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OUTSIDE THE GATE

PROF. GEORGE SHAW, A. B., B. D.

EVANGELIST

Professor in Taylor University, Upland, Indiana

Author of "The Spirit of Redemption,"

*"Acquainted With Grief," "Selling
the Birthright"*



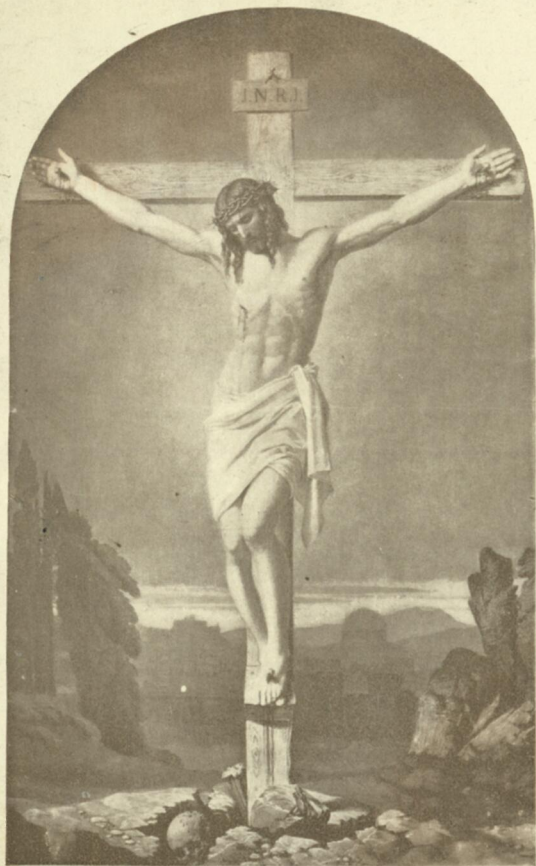
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THE CRUCIFIXION.

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By

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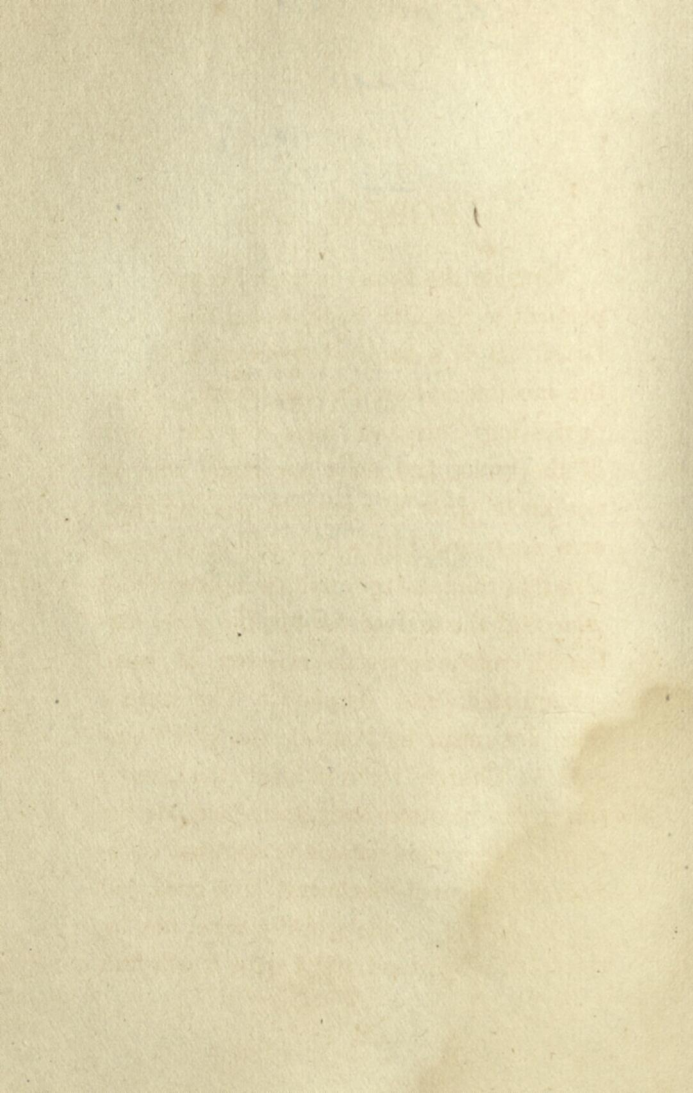
Printed in the United States of America

THE CAXTON PRESS

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BY GEORGE SHAW

James Harper
57 Visger Rd
Essex
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THIS LITTLE BOOK IS
DEDICATED
TO THE
President, Faculty and Students
of Taylor University,
WITH WHOM IT HAS
BEEN MY PRIVILEGE TO LABOR
IN THE
Gospel of Christ



FOREWORD.

“Outside the Gate” is intended as a supplement to the little book, *Acquainted With Grief*. It is a book of devotion to aid in the meditations on Passion Week. Many professing Christians have lost the vision of the cross, and there are many who do not know what it means to take up their own cross and follow Christ. It is hoped also that the messages will strengthen those who find themselves outside the gate, maligned, misunderstood, rejected of men, calumniated, and despised. The author does not mean by “outside the gate” outside the Church, for it is inside the Church that the soul often finds itself “outside the gate.” He means outside in spiritual isolation and spiritual loneliness. The book will not be valued by the worldly wise, nor by the spiritually proud, but I trust it will find

a response in the hearts of many who have heard the call of the Master, "Come follow Me."

14 Etchingam Park Road,
Church End,
Finchley,
London, England.
Taylor University,
Upland, Indiana.

"Christianity has no more precious possession than the memory of Jesus during the week He stood face to face with death. Unspeakably great as He always was, it may be reverently said that He was never so great as during those days of direst calamity. All that was most tender, the most human, and the most divine aspects of His character were brought out as they had never been before."—STALKER.

"It is impossible to read the story of the closing episodes of our Lord's life without hearing the tramp of a thousand forces."

"Wherefore Jesus, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate."

OUTSIDE THE GATE.

SUNDAY.

A DAY OF TRIUMPH.

"Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest."

"AT length the time of the end had come." Jesus passes from the slopes of Hermon, where He had been transfigured before His disciples, through Galilee "into the coasts of Judea by the farther side of Jordan." And knowing that the "Son of man is delivered into the hands of men and they shall kill Him," He sets His face steadfastly toward Jerusalem, knowing that the cross awaits Him and feeling the "exceeding weight of sorrow in His soul." On the way James and John seek a privileged seat at His right and left hand when He comes in His glory, forgetting, like many a disciple since, that such a place is for those

only who can be baptized with the baptism of the cross, and that such an honor is given only to "them for whom it is prepared." Blind men are healed by the way, for neither sorrow nor joy prevents Christ from helping those who come to Him. Jesus was never so taken up with Himself as to forget others. A supper awaits Him at Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, and "Lazarus was one that sat at the table with Him." At this feast Martha served, Mary poured out her ointment in loving devotion, and Judas found fault. True character must come out in the presence of the Master. The feast did not turn Jesus from His true purpose, and we do well to learn from this that the innocent pleasures of life will not affect a purpose when it is rooted in the will of God. Moroseness is never a mark of true piety nor the evidence of a high and lofty ideal. Great souls are never turned from their lofty purposes by the innocent joys of life. Jesus with the shadow

of the cross deepening in His soul did not refuse to enjoy the feast with His disciples. Great souls never cast gloom across the paths of others. Jesus in the garden "went apart" to pray.

Jesus spent the night at Bethany. How we are not told. The next day He rides into Jerusalem "on an ass, the foal of an ass." Many people had come to Bethany to see Lazarus, who had been raised from the dead, and meeting "the great multitude" that had come out from Jerusalem, they were filled with enthusiasm and shouted, "Hosanna; blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." It is one of those popular outbursts which Jesus has met several times in the second year of His ministry, when the people sought the loaves and fishes and on one occasion would have crowned Him king. This enthusiasm soon passed into another of a more threatening manner, and it is now "crucify Him." Such is the world and its faithfulness. The

crowd is always fickle, but the strong soul, the soul that has spiritual insight, is not carried away by popular applause.

Christ knows too well what is before Him. In the multitude are His bitter enemies, the Pharisees. Their malice leads them to call upon Him to stop this shouting and praising. They turn to one another with angry frowns, saying, "Behold, how ye prevail nothing." "It is always so, that in the disappointment of malice, men turn in impotent rage against each other with taunts and reproaches." Christ breaks His silence and rebukes this spirit. Pointing to the stones by the wayside, He says, and He says it indignantly, "If these should hold their peace the very stones would cry out." Thus rebuked, they wait the hour of revenge. Christ again passes into silence, which is broken once more on the journey. As they pass in full view of the city, He weeps over Jerusalem, and well He might, for with prophetic vision He sees her com-

ing destruction, her punishment for the dark crime she is about to commit in putting her Messiah to death. He weeps, as the Greek suggests, with loud lamentation, and silently (and triumphantly) He rides into the city, but His triumph is the triumph of a victorious soul. He might have been tempted for the moment to accept the challenge of the multitude and proclaim Himself king and on the enthusiastic moment take the city by storm and escape the cross which had been appointed unto Him; but even if He were, He has gained the victory and passes silently through the gates and up the temple slopes. The triumph of the Christ is that inward soul triumph which resists the momentary temptation to seize the temporary crown and escape the cross and lose the "many crowns." One word from His lips and multitudes would have rallied to His standard. And no doubt the tempter was by His side showing Him the "kingdoms of this world," and asking Him to

“fall down and worship him.” There is always this temptation in popular applause, and many a soul has been lost amidst the shouts of the multitude. This was Christ’s lifelong temptation, and it is the temptation of every saint, made more subtle by the bitter opposition of ecclesiastical foes. The soul is in more danger from the world’s applause than from the world’s frown, for the soul’s greatest danger is in the hour of success. Christ prayed after He had worked miracles, for He knew the danger attending success. It is in such an hour that the path to the cross is missed and the soul is led along the paths of selfishness. Jesus had a triumphant entry into Jerusalem not because the people shouted and spread palm branches, but because He resisted the temptation to yield to the popular conception of the Messiah. The triumph was not in the proclamation of the multitude to His kingship, but in the calm resolve of the soul to finish the work God

had given Him to do. Jesus taught all through His life that temporal failure is the road to true success. To take the

“Road that seems wrong
To man’s blindfold eye,”

is to take the road that leads home to God, “for the way of the cross leads home.” In the midst of the tumult of human praise I hear Him say, “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone;” and again, “He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.”

This is the great lesson for this day. The world’s values are false. The true value of life is in doing the will of God even though it should lead us “outside the gate” to suffer with Him. Edersheim closes his history of this day with these beautiful words: “He alone was silent and sad among this excited multitude, the marks of the tears He had wept over Jerusalem still on His cheek. It is not so that an earthly king enters his city

in triumph; not so that the Messiah of Israel's expectation would have gone into His temple. He spake not, but only looked round about upon all things, as if to view the field on which He was to suffer and die. And now the shadows of evening were creeping up; and, weary and sad, He once more returned with the twelve disciples to the shelter and rest of Bethany."

MONDAY.

A DAY OF DISAPPOINTMENT.

"He found leaves only."

MARK tells us that on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, He was hungry. Matthew tells us that Jesus had lodged in Bethany and it is most likely that He had spent the night in prayer. In the morning He was hungry. That all-night watch and the brisk morning air made Him hungry. He looked about for some fruit, usually to be found along the roadside, and, coming to a fig tree, He found "leaves only." Mark tells us that the "time of figs was not yet;" that is, the harvest for figs was not at this time of the year, but Jesus looked for some of the fruit from last year, for figs are often found all the year round. We must pass by the question of Christ's om-

niscience at this point, and get the spiritual lessons from this incident.

Luke records the parable of the fig tree. "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none; cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?" This parable without question means the Jewish nation, and the incident of the cursing of the fig tree is the symbol of that destruction that came so shortly after the death of Jesus.

For three years Christ has sought for the fruits of righteousness and true holiness, and He has found hypocrisy and hollow pretensions. He has found outward, but not inward holiness, a nation not bringing forth the fruits of righteousness and truth. The Jews made long prayers, but despised the poor. They gave gifts to the temple,

but robbed widows' houses. They gave their tithes, but were bitter and unforgiving. They pretended to be pious, but had not the love of God in them. They did not bear the fruits of the Spirit.

They were a nation without fruit. The cursing of the fig tree is a lesson that the disciples would long remember, and a lesson that the Church and the modern Christian would do well to remember. What a fearful condemnation in those withering words, "Let no man eat fruit of thee hereafter forever;" and the history of the Jewish Church has been a confirmation of these words. The Jewish Church has failed utterly to give spiritual food to the nations. What soul turns to modern Judaism for spiritual food? On the other hand, thousands are turning to the Christian Church for spiritual comfort, while many of their number, failing to find fruit on the barren fig tree, are wandering in the arid deserts of unbelief. The soul that turns to modern Ju-

daism for spiritual food will find "leaves only." Christless and powerless she stands by the roadside of the nations without fruit; dead with the withering blast of the voice she tried to silence within her temple walls; dead with the curse of His invective that symbolically fell on her this day, when in the last moment He sought in vain for some evidence of that righteousness she had been called out of the nation to spread over the earth. ✕ The buried talent must be taken from her and given to another nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. There is solemn warning to the Church in this incident; for she, too, stands only as she continues in goodness. When she fails to bring forth righteousness she will be rejected of God. Let her, too, take warning. ✕ Her past glory, her past history, her past faithfulness will avail her nothing if she fails to bring forth fruit. And the Christian needs to take warning, for, "If a man abides not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is with-

ered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." This is the lesson of the fig tree. ✕ When we fail to bring forth the fruits of righteousness, when we fail to carry out the purpose of God, then it is that the withering curse falls on nation, Church, and individual. God never hesitates to cast aside that which has failed to serve His purpose. ✕

✕ And what kind of fruit does Christ look for in His Church? It is the "fruit of the Spirit in all goodness, righteousness, and truth." It is "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law." We do well to ask ourselves calmly the question, If the hungry Christ in the form of a hungry soul came to us this morning would he find fruit, would he find the help his soul needs? Can we give it? Or have we leaves only to offer; creeds, formalities, cold criticisms, empty formulas, and lifeless shibboleths instead of the bread of life?

There is another lesson that Jesus teaches through this roadside incident, and that is the lesson of faith. When Peter expressed his surprise that the tree had withered, Jesus said, "Have faith in God." And surely when the truth of the symbolical act had dawned upon the disciples there would be need of faith on their part. They would live to see the decay of their nation and the passing of all that had seemed to them sacred, and there would be need of faith. There would be need of faith in the dark hour just before them when He upon whom they had staked their all was taken from them and crucified before their eyes. There would be need of faith in the battle they were so soon to enter for their Lord. It was the lack of faith on the part of Israel that had brought about her downfall, and the disciples and the Christian Church must stand by faith. "The just shall live by X faith." This principle of Christian life must never be lost sight of. The moment doubt

enters the heart there is danger of falling, danger of decay. Faith must be the watchword of the Christian.

He can do nothing without it. He can do everything with it. "All things are possible to him that believeth." Some one has said, "Things are never as bad as they seem, and the difficulties will sneak away if you look them square in the face." But this looking things square in the face is the principle of faith. When there is a grain of faith as small as a mustard seed great things can be done, but where there is no faith there is decay and withering and death. When your little passes into the realm of God's purpose it becomes great in its accomplishments. Prayer without faith is powerless, X but "faith gives absolute power in prayer." To the one who shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that what he saith shall come to pass, it shall be to him. "None X other than this faith, and none other than faith — absolute, simple, trustful — gives

glory to God, or has the promise." Are you hard pressed? Have faith in God. Are you tempted and tried? Have faith in God. Are you troubled about many things? Have faith in God.

Christ enters the temple and cleanses it as He had done at the beginning of His ministry. This also seems to be a symbolic act setting forth His authority as the Messiah of Israel. The children sing hosannas and the angry Pharisees call upon Him to hush this childish gladness, but He answers them that "out of the mouths of babes and sucklings" God "has perfected praise." And so the day closed and "when even was come He went out of the city."

"Long from Thee my footsteps straying,
Thorny proved the way I trod;
Weary come I now, and praying,
Take me to Thy love, O God.

"Fruitless years with grief recalling,
Humbly I confess my sin;
At Thy feet, O Father, falling,
To Thy household take me in."

TUESDAY.

A DAY OF TEMPTATION.

"They took counsel how they might entangle Him in His talk."

TUESDAY has been called the day of temptations. There is one day more of conflict with the Church and then Christ leaves the temple forever. For Christ it is a day of great temptation. He has returned more for the people's sake than with any hope of changing the hearts of His enemies. If He ever had the hope of doing so, that hope has died out. He has calmly accepted His fate, and He returns to teach the people. It is while He is so doing that the "Scribes and Chief Priests came upon Him with the Elders." They question His right to teach. They do not question His teaching, for Christ agreed with the rulers of the Church in the great fundamentals of religion. But He has not sought their authority; He has

not bowed down to their mandates; but on the contrary, He has uncloaked their hypocrisy before the eyes of the people and warned them against their practices. It became more evident as time passed that "the contradiction between Jesus' spiritual teaching and the popular hopes became more and more clear; the conflict between the scribes and Jesus' simple spiritual message became more acute; and the contempt of the rulers for the Nazarene Prophet became more chilling and widely felt." And it has always been so and will continue to be so until all men are born of the Spirit. For "he that is born after the flesh persecutes him that is born after the Spirit." The dogmatist cannot understand the mystic. The mystics of all ages have had to suffer at the hands of the men who worship by rubics and whose teachings are made up of casuistical sophistries and fast-set dogmas, and who force religion into the narrow molds of Pharisaism. In the "specific tra-

ditions of the chief priests, the scribes and elders, religion became lost in a maze of hand-washings, Sabbath regulations, and rules concerning clean and unclean meats." Against such a religion Christ protests, and the Church asks by what authority. Christ shows His authority by asking them a question. Church authority does not like to be questioned. It speaks *ex cathedra* and that is the final word, and it is only the intrepid soul that dares say to Church and State, "I will ask you a question; I will ask you one thing; and answer Me." And hence reformations and revolutions; Protestantism and Methodism. Knox in St. Giles, Luther at Wittenberg, Wesley on his father's tomb at Epworth, are but the echoes of the Master saying, "I will ask you one thing, and answer Me." "The baptism of John, was it from heaven or from men?" And when they could not answer, He said, with the majesty of a free soul, "Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things."

Failing to condemn Him upon ecclesiastical grounds, they next try to involve Him in a civil dispute about Cæsar. That the Roman power has been watchful is evident from the Gospel narratives. It would be an easy solution of their problem if the Jews could implicate Jesus with Rome and prove Him disloyal to Cæsar. But He meets their cunning with the words, "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's and to God the things which are God's." If He had said pay tribute to Cæsar He would have offended the Jews in general and the Herodians in particular. And if He had said thou shalt not pay tribute, then He would have offended the Romans. His divine wisdom foils again His enemies and leaves them to hate Him without a cause. And yet in spite of this answer they actually accused Him at the trial of being disloyal to Cæsar.

There is to be no quarter from either side from this time on. Darkness and light

are in final conflict; night challenges day, and day answers back with a boldness hitherto unknown. At last the free Soul is here and the questioners of mankind are questioned and baffled. Then spies came who "feigned themselves just men, that they might take hold of His words that so they might deliver Him unto the power and authority of the governor." They, too, are forced to pay tribute to the Master's freedom by saying, "Neither acceptest thou the person of any, but teachest the way of God truly." Christ perceived their craftiness and said unto them, "Why tempt ye Me?" He confounds His enemies and puts them to silence, and it is at this point that He utters the terrible woes pronounced against the scribes and Pharisees recorded in Matthew's Gospel. The conflict is ended and the relentless enemies of Jesus go away to plan how they may put Him to death. Jesus, weary with the struggle, sits down by the treasury. A few devout souls have

remained to drop their gifts into the treasury, all unconscious that the system and the temple they support have that day received their death blow, and that henceforth all the gifts and prayers of men cannot continue that which the decree of God has discontinued. Sitting by the treasury He gives to the world in the incident of the widow's mite a perpetual lesson, that it is not the amount of the gift that commends it to God, but the sincerity and love of the giver. True religion is not outward show, but inward piety, "Thou desirest truth in the inward parts." It is inward holiness God requires, and not religious pretensions.

It was during this day that the Greeks came to His disciples and said, "We would see Jesus." At His birth the Wise Men came from the far East to pay homage at the manger, and it is a fitting close that the Greeks should seek for Him at this time. It is prophetic of the time when the Greek peoples shall find soul-rest in the blessed

gospel He has brought to the world. Christ replies in those mystic words, "Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone." There might have been a temptation in this visit to turn to the Gentiles, but He keeps the cross before Him and as the shadows of the evening are falling about the temple walls He passes out to the Mount of Olives and His disciples say to Him, "Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here," and He answers, "There shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down." The outer symbol of a dead faith must perish. The form cannot long remain when the life is gone. The heathen shall tread down the sacred courts and the very site of the temple shall be a ploughed field. And although the Jews finished building their temple after this prediction fell from the lips of their rejected Messiah, doom came at last and the temple fell in ruins and the curse has rested there ever since.

And what is the lesson from this day? That Christ is the Life, the Truth, the Way. Jesus is the Soul of the universe, and where He is there is peace and joy, and where He reigns not there is discord, unholy confusion, and eternal ruin. So Christ turns His back on the temple and His face toward the cross. He has failed to win the Church, but "He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied." On the way to the temple in the morning He passes the withered fig tree, and says to His disciples, "Have faith in God," and Himself borne up by that faith, He returns to Bethany to await in silence the end of the tragedy which is fast coming to its consummation. He has left the temple forever. He returns to the city for the "Great Contest." "The rejection of Christ by the Jews was not an isolated act, but the outcome and direct result of their whole previous religious development." Have we received Christ? If not, let us take up our cross to-day and follow Him.

“Jesus, I my cross have taken
All to leave and follow Thee;
Naked, poor, despised, forsaken,
Thou from hence my all shalt be.

“Perish every fond ambition,
All I’ve sought, and hoped, and known;
Yet how rich is my condition,
God and heaven are still my own.”

WEDNESDAY.

A DAY OF SILENCE.

"Come ye apart in the wilderness and rest awhile."

LEAVING the temple, Jesus went with His disciples to the Mount of Olives and there He spoke to them of the last things. It was also at this time that He gave those well-known parables of the Ten Virgins, the King returning with his servants, and the Parable of the Talents. The parables of the Laborers in the Vineyard, the Two Sons, the Evil Husbandman, and the Wedding Garment were given in the temple before the Pharisees. Most if not all these parables were spoken on the last visit of Christ to the temple. It was a day crowded with teaching and conflict. His public labors ended, He sought a day of retirement, "a Sabbath to His soul before the Great Conflict." He spent the day at Bethany or

in its vicinity, and doubtless in the company of His disciples. His disciples had suffered a great strain during the previous days, and there were many things He wanted to say to them concerning His coming death. They saw the growing hostility of the rulers and felt from the Master's words that a great crisis was at hand. Part of the day was doubtless spent in preparing their hearts for the dark days ahead. But it is also conjectured that a great part of the day was spent by Jesus in quiet communion with the Father.

All strong souls are born in solitude. Elijah was strengthened in solitude after the conflict on Mount Carmel. The burning bush where Moses met God was in the wilderness. It is in the quiet places that the soul finds God. It has been said, "If we would cease to be restless it must be at a shrine."

It is modern to laugh at the poor monks of the Middle Ages, who sought seclusion

in the dens and caves of the earth, but let it be remembered by the Church and the Christian that these monks came forth from these places of solitude to work righteousness and so stop the mouths of lions, and out from these souls of solitude have come words that have thrilled the hearts of multitudes. The hymn of the cross, of which we will speak in another chapter, is an example of the faith, hope, and love born in the solitude.

Jesus knew the power and value of secret prayer and communion. He who had taught His disciples to enter into the secret place of prayer and commune with the Father who seeth in secret knew only too well that He needed, at this time of His great temptation and trial, the strength derived from quiet waiting upon God. The soul takes on strength from such waiting, and it is for the want of secret prayer that many souls go down in ignominious defeat before the violent assaults of the enemy.

“They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.” “Be still and know that I am God.” We need to learn the lesson over and over again that if the soul is to endure great trials and conquer great temptations, it must be strengthened from time to time with hours of silent resting in the will of God. It is in such hours that the soul gets its true perspective and its clearer vision. It is after such hours that the Voice speaks from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” In the conflict the soul’s vision is dulled, and in temptation the tempter confuses the most pious mind and blurs the clearest vision of the soul. There were none among Christ’s friends who understood the conflict through which He was now passing. The Father only knew, and to the Father He turns for comfort.

There are times when the Christian must hear from God, and when the soul must draw away from the babel of voices and

retire into the solitude and wait for the Voice to speak. Jesus needed fresh confirmation of His Messiahship, fresh soul-vision to return to Jerusalem and finish His work, and renewed strength of body, mind, and spirit to endure the fearful ordeal that waited for Him in betrayal, Gethsemane, and death upon the cross.

Let us learn from this day of solitude in the Passion Week the need of meditation and secret prayer in the Christian conflict and the soul's growth in grace. The quiet soul is the strong soul. A noisy religion is apt to be a shallow religion which soon exhausts itself by its own exertions. "The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever." "Come unto Me and I will give you rest." There are times when the heart bursting with grief can find relief only in the bosom of a human friend, but there are trials too great for human sympathy and griefs too deep for human

consolation. There are heart wounds that only God the All-loving can heal, and dark hours that only the face of the Father can brighten. And in the Father's presence, "He would gather Himself up for the terrible conflict before Him." It is well for us if our trials drive us to the Father. It is well for us if we have learned to "dwell under the shadow of the Almighty wing." We all need to know in this world of strife that there is

"A calm, a sure retreat,
'Tis found beneath the mercy seat."

For every tempted and anguished soul there is a resting place in the bosom of the Father. Lazarus, stricken through and through with the injustice and sorrows of this life, found rest in Abraham's bosom. If Christ had not known how to commune with the Father He would not have known how to die. We shall soon follow Christ into the upper room, where there is contention among His disciples and the unhallowed presence of

Judas, but the Christ sits calm and undisturbed and His soul is not moved by the vain ambitions of His followers nor by the treachery of the betrayer.

“Peace, perfect peace by thronging duties pressed,
To do the will of Jesus, this is rest.”

Art thou tired? Then go apart and rest awhile. Art thou sorely tempted? Go apart and rest awhile. Art thou tempted? Go apart and rest awhile. Is thy life “by thronging duties pressed?” Go apart and rest awhile. Is some great sorrow clouding thy life? Then seek the Father’s face. Let anxious thoughts give way to a settled peace that He doeth all things well.

“Still with Thee, O my God,
I would desire to be;
By day, by night, at home, abroad,
I would be still with Thee.

“With Thee when dawn comes in
And calls me back to care,
Each day returning to begin
With Thee, my God, in prayer.”

THURSDAY.

A DAY OF FELLOWSHIP.

"I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you."

JESUS spends the greater part of Thursday in retirement, and toward evening He sends Peter and John to make ready the Passover—that is, to prepare the bread, wine, and bitter herbs for the Paschal feast.

The last night of Christ's life is crowded with solemn and important events, but the purpose of our book, which is devotional, will not permit us to go into them in detail. There are four things to consider that took place in the upper room. First: the strife among the disciples as to who should have the seat of honor at the table. How little the disciples knew the true meaning of the Lord's table! This of all places is the last place to strive for seats of honor. This is

the place to honor one another. There have been many bitter strifes about the Lord's table, showing that the words of our Master have been little understood in the Church. It was a controversy over the meaning of Christ's words, "This is My body," that separated the reformers of the sixteenth century. The true meaning of the Lord's table is Christian fellowship, and the man who goes to the table of our Lord with enmity in his heart or is not in "charity with his neighbor" eats damnation to his soul. The object of the celebration is that "they may be one even as We are One." When there is not that fellowship and good will we desecrate the holy sacrament. The mediæval Church turned the supper of our Lord into a mystery, but the true meaning is that in remembering His death till He come again we should keep the spirit of love and unity and good will toward all men.

Christ ended the strife by becoming a

servant Himself. And for all time He set the example that "He who would be greatest among you let him be the servant of all." "True success is measured by the service you render and not by the pay you get for it." The disciples had the world idea of honor, that is, of being served and sitting in the places of honor. Christ made service the greatest honor and the highest seat the servant of all. And yet, how slow we are to learn this great lesson! It is for want of learning it that all the great strifes disturb and destroy Christ's Church. Disciples are still struggling for the places of honor and looking for the prizes the Church has at her disposal, but the true honor lies in doing for others and denying ourselves. The truly great are those who have become truly small. Men who have made themselves of no reputation and have taken on the form of a servant have been the men in all ages who have lived in the love and gratitude of coming generations. The world

soon tires of the man who is seeking his own and soon forgets him. Girding Himself with a towel, Christ reverses all human standards and puts to blush the selfish aspirations of men. The "towel" is the lasting rebuke to all who seek the places of superiority and places of lordship over their fellow men. True love seeketh not her own and true holiness of heart will help us rejoice when we see our brother receiving the seat of honor. If we are truly humble we shall feel unworthy of the seat of honor. Let us therefore take the low seat and wait the divine call to higher things. The place in the Church that is not reached on true merit will become a snare to a man's soul. Let us not envy those who are filling the seats of honor in the Church, but let us seek to serve God and our generation and wait His "well done, good and faithful servant." There will be a grand "reversal of human judgment" at the coming of Christ to judge the world in righteousness.

Some one has said that on the curtain that hangs before the judgment seat of Christ will be written the words, "The first shall be last and the last shall be first." Remember there is far greater joy in the humble place that God has given you than in the seat that has been gained by unmerited strife or at the expense of a worthier brother. Paul said, "A man of God should not strive, but be gentle, apt to teach, patient."

We would gladly pass by the tragedy of the betrayal by Judas but for the fact that it plays such a great part in the last week of Christ's life. More than all the bitter animosities and cruel hostilities of the scribes and Pharisees the betrayal of Judas must have been hard to bear. Sharper than the Roman spear was the dart he plunged into the Master's tender heart. The betrayal of one friend is more cruel than the wounds of a thousand foes. To be kissed by a Judas is more heartbreaking than to

be crucified by the Pharisees. "He that eateth bread with Me hath lifted up his heel against Me." All great Christians have felt the sting of the betrayer, and all literature has branded this crime as the blackest of sins. And let it not be forgotten that this sin goes the deepest into the soul of the man or woman who commits it. It is hardly ever, perhaps never, for aught we know, followed by true repentance, but always by black despair.

Let us be careful how we deal with friends, for friendship is one of God's greatest gifts to mankind. Once betrayed, it is never regained. It is well-nigh impossible to mend the broken fabric of fellowship.

It is thought by some that Judas was first stirred up to do his work at the supper given at Bethany when he rebuked Mary for her waste of the ointment. We cannot enter upon the discussion of the "mystery" of the dark deed. It is all too human to

betray, and Judas is not alone in committing this sin. Human life is tragic with the betrayals of friends, and what Christ said of Judas, "It were better for such a man that he had never been born," could be said of all who betray friendship. There is a fearful judgment both here and beyond for the one who betrays.

Judas had gone on Wednesday to the high priest and made the darkest bargain a human soul ever made. Like Esau, he sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. It is hard to tell why he came to the supper. Perhaps he wanted to learn the movements of Jesus. In answer to the statement Jesus made that "one of you should betray Me," Judas said, "Is it I?" After he had received the sop he went out. We shall meet him again under the shadow of the garden with the shadow of his great sin deepening in his dark soul.

It was after his departure that Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper and comforted

His disciples with the words about the coming Comforter. There is a difference among scholars as to the exact time and place that the words about the Comforter were spoken, and when the wonderful intercessory prayer for His disciples was uttered; but it matters not whether they were spoken in the upper room or across the brook Kedron: they have thrilled the hearts of multitudes with a new hope and they have the heart-beat of Divinity in them. "Let not your heart be troubled" has been the comfort of millions in the storms of life and is one of the greatest legacies the Son of man gave to His Church to comfort her in her many trials on earth. At the end of the fourteenth chapter of John, Jesus says, "Arise and let us go hence," and at the beginning of the eighteenth chapter He says, "And when Jesus had spoken these words He went forth over the brook Kedron." Therefore, the words were spoken

during the evening of Thursday and in connection with the institution of the supper.

Christ left the upper room about midnight, for this was the usual hour to end the supper. Judas has gone to make "final arrangements for the immediate arrest of Jesus." When Christ reaches the garden He leaves all His disciples except Peter, James, and John at the entrance. This holy triumvirate He takes within the garden, He Himself retiring to a secluded spot to pray,—and we now come to the most solemn and sacred hour of the Passion Week. It will not do to rush in where angels fear to tread, and to speculate upon this great agony would be unpardonable, for of all places too sacred for the devout soul to speculate upon, the most sacred is the scene in Gethsemane. Gethsemane means the valley of oil, or oil press. One writer hints that the family of Lazarus might have had possessions there. It would appear from "a compar-

ison of Luke 21:37 and 22:39 that the Lord had spent some part of the previous nights there, perhaps alone in prayer." It was without doubt His habit to resort there when He was near Jerusalem. It was a place "where prayer was wont to be made." Judas knows His trysting place and leads thither his rabble mob to arrest Him. The evangelists have told us enough to let us see that the agony and suffering were cruel. Ponder on these words, "He sweat drops of blood." The mystery is too great for human feeling and, like the disciples, our spirit is willing but our flesh is weak. We can but stand back and wonder at the prostrate form of Christ in His final conflict with the powers of darkness and the last bold stroke of the enemy to turn His will from the noble purpose of redeeming the world at so fearful a sacrifice. Hear the tempted Son of man crying out, "If it be possible let this cup pass from Me." Must He drink the bitter cup and go "outside the

gate?" Must He suffer death, "even the death of the cross?" Must He become a curse by hanging on the tree? The tempter is there in that garden. He is presenting another way. The cross, after all, is a mistake and His Messianic claims are a delusion. There is yet a chance to escape the trying ordeal. There is no greater temptation than the one that suggests that perhaps we have taken the wrong course and have been deceived in our highest aspirations; and this temptation comes to every soul that walks the narrow way.

No man who has walked out beyond his fellows into the freedom of a larger life but has felt the power of that temptation. This isolation of spirit forces the soul at times to feel that "the multitude is right and I am wrong." But He who said, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God," can now say, "Not My will, but Thine be done." Jesus said, "If any man is willing to do My will he shall know of the teaching." A

surrendered will cannot go astray. Keep the heart submissive, willing to do the will of God, and the path will appear plain. The prayer is ended and the victory won. The struggle is now over and the cross is before Him. Calvary is "outside the gate," but it is the will of God.

Jesus awakes His disciples with those words which ring with disappointment, "Could ye not watch with Me one hour?" In the words which follow, "Sleep on now and take your rest," F. W. Robertson sees the "irreparable past" of the disciples; a lost opportunity. Christ, who is ever compassionate, says, "The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak." This is the first time the reproaches of Christ have fallen upon them. This is the night that tests their fidelity to the Master. It comes to every disciple, and blessed is the man who in such an hour will not deny like Peter or betray like Judas!

Jesus hears the sound of approaching

footsteps and in the still night air the clashing of Roman arms; and, knowing that it is Judas who has come to deliver Him into the hands of His enemies, He says to His disciples, "Rise, let us be going; behold, he is at hand that doth betray Me."

The Jews, who feared that Jesus might start an insurrection, had persuaded Pilate to send armed soldiers with Judas, and so with sticks and staves they come out to meet Him. Jesus steps forth and asks, "Whom seek ye?" They reply, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said, "I am He." Judas gave the kiss, and that kiss plunged his soul into the eternal night and sent his name down into history covered with infamy that no extenuation has been able to lessen. Silence is the best comment on so dark a deed.

From the garden Christ is led to Annas, and from there to the palace of Caiaphas the high priest. He suffered many indignities during this night, but what must have pained

His righteous soul most was the injustice and unfairness of the trial. There is nothing so painful to a pure soul as sham and pretense; as cowardice and buffoonery. Such mockery must have hurt cruelly a heart so full of the love of justice and truth. His soul is pained into silence. The witnesses have been bribed to accuse Him, and He is forced to confess before Pilate that He is the Son of God. Pilate acquits Him on the charge of civil offense against Cæsar, and the Jews are finally forced back upon their original charge that He called Himself the Son of God. He is condemned before the Sanhedrin as a blasphemer. "The abuse which He suffered, both before and after the trial, and in the very presence of His judges, sufficiently shows how bitter and cruel was the enmity toward Him." The trial of Jesus should teach us how dark the heart may become when truth is rejected, and how blind bigotry makes the soul. The system of the Pharisee made him

hard. The letter killeth. The very men who made justice their first principle are guilty of the most unjust act the world has ever witnessed. They who pretended to be good spurned with wicked contempt the only true goodness that has ever appeared in the world. Let us take warning when fighting for our religious opinions lest we be found fighting against God. Religious hatred is the most cruel of all hatred. It pursues its victim relentlessly and knows no mercy. The Jews were not content until the object of their hate had expired on the cross, and after He had arisen His very name was detested.

Here we must leave them upon whom the displeasure of God has fallen with awful severity, and we say with Paul, "Behold therefore the severity and goodness of God; on them which fell, severity." And surely this severity has fallen upon the Jews down the centuries, and if we understand Christ aright, will continue to fall until they shall

say, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord," and the national crime shall be wiped out by a national repentance when they "shall look upon Him whom they have pierced."

"My broken body thus I give
For you, for all; take, eat, and live;
And oft the sacred rite renew
That brings My wondrous love to view."

FRIDAY.

A DAY OF GRIEF.

"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

THE road from the city gates to the hill Golgotha is called the Via Dolorosa—the way of grief. Jesus, faint with the abuse of the night, weakened by the scourging, and sick at heart from the hollow mockery of the whole dark proceedings, fell beneath the weight of the cross. He had taken the cross, the symbol of the world's hatred, but to Him and His Father the symbol of His faithfulness. He had made no compromise with sin. He escaped many times from His enemies, leaving the "danger zone" because His hour was not yet come, but when the hour had come He did not shrink from taking the cross. The compromise would have been an easy one. All compromises

are easy, being seasoned with the hope of reward. The Pharisees would have welcomed Him to their party if He had given up His one claim. The Sadducees would have welcomed Him to their standard, and the people would have crowned Him king. His disciples did their best to persuade Him not to go to Jerusalem and die. There was only One who saw the significance of the cross and that was Jesus Himself. No one else saw its necessity. The blinded Pharisees thought they would save their place in the nation by crucifying Christ, but it is the cross that has for all time laid bare their hypocrisy and revealed the true nature of their sin. It has covered Judaism with a shame from which it will never escape. The cross has shattered the legal systems, and ecclesiasticism has been broken again and again by the men of the cross. No flesh can glory in the presence of the cross. The late George Tyrrell wrote to his ecclesiastical superiors, "How glad one would

be to get out of it all, but there is that strange Man on the cross, who drives me back again and again!" Let us remember when we are tempted to turn from the path of duty and seek the easier way, that the strange Man is still on the cross.

Jesus fell beneath the weight of the material cross, but it was the weight of the spiritual cross that had weakened Him. Mark says, "And they compelled one Simon a Cyrenian who passed by to bear His cross." Simon little knew that he was earning the right to immortal fame when he carried the cross of Jesus. It is only those who bear the cross who have the right to eternal life. To be baptized with His baptism gives the right to sit on His right hand. They who come up out of great tribulation wear the white robes. "If we suffer with Him we shall reign with Him." It was because Simon was near Jesus that they laid the cross on him. It is only those who walk near Christ that are called to

bear the cross. If we walk afar off we shall not be troubled with cross-bearing. We can escape the cross by denying the Christ. A stranger "coming out of the country" suffers the shame. It is said that Simon was a slave. The cross to the Jews and Romans was a degrading thing, fit only for the slave to carry. Paul, the man who delighted in the cross, loved to call himself the slave of Jesus. We must be identified with our Lord in His crucifixion and shame if we are to share His glory. One has well said, "The world is made up of two classes, those who bear the cross and the rest." It is the cross that marks us off from the world, that identifies us with Christ; and it is the cross that will crucify us unto the world and the world unto us. The man who bears the cross is easily picked out from the crowd. There is a power in his word and in his presence that is easily felt and distinguished from the man of the world, professing Christian though he be. There

is an invisible halo about the life of the cross-bearing Christian. It would be interesting to know how Simon felt and whether it is true that he became a disciple of Christ. Did he bear it gladly?—for unless we bear the cross cheerfully, without murmur or complaint, we bear it without virtue or reward. Yea, we must go deeper and glory in the cross before its power becomes apparent in our lives and the heathen are led to exclaim, as the Roman did when he looked upon Christ, "This is the Son of God."

But we must pass on to another interesting incident that happened by the way. Luke the evangelist, who has so much to tell us about women, says, "And there followed Him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented Him." There were doubtless many tender hearts in Jerusalem. Many who had received healing from His touch and comfort and pardon from His lips. All had not

taken part in the great crime, for all had not sinned against the Light. But this "wailing and lamenting" was simply the result of awakened sympathy, to be found in any crowd where there is suffering. Poor, blind souls, they little knew that He did not need their tears! Christ admonished them to weep for themselves for the hour of darkness was coming. Their day of weeping was not far distant. Christ has not forgotten the sin that laid the cross on Him. He said to the Jews who came to arrest Him, "This is your hour and the power of darkness." He now reminds them that the hour of their tribulation draweth nigh.

There are two lessons to be learned from this incident. First: That those who bear the cross do not need the sympathy of the world. The world can give at its best but cheap sympathy. Only as we share suffering can we truly sympathize. Job's comforters are but vain mockers. The cross-bearing man cares nothing for the "wailing

and lamenting" of the mere spectator, who looks upon His suffering with human pity. There is encouragement in the silent friend who watches by the cross. The cross-bearing man does not despise sympathy and he can readily distinguish between the sympathy which really means "suffering with" and the cold, heartless pity that the world has to offer. There is a deeper sympathy for those who bear their cross in silence and that is the sympathy that issues from the heart of the Father.

The next lesson is that those who lay the cross on Jesus and His followers will come to judgment. They will "cry to the rocks to fall on us and to the hills to cover us." Let all who bear the cross be patient; the day of reckoning is at hand and the "day of the Lord draweth nigh." "Truth crushed to earth will rise again" in glorious power. Let all who sink beneath the load of infamy and calumny take courage, "the Judge is at the door."

The mob surges about the Master and He is jostled by the motley crowd. Richards says, "During the massacres in Turkey, Tomkyres the poet said,

'Hell is burning through in Turkey.'

"That is the kind of impression which is made by the welter of passion and intrigue and bigotry and hate which surged around Jesus during His last hours." Arriving at the top of the hill, they stripped Him and nailed Him to the cross, and here we must leave Him to the

"Death-grapple in the darkness

'Twixt old systems and the Word."

Here we leave Him to die, the most loved and the most hated Being in the world. Here we leave Him to suffer that death which has become the life of the world, the death of the cross; we leave Him to that darkness which has become the light of the world, and to that despair which has become the hope of the world. "Jesus could

not have escaped the cross, and He knew it. There was no other goal in the world for the driving force which worked in Him."

"In the hour of trial,
Jesus, plead for me;
Lest by base denial
I depart from Thee;
When Thou seest me waver,
With a look recall,
Nor for fear or favor,
Suffer me to fall."

THE LAST UTTERANCES.

There are seven dying utterances of our Lord recorded in the Gospels; one conjointly by St. Matthew and St. Mark, and three by St. Luke and three by St. John.

“It was nine of the clock when the melancholy procession reached Golgotha, and the yet more melancholy preparations for the crucifixion commenced.” They offered Him an opiate while the cruel preparations were going on, but He refused to dull His consciousness. He would not lessen the pain that had been given Him to suffer. He desired to die in the full consciousness of all His mental and spiritual powers. This was another instance of organized pity of which He did not stand in need, and another evidence of the blindness of those who offered it. They knew not the divine resourcefulness of the Man who had passively placed Himself in their power. He who had

power to lay down His life and take it up again was not afraid to meet and endure the most painful death. He would drink the cup to the dregs. While they parted His raiment and nailed Him to the cross He uttered the first of His last utterances which have come down to us and which bring out the glory of His human and divine character :

"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

The Roman soldiers were the primary object of this prayer, but without doubt it extended to the Jews as well as those who in their greater blindness were most responsible for the crime. Let us hope it extends to us who by our willful sins have often crucified the Lord afresh. What depth of mercy and love in this prayer! What divine compassion for enemies is here manifested, and what an evidence of soul-triumph that in such an hour of malice and

revenge, when the first rush of shame and degradation passed over His soul and the cruel nails turned every nerve into a pathway of agony, that in such an hour His soul found expression in words of loving forgiveness! Was there ever such a Man as this? And how could He do it? This is the question that comes to every thoughtful mind. What is the secret of such divine forgiveness? for if there is one thing more than another that we find it hard to do, it is truly and freely and lovingly to forgive our enemies. To forgive the cruel injustice, the bitter calumny, the slanderous wrong, that is hard—yea, to many it seems impossible. Ask the Sufferer on Golgotha the secret of such forgiveness and He would point you back to the garden, where He had said, "Thy will, not Mine, be done." So now He takes it to be the will of God that He should suffer, and submission to the will of God fills His soul with calm and forgiving love for those who in their blindness

have become the "unconscious instruments" of His Father's will. And when we can say with a saint of old,

"Thy will is sweetest
When it triumphs at our cost,"

then, and not till then, can we say, "Father, forgive them." May God give us this grace in every crucifying hour! May we, too, turn away our eyes from the instruments of our pain and say, "Father, forgive!" "And thus also does the Conquered truly conquer His conquerors by asking for them what their deed had forfeited."

But we must pass on to the next utterance, which was to the penitent thief. The thief has asked to be remembered when Christ comes into His Kingdom; but He is not coming into His Kingdom at this time, but the thief shall rest in Paradise until He does come into it:

*"To-day thou shalt be with Me
in Paradise."*

Is it any wonder that the thief found ready forgiveness from the heart and lips of Him who had just prayed for His enemies? What joy must have mingled with His pain when He heard the cry of the penitent! Out of such profound love the thief would easily find forgiveness. How gladly He who came to seek and save the lost would now welcome the penitent and contrite heart! Redeeming love is already beginning to see the travail of its soul. There is a vital relation between the love that can say, "Father, forgive them," and the love that can say, "To-day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise." Without the love that forgives the enemy you cannot win souls for the Master. A love that cannot forgive an enemy is not a love deep enough to be true to a friend. The love that saves does not exist without the love that forgives. Have we got this love? If not, the Master waits to shed it abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. Christ gives this love to all

who die on the cross with Him. It is after tribulation that this love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. Such love comes only after "we have suffered awhile." You may enter to-day, now, into this blessing of full salvation and into "the holiness without which no man shall see the Lord." The "holiness without which" is this "perfect love" that "lives peaceably with all men," and this is the paradise into which His love will lead your soul. And if, dear reader, you are not a Christian, true penitence, with faith in Christ and what He has done for you, will give you a true entrance into His everlasting Kingdom. Repent now and believe the gospel.

The next utterance is addressed to the virgin mother,

"Woman, behold thy Son;"

and to the disciple John,

"Behold thy mother."

Edersheim thinks that John had just arrived on the scene, bringing the women with

him, and for that reason does not record in his Gospel the early events of the crucifixion. Salome, the mother of John, was Mary's sister, and that explains the reason why Jesus intrusted His mother to "that disciple whom He loved." It is quite likely that John took Mary away from the torturing scene, while the other women sat on the hillside and watched in mute and solemn silence the suffering of their Lord. The sword had passed through Mary's heart and it was enough.

What divine self-forgetfulness in this saying, "Behold thy mother." His first thought is for others: first, his enemies, that they might be forgiven; then for the thief, that he might enter blessedness and peace; and now for the temporal needs of His mother. What balm to the heart the sword had pierced these words must have brought! Amidst the great agony He thinks of her. We are so apt in our sorrows to forget others. Pain is most likely to make us

selfish and forgetful of the needs of others. There are so few who can suffer patiently and unselfishly. It is always a mark of great grace when a man does so. While Jesus is suffering for the sins of the whole world and the mysterious death is creeping over His soul, He remembers His mother. That is great, majestic, divine. "Behold, all ye that pass by and wonder." We forget the little duties while trying to do the great things of life, but it is only he who is faithful in the little who is able and worthy to do the great. Was there ever love like this? Shed this love abroad in our hearts, Thou Savior of men, lest in our religious activities we forget those who have first claims upon our love.

"O Love Divine, how sweet Thou art!
When shall I find my willing heart
All taken up in Thee?
I thirst, and faint, and die to prove
The greatness of redeeming love,
The love of Christ to me.

"Stronger His love than death or hell;
Its riches are unsearchable;
The first-born sons of light
Desire in vain its depths to see;
They cannot reach the mystery,
The length and breadth and height."

THE END.

JESUS, having commended His mother into John's keeping, soon passes into the soul-darkness expressed in that heart-piercing cry,

*"My God, My God, why hast
Thou forsaken me?"*

Into the meaning of this experience it is irreverent to try to enter. It is sufficient to say that for one bitter moment He was permitted to taste the unutterable loneliness and agony of feeling Himself forsaken by God. And the anguish was all the more intense to One who had always felt the presence of God such a comfort and who had had such unbroken fellowship with the Father. He said, "The Father is with Me because I do always those things which please Him." Why has the Father left Him thus in the darkness? He had felt that fellowship when they were nailing Him

to the cross, for He had prayed, "Father, forgive them." The momentary loss of that fellowship forces the agonizing cry, "My God, My God." The word "God" is not the word of fellowship. It is the word that denotes distance—yea, the absence of fellowship. Something has broken His fellowship, and that something was the sin of the world. To lose fellowship with God as Father is the greatest loss the soul can sustain and brings the greatest suffering. We can endure anything when we feel that the Father is near, but to lose His fellowship is the greatest agony to the soul that has once drawn comfort and help from the Father's presence being near. To feel our faith slipping from God—and not knowing why—this is the extreme of spiritual agony. This is the soul's midnight. "The despondency of the Redeemer was not supernatural, but most natural darkness." It is not an unusual thing for great saints to have this experience. It is only possible to those who

walk in close fellowship with the Father. It is not the darkness so much that brings the pain, but the doubt expressed in the words, "Why hast Thou?" It would not be so hard to bear if we knew the reason why we had been forsaken. To discover sin as the cause may be a relief, but to pass into the darkness and not know why—that is the cause of our suffering and doubt. In the hour of great temptation the witness of this fellowship is likely to be lost. There is no great temptation without the loss of fellowship with God. It is this loss that makes temptation real and a thing of pain. It is then we cry "My God" instead of "My Father." It is only when we are in conscious fellowship with God that we can say "Abba Father." This is the expression of the soul in fellowship with God. This fellowship with God is not truly broken except by willful sin, although, as has been said above, it can become dim and for a time entirely lost during a period of great

temptation when the enemy steps between the soul and God. Then it is only the soul's eclipse. At such times we must wait quietly for the passing of the cloud. To struggle in temptation will only increase the darkness. Satan would like to have us mistrust God's goodness when the night sets in, but there is no mistrust in Christ's question, and there should be no misgiving in ours. This is the triumph of our faith that when the night comes we believe in the morning, and when the sorrow comes we believe it will be turned into joy. This cry is the climax on the cross.

There is no great pain beyond it. From spiritual pain He passes to temporal pain, from spiritual thirst He passes to physical thirst. The greater pain of the spirit has for the time made Him unconscious of physical suffering. The next utterance,

"I thirst,"

is a cry of physical want and "seems to indicate, by the prevalence of the merely

human aspect of the suffering, that the other and more terrible aspect of sin-bearing and God-forsakenness was past." John says, "that knowing that all things were now finished," He said, "I thirst." Some see in this a deeper than a human thirst and think that a thirst for the world's salvation is expressed. The fact that the soldiers offered Him drink after the agonizing cry indicates that "I thirst" came immediately after. The last two utterances follow soon after.

"It is finished"

expresses calm repose and victory. He has won the great conflict. He is Conqueror over sin, death, and hell. He has by His suffering and dying redeemed a world from sin. He has made the sanctification of the human heart possible. He has opened the gates of immortality to the sons of men. All who believe may pass into endless day and never-ending joy. He has tasted death

for every man that every man may have life and have it abundantly. His dying is our living.

He has won the exalted Name. He has ransomed humanity. All who believe on that Name are forever free. The Church now may sing the "song of Moses and the Lamb," and ascribe to Him "all honor and power and glory."

"However dreary we may have felt life to be here, yet when that hour comes—the winding up of all things, the last fearful rush of darkness upon our spirits, the hour of that awful, sudden wrench from all we have ever known or loved, the long farewell to sun, moon, stars, and light—brother men, I ask you this day, and I ask myself, humbly and fearfully, What will be then finished? When it is finished, what will it be? Will it be the butterfly existence of pleasure, the mere life of science, a life of uninterrupted sin and selfish gratification, or will it be, 'Father, I have finished the

work which Thou gavest me to do?"—F. W. Robertson.

The temptation is past and the consciousness of His abiding fellowship with the Father has returned; and Christ's last utterance on the cross, as His first, begins with the endearing word "Father:"

"Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit."

The meaning of the word "commend" here is to "commit for safekeeping." And He who taught the world to say "Our Father" dies with these words of simple, filial trust upon His lips. Many thousands have pilowed their heads upon these words when going to rest. They were the last words of Polycarp, Bernard, Huss, Luther, and Melancthon. Jesus, our dying and ever-living Lord, has taught us to trust in the love of a heavenly Father who never fails the soul in the darkest hour; and may the

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consciousness of the Father, although broken at times by temptation, be the brightest in the hour of our departure!

“When I survey the wondrous cross,
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss
And pour contempt on all my pride.”

“Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth, therefore, unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.”

A fitting close for our meditations will be the “Hymn of the Cross.” And we shall better appreciate it if we know its history and how it came into the possession of the universal Church. I am indebted to Professor Clow for the following facts:

St. Sabas, in the year 520, founded a monastery near the brook Kedron, and two hundred years later the famous scholar John of Damascus fled to the monastery,

leading a little boy of ten by the hand. This boy's name was Stephen, and he lived fifty-nine years in the monastery. All we know about him is that he wrote this wonderful hymn. It was sealed in the Latin tongue until the year 1862, when Dr. John Mason Neale rendered it in English. Like all hymns which have captured the heart of Christians, it is a hymn to the praise of Christ. I heard it sung on one occasion by the Salvation Army in London when there were about three thousand poor men present, and I think I never heard anything so redeeming as the singing of this beautiful hymn:

“Art thou weary, art thou languid,
Art thou sore distressed?
Come to Me, saith One, and, coming,
Be at rest.

“Hath He marks to lead me to Him
If He be my Guide?
In His feet and hands are wound-prints,
And His side.





