and He was first in love. He could say to God, I love My Master, and He loved poor sinners enough to die for them. All who love God, and all who serve God, must follow Jesus, and take the lowest place among men. They will not be ashamed of that, for God says, He that humbles himself shall be exalted. I knew a little girl once who was everyone's messenger. Some one said to her father, Will you not let the servant do that for

you? He said, No, my little girl likes to be my servant, and no one else will do it half so well, because it is a pleasure to her! So God likes us to take pleasure in doing His will. Then we are able to be His messengers. But He does not use people while they are thinking of getting honour for themselves.

Jesus came to Jericho with His disciples, and a crowd of people were outside the town. A blind man who was the son of a blind man sat by the roadside and begged. Matthew tells us there were two men, as if the father and the son were together. But the blind man heard that Jesus of Nazareth was there. He had never seen Jesus, but he had faith to believe that the lowly One of Nazareth was the Son of David, so he cried out, O Son of David, Jesus, have mercy on me. The people tried to stop him, but he cried out all the more, Son of David, have mercy on me. Jesus stood still and waited for him to come to Him. Then they said to the blind man, Rise up, He is calling you. The poor beggar threw away his garment in his haste to get up and go to Jesus; he did not try to hide his poverty, and he was not like the man who had great possessions; but what little he had he threw away, that he might go to Jesus

more quickly. Jesus said, What do you want Me to do for you? He said, Rabboni, that I may see. It was as if he said, Be my Teacher and give me light. Jesus said, Go, thy faith has made thee well. He was healed, he was saved by faith in Jesus, he saw at once and followed Jesus in the way. He kept his new eyes upon his Saviour. In the next chapter we shall read how others joined with him in doing honour to the Son of David.

Jericho was the place where Elijah crossed over Jordan before he was taken up to heaven in a chariot of fire, and it is the place where the water was bad and the land barren; nothing would grow in it. It was a true picture of the cities that men build, and also of the hearts of men who do not know God. But Elisha the prophet came to Jericho, and they cried to him, just as the blind man cried to Jesus. Then Elisha took a new cruse and some salt, and he cast salt into the water, and the water was healed. What was death before, was then life and refreshment. So Jesus carried the healing water of His grace into this world of poverty and blindness. He made men able to see the goodness of God and the power of His salvation.

Glory unto Jesus be !
From the curse He set us free ;
All our guilt on Him was laid,
He the ransom fully paid.

All His blessed work is done ;
God's well pleased in His Son,
For He raised Him from the dead,
Set Him over all as Head.

MARK XI.

WE read that Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem. When He came to Bethphage and Bethany and the Mount of Olives, He was quite near to Jerusalem, and He sent two of His disciples into the nearest village and said they would find a colt tied ; it was a young donkey on which no child of man had ever sat. They were to untie him and bring him to Jesus. If any one said, Why do you untie the colt ? they were to say, The Lord has need of him. The two disciples went, and they found the colt tied, as Jesus said. It was tied to the door where there were two ways. It was a time when every one had to choose which way he would go : if he would follow Jesus in the way, as the blind man from Jericho was doing, or whether they would choose their own way. They asked the disciples why they untied the colt, and they said, The Lord has need of it. Then they brought it to Jesus, and put their own clothes on the colt, and Jesus sat on it and rode into Jerusalem, meek and lowly, sitting on an ass. The people spread their clothes in the

way, and some cut down branches of trees and spread them in the way. This was to do honour to Jesus. The people who went before Him, and those who followed Him, cried out, Hosanna!—that means, Save now—blessed is He that comes in the name of Jehovah—that was the name that God called Himself to Israel—and blessed be the coming kingdom of our father David, Hosanna in the highest!

Why did Jesus do so? To show how He would command everything in the service of God. He could command the hearts of His people, and He could command an ass. If the Lord had need of it that was enough. When the children of Israel were happy with God they offered willingly, and it was to God Himself they gave their offerings. This man gave the ass willingly.

Jesus also did it to give another proof to the Jews of who He was, so that they had no excuse for not believing in Him. The prophet Zechariah had said to Jerusalem, Thy King cometh to thee, He is just, having salvation, lowly and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt, the foal of an ass. So they said, Hosanna—Save now. Jesus brought salvation by Himself to all who followed Him. But He was going

to the cross, and now it was to be seen who was for Jesus, and alas ! it was also seen who was against Him.

Those who ought to have been the shepherds of Israel did not cry Hosanna. They did not say, How great is His goodness, how great is His beauty. They rejected His salvation, and those very people who heard Him proclaimed as Son of David that day, were ready soon after to join in the cry of Crucify Him !

As Son of David, Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the Temple. It was called the house of God. Jesus felt it was His business to look after what belonged to God even in the faithless city of Jerusalem. He went inside the Temple and looked all round on every thing, to see if there was anything for God there. As God's blessed Servant, Jesus looked round on all the disorder that men had brought into His house, but it was late in the day, it was near the end of His time down here, and He went out to Bethany with the twelve disciples.

The next day, as they were going back to Jerusalem from Bethany, Jesus was hungry, and He saw a fig-tree far away which had leaves on it. He went near to the fig-tree to see if

there were any figs on it, because the figs ought to come before the leaves. Jesus found nothing but leaves on that fig-tree ; it was not the time for figs, so it ought not to have had all its leaves on it. Jesus said to the fig-tree, Let no one eat fruit of thee any more for ever. It had no fruit for Jesus, and leaves were no pleasure to Him. His disciples heard it. Why did Jesus say that ? Because God had spoken of Israel as a fig-tree that ought to bear fruit for Him. Obedience and love were the kind of fruit that God looked for from His people ; but they were disobedient and hard-hearted. They were like the fig-tree which had plenty of leaves, it had a great show of life, but no fruit grew on it for Jesus. They were far away, but He came near to them. His heart longed to find some fruit for God in Israel. Jerusalem was also like the fig-tree, which was covered with its large leaves, but it had no figs underneath. Its fine temple was there, and a great appearance of worship, but the glory of God was not in the temple, and the priests who worshipped there hated Jesus, though He was come in the name of Jehovah. Jesus went into the temple, and what did He find there ? People buying and selling, and tables of money, and the seats of those who sold doves. They

were making money by what ought to be offered to God.

Jesus drove them all out of the temple, and forbid them to carry anything through the temple, for it was written : My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations, but ye have made it a den of robbers. Buying and selling and counting their money was just the opposite to praying.

The prophet Jeremiah had said that they called it the temple of Jehovah, but it was more like a den of robbers because of their evil ways. Jesus quoted his words to them. And Isaiah had said that when Israel was faithful to their own true God He would make the Gentiles joyful in His house of prayer. When Solomon built the temple, he prayed that if a Gentile came from a far country, he might see that it was the house of God and that Israel were His people. But the glory had gone away from Israel. They did not know Jesus, the One who came from the glory.

After Jesus was gone back to heaven, there was a Gentile whose business it was to take care of all the treasures of the Queen of Ethiopia. But he wanted something more than earthly treasures ; he had heard the great name of

Jehovah and of His house of prayer at Jerusalem. So he went up there to worship, as Solomon wished the strangers to do. But this man did not find the knowledge of God in Jerusalem, and he was going home disappointed. It was a long way to his country, and he had to drive through the lonely desert, but God looked down from heaven and saw him sitting in his chariot, and God saw that he had a book and he was reading something out loud. How do we know that God took notice of him? Because He sent His angel to Philip and told him to go to Gaza. The angel did not tell him why he was to go there, but he obeyed, and as he was going he met the chariot. The Spirit told him to go to it, so he ran up to it, and Philip heard the Gentile reading out of the book; it was written hundreds of years before by the prophet Isaiah. Philip said to him, Do you understand what you are reading? The Gentile said, how could I understand it unless some one would teach me? Then he begged Philip to get into his chariot and sit with him. The place where he was reading was about Jesus laying down His life for sinners, so he said, I pray thee tell me Who the prophet was writing about? How delighted Philip was to answer that question!

He began at that word, "His life was taken from the earth," and told him the good news about Jesus! The Gentile had never heard of Jesus. He took a long journey to go to Jerusalem because God's house of prayer was there; but he did not hear the Name of Jesus in the temple. Philip told him that Jesus had died to put away sin, and that He was gone up to the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. The Gentile could pray to Him up there! He believed this good news, and it was such good news to him, that he felt he would like to come under the name of a glorious Man who was in heaven, and who had died for him; so he asked Philip if he might be baptized. Then he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down to the water and Philip baptized him. He confessed the Name of Jesus and went home rejoicing. What good news that Gentile brought to his own country. So it is, when men are unfaithful to God, as the Jews were, He finds some other way to give blessing, because God is determined to bless. He says, Blessing I will bless. Some one else will get it. The chief priests and scribes missed the blessing. They were angry with Jesus for quoting the words of Jeremiah. They wished to kill Him, but they

were afraid, because the crowd were astonished at His teaching.

When the evening came, Jesus went out of Jerusalem, and in the early morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig-tree dried up from the roots. Peter told Jesus of it, and He said, Have faith in God. Then He told them that whatever they prayed for they would get if they believed in God and did not doubt in their hearts that God heard them. But He said, they must forgive one another, as their Father in heaven forgave them. The joy of God's forgiveness was to be so bright in their hearts, when they spoke to Him, that they would be able to forgive one another.

When Jesus came back to Jerusalem He walked about in the temple, and the priests and scribes and elders came to Him, and asked Him who gave Him authority to do those things? Jesus said, I will ask you a question, Was the baptism of John from heaven or of men? But they knew that if they said that John's message was from heaven, Jesus would say, Why did you not believe him? They confessed that they were unbelievers. And they were afraid of the people to say it was of men, because they all believed that John was

a prophet. So they said to Jesus, We do not know. They were afraid to say the truth. So Jesus said, Then I will not tell you by what authority I do these things. John was sent by God with the message that Jesus was coming. If they did not believe that his message came from heaven, they could not understand the authority of Jesus. He came as Son of God with the good news of God's kingdom. He had authority to use all things for the service of God. He had a right over the temple as God's house. He had authority over the fig-tree and over the mountain. He could remove all things. He showed them the unbelief that was in their own hearts. He had authority to remove them also, for none of those priests, or scribes, or elders had the knowledge of God. They were all like the withered fig-tree that had no fruit on it for Him.

Children now may come to Jesus
In their early days.
Children now may swell the chorus
Of His praise.

'Twas for us His life was given,
And He waits to see,
Round His throne in that bright heaven,
Such as we.



‘ VINEYARD, ’

MARK XII. 1-34.

JESUS began to speak a parable to those men who did not know His authority. That was the way the prophets spoke, in parables. They told what God's thoughts were about people at the time; they warned people of what would come. God always told people beforehand; He left men without excuse. Just as He told Adam that he would die if he ate the fruit of the tree. So it was as if Jesus said, I am God's Prophet now, and I will tell you what God thinks about all of you, men of Jerusalem.

Then He told them a parable about a man who planted a vineyard, and he put a wall all round it, and built a tower, and a place to keep the ripe grapes in, and to make them into wine; then he gave it to men to take care of, and went away to another country. God had called Israel His vine. He planted them in a good land, with rivers and sea all round them, and the vineyard of Jehovah was the house of Israel, and the men of Judah the plant of His delight. Jesus went on with the parable, and

said that the master of the vineyard sent his servants to get some fruit from it ; but the men who took care of it caught the servants and beat them, and sent them away empty. Then another was sent, and another ; he sent many. Just as God sent His prophets : some they beat, and some they killed. At last the owner of the vineyard said he had one son, his well beloved ; he would send his son, the last of all, for he said, They will reverence my son. But those men said, This is the heir, come let us kill him. and the inheritance will be ours. So they killed the son, and cast him out of the vineyard.

When Jesus had told them this parable, He said, What will the master of the vineyard do ? He will come and destroy those men, and give the vineyard to others. Then He said, Have you not even read the Scripture, where it is written, The Stone, which those who builded rejected, is become the corner stone. That is the chief stone of all. It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. But their eyes were blinded ; they could not see that Jesus, whom they were rejecting, and casting out of His own vineyard, was God's precious corner stone. They tried to lay hold of Him,

but they were afraid of the crowd. Those chief priests and scribes and elders knew quite well that the parable described themselves. They were saying of God's beloved Son, This is the Heir, come let us kill Him. They had heard the Hosanna to the Son of David. He was proclaimed in their city, as the One who came in the Name of Jehovah, bringing salvation; and not one of them joined in saying, Blessed is He who comes in the name of Jehovah. They left Him, and went away. They refused the salvation of God.

But God was letting all kinds of men come before Jesus, that the light and truth that was in Him might show what was in all their hearts. When they could not destroy Jesus themselves, they sent Pharisees and Herodians to try if they could make Him say something wrong. It was like Satan when he tried to tempt Jesus. They called Him, Teacher; they pretended that they wanted to know the way of God in truth. Then they asked Him, Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar or not? Cæsar was the Roman Emperor, and it was a disgrace to the Jews to have to pay tribute, or taxes, to the Gentiles. The Pharisees felt that, and they hoped that Jesus would say, Do not pay the

tribute. They hated the Romans, and they hated the Herodians, they were the people who belonged to Herod's court: and the Herodians liked to make the Jews pay tribute to the Romans. Yet those men who hated each other, agreed to tempt Jesus. How did He receive them? In the calm dignity of One who was unmoved by their smooth words, or by their evil thoughts. He could look into their secret hearts, and what He saw there was hypocrisy! They pretended that they wanted to know the way of God, but they really wanted to find an accusation against Jesus. He said, Why do you tempt Me? Bring me a penny that I may see it. Jesus had none of their pennies. They brought one. Jesus did not take it in His hand, but He said, Whose face is on it and whose writing is on it? They said, Cæsar's. Then Jesus said, Give Cæsar the things that belong to Cæsar; the penny belonged to Cæsar, and if he was their king they must submit to him. God would not allow rebellion against even a bad king. And Jesus said, Give to God the things that are God's. It was just what they were not doing. They were not giving Him the fruit of His vineyard. They wondered at His answer.

His words were like a two-edged sword, that cut into the hearts of both the Pharisees and the Herodians !

The Sadducees were another kind of men. They were not religious like the Pharisees, and they were not like the scribes and elders. They did not agree with any of those people except in one thing, and that was, they did not love Jesus ! But they said that God did not make a man of spirit, soul, and body. They said a man had no spirit, so they did not believe in the resurrection. They thought when the body died a man's life came to an end, and they came to Jesus with what they thought was a very clever question, and that it would prove that there was no such thing as people living again by and by. They said, Suppose a woman had seven husbands, one after another, and they all died, and if they lived again, which one of the seven would she be the wife of ? Jesus said, You are all wrong, because you do not know the scriptures, nor the power of God. When people rise from the dead they do not marry ; they will be like the angels in heaven, where everything is perfect and there is nothing more to wish for. God gave Adam a wife because he was alone ; he wanted a

companion who could understand him ; he called all the animals by name, but none of them could answer him. It was a proof that man had a spirit ; he found no one to understand him until God made a woman on purpose for him ; that was the power of God. He was the Creator and He was the life giver, and He could call the dead out of their graves and make them live again. If the Sadducees had known the Scriptures they would have known that when God spoke to Moses out of the burning bush, He called Himself the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob. That shows they were alive, for God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. What a wonderful thought that is ! He is God of the spirits of all flesh. The spirit of a man belongs to God. He holds the spirit in His own power, and God will raise the dead, in spirit, soul, and body, to give an account to Him of things done in the body. Jesus left the Sadducees also without a word to say. But one of the scribes was listening, and he liked what Jesus said about being the God of the living. So he asked Him which was the greatest of all the commandments ? Jesus said, The first commandment was, that they should love the

Lord their God with all their heart, and with all their soul, and with all their mind, and with all their strength. He was their one Lord, He was to have the first place with every man.

Man's heart, and soul, and mind, and body, were to be under God's command. It was the rule of love and of entire obedience. If we love anyone very much it comes easy to us to obey him. Jesus said the second commandment was like the first, for it said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. If they could have kept those two commandments they would have kept the whole law. Because if they loved God they would not sin against Him, and if they loved their neighbour, they would do good to him. The scribe understood what Jesus said, and he answered, Yes, God is One, and there is no other God but Him, and to love Him perfectly and one's neighbour as oneself is a greater thing in His sight than whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. Jesus was pleased with the scribe's answer, and said to him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.

But no one dared to ask Jesus any more questions. He had the last word with every one of them. It was a word of authority and power. He had the Spirit of wisdom and

understanding. He was Himself the Lord their God: they ought to have loved Him with all their heart and with all their soul, with all their mind and with all their strength!

A new thing 'neath the sun was seen,
For God, a Man on earth has been.
Now,—Man in glory—fills the scene!

MARK XII. 35-44.

WE read how Jesus told them the first and great commandment ; how the blessed God claimed the heart of every man. God had a right to all the heart, and all the soul, and all the mind, and all the strength of every man. It would have been perfect happiness for men, because nothing makes a man so happy as being able to love some one who is entirely worthy to be loved. God wished men to be happy. But men had idols in their hearts, and after them they would go ! The whole life of Jesus showed them how to love God perfectly. Jesus kept that first and great commandment.

When the men of Jerusalem did not dare to ask Him any more questions, Jesus asked them a question. He said, How is it that the scribes say that Christ is the Son of David, because the Holy Spirit taught David to say, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool. Jesus said, If David called Him Lord, how is He his son ? They did not answer that question,

but the mass of people heard Him gladly ; they were the many for whom He was going to give His life a ransom. Why did Jesus ask that question ? To make them understand that He was David's Lord as well as David's son, and that the time was come when God would call Him up and say to Him, Sit on My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool. Jesus is there now at God's right hand. He is waiting on His Father's throne, until all His enemies are put under His feet.

Jesus, once for sinners slain,
From the dead now raised again ;
And in heaven is now set down,
Glorious on His Father's throne.

Jesus said to them in His teaching that they were not to follow the example of the scribes, whose goodness was in outside things, like the leaves on the fig tree which had no fruit on it ; they wore long robes, they had no girdle, as John the Baptist had, and they made long prayers. They pretended to be good, but they would get all the greater judgment. It was better to be like the blind man who said, Have mercy on me ; he did not hide his state of darkness and want ; he had faith, that was the inside thing, and Jesus rewarded his faith.

You remember how Jesus found a man in the synagogue who had a withered hand. That was just the opposite to what the fig tree meant, for he did not hide his withered hand ; fig leaves can hide us from one another, but they cannot hide from God. Jesus put new life into the withered hand, but the fig tree that had nothing but leaves was withered from the roots.

When the disciples were surprised, Jesus said to them, Have faith in God. He told them before that all things were possible to him who believes, and that with God all things are possible. It was a greater thing to have faith in God than to make a good appearance before men. When a man has faith in God he does not talk about it, he does not want other people to see it. All the chief men of Jerusalem joined together against Jesus, because He put away the things they brought into the temple ; they were their own things, the things of men ; Jesus would not allow them to be brought into God's house of prayer. They would rather let the temple be like a den of robbers, as Jeremiah said, than bow to the authority of Jesus. But His presence was showing what was in every one's heart—whether they were keeping God's first and

great commandment, or whether they were wishing to destroy the One whom God had sent, the last of all, His well-beloved Son. They knew He was the Heir, yet they said in their hearts, Come, let us kill Him—no one can come after the Son. He was God's last message to Israel and to this world. They were far away, but He came near to them, and He was looking for good fruit for God, but they had only a good appearance before men. They were like the fig tree with leaves on it and no fruit, so when they asked Jesus about paying the tribute, He called it hypocrisy. It was no use for them to hide the fact that they were in bondage to the Romans, and that God allowed it because they were not giving to God what belonged to Him. They did not give Him the fruit of their lips, giving thanks to His name, so that, in the sight of God, they were all like the fig tree that was dried up from the roots. Jesus meant them to feel it. It was a proof of their shame that they had to pay tribute to Cæsar—the very money which they carried in their pockets belonged to those who ruled over them. It was not the riches that comes from God only.

Do you remember how Abraham said he



FIG TREE.

would not take anything from the king of Sodom, because he did not want to have any riches but what the Most High God gave him? And what a rich man Abraham was! He had flocks and herds and servants, and plenty of money. One day he had four hundred pieces of silver in his hands. And when he sent his servant to seek a bride for his son Isaac, he gave him gold and silver ornaments to put on her! Who gave Abraham all those riches? The Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth. He made Abraham rich, and Abraham's tribute went back to God, for he paid a tenth part to the One who blessed him in the name of the Most High God! Those men of Jerusalem called themselves the children of Abraham, but they had not Abraham's faith, and without faith it is impossible to please God.

It was a great sorrow to Jesus to see that God's judgment was coming on Jerusalem, because the chief priests and scribes, and elders were refusing Him. He was God's Corner Stone on whom He would build every thing that would be for His own pleasure.

Then Jesus sat down and watched the people putting money into the box at the temple. Some rich ones put in a great deal. But a poor

widow came with only two mites, which make one farthing, and she put in both her mites, though it was all she had to live on. It was more than a tenth part, for it was all she had ! No one else noticed her, or saw what she put in, but Jesus did. He knew that she was a widow, and He knew that she had nothing but those two mites. She might have kept one for herself, but she gave her little with her whole heart, because she loved God and the temple was His house. It pleased Jesus to see her do it, because it showed that she did love God with all her heart, and she would like to give to God the things that are God's. She gave all she had with her whole heart !

Jesus called His disciples to Him, and said : This poor widow has cast in more than all those who have put into the treasury, for they have put in what they could spare of their riches, but she has given all she had—the whole of her living. That is the kind of service Jesus likes, because it was done with her whole heart. She gave her heart to God first before she gave her money to the temple, and out of her deep poverty she gave all she had. She did not know that Jesus was looking on and that He would count it free-hearted liberality.

It was greater in His sight than all the gifts that the rich men put into the treasury. It was not like the scribes, who chose the best places for themselves. But it was like Jesus Himself, who was just going to give all that He had. He was on His way to Jerusalem to give His life for sinners.

When God looked down from heaven, and saw
That all had sinned and strayed,
That none were loving, serving Him,
Of all the men He made ;

When God looked down from heaven, and saw
That all were filled with sin ;
That men, and women, children too,
Had wicked hearts within ;

What then did God in mercy say—
That holy Righteous One ?
I have one Son, My well-beloved,
And I will send My Son.

My Son shall die for wicked men,
Shall bring them back to God ;
And I will wash their sins away
In His most precious blood.

The tender shepherd seeks His lambs,
How far soe'er they be ;
My Son shall seek those wandering ones,
And bring them back to Me.

So Christ, the Lord, is seeking still,
Says, " Little children, come,
And I will bear you in My arms
To God My Father's home."

MARK XIII.

AS Jesus was going out of the temple one of His disciples pointed out to Him what fine stones and buildings it had. But Jesus said, Not a stone shall be left upon a stone, that shall not be thrown down. If it were so beautiful, why should it be thrown down? Because they were rejecting the Lord of the temple. They did not know His authority; the fine stones were outside things, but God was not known in that temple. As Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives, where He could see the temple, four of His disciples asked Him to tell them privately when it would be, and what would be the sign that it was going to happen?

Before Jesus answered their question, He said, Take heed lest any one lead you in the wrong way. The important thing for the disciples was to take care that they were right themselves. For many would come in the name of Christ and would pretend to be the Messiah of Israel. The disciples must not be deceived by them, and when they heard of wars, and

earthquakes, and famine, they were not to be troubled, for that would not be the end. And again Jesus said, Take heed to yourselves ; that was the chief thing, because they would be delivered up to the people of the synagogues, and they would be beaten, and they would be brought before kings for Jesus' sake, for a testimony to them. Why was that ? In order that all the great people of the world might see that those poor disciples loved Jesus enough to suffer and to die for Him. That was their testimony, for Jesus said, The gospel must be preached to all the nations. But the disciples were not to think beforehand what they should say. God would teach them what to say when they stood before the kings. The Holy Spirit would put the right words into their lips. It was for Jesus' sake, because of His name that they would be so hated. Men hated Jesus when He was down here, and they would hate all those who loved Him, and who preached the good news about Him. He was speaking of the time when He would have gone away to heaven. He had preached about God's kingdom, and when He would be sitting at God's right hand He expected His disciples to go on preaching about Him, for God

intended all the nations to hear of His beloved Son.

After Jesus had gone back to heaven, Peter and John found how true these words were, for one day the high priest was very angry with them for telling people about Jesus. He was the same high priest that Jesus stood before, while Peter waited to see the end, and he joined with the Sadducees to seize Peter and John; they shut them up in the common prison. But Jesus had said they were to preach of Him. Could the high priest shut their mouths? No. He shut them up very safely in the prison, and the next morning they all came together and sent for Peter and John. The officers went to the prison and came back without them! Why did they not bring them? They said, We found the prison doors shut quite safely and the keepers of the prison standing at the doors, but when we went into the prison we found no one there! Then some one came in and said, The men that you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people. They sent the officers to bring them. They were afraid of the people to be unkind to them. Then the high priests told them that they must not

teach in the name of Jesus any more ; but Peter said, God must be obeyed rather than men. The God of our fathers has raised up Jesus . . . to His own right hand to be Prince and Saviour and to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins. Those were the words the Holy Spirit put into Peter's lips that day.

Then they beat them and let them go, but they went away rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus.

How did they get out of prison, where they were so safely locked up ? In the night, when everyone was asleep, the angel of the Lord opened the doors of the prison, and led them out, and said, Go, stand, and speak in the temple. And they went very early in the morning and taught the people, before the high priest got up. They did obey God rather than men. We find all through the Bible that when people were very much in earnest about something they had to do, they always got up very early in the morning to do it.

Jesus was speaking as a Prophet, and He told them what will happen by and by, in the time that Daniel wrote about. When a man who did his own will would come, he would pretend to be the Christ, but he would

persecute the Jews who believed in Jesus. Then they would fly out of Judea and hide in the mountains. Jesus said, Pray that it may not be in the winter that you have to fly ; for they would be so hunted by their persecutors that they would not have time to take even their clothes out of their houses. It shows us how Jesus thought about them when He said, Pray that it may not be in the winter.

Why would those dreadful things happen to the Jews ? It was God's judgment upon them for rejecting His Son. They cast Him out of His own vineyard. Jesus said that false Christs, and false prophets would come, and they would do signs and wonders to deceive, if it were possible, even those who believed in Jesus. Therefore Jesus said again to them, Take heed. They were to be careful to remember what He said to them. Jesus told them all those things before they happened, that they might trust in Him and not be afraid, for when those days of suffering would be over the Son of man would be seen, coming in clouds with great power and glory. Then He would send His angels, and they would gather together His chosen ones, all over the earth, from the north and south, and east and west.

for heaven and earth might pass away, but not one word that Jesus spoke would pass away. What a comfort that is to all those who believe in Him. Jesus said, No one knew the day or the hour when those things would happen, not even the angels, but the Father only. Jesus will sit at God's right hand upon His Father's throne, until His Father names that day.

Again Jesus said, Take heed. It was the fourth time He said it that day. Take heed, watch and pray. It was the only way to keep safe from all the evil in the world while Jesus was away, because they did not know when He would come back. He would be like a man going away out of the country, but He was leaving His house there and His servants. He was giving authority to His servants, and to each one his work—no one who was a servant could say that he had nothing to do for his Master. Jesus called them His bondsmen, or slaves. He was going to buy those servants for Himself. They could not be servants to anyone else but the Master who had bought them; they belonged to Him, and the doorkeeper of the house was commanded to watch. A doorkeeper is one who knows

when to open the door and when to shut it. He has to watch, and take care of his Master's goods, and to keep out a thief or anyone who would spoil his Master's house.

David made a man a doorkeeper who was faithful in a time of unfaithfulness. He took care of the ark, and God blessed him, and gave his family a great place in the kingdom of Solomon. There were four thousand doorkeepers in the time of Solomon. They had to watch that no enemy came from the north, south, east, or west. They took care that men brought nothing of their own things into God's house of prayer. There was no good doorkeeper at the time when Jesus found them buying and selling and changing their money in the temple at Jerusalem.

The Holy Spirit is the real doorkeeper in God's house, but He can make His servants doorkeepers if they watch and pray. The Holy Spirit is watching for Jesus now, and He teaches His servants to watch for Him while He is away, because they do not know when the Master of the house may come back. It might be in the evening—that would be before nine o'clock; or it might be at midnight—that would be twelve o'clock; or at cockcrow

—that would be three o'clock ; or in the morning
—that would be six o'clock. Jesus spoke as if it would be all night to His servants while He was away. But when He comes back it will be all day. Those servants would have a time of suffering, but though they went forth weeping, they would carry precious seed, which would grow for God's harvest, and when Jesus comes back they will have a time of rejoicing. Jesus did not wish to come suddenly and find them sleeping. So He said, What I say to you, I say to all, Watch. If they loved Him they would watch and pray, and each one would be found doing his own work. They would be like those who say, My soul waits for the Lord more than the watchers who wait for the morning.

The day of glory bearing
Its brightness far and near,
The day of Christ's appearing,
His people do not fear.

Jesus will come in glory,
He comes His saints to raise ;
He'll perfect all the story
Of wonder, love, and praise.

MARK XIV. 1-26.

WHEN Jesus told His disciples to keep awake and to watch for Him to come back, it was like His last words to them. He was going away to His Father. His life of service on the earth was ended. He was going to give Himself up to suffer and to die.

It was the time for the Passover. You know that was the remembrance of the night that they came out of Egypt, when God sent His angel to destroy all the firstborn in Egypt. But in every house of the Israelites they had a lamb ; all the family ate it together, and they sprinkled the blood upon the doorpost. When God saw the blood, His destroying angel passed over that house. The people inside were safe because God saw the blood. The Egyptians were hard-hearted, they were hardened against God ; so they buried their firstborn and forgot them ; they forgot the judgment of God. But God said His people must not forget, they were to remember that night for ever. They were to keep the Passover on that night in every year, to show that they remembered how God saved

them out of Egypt and from the power of Pharaoh.

The chief priests and scribes wished to kill Jesus; but they said, not on the feast day, because they were afraid of the people. They did not know that God had determined that it should be on the feast day, because Jesus was God's holy Lamb. He was God's Passover, whose blood would be shed for many. God meant it to be on the feast day; He was ordering everything. Wicked men might make their plans, but they could only do what God allowed them to do, and at His time and as He chose. Men and Satan thought they had it all their own way at the cross. They did it for evil, but God meant it for good. It was His blessed way of bringing salvation to all who believe in Jesus.

While the men of Jerusalem were thinking how they could kill Jesus, He was at Bethany, sitting at table in the house of Simon the leper, and a woman came with a very precious box of very costly ointment. She broke the box and poured out the sweet-smelling oil upon His head. She was like the widow who gave all she had to the temple because she thought it was the house of God. So with this woman, when the hatred of men was like a great tide

of the sea dashing up against Jesus, she felt, Now is the time to show how I love Him. If all are against Him, He is precious to me ; the best thing I have I will spend on Him, the most costly thing I can get I will pour out upon Him, because He is worthy to be loved with all my heart and with all my soul, with all my mind and with all my strength. Jesus had taught her how to love, and made her able to show her love in the right way and at the right moment. What a wonderful Teacher Jesus is !

But some were displeased at what she did ; they spoke angrily to her, they called it waste to spend the costly oil upon Jesus. Judas began it, because he loved money. He said it might have been sold for a good deal of money and given to the poor. The woman was silent, she made no excuse for what she did, but Jesus answered for her. He said, Let her alone ; why do you trouble her ? She has done a good work on Me. You have the poor always with you, and whenever you wish you can do good to them ; but Me you have not always. She has done what she could. She has come beforehand and anointed My body for the burial. Jesus valued what was done to His body ; it was a body prepared for Him. He glorified

God in His body, and that holy body was going to be put into the grave, but it was precious to the one who loved Him. She anointed His body for the burial. When the priests offered a meat-offering to God, they put sweet incense on it that all might go up as a sweet smell to God. The whole life of Jesus was a meat-offering to God ; that woman knew something of its sweetness. In another place it is said that the house was filled with the sweet smell of her ointment, but here it is said the whole world was to hear of it ! Jesus said, wherever the good news about Himself was preached in the whole world, they should also tell what this woman had done. It was to be spoken of for a memorial of her. How surprised she was to hear Jesus say that. It was such a simple thing to show her love to Him, when even one of His disciples was betraying Him to His enemies ! For it was just at that moment that the devil put it into the heart of Judas to betray Jesus.

The widow gave all her living to the temple, though it was going to be thrown down. The woman at Bethany put the most costly thing she had into the grave of Jesus. He was going to die on the cross, to bear her sins in His own body on the tree ; that was the good news that would

be preached to sinners, and the woman was a pattern of what a sinner would do who believed the good news. She would love Jesus when He was away, when she could not see Him. He might be buried, but she would not forget Him. Her remembrance of Him would be sweet. The woman felt she would not have Him always. Jesus knew what she felt, and He valued it. She was the first of the great company who love Him while He is away, who remember His dying and that He found a grave in this world. Jesus said it should be told of her.

Then Judas, one of the twelve, went away to the chief priests and offered to betray Jesus ; they rejoiced at what Judas said, and promised to give him money. So Judas watched for a good opportunity to give up Jesus to His enemies.

It was the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, when they killed the lamb for the Passover ; so the disciples asked Jesus where they should prepare the passover for Him to eat it. Then Jesus sent two of His disciples into the city, and said that a man would meet them who was carrying a pitcher of water. They were to follow him. When John wrote this story, he told what the water was used for ; but

here it is mentioned to show that they were to be guided to the right place by one who carried a pitcher of water. They were to follow him into the house, and they were to say to the master of the house, The Teacher says, Where is the guest-chamber that I may eat the Passover with my disciples? The master of the house would show them a large upper room furnished and ready for Jesus. He was going out of the world, and yet He had a guest-chamber in it! A great man of the world has a guest-chamber where he invites the people whom he thinks great enough to be in his company; he does honour to his guests, and they do honour to him. They are his guests.

Now Jesus was going to have a guest-chamber, and Jesus had guests! What a wonderful thing to be invited by Jesus to sit at table with Him. The disciples did as He told them, and they found the large upper room ready. We shall hear more about that large upper room by-and-by. Many wonderful things took place there. It was large enough to hold all who loved Him when He was gone away.

When it was evening Jesus came with the twelve; and as they were sitting at the table and eating, He said, One of you will deliver Me

up, one who is eating with Me ! What sorrow was in His words : One of My guests, one of those I chose to be with Me, one of the twelve, one who is eating out of the same dish with Me. No wonder they were grieved ! And they said to Him, Is it I. And another said, Is it I ? Jesus said, It is one of the twelve, the one who dips with Me in the dish. Then Jesus handed a sop to Judas ; he took it from the hand of Jesus, and Satan entered into him ! He became possessed by Satan. He had put it into his heart before to betray the blessed Lord. Judas kept the wicked thought in his heart until Satan entered into him and made him do his will. Jesus said, The Son of Man is going to fulfil all that is written about Him ; but woe to the man who delivers Him up ! It was night. Judas went out of the guest-chamber, into the dark world to do his awful deed. And all for the sake of this poor world's money, for the sake of thirty pieces of silver !

As they were eating, Jesus took bread and blessed it, and broke it and gave it to them, and said, Take this, this is My body. They were to eat the broken bread. Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, and they all drank out of it. Jesus said,

This is My blood of the new covenant that is shed for many. That is what Jesus meant by saying He would give His life a ransom for many. The blood is the life of the body. His blood would be shed for many ; not like the blood of the lamb that was sprinkled only on the doors of the Israelites. The blood of Jesus was for all. It was the blood of the new covenant which God would make, and by which they would know God, for He would write the knowledge of Himself in their hearts, and He would pardon their iniquities and remember their sins no more. Jesus gave thanks for the cup ; it was the cup of suffering and death to Him, but it was the cup of salvation for all who believe in Him ; and whenever they ate the bread and drank the wine, they were reminded of the One Who died in this world, and Who died for them. Jesus wished them to remember Him, He expected them to love Him when He was gone away from them, and He gave them this way of bringing Himself to their minds, so that they would never forget what He did that last night when He was alone with them in that upper room. Judas had gone out to betray Him. It was the moment of Satan's power ; he was the roaring lion stirring up men against Him. Jesus

knew it all, He felt it all. He knew how His poor disciples would miss Him, and He gave them this simple way to remind them of Him in His death, and to show that they loved Him when He was gone away. He said, I will not drink any more of the fruit of the vine, until the day that I drink it in a new way in the kingdom of God. The vine was what grew on the earth. Jesus would not have any earthly joy. The great shadow of His death is on this earth until He comes in glory ; then He will bring the whole creation into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. He will come in the blessing of the new covenant which is written in His blood. God will write it, not on the cold hard stone, like the ten commandments, but on the softened hearts of His people. It made Jesus glad to think of that time when the kingdom of God would be come, when He would be with His dear disciples in a new way, and they would share with Him, in His joy and in His glory. Then Jesus sang a hymn with them, and they went out to the Mount of Olives. That was the place where His deep suffering was seen. Angels saw it and men saw it, and it is the spot where His feet shall stand when He comes in glory. Jesus will take the cup of salvation then,

and He will lead the praises of His people. The many who are redeemed by His precious blood now, while He is away, will be with Him then. He will drink wine—that means He will have joy with them—in a new way in the kingdom of God.

The Lord is now rejected,
And by the world disowned ;
By the many still neglected,
And by the few enthroned.
But soon He'll come in glory.
The hour is drawing nigh,
For the crowning day is coming
By and by.

Oh, the crowning day is coming,
Is coming by and by,
When the Lord shall come in power
And glory from on high.
Oh, the glorious sight will gladden
Each waiting, watchful eye,
In the crowning day that's coming
By and by.

MARK XIV: 27-72.

WE have read about the supper at Bethany, where one heart had the thoughts of God about the One He delighted to honour. The woman poured out on Him the most costly thing she had.

There was another supper, at Jerusalem, when the one who ate out of the same dish with Jesus went out to betray Him for money. Jesus felt the love, and He felt the hatred. But nothing changed Him. He comforted those who loved Him, and gave them something to remind them of Him until He came for them. Every time they ate the bread and drank the wine together, they could say, Come, Lord Jesus, because He said He would come again to take them to be with Himself in heaven. There were just two things for them to think of while He was away—His dying and His coming. So they would do good work for Him.

Then Jesus told them something very sad. He said they would all be offended because of Him that night. For it was written in the Old Testament, I will smite the Shepherd, and the

sheep shall be scattered. He was the Shepherd and they were His sheep. But He also said, After I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee. How kind it was of Jesus to tell them where they would find Him ! That was the place where they met Him at first. As He walked by the Sea of Galilee, He called them to be with Him. After He rose from the dead, He would go before them into Galilee.

Peter said, If all should be offended, I will not. He thought he loved Jesus more than anyone else did. Jesus answered, In this night, before the cock crows a second time, you will deny Me three times. But Peter said still more earnestly, If I have to die with you, I will not deny you ; and all the disciples said the same. But Jesus knew them better than they knew themselves.

Then Jesus took them to a place called Gethsemane, and He said to His disciples, Sit here while I shall pray. And He took with Him Peter, James and John ; those were the three disciples who had seen His glory on the holy mount. Jesus began to be amazed and oppressed in spirit, and He said to them, My soul is full of grief, even unto death ; stay here and watch. Then He went on a little way and fell upon the earth, and He prayed that if it

were possible that hour might pass away from Him. It was the hour of God's forsaking, when He would make His soul an offering for sin. Jesus prayed and said, Abba Father, all things are possible to Thee. Take away this cup from Me ; but not what I will, but what Thou wilt. Then He came to the disciples, and found them asleep ! And He said to Peter, Simon, do you sleep ? Have you not been able to watch one hour ? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. Jesus went away and prayed the same prayer, and when He came back to His disciples, they were sleeping again ; for their eyes were heavy, and they did not know what to answer Him. When Jesus had prayed the third time, He came back to them and said, Sleep on now and take your rest ; the hour is come, the Son of Man is delivered up into the hands of sinners. Poor disciples, they lost that opportunity of watching with Him, and it was the last. They said they would die for Him, yet they could not keep awake for one hour to watch with Him. It was night, it was the natural thing for them to sleep ; but Jesus had said, Watch and pray. How often He told them that was the only way to keep out of

temptation. He called Peter by his old name Simon ; he was the weak man, the son of Jonas, the man made of dust, like Adam. He did not know what to say when he saw Jesus in His glory, and he could make no answer to Him when He saw Him in His suffering.

The presence of Jesus on the earth proved two things about the flesh—it was wicked, and it was weak. Judas and the men of Jerusalem were wicked. The disciples were not wicked, but they were weak. They loved Jesus, but they were too weak to keep awake even for an hour to watch with Him. It was the last word Jesus said about the flesh. It was weak, it was like the withered fig tree. God would never use the flesh again.

Jesus said, Rise up, let us go ; he that betrays Me is coming. And while He was saying it, Judas came, and a crowd of people with him. They came from the chief priests, and scribes and elders, and they had swords and sticks in their hands. But Jesus did not look different from His disciples, His dress was as poor as theirs ; so that Judas had to give them a sign to show them which was Jesus. He said, the One that I shall kiss. Then he went up to Jesus and said,

Rabbi, Rabbi, and kissed Him. He pretended to love Jesus! Then they laid their hands on Jesus and took Him. But one of those who stood by drew a sword and cut off the ear of the servant of the high priest: It was the flesh again showing its weakness, cutting off a man's ear only prevented him from hearing what Jesus might say. But swords and sticks belong to the flesh. The heavenly man would not use them. Jesus said, Are you come out as you would against a thief, with swords and sticks, to take Me? I was with you every day, teaching in the Temple, and you did not take Me; but the Scriptures must be fulfilled. To the last Jesus was thinking of those holy writings. The disciples saw that He gave Himself up to His enemies, and they all forsook Him and fled.

But a certain young man followed Him; he had only a linen cloth round his naked body. They caught him by the linen cloth, and he left it in their hands and fled from them naked. Mark is the only writer who tells us of this young man. It makes us think of the one who went away sorrowful because he had great possessions. He would have liked to follow Jesus and to keep his riches too. But how

could a rich young man follow One who had not where to lay His head in this world? He had not faith to give up the things of this world for Jesus' sake. But when the time came when all forsook Him and fled, he felt now is the time to show that I love Him, and he left all to follow Him. But could he follow Jesus to the cross and to the judgment of God? No. Jesus had to bear that all alone; the young man also had to fly from the men with swords and sticks! No one but Jesus could stand before that crowd of wicked men. The disciples thought they could follow, and they could die for Him. They did not know how weak the flesh was, and that no one could die for Jesus until He first died for them! They had to learn the reason why the fig tree was dried up from the roots.

This young man lost the opportunity of being with Jesus in His life of service and the will of God. He brought no costly ointment to give pleasure to Jesus. Those who followed Him and were with Him, saw how He did all things well. They learned from Him the way of heavenly love. It was the only way to do a good work upon Him!

They led Jesus to the high priest. Peter followed Him afar off, and went into the court of

the high-priest's palace. He sat there with the officers and warmed himself at their fire. Then all the chief priests and elders and scribes joined together to try to find something to say against Jesus, that they might have some excuse for putting Him to death ; but they found none. Many bore false witness against Him, but they did not even agree. Some said, We heard Him say that He would destroy this temple that was made with hands, and in three days He would build another made without hands. But none of them understood what Jesus had said. The high priest asked Jesus why He did not answer them ? But Jesus was silent. Then he said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the blessed ? And Jesus said, I am, and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming with the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his clothes and said, What do you think ? And they all condemned Him to be guilty of death. Then they insulted the blessed Saviour in every way they could. He bore it all in meekness and did not say one word. For the joy that was set before Him, He endured the cross, despising the shame. He knew it would lead to the right hand of the throne of God.

Christ the Lord, the living One !
All His work for sinners done :
On His Father's throne is seated ;
All His toil on earth completed ;
 In the glory.
See Him, God's eternal Son !

Peter was below in the court of the palace, when one of the maids of the high priest saw Peter warming himself. She looked at him and said, Thou wast with Jesus the Nazarene. Peter denied, and said he did not understand her ; but he went outside away from her, and a cock crew. The maid seeing him again, said to those who were standing about, This is one of them. Peter again denied. And after a little while those who stood by said to Peter, Surely you are one of them, for you come from Galilee ; they thought he spoke like the people of Galilee. Peter began to curse and swear, and to say, I know not the Man of whom ye speak. Then the cock crew a second time, and Peter remembered the word that Jesus had said to him, that before the cock crew twice he would deny his blessed Master three times. Peter went out and wept bitter, bitter tears ; he covered his face and sobbed. He went out into the cold, dark night ; terror was on every side, fear was on every heart, for it was the hour of Satan's power.

Peter felt that he had sinned against love ; he had denied the One who loved him as no one else had ever loved him. Peter learned that night that the flesh was weak—he suffered in the flesh—and he learned that Jesus knew him better than he knew himself. He trusted his own heart, and it cost him bitter tears.

Jesus chose His disciples to be with Him, that they might be His witnesses. They could tell what He taught and what He did. And they could tell how He died and rose again, for they all saw Him after He rose from the dead.

But Jesus surnamed three of His disciples for a particular service. God often gave a name to His servants that showed what He intended them to bear witness to. We said that Elijah's name meant, His God is Jehovah—His service for God was expressed in his name. So Jesus gave the name of Peter, a stone, to Simon. We learned in Matthew how Jesus made him a stone in His own building. A stone remains where it is put. We often read in the Old Testament that they set up a stone. It was to stay there and not be easily moved away. Perhaps you think Peter was not very like a stone, and it is true, the weak Simon was frightened by a maid, for the flesh is never changed. But when

Peter was clothed with power from on high by God's Holy Spirit, he was true to his new name. Then he was Peter, a stone, and when he was strong in faith in the glorified Saviour, not all the great men of Jerusalem could frighten him !

Jesus called James and John the sons of thunder. A great sound would go out from them. Their voices were not much heard while Jesus was down here. He was present with them ; they were silent while He was speaking. But when they learned that the One who died down here was alive again for evermore, a great report went out from them. He came to them for forty days after He rose out of the grave and He talked with them. They saw Him taken up, when a cloud received Him out of their sight. What could they do but go and tell all that they had seen and heard ?

Those three disciples were shut in with Jesus on the night that He gave life to the child of the believing Israelite. They were with Him that night on the holy mount, when He stood alone with them as the First and the Last. They witnessed the night of His sufferings, and they heard His prayer at Gethsemane ! While He was with them He taught them how to be His

servants. He had said, Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God ; and He could say, It is done.

The Lord of glory, Who is He ?
Who is the King of glory ?
Only the Son of God can be
The Christ—the King of glory.
He said, e'er Abram was, I am,
Jesus is evermore the Same,
The eternal King of glory !

MARK XV.

IN the morning the chief priests took counsel with the rest, and they bound Jesus and gave Him up to Pilate. Jesus had said that they would give Him up to the Gentiles ; that was their great sin, it made both Jews and Gentiles guilty of rejecting Him. Pilate asked Him if He were the King of the Jews, and He said, Yes. As the chief priests accused Him, Pilate said, Do you not answer them ? But Jesus still did not answer them, so that Pilate was astonished. He had never had a prisoner like that before, who would let Himself be accused and falsely spoken of, and would give no answer. Jesus stood there before them like a strong lighthouse upon a rock, all the waves of man's hatred dashed up against Him, but they could not move Him. He was the power of good in the midst of evil. The love of God shone out in Him, and patient grace. He was suffering from men for righteousness' sake. At the feast of the Passover Pilate used to let a prisoner go free ; and he wished to let Jesus go because he knew that the chief priests had given

Him up from envy ; so he said, Shall I release to you the King of the Jews ? But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to ask for a man who was a murderer instead of Jesus. It is most sorrowful to see that the priests were the worst of all in their hatred to Jesus. They were like Cain who killed his brother Abel, because his own works were evil and his brother's righteous. It was the business of the priests to teach the people knowledge ; they were to be holy themselves, and they were to show the way of holiness to others. But they had lost the knowledge of God ; they went after their covetousness, and when God sent His Son—as Jesus said, the last of all—they said, This is the heir ; come, let us kill Him. They knew He was the Heir, they did not do it ignorantly, they did it from envy, like Cain who envied his brother. The priests stirred up the poor ignorant crowd, so that when Pilate offered to release Jesus, they said, Crucify Him. Pilate said, Why, what has He done ? But they cried out still more, Crucify Him. They asked for a murderer and they rejected the Prince of Life. Pilate judged that He should be let go, but to content the crowd he gave up Jesus to be crucified.

The soldiers led Him away and put on a purple robe, and platted a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and said, Hail, King of the Jews ! They pretended to worship Him. Then they took off the purple robe and put on His own clothes and led Him out to be crucified. They met a man named Simon, from Cyrene ; he was coming out of his field, and he had two sons who believed in Jesus. The soldiers made this man carry the cross for Jesus. They came to a place which was called the place of a skull, and they offered Jesus a mixture of wine and myrrh, but He did not take it. When they put Him on the cross, the four soldiers divided His clothes and cast lots for them. It was written in the Psalms, They part My garments among them, and cast lots upon My vesture.

It was the third hour of the day when they crucified Him,—what we should call nine o'clock. What they accused Him of was written on the cross. It was "The King of the Jews." They confessed the cause of their envy. It was written, and what is written remains. It is the judgment on the Jews to-day, that they crucified their King ! Then they crucified two thieves, one on His right hand and the other on His left ; for it was written in the Scriptures that the

Sinless One would be counted with sinners. Those who passed by shook their heads and said, Thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it in three days, save Thyself and come down from the cross. The chief priests, with the scribes, mockingly said, He saved others, Himself He cannot save. Quite true! He saved others; because He would not save Himself. They were like the bulls of Bashan, they roared against God's Holy One. But He was the Saviour. He was giving His life a ransom for many, and when He had by Himself made purification of sins, He had power to sit down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. They might say, If He is the Christ, the King of Israel, let Him come down from the cross. But God would make Him higher than the kings of the earth.

When the sixth hour was come—that was twelve o'clock—there was darkness over the whole land for three hours. At the end of that time Jesus cried with a loud voice words which meant, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? Could anyone answer that question? Yes; every saved sinner can say, Jesus was forsaken that I might never be forsaken. He bore the judgment of God that

was due to me ; He tasted death for every man that He might become the Author of eternal salvation to all those who obey Him.

The people who heard it did not understand what Jesus said ; their thoughts were about men, they thought He called for Elias. But Jesus was alone with God when He did that great work upon the cross. It was the end of His life of service on earth. He was God's blessed Servant right on into death. He loved God with all His heart, and with all His soul, and with all His mind, and with all His strength. And when He had uttered a loud cry, He gave up His Spirit to God. Jesus was dead ! Immediately the veil of the temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom. Men did not do it. It was done from the top. God did it ! Just as He had burst the heavens open to tell of His good pleasure in Jesus, so the veil was torn in two, to show that God could come out to men and men could go in to God.

We read in Exodus how Moses made the veil of everything that was beautiful. But it hid the most holy place where the ark was, and the mercy seat which was God's throne. No one was allowed to go inside the veil except Aaron, once a year, when he went in to make atonement

for sin. Moses put it there to show that the way into the Holiest was not yet open. God was hidden. Why did God rend the veil when Jesus died? To show that now the way was open. The death of Jesus made a new and living way right in to where God is. The death of Jesus had put SIN away from God's sight for ever. That beautiful veil was a type of the body of flesh that Jesus took, when He came into this world as a Man. His body was given and His blood was shed, and immediately the veil was rent from the top to the bottom! God would not be hidden any more. Now He could come out in all His holy love to poor sinners and bless them, because sin was put away from His holy eyes forever, and all who are washed in His precious blood know that after Jesus had offered one sacrifice for sins, He sat down on the right hand of God. He is now in the presence of God for us, our Saviour.

The centurion who was over the soldiers, stood by the cross, and when he saw that Jesus had died, when He gave that loud cry, he said, Truly this Man was Son of God. He saw that it was not the weakness of death as other men die, that Jesus was strong in the power of God. That He gave up His life when He had finished

His work. God showed that it was finished by the rending of the veil! There were also women looking on afar off. Mary Magdalen was one, and Mary the mother of Joses. They were women who did two things: they followed Jesus from Galilee and they ministered to Him. There were many others who came up with Him to Jerusalem, those who had learned to love Him.

In this gospel we are not told about the earthquake, or about the end of Judas and other things that Matthew wrote of, because the Holy Spirit, who taught Mark what to write, keeps the Lord Himself before our hearts, that as we read of all He did and all He said, we may admire and love Him as One we are learning to know, that we may feel we can speak to Him and trust Him and say to Him

Unseen, we love Thee, dear Thy name.

He loves those who loves Him. Mark's gospel keeps Jesus before us as God's Great Servant, Who did always the things that pleased God, and was always in haste to glorify Him. So Mark does not wait to tell us of others, they are only mentioned to show us what effect His love had upon them, and what

it made them do. Jesus Christ the Son of God is His glad tidings. The Holy Spirit wants us to learn how perfectly He served God and to see how His love has left a track of light through this dark world ; for those who wish to serve Him must first follow Him.

The day that Jesus was crucified, when it was evening, they were getting ready to keep their sabbath. We hear of a man named Joseph ; he was an honourable counsellor, and he was waiting for the kingdom of God. But he had not followed Jesus in His life—perhaps he was too rich—until Jesus was rejected and crucified ; then Joseph felt like the woman at Bethany, now is the time to show that I love Him. Love gave him courage, and he went in to Pilate and begged for the body of Jesus. Pilate thought He could not have died already, so he called the centurion and asked him. Wonderful that those two Gentiles should bear witness that Jesus did not die like other men. Pilate gave Joseph the body, and he bought fine linen, and he wrapped the body in the fine linen and laid Jesus in a sepulchre which was cut out of the rock. It was his own new tomb, no one had ever been laid there. Joseph rolled a stone to the door of the sepulchre and went away.

He had done what God put into his heart to do. He gave the best he had, to show his value for the body of the Crucified One. But the two Marys were watching, and saw where He was laid.

A pilgrim through this lonely world
The blessed Saviour passed ;
A Mourner all His life was He,
The dying Lamb at last.

That tender heart that felt for all,
For all its life-blood gave ;
It found on earth no resting-place,
Save only in the grave.

MARK XVI.

JESUS lay in the grave all that Sabbath day. The only rest He found in this world was in the grave. It was the seventh day, the day of rest. The women also rested on the sabbath, but as soon as it was over, they came very early to the sepulchre. The sun was just risen ; it was the first day of a new week. They brought spices to put upon the body of Jesus ; they thought His dead body was all they should see of Him, and they wished to express their love to Him in death. As they walked together they said, Who will roll away that great stone for us ? They had seen Joseph roll the stone to shut in the sepulchre. But as they looked they could see that the stone had been rolled away, and it was very great. They went into the open sepulchre, and they saw a young man there, sitting on the right side, clothed in a white robe. Matthew called him an angel, but God sent him there to show the empty tomb. The women were frightened ; but he said, Do not be frightened ; you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, the Crucified One. He is risen, He

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is not here. Then he showed them the place where they had laid Jesus. The place was empty. God did not leave His Holy One in the grave. Jesus was called out from among the dead by the glory of His Father. The young man said to the women, Go and tell His disciples and Peter, that Jesus is gone before you into Galilee ; you will see Him there as He said to you.

That messenger knew the heart of Jesus when he said, Tell Peter ; he did not even call him Simon. Peter had found out that Simon is weak and cowardly ; he will not be Simon any more. Peter will seek to be true to the name that Jesus gave him ; he will be Peter, the stone. In the dreadful sorrow of that night, he tasted that the Lord is gracious, and that He was the Living Stone, cast away by men, but precious to God. Jesus forgave Peter, and went to see him alone. The women fled from the sepulchre, they were afraid to tell any one what they had seen until they came to the disciples. God did not mean any one else to hear that message but those who went out to Galilee to meet Him.

The first one that Jesus appeared to was a woman, out of whom He had cast seven devils ! What a picture she was of Israel in the bondage

of Satan. She had not only one devil but seven. It was the full number of spiritual evil. But Jesus delivered that poor woman from the seven devils, that was His great service to her. No wonder she loved Him and missed Him when He was gone. No one could make up to her for His absence. He had died, and she wanted to anoint His dead body. But Jesus appeared to her Himself, He let her see Him risen. The risen Man appeared to her, and spoke to her. Her name was Mary of Magdala. She went and told those who had been with Jesus ; they were grieving and weeping at having lost Him, yet they did not believe that He was alive and that she had seen Him. It was strange that they did not believe, for Jesus had told them so often that He would rise from the dead on the third day. It shows how we may hear a thing over and over again, but if it is not written on the heart by the Spirit of God, it passes away. It is like the seed that was choked by other things and by the thoughts of men. On the same day Jesus appeared to two of them in another form. They were walking into the country, away from Jerusalem. He came beside them as if He were on the same journey. He walked with them and He talked with them. They could say, We

have walked with the Risen Man. He has talked to us and made Himself known to us as the One who died and is now alive again for evermore. Those two went back to Jerusalem that very night and told the others ; but they did not believe them. Afterwards at supper time, it was still the first day of the week, Jesus showed Himself to the eleven disciples, and He reproached them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him risen.

Why was it so hard to believe that He was risen ? Because they were expecting Jesus to bring them into blessing on the earth. They did not understand that the heavens must receive Him because He was rejected on the earth, and that all blessing, even for the earth, could only come in by His resurrection, as God said, Behold, I make all things new. Jesus is the Head of God's new Creation. Many people now believe in Jesus as the gracious Man who was down here who went about doing good, but they do not know Him as the Risen Man in the place of power and glory, as the One who has gone up to heaven and has no place in this world, and who does not give those who love Him a place in this world. He could not give them a

place where He has none. He is gone to make a place for them with Himself in His Father's house, that they may feel that His home is their home, and that they have no home down here because He is not here !

Jesus was so anxious for them to know Him risen that He showed Himself to them for forty days after He rose from the dead. He used to come to them and talk to them. What did He talk about ? The kingdom of God. Those eleven disciples were to be witnesses of His resurrection. They were to tell everyone that they had seen Him. He spoke to them, and they even ate and drank with Him after He rose from the dead. In those forty days there were five weeks, and five first days of the week, when He came to them !

Before Jesus went away He put His disciples into His place in the world as God's servants. They had seen Him crucified, and they had seen Him risen. They were to go into all the world and preach the glad tidings to every creature. Before that they were sent only to the house of Israel, but the new covenant in the blood of Jesus was for all. It would reach out to all the creation. God would make all things new in resurrection. Jesus is now the Tree of

Life in the midst of the Paradise of God. The pleasure of God is all round Him.

When Moses made the beautiful things for the Tabernacle, they were all to be covered over with gold, and so God means to cover everything with Christ, the risen Man is to fill all things for God. Jesus will have other risen men, they will be like Him, but He will be the first and the greatest, He will fill all things. The disciples had left all to follow Jesus. They were like men who had gone out of the world, they had no possessions in it. But they were to go back into the world to do one thing, that was to preach the glad tidings. If anyone believed and was baptized, he would be saved. Those who did not believe would be condemned. Why were they to be baptized? It was the outward confession that they believed in the One who went down under the water of death for them. It was the obedience of faith in the risen Saviour. It was a much greater thing than obedience to a law. It was the obedience of faith in a living Person. He would be with His servants although He was up in heaven, and He would give signs to those who believed. In His Name He would give them power to cast out devils, He would make them able to speak

new languages and to take up serpents—poisonous things would not hurt them—and they should lay their hands upon sick people and they would get well. This promise was only to the disciples who had been with Him while He was down here, and it was only in His Name they could do these things.

When Jesus had spoken all these things to His disciples, He was taken up into heaven, a cloud received Him out of their sight. They saw Him go up in a cloud. A cloud took away Moses and Elias, and Jesus, the Lord of glory, went up in a cloud and sat at the right hand of God. It is the place of power and of authority, where the Son has a right to sit. When He had by Himself made purification for sin, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

The disciples went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by signs following, as He said. Jesus was God manifested in flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, and received up in glory.

God in mercy sent His Son
To a world by sin undone ;
Jesus Christ was crucified,
'Twas for sinners Jesus died.

Oh, the glory of the grace
Shining in the Saviour's face,
Telling sinners, from above,
God is Light and God is Love.

Sin and death no more shall reign,
Jesus died and lives again !
In the glory's highest height
See Him God's supreme delight !

All who in His Name believe
Everlasting life receive ;
Lord of all is Jesus now,
Every knee to Him must bow.

Christ, the Lord, will come again,
He Who suffered once will reign,
Every tongue at last shall own,
Worthy is the Lamb alone.

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