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MEDITATIONS
FOR THE
PASSION SEASON

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MEDITATIONS

FOR THE

PASSION SEASON,

FROM THE

“EVANGELISCHE HAUS-AGENDE”

OF

GEORGE CHRISTIAN DIEFFENBACH,

TRANSLATED BY

CHARLES E. HAY, D. D.,

TO WHICH IS ADDED

A HARMONIZED HISTORY OF.

THE PASSION OF OUR SAVIOUR

ACCORDING TO

THE FOUR GOSPELS.

PHILADELPHIA, PA.:

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PREFACE.

THIS book is purely devotional. It is issued by The Lutheran Publication Society in response to frequent inquiries for a book of this character. It covers the Passion Season, and is intended to be of use in the private devotion of the Christian, to direct the family worship in the home, and to aid in the public service of the churches during the Lenten time.

The book consists of a translation of Dieffenbach's "Haus-Agende," giving meditations and prayers and Scripture readings for each day from Ash Wednesday to Easter. It is characterized by a profound insight into the meaning of the story of our Lord's suffering, and a deep spirituality. For the excellent translation and the adaptation of the prayers, we are indebted to Charles E. Hay, D. D.

A harmonized history of our Lord's Passion is added, and recorded by the four Evangelists, arranged in such form as to give the connected story in the inspired language of the Gospel. The daily reading of the "Haus-Agende" during the preceding weeks will prepare the devout soul, and find a conclusion of deep spiritual profit in the

daily reading of the Passion History during Holy Week.

In these days the busy head of the house scarcely finds time to carefully select his Scripture readings for family worship. It is hoped that this little book will help many to give a few moments each day to proper devotional thought, and bring the old, old story into many homes. It will be especially helpful in bringing the devotions of the home into harmony with the great theme of meditation in the Church.

It is a book that ought to be in every home.

INTRODUCTORY.

THE Passion Season, or Lent, begins with Ash Wednesday, and continues until the Saturday before Easter. It presents to our reverent contemplation Jesus Christ as the true divine High-priest, who offered Himself for us upon the cross, and who by His own blood entered for us once into the Holy of Holies, and wrought out for us an eternal redemption. But it is only as the God-man, true God and true man, that He can be a true High-priest. A mere man cannot deliver us. The eternal Son of God must Himself condescend to us in order to make an availing sacrifice for us, and thus to atone for the sins of the whole world, to sanctify our sinful natures, and to restore us to that fellowship with God from which we had fallen through sin.

The season is to be appropriately observed as a time of serious reflection and penitence—a time when we contemplate the bitter sufferings of our Lord.

In the lessons from the Passion History, which, according to ancient usage in the Church, are read during this period, the Lord appears in His deepest humiliation and shame, as the most despised and

unworthy of men, whilst the Gospels for the same period reveal His divine glory. The Passion Season as it progresses brings into ever clearer view the two natures of Christ, His divinity and His humanity. It presents at once to our reverent thought the *eternal divine High-priest in His glory*, and the *sacrificial offering rendered in His bitter sufferings and death*. The former appears in the Gospel lessons appointed to be read upon the Sundays of Lent, and in the lessons for Monday and Tuesday of each week ; the latter, in the extracts for Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. The Epistle for each Saturday of the period makes practical application of the lessons of the week immediately preceding.

1. *Ash Wednesday*, the first day of Lent, has no specially appointed lesson. The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah may be appropriately used. Passages bearing upon the High-priesthood of Christ in its Old Testament type and its New Testament fulfillment may be read, and also the twenty-second Psalm as a prophetic announcement of the sufferings of Christ.

2. *First Week in Lent*. Invocavit (Matt. iv. 1-11). The Temptation of Christ. All the sufferings of Christ are to be attributed in the last analysis to the agency of Satan, whose constant aim it was to hinder the progress of the kingdom of God. The temptation of our Lord by Satan is therefore rightly included in the record of His sufferings and reveals His true humanity, since it

is only as man and as our brother that He can be tempted. At the same time, we witness in His victory over the tempter the clearest evidence of His divine glory. Only because He is both true God and true man can He redeem us and become our true High-priest. In the Passion History for the week we learn of the beginning of His deep humiliation.

3. *Second Week in Lent.* Reminiscere (Matt. xv. 21-28). The Lord not only triumphantly endures the temptation of Satan, but He also exerts His power over the spirits of darkness. He is appealed to by the heathen woman as the Lord to whom such power has been given. The evil spirits themselves recognize Him, and unwillingly submit to His authority. While the glory of the Lord and His divine power thus shine forth with increasing brilliancy, the Passion History reveals His pathway as one of ever-deepening humiliation.

4. *Third Week in Lent.* Oculi (Luke xi. 14-28). Yet again the Lord is seen exercising His power over the Devil and his angels. As the Stronger One, He has overpowered the "strong man armed," despoiled him of his power, and set free those held by him in bondage. It was the very purpose of His coming thus to destroy the works of the Devil. His time of suffering is as well the time of His victory over Satan and the world. But how severe the conflict and how deep the humiliation and suffering involved is made manifest in the lessons from the Passion History.

5. *Fourth Week in Lent.* Lætare (John vi. 1-15). Easter is near. The time will soon be at hand when the Lord, as the great High-priest, will make Himself a sacrifice for the sins of His people. With prophetic reference to the Paschal Lamb, and to the fulfillment of the typical ceremony of the Passover in the Lord's Supper, He feeds the multitude in the wilderness, foreshadowing the giving of His body and blood to death and for the spiritual nourishment of His followers. Thus He manifests His glory and His wealth in the feeding of the multitude, although still in His sufferings appearing in lowliness and poverty.

6. *Fifth Week in Lent.* Judica (John viii. 46-59). Christ here gives wonderful testimony concerning Himself. He claims for Himself perfect sinlessness and truthfulness, the power to give life, full knowledge of the Father, honor from His Father. He speaks of His holy obedience, and asserts His eternity. John has preserved for us many such testimonies of Christ Himself as to his own person and glory. While He thus stands before us in sublimest majesty, the Passion History presents to us in most striking contrast the infinite abasement of the eternal Son of God.

7. *Sixth Week in Lent.* Palmarum (Matt. xxi. 1-9). With our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem begins the true Passion Week. As a King He enters, amid the acclamation of His people. The radiance of His glory shines about Him even as He is preparing to descend into the profoundest

depths of suffering and shame, to the contemplation of which we are led by the Passion History in this Silent Week. On *Maundy-Thursday* we reverently meditate upon the institution of the Holy Supper. On *Good Friday* we read the narrative of the crucifixion of the Lord as the consummation of the sacrifice of our High-priest. With Silent Saturday closes the solemn Lenten Season, which has thus impressively set before us the glory and the humiliation of Christ, His divinity and His humanity, and His office as the great High-priest.



MEDITATIONS

FOR THE

PASSION SEASON.

GENERAL PRAYER.

BENEATH Thy cross, Lord Jesus Christ, our eternal High-priest, we bow in this sacred season. Grant us Thy Holy Spirit, that we may with silent reverence celebrate Thy deep sufferings and Thine unfathomable love. We have by our sins caused Thee grievous toil and Thou hast been wounded for our transgressions. How hast Thou humbled Thyself—Thou, the only-begotten Son of God, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God ! How can we fitly thank Thee for Thine agony and torment, for Thy stripes and wounds, for Thy sighs and tears, for Thy bitter death upon the cross ? Accept, Lord Jesus, the poor thank-offering that we bring Thee in our prayers, and grant that we may learn to understand more fully, to experience more deeply, and more heartily to adore Thine unfathomable love. Bless to us the celebration of this holy season, and grant us grace to know Thee aright as our eternal High-priest and reverently to meditate upon Thine eternal glory and Thy deep humiliation. May the consideration of Thy glory and Thy sufferings lead us to true repentance, that we may learn to know and hate our sins and seek in Thee alone grace, comfort, peace, and life. Permit us to taste on earth the blessed fruits of Thy holy sacrifice, and bring us at length, by the virtue of Thy precious blood, through death and the grave, to eternal blessedness.

O Lamb of God, slain in Thine innocence upon the cross—ever patient wast Thou amidst reproach and contempt. All our sins hast Thou borne. Wherefore then should we fear? Grant us Thy peace, Lord Jesus. Amen.

ASH WEDNESDAY. The Deep Humiliation of Christ, His Sufferings and Death, and His Glorious Exaltation.

13. Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.
14. As many were astonished at thee ; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men ;
15. So shall he sprinkle many nations ; the kings shall shut their mouths at him : for that which had not been told them shall they see ; and that which they had not heard shall they consider.
1. Who hath believed our report ? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed ?
2. For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground : he hath no form nor comeliness ; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.
3. He is despised and rejected of men ; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief : and we hid as it were our faces from him ; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.
4. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows : yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.
5. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities : the chastisement of our peace was upon him ; and with his stripes we are healed.
6. All we like sheep have gone astray ; we have turned every one to his own way ; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.
7. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth : he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.
8. He was taken from prison and from judgment : and who shall declare his generation ? for he was cut off out of the land of the living : for the transgression of my people was he stricken.
9. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death ; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.
10. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him ; he hath put him to grief : when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.
11. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied : by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many ; for he shall bear their iniquities.
12. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong ; because he hath poured out his soul unto death : and he was numbered with the transgressors ; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors (Isa. lii. 13—liii. 12).

1. We have in the preceding portion of the Church Year considered the Prophetic office which Jesus Christ, the holy Servant of God, so "prudently" exercised. To-day we enter upon the Passion Season, when we reverently dwell upon the High-priestly office of the Lord, and especially upon His bitter sufferings. The Holy Ghost has, through the prophet Isaiah, given us a wonderful prophetic announcement of the deep humiliation and sufferings, as well as of the final exaltation of our Saviour. Luther says of it: "There is indeed in the whole volume of the Old Testament no clearer text or prophecy both of the sufferings and of the resurrection of Christ than this chapter." Therefore at the opening of the Passion Season we read this prophecy, whose wonderful fulfillment we shall observe during the progress of the weeks before us.

2. *Verses 13-15.* Here we see the holy Servant of God, who, although He has dealt prudently, is yet rejected by many, but shall nevertheless be exalted and ardently worshiped by kings and nations. We should not, like Israel, take offense at His lowliness, but find our delight in Him, who, though God's eternal and exalted Son, yet for our sakes becomes so pitifully poor and despised. We should in this sacred season set before us both His glory and His lowliness, that we may be impelled to close our lips before Him in reverent penitence—and again break forth in praise and thanksgiving for His grace.

3. *Verses 1-3.* Isaiah begins to proclaim the coming events revealed to him by the Spirit. It is a wonderful announcement. O, that it might be believed by all ! He preaches, first of all, of the *deep humiliation* of Christ. Consider how despised and rejected, how full of sorrow and grief, was thy Saviour in His sufferings—mocked, scourged, spit upon, forsaken by all, nailed to the cross, and numbered among transgressors.

4. *Verses 4-6.* The sufferings which Christ endured were all undeserved. He is holy and without sin. “He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows ; He was wounded for our transgressions ; He was bruised for our iniquities. The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” Thus does Isaiah speak of the *cause* of our Lord’s sufferings and death.

Says Luther, “This article of our faith: Christ has borne our sins, is the chief and only foundation-stone upon which the whole Gospel is founded and built, so that, where this article remains standing, all other articles are secure. Hence the devil has not been at so great pains to overthrow any other article, for he knows that all depends upon this one. It is just this article, too, which makes an everlasting distinction between our religion and all others in the world.”

But if we wish to have a share in the blessing of this “lofty article,” as Luther calls it, we must rightly understand the little word “our,” so that we may with deep penitence recognize and confess

that *our* sin is the cause of His death, and with true faith comfort ourselves with the thought that the sins of *us all* have been laid upon Him, and thus removed from us. “For by the word ‘*our*’ the blessed and salutary sufferings of Christ are imputed and imparted to us—yea, they become as really our own as though we had ourselves experienced them. . . . He who rightly knows and understands this truth has learned the whole sum and substance of Christianity and of our faith. For out of this full, rich well the holy apostle Paul has drawn a great part of his consolatory epistles and a whole flood of blessed and comforting sayings. . . . This doctrine of Christian justification can no one understand or comprehend without the aid of the *true master and teacher*, the Holy Ghost.”—*Luther*.

5. *Verse 7.* Isaiah further sets before our spiritual vision “how great *divine patience* our Lord possessed and displayed in His bitter sufferings. His thoughts were set upon peace and salvation, and how He might heal our sins by His own wounds. This great gentleness and kindness and graciousness of the patient heart of Christ he sets forth in the beautiful symbol of an innocent lamb, about to be slain for sacrifice, which is perfectly silent, not even breathing a sigh—so patient also was Christ.”—*Luther*.

6. *Verses 8-12.* After suffering comes glory—after the painful sowing of the seed, the gathering of the precious fruit. Of this Isaiah finally

speaks. The Lord, the vanquisher of hell, death and the law, now lives eternally. The seed of His Church is multiplied so that He finds delight in the abundant increase. Many shall become righteous and therefore blessed through His knowledge, *i. e.*, through true faith in Him, for only he knows Christ rightly who believes in Him. As an eternal Conqueror, He shall have for spoils a great multitude, among them the strong and great and mighty of the earth, for He has, by His death, vanquished sin, death, the devil and hell. The Lord grant that we may also enjoy to all eternity the fruits of His glorious victory.

PRAYER.

O Lord Jesus Christ, who hast by Thine innocent and holy sufferings obtained for us poor lost sinners the gracious favor of Thy heavenly Father and eternal life, we call to mind in this solemn Passion Season Thy bitter sufferings and cruel death, and we thank Thee from our inmost hearts for Thy love, for Thy distress and agony, and for Thine atoning death. We humbly pray Thee, preserve in us forever the spirit of love and thankfulness to Thee for all Thy sufferings, and grant us grace to recognize with grateful hearts and magnify the priceless boon of deliverance from sin and death. May the contemplation of Thy great redeeming work make us stronger in faith, more joyous in hope, warmer in our love, calmer in patience, more willing and constant in obedience. Do Thou help us, Lord, that even in our distress on account of our own sins we may find consolation in the thought of Thy willing sacrifice for us and Thy precious blood shed for us upon the cross. By the virtue of this Thy sacrifice and Thy holy intercession may we be freed from the burden of all our sins and blessed with forgiveness and peace. Deliver us from an evil conscience by the power of Thy sufferings and death, and help us to utterly renounce all evil, dying unto sin, and to lead lives of holiness.

ness. Be near us when our end draws nigh, that we may know the comfort of Thy death, and, dying peacefully in Thee, may enter into everlasting life. Amen.

THURSDAY. *The High-priest under the Old Covenant and the Great Sacrifice of the Atonement—a Type of the High-priesthood and Sacrifice of Christ.*

1. And the LORD spake unto Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered before the LORD, and died;
2. And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the vail before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat.
3. Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering.
4. He shall put on the holy linen coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a linen girdle, and with the linen mitre shall he be attired: these are holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them on.
5. And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering.
6. And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house.
7. And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.
8. And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the scapegoat.
9. And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the LORD's lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering.
10. But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness.
11. And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin offering which is for himself:
12. And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the LORD, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the vail:
13. And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not:
14. And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times.
15. Then shall he kill the goat of sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the vail, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat:
16. And he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their

transgressions in all their sins : and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness.

17. And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel.

18. And he shall go out unto the altar that *is* before the LORD, and make an atonement for it ; and shall take of the blood of the bullock, and of the blood of the goat, and put *it* upon the horns of the altar round about.

19. And he shall sprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel.

20. And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat :

21. And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send *him* away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness :

22. And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited : and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness (Lev. xvi. 1-22).

1. *Verses 1.10.* The Old Testament bears testimony to the coming Christ, not alone through the utterances of the prophets, but as well through the lives of the holy men of old and through a great variety of sacred ordinances. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, David and Solomon, in fact all the judges, prophets, priests and kings, were each, in some peculiar way, types of Christ. This was particularly noticeable in the case of the high-priest. His office pointed forward to the true and eternal High-priesthood of Christ, and the great DAY OF ATONEMENT, referred to in our lesson to-day, is but a type of that true and great Day of Atonement upon which Jesus Christ by His own blood made propitiation for all our sins and reconciled us to God.

In the celebration of the Jewish Day of Atonement, the high-priest, clothed in sacred robes, after careful preparatory observances, consisting of fastings and various washings, brought before the Lord on the tenth day of the seventh month the beasts appointed for the sin offering—a bullock for himself and his house and two he-goats for the people, with two rams for a burnt offering.

2. *Verses 11-14.* The bullock was first led forward, and the high-priest laid his hands upon its head, confessing his sins and the sins of his house. He pronounced the name of the Lord three times, at which the whole assembly of the people fell upon their faces in prayer. He then slew the bullock, and having previously, by the burning of incense, filled the Holy of Holies with a thick cloud of smoke, brought into it in a golden bowl the blood of the bullock and sprinkled of it seven times toward the mercy-seat as an atonement for the sins of himself and his household.

3. *Verses 15-19.* He then slew one of the goats, chosen by lot, carried its blood, in a golden bowl, into the Holy of Holies, and sprinkled of it seven times toward the mercy-seat as an atonement for all the sins of the whole nation.

4. *Verses 20-22.* Finally, the high-priest led up the other goat, laid both his hands upon its head, and confessed upon it all the iniquity of the children of Israel and all their transgressions. Three times he uttered the name of the Lord,

and each time the whole assembly fell upon their faces. The goat was then led out into the wilderness, to bear away with it all the sins of the people.

5. Such was the ancient celebration of the great Day of Atonement in Israel. We see in Christ the fulfillment of the prophetic ceremony. He is the true High-priest, who, not with the blood of goats, but through His own blood, entered once into the Holy of Holies and wrought an eternal redemption. That which was only a typical act under the old covenant has, in Christ, become a reality. He has, by His sacrifice, atoned for all sin ; for God the Father laid upon Him the sins of us all, and He has borne away all our transgressions, so that they shall be remembered no more forever. We need only appropriate to ourselves in faith the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. *For us*, too, was that sacrifice brought and *our sins* have been borne away and atoned for by Christ. That which He has won by His sacrifice He bestows upon us in Holy Baptism and imparts to us through His Word and the Holy Supper. The means of grace have their efficacy only through His blood shed upon the cross. We should, therefore, rest our confidence entirely upon His sacrifice and not upon our own works. By the virtue of His sacrifice we hope at length to die in happiness and peace and on the last day to enter into everlasting life. May God grant it in His abundant mercy.

PRAYER.

Thou God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we heartily thank Thee that Thou has given Thine only-begotten Son to death for us, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Thou hast laid our chastisement upon Him, that we might have peace, and by His wounds we are healed. Father of Mercies ! Look not upon us in our sinfulness, but look upon us in the face of Jesus Christ, Thy Son, holy and beloved, and forgive our many and great sins for the sake of the all-atoning sacrifice which He has made for us. Lord Jesus ! Set before our eyes from day to day, and especially in this time of Thy bitterest sufferings, the vision of Thine unfathomable love and enkindle in our cold, dead hearts the flame of holy ardor, that we may love Thee above all things, who hast loved us even unto death. Grant us grace that we may contemplate Thy sufferings with truly penitent hearts and with living faith. May we beneath Thy cross find a refuge from the curse of sin and from the condemnation of the law and of our own consciences. Cease not, O Thou heavenly High-priest, ever to pray for us, " Father, forgive them," Blessed Saviour, enable us by the power of Thy death to turn from sin with loathing, to crucify the flesh with its sinful desires and lusts, and live alone to Thee in the world. We commit ourselves without reserve to Thy love and grace. Abide with us now and forever with Thy peace and comfort, with Thine eternal faithfulness and grace. In our days of prosperity and hours of joy may we keep before us the memory of Thy bloody sufferings, that we fall not into sin nor wander into the ways of destruction. If Thou sendest suffering and trials, make us steadfast. Give us courage, as we look upon Thy cross, to bear with patience whatever Thy love may lay upon us, and support us in Thy mercy, that we may overcome in every trial, and stand at length rejoicing in Thy presence in eternal glory. Amen.

FRIDAY. *A Prophecy of David concerning the Sufferings and Glory of Christ.*

1. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?

2. O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent.

3. But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.

4. Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them.

5. They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.

6. But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.

7. All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying,

8. He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.

9. But thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts.

10. I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly.

11. Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help.

12. Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round.

13. They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion.

14. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.

15. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.

16. For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.

17. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me.

18. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.

19. But be not thou far from me, O LORD: O my strength, haste thee to help me.

20. Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog.

21. Save me from the lion's mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns.

22. I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.

23. Ye that fear the LORD, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel.

24. For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard.

25. My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him.

26. The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the LORD that seek him: your heart shall live for ever.

27. All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.

28. For the kingdom is the LORD'S: and he is the governor among the nations.

29. All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him: and none can keep alive his own soul.

30. A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation.

31. They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this (Ps. xxii. 1-31).

1. David here celebrates the bitter sufferings of a holy and righteous One, and gives assurance that after all his misery he shall attain a glorious victory and everlasting dominion. All the righteous in Israel must to-day, as in all ages, suffer much and enter into rest through distress and misery. But the declarations of this Psalm find their profoundest fulfillment only in the Most Holy and Righteous One who ever trod the earth—in Him who bore the most bitter sufferings and has entered upon the highest honor and glory—our Lord Jesus Christ. Hold up this vivid portrayal of sufferings by the side of the picture of the Crucified One, and you will fall reverently upon your knees before Him who has borne so much in accordance with the fore-ordained counsel of God.

2. *Verses 1-22.* David here portrays various features of our Lord's sufferings as He endures for us shame, distress, and death. "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" cries the Lord upon the cross, as He experiences for us the curse of sin. The eternal Son of God is forsaken by His Father, that we may not be forsaken forever. It is the Lord who has become "a reproach of men and despised of the people." At Him they wagged their heads and cried in mockery: "Now let the Lord deliver Him." He experienced the fainting and thirsting spoken of, as He cried: I thirst. "They pierced my hands and my feet," the Lord might have lamented on the cross. "They part my garments among them and cast

lots upon my vesture" was literally fulfilled at the foot of the cross. It was not concealed from the Lord that He must endure all this. He Himself applies this Psalm to Himself, as He, hanging upon the cross, appropriates its opening words : "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" How clearly is not His love for us revealed, in that He willingly assumed such sufferings that we might have everlasting joy and peace !

3. *Verses 23-31.* That which is here foretold has since then, in part, come to pass, and is yet finding constantly renewed fulfillment. That which the Lord has achieved by His sufferings, He has, in His mercy, bestowed upon us. Souls in distress are, by His grace, satisfied with peace and life. His righteousness is proclaimed to all the nations, that they may repent and turn to God. The Lord has through His sufferings won for Himself a kingdom, in which His loyal subjects serve him, and all heathen tribes worship and bow the knee before Him. We live in the midst of the fulfillment of these prophecies. This kingdom will continue to flourish, although thousands in our day rise up against it and array themselves against the Lord. He shall reign at length, and all His enemies shall be put under His feet, and at His name every knee shall bow of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth. We wait in patience, and hope for the final fulfillment of this promise and for the

consummation of the kingdom of God. May the Lord make us partakers of His peace.

PRAYER.

Lord Jesus Christ, Thou Lamb of God, we heartily thank Thee that Thou hast borne the sins of the world, and hast by Thy suffering and death made atonement for our sins. Thou didst give Thyself into the hands of sinners, and wast for our sake mocked, and scourged, and crowned with thorns, and crucified. O, do Thou grant us grace, that we may by reverent meditation upon Thy holy sufferings and death be made lowly of heart, comforted in all trials of life and of death, and fully armed against the assaults of sin and the world. Thou hast, O blessed Saviour, left us an example, that we should follow in Thy footsteps. Grant that, looking unto Thee, the Author and Finisher of our faith, we may run with patience the race that is set before us, and attain at length the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls, when we shall praise and bless Thee to all eternity for Thine unutterable love. Amen.

SATURDAY. *The Typical Priesthood and Sacrifice of the Old Covenant Fulfilled in Christ.*

24. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

25. Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others;

26. For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

27. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

28. So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

1. For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

2. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.

3. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.

4. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

5. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me:

6. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure.

7. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.

8. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law;

9. Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.

10. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*.

11. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:

12. But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

13. From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.

14. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified (Heb. ix. 24—x. 14).

1. *Chapter 9, verses 24-28.* That which was done in type and symbol under the old covenant has been fulfilled by Christ. The high-priest of the old covenant only pointed forward to the coming of the true High-priest. The tabernacle of Israel is only a type of the real true tabernacle, heaven itself, where the everlasting Father dwells in His glory. Thither, into this eternal sanctuary, our High-priest has entered to appear before the face of God for us. *For us*—may these golden words be grasped in true faith by everyone who bears the name of Christ. For us He has appeared, by His one sacrifice to take away our sins. His sacrifice need not be repeated every year, as that of the high-priest under the old covenant; for in His sacrifice He shed not another's blood but His own. Such a precious sacrifice has efficacy to take away all sins. He who in faith lays hold upon this act of grace and in

the blessed assurance of faith says : *For me* the eternal Son of God and Son of Mary shed His blood, may be full of confidence, fearing not even the day of judgment—may calmly await the coming of the Lord *unto salvation*. He who shall appear as a glorious King and as the Judge of the world will be none other than He who has borne our sins. How can He condemn us who has redeemed us with His own blood ?

2. *Chapter 10, verses 1-9.* The Old Testament sacrifices are only typical. They are related to the true sacrifice of Christ as a shadow to the substantial object which produces it. They could neither lift the burden of sin, nor really effect that entire surrender to the Lord which they typically signify ; they could not make perfect. Their constant repetition bears evidence that they could not set free nor satisfy the conscience. And how could the blood of oxen and goats take away sins ? The Old Testament sacrifice was designed to be merely a vivid reminder of sins, through which might be kept alive in the heart a consciousness of sin and longing for complete expiation. This full satisfaction for our sins and true self-surrender to God—the perfect sacrifice—Jesus Christ has rendered for us. In Christ is fulfilled what David foretells in Ps. xl. 6-8. God has no pleasure in the symbolic sacrifices and gifts ; they are not sufficient in His sight. Christ, of whom it has been so written in the volume of sacred Scriptures, has come to do the will of God. In His complete self-surrender

to God in the blameless fulfillment of the whole law, as in His sufferings and death, he has brought the true and perfect sacrifice. Thus all the merely symbolic sacrifices are abolished—the first or typical sacrifice is done away with, and the second, or true and real, sacrifice established.

3. *Verses 10-14.* In Christ's fulfillment of the law, we too are sanctified. The Lord fulfilled the law *for us*. If we are united to Him in faith, His obedience belongs also to us, and we have therefore fully surrendered ourselves to God in Christ, so that henceforth our body and soul, with all our talents and powers, belong to Him. Hence there is no need of a repetition of the sacrifice of Christ, but only of the appropriation of that sacrifice in faith. Not only has the Lord atoned for separate sins, but the one great general evil—sin itself—has been blotted out by His sacrifice ; and if we now only remain in Christ and He in us, we are made eternally complete in Him, and shall with Him, as He sits at the right hand of God, trample all enemies, sin, death, Satan, and hell, under our feet.

Such is the power of the precious sacrifice of Christ. May the Lord by His grace enable us all to experience this power in our own lives.

PRAYER.

Our Lord and Saviour, blessed be Thy holy name for ever and ever. Blessed be Thy faithfulness and mercy shown toward us poor sinners in the hours of Thy bitter suffering and death upon the cross. O, what distress and agony and torture were caused Thee by our sins ! At what a price hast Thou redeemed, secured, and delivered

us from sin, death, and the power of the devil—not with silver and gold, but by Thy precious blood and Thine innocent sufferings and death. Grant that we may now live and walk as Thy redeemed ones, holy and beloved, washed clean from sin by Thy blood and sanctified by Thy Word in the washing of regeneration to be a holy people unto Thee. In the hour of temptation hold Thou before us Thy deep suffering, that we may tremble at the thought of the sin and unrighteousness of men which pressed upon Thee as an awful burden. In all our trials and sufferings, in all our earthly sorrows and distress, may we draw comfort and blessing from Thine agony and torture. Amid all the conflicts of the world, let peace flow upon us from Thy holy wounds. And when the hour shall come when we must take our departure from this earth, O, then by the virtue of Thy death upon the cross, grant us Thy peace, with true faith and a rejoicing heart, that we may gain the victory over death. O, Lord, do Thou uphold us, and lead us through all the sorrows of the world and the terrors of death to everlasting life and blessed peace, for the sake of Thy holy passion and most bitter death. Amen.

FIRST WEEK IN LENT.

All the sufferings of the Lord may be traced to Satan as their source. With the temptation in the wilderness the assault of the great enemy begins. That Christ is open to temptation is for us an evidence of His true humanity, while His threefold victory reveals His divine glory. His twofold nature, truly human and truly divine, makes it possible for Him to be our High-priest.

SUNDAY. *Christ Tempted by Satan.*

1. Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.
2. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered.
3. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

4. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

5. Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,

6. And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

7. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

8. Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

9. And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

10. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

11. Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him (Matt. iv. 1-II).

1. *Verses 1 and 2.* Immediately after His baptism our Lord was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness. He tarried there in quiet loneliness, certainly in the most intimate association with His Father. He was accustomed to retire thus frequently into the wilderness, or up the mountain-sides, to hold converse with His Father in prayer. This quiet intercourse with God has become our privilege also through Christ. The way of approach to the Father has, through Him, been opened to us, and he who desires to hold his ground manfully in the conflicts and storms of this world will need these hours of secret prayer. Where this hidden life with God is wanting, there true courage will be lacking for the strife and true fortitude in suffering. In secret is stored up the water of life, which bursts forth as a fountain to refresh the thirsty and to revive the parched land.

The Lord fasted forty days and forty nights. In

quiet retirement and in most familiar intercourse with His heavenly Father in prayer, He sought preparation for entrance upon His public ministry. Then came the tempter, the devil. The old enemy, who had led our first parents astray, and alienated them from the Lord their God, will not without a conflict allow himself to be robbed of his booty. He will attempt to overthrow the Prince of Life, for he well knows that the latter has come to destroy his own evil works. Since the Lord has become a true man, he may now venture to approach Him. The temptation of Christ comes thus directly from the devil. It is idle to attempt to evade this fact, or to explain it away. It could not be otherwise. He who argues that the evil thoughts which came to Christ originated in His own heart slanders the Holy One. Temptation must come to Him from without, from him who was a murderer and a liar from the beginning ; for in Christ there is no evil lust, not even the slightest inclination to wrong-doing. No one can charge Him with sin. His soul is sinless and holy, a mirror of heavenly purity, whose clear surface has never been beclouded by any breath of sin, and is, therefore, unaffected by the wiles of the tempter. We are also subject to temptation. Satan assails us with all his arts, the world allures us with her pleasures, pomp and wealth, and—worst of all—our own flesh lusts after evil. Thus the enemy, assailing us from without, finds an ally in our own hearts, and hence it is that we fall

so easily and so often. Who of us has not occasion sorely to lament many a fall into sin, many an hour of weakness, when we were overcome by the tempter?

2. *Verses 3 and 4.* Thrice the tempter assails the Holy One of God. It was his design to bring Him to shame in His threefold official character, as Prophet, High-priest and King. The devil tries in turn the three keys which open the doors of all other human hearts, *i. e.*, he appeals to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. But these keys, so successfully employed in other cases, do not fit the heart of Jesus. How often has not one or the other of them opened your heart! First, he assails Christ as the great Prophet, and tempts Him to employ His power of working miracles for His own carnal indulgence. But the holy Prophet repels the tempter with the Word of God. Not for Himself does He perform miracles, but for us poor children of men ; not for the satisfaction of His own fleshly appetites, but as proofs of His holy office and His divine mission. Prompted by love and mercy, He chose for Himself poverty and want, that He might satisfy our souls with life, peace and joy. Whosoever clings to Him in true faith can withstand temptation and repulse the tempter, who only too often still assails us with allurements appealing to the lust of the flesh. The Word of God is our best weapon of defense, and Christ is the best comrade in the conflict.

3. *Verses 5-7.* Approaching the Lord a second time, Satan leads Him out upon a pinnacle of the temple, and, by the artful employment of a passage of Scripture, endeavors to persuade Him to cast Himself down from the temple, and thus make it manifest in full view of the whole city of Jerusalem that He is the true High-priest and spiritual Prince of Israel. But the Lord again repels the tempter with the Word of God. Not by pomp and outward glory, gratifying the lust of the eye, does He purpose to reveal and consummate His priestly office, but in humility and suffering. His course is not to be a lofty and magnificent passage through the air, but a lowly walk upon the earth. As the Lamb of God, He will bear the sin of the world, and His priestly office will be exercised as He hangs upon the cross, the most despised and forsaken of men. Thus, also, the true Christian passes through the world quietly and without ostentation. The path of life leads not through outward splendor, but through suffering; not through worldly glory, but through humility and shame. Yet how often we wander from the narrow way, allured by the lust of the eyes into forbidden paths!

4. *Verses 8-11.* The third temptation is addressed to the Lord as King. Satan presents to His view a gorgeous picture of universal dominion and glory. Without effort, without cross or suffering, Christ may become a king, honored by the whole world. The devil here offers what he

does not really have to give, and demands in return the homage which belongs to God alone. Thus Satan is always alluring men by deceptive appearances. All the pleasures which he promises end in eternal sufferings ; all the glory which now blinds the eye, all the honor and power which he offers, are transformed into lamentation, woe, and everlasting perdition. The Lord does not suffer Himself to be thus led into folly. He does not seek honor before the world—does not in pride of heart desire a kingdom glittering with earthly splendor. His kingdom is not of this world. The crown which He seeks is a crown of thorns ; the throne which he desires to ascend is the cross. Through suffering and death will He rise to the glory which belongs to Him, and possess the kingdom which has been given to Him.

“Get thee hence, Satan”—at the word of command the devil departs for a season. From that time forward he wages his warfare against the Lord indirectly, through the hearts of men, through the children of unbelief, through the scribes and Pharisees, until he returns in person to the assault in Gethsemane and on Golgotha, where Jesus at length crushes the head of the old serpent. Like Jesus, we should sternly command Satan to leave us when he seeks to allure us into the ways of worldly pride. But oh ! how often are we entangled in the toils of this snare ! How many become the devil’s prey through pride and ambition ! In the hour of temptation, cry in the

name of the Lord, “Get thee hence, Satan,” and he will be compelled to leave thee in peace. The Lord has despoiled him of his power and brought his works to naught. If we believe, the victory of Christ becomes our victory.

5. The Lord was tempted like as we, yet without sin. He became a true man, and, therefore, like all flesh, experienced temptation and trials. Just in this lies our consolation. Because He is both true God and true man, He is our High-priest, and the proper Mediator between God and man. Had He been God only, how could He have taken upon Himself our sins, and, dying for us, have rendered an eternally valid offering for our sins? Had He been man only, how could He, then, have redeemed us? Only the God-man, Jesus Christ, can be our merciful High-priest, and in this temptation in the wilderness His twofold nature is clearly manifest. Thus has Christ, the Second Adam, repaired the damage brought upon the world by the first Adam. The first Adam was tempted in Paradise, and fell away from God. By this means sin and death entered the world, and our human nature became utterly corrupt. Thus all flesh fell under the power of Satan, the victor in that conflict, with whom all sin originates. Christ, the Second Adam (1 Cor. xv. 45; Rom. v. 14, 15), came to blot out sin and to deliver us from death and the power of Satan. His victory over the tempter inures to our benefit, for He endured the temptation *for us*, and *for us* gained the vic-

tory, just as all the deeds and sufferings of His earthly life were for our good. May He enable us to share the fruits of His conflict and His victory.

PRAYER.

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, Thou seest that the great adversary, the devil, who spared not Thine own dear Son, is ever pursuing and tempting us poor sinful creatures, who have no power to resist him. O, do Thou strengthen us and keep us, lest he allure us to destruction. Be Thou ever with us, to guard us against the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, that we may not fall into unbelief, despair, or open sins; and if temptation comes to us, give us courage to resist it manfully and power to gain a glorious victory. Endue us with the strength of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may overcome all evil, and that sin may have no power over us. Hear Thou our prayer, for the sake of Jesus Christ, Thine own dear Son, our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

MONDAY. Christ became Man and Our Brother, in order that He might be a True High-priest before God to Atone for the Sin of the World.

6. But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?

7. Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands:

8. Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing *that is* not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.

9. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

10. For it became him, for whom *are* all things, and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

11. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified *are* all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,

12. Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.

13. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me.

14. *Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;*

15. *And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.*

16. *For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.*

17. *Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.*

18. *For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted (Heb. ii. 6-18).*

1. *Verses 6-10.* Our lesson to-day sets before us three great truths which we ought to bear especially in mind during the solemn weeks of the Passion Season. It reminds us, in the first place, how Christ through His deep humiliation, sufferings, and death has entered upon a state of honor, glory, and everlasting dominion, and has thereby become the Captain of our salvation. He, the eternal Son of God, Lord of all the angels, condescended to so lowly a condition and became man, in order that He might for us suffer death, which is the wages of sin, and, faithful to the end, in perfect obedience to God, offer Himself up in sacrifice for us poor sinful men. Only as true man could He take our sins and their penalty upon Himself. But His sacrifice and atonement can be sufficient only because He is at the same time true God. Thus has He become the Captain of our salvation, and, as He Himself has passed through suffering into glory, so will He lead us also to glory if we in true faith become one with Him.

2. *Verses 11-15.* We are here reminded, in the second place, that Jesus Christ was not ashamed

to be called our Brother, and to call us His brethren and His children, having taken upon Himself flesh and blood in order to deliver us from death and the power of the devil. Through the seduction of Satan sin entered the world, and death by sin. In our natural state we are all in sin, and in consequence subject to death and held in the power and service of Satan. He has a right to us, for sin has brought us under his dominion. The fear of death rests upon us, and we have reason to fear, since we deserve to die. But now Christ has appeared, taken upon Himself our flesh and blood, offered Himself as a holy surety in our behalf—as the innocent One, taken upon Himself our guilt, and surrendered Himself to death for us. We need therefore no longer fear, if we but live in Him. We have thus in Christ deliverance from death and the fear of death, and Satan has no longer power over us, because our sins have been blotted out through Christ, and we have become His property. But only he can understand this work of deliverance who has first believed it and experienced it in his own soul. Talking about it and seeking to explain it can therefore avail but little. Only simple faith can appropriate the blessing.

3. *Verses 16-18.* The third truth here taught is that Jesus Christ has become entirely like us, has by suffering and struggling with us thoroughly experienced our human misery, and has even endured temptation at the hands of him who was a

tempter and a murderer from the beginning—all in order that He might have feelings of mercy for us and be a true and faithful High-priest before God. He Himself experienced our misery. Moved by His unfathomable love, He willingly took upon Himself poverty, hunger, persecution, mockery and scorn, agony and wounds, the cross and death. He knows all the misery which we now endure. To His divine pity is added His human sympathy ; and since He, as a true man, can experience with us all our woe and want and our temptations, He has become a faithful High-priest, who not alone once offered Himself up upon the cross, but who yet continually pleads for us in His eternal glory. We, upon our part, may now draw near to Him with our great burdens and our little trials, since we know that He understands all the troubles that oppress us, since He took them all upon Himself when He became man for us.

PRAYER.

Lord Jesus, our Eternal King and High-priest, who sittest at the right hand of the Almighty Father, at whose name every knee shall bow in heaven, upon earth, and under the earth. We adore Thee in Thy glorious majesty and magnify Thy grace and Thine unfailing mercy. Thou didst for our sakes come down into the misery of this world, didst take upon Thee the form of a servant, wast made like unto other men in order that Thou mightest make us the children of God. We thank Thee for Thy deep humiliation, for Thy shame and sufferings, for Thine obedience unto death. Do Thou make us ever mindful of all that Thou hast done for us. For the sake of Thy deep humiliation, forsake us not in our distress and misery. Abide with us and with all Thy servants, according to Thy blessed promise, alway, even to the end

of the world. Take not from us the sweet consolation of Thy presence, and may we daily rejoice in Thy love. We are Thine own, for Thou hast redeemed us by Thy precious blood shed for us upon the cross. Lift not Thy hand of blessing from us, but be Thou our Advocate before Thy Father's throne, according to Thy Word. Bless us, Thy people, evermore as our faithful and eternal High-priest. Bestow upon us Thy Holy Spirit, that we may be purified from dead works, that we may walk in Thy footsteps, and our whole lives be a continual sacrifice of praise. Amen.

TUESDAY. *Christ, Our High-priest, is Tempted as We are.*

14. Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our profession.*

15. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are, yet without sin.*

16. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

1. For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things *pertaining to God*, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins:

2. Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.

3. And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.

4. And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as *was Aaron.*

5. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, *Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee.*

6. As he saith also in another place, *Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.*

7. Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared;

8. Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;

9. And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;

10. Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec (Heb. iv. 14—v. 10).

1. *Chapter 4, verse 14—Chapter 5, verse 3.* Here, as in our last Sunday's Gospel lesson, we see both the Saviour's humiliation and His glory. Jesus Christ is a *great High-priest, the Son of God from*

all eternity. After His incarnation He returned again, at His ascension, to His original glory. But He condescended to the deepest humiliation and was tempted like as we are, yet without sin. We are tempted *by* sin and *to* sin, for all temptation from without, from Satan and the world, finds support and help in the sin which dwells within us. He who was without sin repelled every temptation of Satan and the world ; and as He, the Sinless One, could not be tempted *by* sin, so did He triumphantly repulse every temptation *to* sin. The high-priest in ancient Israel was selected from among men, and was therefore subject to the same weaknesses as others, involved in the same sin and misery. The sense of his own need and sin must have impelled him to the greater diligence and fidelity in discharging the duties of his office—sacrifice and prayer—that he might be a real mediator between a holy God and the sinful people. Thus also Christ became man and our Brother, and since He has thus borne our misery and has even Himself been tempted, He knows the feelings of the tempted soul and sympathizes with us in our weakness. But this deep humiliation of Christ and His holy sympathy should inspire us with joyful boldness to approach the throne of God, which has, through Christ, become for us a throne of grace. The Son of God, who has become our Brother, whose heart throbs with holy sympathy for us, appears as our Advocate, and for His sake we obtain mercy and grace,

which we poor sinners always sorely need, especially in our hours of temptation, and, above all, when our last hour draws nigh.

2. *Verses 4-10.* God Himself appointed and ordained His only-begotten Son to be a merciful High-priest, and Jesus Christ willingly assumed the office. It was no slight undertaking. He offered up “prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears”—so heavy lay the sins of the world upon Him, such pain did the work of our redemption cost Him. In Him was fulfilled the word of prophecy : “Thou hast made me to serve with thy sins ; thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities” (*Isa. xlivi. 24*). He who is Lord over all and God’s own Son surrenders Himself in complete obedience in life and in suffering. He fulfilled the Law *for us*, and *for us* suffered death. He is now *made perfect*—*i. e.*, freed from all the self-assumed burden of vicarious suffering. He has entered into glory, and has thus become also *for us* the author of salvation, if we but surrender ourselves to Him in holy obedience. God has Himself pronounced Him a High-priest after the order of Melchizedek. Such is He to be for us all—at once a King and a Priest. He has redeemed us by the sacrifice of Himself, and He reigns over us according to His grace in His eternal kingdom. He is the true Melchizedek—“King of righteousness”—for He has Himself become our righteousness. As Melchizedek was king at *Salem*—*i. e.*, a “king of peace”—so Christ is the true King of Peace, who

has made peace between God and us, in that He, true God and true man, has become our Mediator and faithful High-priest. To Him be glory to all eternity.

PRAYER.

Our merciful and loving Saviour, we praise Thee that Thou didst so pity us in our weakness and sinfulness that Thou didst come from heaven to save us. Thou wast made in the likeness of men, and wast not ashamed to call us Thy brethren. For us didst Thou bear the assaults of temptation, that Thou mightest sympathize with us when our faith is sorely tried and when the wiles of Satan almost overcome us. O, do Thou help us to resist the devil, that he may flee from us. May we live so close to Thee that the evil one may have no power over us. May Thy Word dwell in us richly, and be to us as a shield for our defense, and as a two-edged sword with which to smite the tempter as Thou didst smite him in the wilderness. O, Thou mighty Deliverer, be Thou ever near us. Keep us, lest we be betrayed into sin. Thou hast all power, and Thou hast overcome the tempter. Make us conquerors through Thee. Amen.

WEDNESDAY. *Passion History. Part I. Christ Anointed by Mary in Bethany.*

Six days before the Passover came Jesus to Bethany, where Lazarus was, which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper in the house of Simon the Leper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. There came to him Mary, having an alabaster box of pure ointment of spikenard, very costly; and she brake the box and poured the ointment on the head of Jesus as he sat at meat, and anointed his feet and wiped them with her hair; and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment. Then saith one of the disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who afterward betrayed him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor? Some of the other disciples also agreed with him, murmured against Mary, and said, To what purpose is this waste? But this said Judas, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the bag and bare what was put therein. When Jesus saw it, he said to them, Let her alone. Why trouble ye her? She hath wrought a good work on me. Ye have the poor with you always, and whosoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always. She hath done what she could: for in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she is come beforehand to

anoint my body to the burying. Verily I say unto you, Where-soever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her (Matt. xxvi. 6-13—Mark xiv. 3-9—John xii. 1-8).

1. The time of suffering is now come. The Lord has fulfilled His prophetic office. The work of His priesthood now begins. The eternal High-priest goes to the altar of the cross, to accomplish the sacrifice. The Lamb of God that beareth the sin of the world is led to the slaughter. Eternal love gives itself away. Life turns toward death. May the Lord subdue our souls into perfect silence, and fill us with holy reverence, as we celebrate the time of His bitter sufferings. May He grant us comfort from His pain, peace from His conflict, healing from His wounds, life from His death. May He anoint us with the oil of the Holy Spirit and bless to our hearts this holy Passion Season, that we may regard the sacrifice on Golgotha with real penitence and true faith and appropriate to ourselves its power.

2. We find the Lord in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper. He was no doubt one of the many sick whom Jesus had restored to health. Lazarus was present, a living testimony to the grace and glory of the Lord. Martha entered and served as was her wont. Mary was not absent from the little circle. Wherever the Lord goes, there gather always the souls that love Him. In His Word He now draws near to us. Let us willingly and joyfully welcome Him to our midst.

3. Mary, whom we have once found seated

humblly at the Master's feet, is near the Lord whom her soul loves. But a short time ago He called Lazarus from the dead, and thus gave back to her her beloved brother. Her heart swells in holy love. She longs to give expression in some way to the emotion struggling within her. Words seem to her too poor and cold. She would fain bring an offering—announce to Him whom her soul loves, by some distinct sign, the entire surrender of her heart to Him. Such is the nature of love. It longs to give—to make sacrifices. Thus prompted, Mary brings a box of pure and very precious ointment of spikenard—doubtless a treasure long carefully guarded. She wishes to give Him the very best and noblest of her possessions. As she breaks the vessel and pours the costly ointment upon the head and feet of the Lord, she lavishes upon Him also the love of her full heart, pure and precious as the ointment itself. The house—yes, the whole world—was filled with the odor of the ointment. Throughout the world the heartfelt, simple, and entire devotion of Mary to her Lord is spoken of, and who does not bless her for the act of that hour? This narrative of Mary's love has been preserved as an example of heartfelt, humble and devoted affection. We should, like Mary, lavish upon Jesus the pure and precious ointment of sincere love, that the odor of it may fill our home and our whole life.

4. The disciples did not understand the love of Mary, and some even murmured at her wasteful-

ness. But the Lord, who, in more than human love, gave Himself freely for the world, and suffered the sacred vessel of His body to be broken, so that heaven and earth are filled with the sweet odor of His love—the Lord understands the heart of Mary. “She hath done what she could”—better testimony than this could not be given. The Saviour has done what none of us can do, what He alone had power to do. He has borne the sin of the world, and by His loving sacrifice has transformed lost and condemned men into blessed children of God. Of us He asks no more than that we shall do what we can. And what can we do? We can only humbly accept His grace and lovingly commit ourselves to Him. All that we do is really but a receiving in humility and faith. He gives us everything—gives us even holy love itself, and our love to Him is only a weak reflection of His love to us.

PRAYER.

O Lord Jesus, how great is the love wherewith Thou hast loved us! May we never forget that Thou hast gone down even to death for us, and may Thy life of sorrows and Thy shameful death be ever before us. Thou didst freely offer Thyself up for us all. We come to Thee with grateful hearts, and pour out before Thee the ointment of our love and of our heartfelt prayers. Yea, we give ourselves to Thee with all our misery. Accept Thou our poor offering. Comfort our souls with the benediction of Thy peace, and may we, by the power of Thy sufferings and death, be kept to everlasting joy in Thy presence above. Amen.

THURSDAY. *Passion History. Part II. The Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem and the Betrayal by Judas.*

On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna; Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord. And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written, "Fear not, Daughter of Zion; behold thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt." But the people that was with him, when he called Lazarus out of his grave and raised him from the dead, bare record of the deed. For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle. The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? Behold, the world is gone after him.

Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover. And Jesus said unto his disciples: Ye know that after two days is the feast of the Passover, and the Son of man shall be betrayed to be crucified. Then assembled together the chief priests and the scribes and the elders of the people and consulted that they might take Jesus by subtily and kill him. But they said, "Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people!" And Satan entered into Judas, who was called Iscariot, being one of the number of the twelve. And he went away and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might deliver him unto them, and said: "What will ye give me, and I will betray him unto you?" When they heard that they were glad, and covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And he promised, and from that time he sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude (Matt. xxvi. 1-5; 14-16—Mark xi. 1-2; 10-11—Luke xxii. 1-6—John xiii. 12-19).

1. The Lord publicly enters Jerusalem. It is for the last time. He knows what is awaiting Him, and tells His disciples beforehand. Yet he goes up to the city. The cross does not terrify Him; Gethsemane does not restrain Him. Behold what love is His, that He goes calmly on, to offer up His life in sacrifice. To Jerusalem He comes. How often had the inhabitants of this City of God driven Him from them, and would not let Him gather them under the wings of His grace. But He never grows weary of calling

them, lovingly inviting them, and freely offering His grace. He comes yet once again, although He well knows that even His last loving plea will be in vain. How this reveals to us the Saviour's heart, and makes us realize the gracious depths of His love, which is still continually being manifested in His dealings with us. O, let Him enter thy heart and house, while He yet comes to thee in Word and Sacrament, proclaiming grace and peace ! Do not repel from thee this meek King. May the season of His pain and sufferings soften hard hearts and open their closed doors, that He may enter them, bearing with Him the benediction of His peace.

2. Wherever Christ comes, the secrets of men's hearts are revealed. The multitude receives Him with joyous hosannas ; but He hears already in spirit their cry, Crucify, crucify ! Their love will so soon have lost its fervor, their praises so quickly die away ! Such is the way of the world. And are not our own hearts often cold and fickle in their love to Him, whose love for us was faithful unto death ? O, how often we forget His love, and our hearts, that should glow with the flame of ardent love for Him, are often so poor and empty ! May the Lord, in this season when true love is so touchingly revealed, enkindle in our souls the flame of a love sincere and holy.

3. While love is thus impelling the Lord onward to death, in order that we might have life, hatred assembles the high-priests and scribes for the per-

fecting of their murderous designs, and Judas sells his Saviour for thirty pieces of silver. This awful crime is being constantly repeated. The world hates its Saviour, and its hatred grows the more intense the more the glory of His love is revealed. Wherever the Lord makes His presence known, there Satan also bestirs himself. Wherever the kingdom of light extends its borders, there the kingdom of darkness rises against it. But let the treachery of Judas lead us all to earnest self-examination. O, how many betray the Lord for less than thirty pieces of silver—for an hour of sinful pleasure, for a little of the world's wretched honors, for the sake of some bosom sin ! Is there no price for which you would sell Jesus ? Blessed is he who can say from his heart : “Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee.” We may always have Him, and it is enough for us if we have nothing but Him, for in Him we have all things that we need. He is near us to-day, and wishes to enter our hearts with the rich gifts of His grace. We bid Thee welcome, noble Heavenly Guest.

PRAYER.

Blessed be Thy name, Lord Jesus, that Thou didst come from heaven through Thy sufferings and death to establish on earth Thy kingdom of peace and grace. O, holy and eternal King ! we welcome Thee with rejoicing. The cross with all its agony and shame awaits Thee, but Thou dost not shrink. Thou takest the awful burden willingly upon Thee, for only thus canst Thou deliver us from everlasting death. As Thou didst enter Jerusalem meek and lowly, so dost Thou come to us in this sacred

season. Grant us Thy Holy Spirit, that we may receive Thee in true faith and with sincere hosannas. O, come to us, Lord Jesus, and stay Thou ever near, that we may not be ensnared by Satan, nor led in an evil hour, like Judas, to betray Thee. We have so often forgotten Thee, and been willing to surrender Thee for the riches and pleasures of the world. But behold us in mercy as we now draw near to Thee with sorrow for our sins, and plead for Thy mercy. O, Thou holy King, look graciously upon us, and shed abroad Thy peace in our hearts. Amen.

FRIDAY. Passion History. Part III. The Washing of the Disciples' Feet.

Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. Then came the first day of unleavened bread, when the passover lamb must be killed. And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the Passover, that we may eat. And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare? And he said unto them, Go into the city, and there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water. Follow him into the house where he entereth in. And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, My time is at hand: I will keep the Passover at thy house with my disciples. Where is the guestchamber in which I may eat the Passover? And he shall show you a large upper room furnished: there make ready. And the disciples went forth and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the Passover. And in the evening he cometh with the twelve.

When now the supper had been prepared (and the disciples were about to sit down to eat) there arose a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat or he that serveth? Is not he that sitteth at meat? But I am among you as he that serveth. And now, supper being ended, the devil having put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him; Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God and went to God, riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel wherewith he was girded. Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also *my* hands and *my* head. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash *his* feet, but is clean every

whit: and ye are clean, but not all. For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean. So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them. I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me. Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

But ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations, and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my father hath appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. xxvi. 17-20—Mark xiv. 12-17—Luke xxii. 7-14; 24-30—John xiii. 1-20).

1. The Lord loved His disciples “unto the end.” Thus does He love us even unto death, and will love us while we live on earth, and to all eternity. Yet once again He lovingly desires to eat the Passover Lamb with His disciples. In making the appointment with them, He acknowledges His subjection to the Law, and yet in His wonderful way permits us to catch glimpses of His omniscience and divine glory.

2. As the disciples, in the pride of their hearts, engage in a controversy as to who of them shall be regarded as the greatest, He gives them an example of the deepest humility. He “into whose hands the Father had given all things washes with these hands, not the hands, but the feet of the disciples” (Augustine). “John the Baptist counted himself unworthy to loosen the latchet of the Saviour's shoes; and this Jesus

accounts Himself not too exalted—not only to loosen the shoe-latchet—but to wash the feet of the disciples. Who would have ventured to believe it, if the Lord had not actually done it? Verily it could never have entered into the heart of man to enact such a living parable!" (Besser).

3. This act of the Lord is both a symbol and a pattern. It is symbolical of the spiritual cleansing which He graciously bestows upon us. "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet." "In holy Baptism, washed is fully cleansed. But as we afterward live in the midst of the affairs of this world, we tread upon the earth with our feet. The human feelings and emotions, without which we cannot live in this mortal state, are, so to speak, the feet to which the dust of the earth cleaves, and we are thereby so defiled, that if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. Daily therefore doth He, who is our Advocate with the Father and pleads for us, wash our feet; and daily do we confess that we need to have our feet washed, as we pray: Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And if we thus confess, He who washed His disciples' feet is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (Augustine). "What the washing of the disciples' feet was before the institution of the Lord's Supper, that is confession before partaking of the sacrament. We go to the confession and confess our sins, and as often as we

receive the absolution, it is as though Jesus washed our feet which have become soiled with the dust of the earth" (Besser).

4. But the washing of the disciples' feet is also a pattern for our imitation. "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you," says the Master. We should, if it be necessary, in holy love literally fulfill this injunction, and not be ashamed nor hesitate to actually wash the feet of those who may stand in need of such service. But especially should we live according to the Saviour's example in the spiritual sense, serving our neighbor in Christian humility and love, cheerfully forgiving him, and in all things seeking the Lord's honor, not our own, and our neighbor's profit and salvation. We should minister to one another as Jesus Christ has ministered to us. To serve with complete devotion is, in the kingdom of Christ, to reign. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

PRAYER.

O, Lord Jesus, our God and Saviour ! Thou didst leave the glory which Thou hadst with the Father before the world was and come to earth, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and by Thy bitter sufferings and death to deliver us poor, helpless sinners. Thou didst take upon Thee the form of a servant in order to transform us into Thy glorious likeness. Thou didst become poor, that we might be made rich. Thou didst go down to death that we might rise to everlasting life. O, Thou meek and lowly Jesus ! adorn our souls with Thy lowliness and meekness, that our lives may be pleasing in Thy sight. Shed abroad Thy love in our hearts, that we may serve one another in true humility, as Thou didst wash the feet

of Thy disciples. Wash us in Thy precious blood. Thou hast granted us in Thy Holy Baptism the washing of regeneration, but alas! we have not remained clean, but our lives have been defiled by daily sins. But daily dost Thou also forgive us our sins. We come to Thee therefore in deep humility and pray Thee to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. O, do Thou sanctify us more and more, that we may walk in Thy light on earth, and at last, cleansed from all pollution, enter through the gates into Thy heavenly kingdom. Amen.

SATURDAY. *We should Appropriately the Grace of God so Dearly Won for Us and Live with Christ.*

1. *We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.*
2. *(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)*
3. *Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed;*
4. *But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,*
5. *In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings;*
6. *By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned,*
7. *By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,*
8. *By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true;*
9. *As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed;*
10. *As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things (2 Cor. vi. 1-10).*

1. *Verses 1-2.* Our Gospel lesson presents to us the Lord as conqueror in the hour of temptation. *For us* the eternal Son of God descended so low as even to submit to the assaults of temptation. *For us* He overcame Satan, that we through Him might gain the victory over the great enemy. For us He passed through suffering and death and such deep humiliation. Thus He won for us the grace of God, having become like us

and taken upon Himself our iniquity and sin. This dearly won grace He is continually offering to us in His Word and sacraments. The announcement of the apostle applies therefore to our own day : “Behold now is the accepted time ; behold now is the day of salvation.” But we should also accept the grace which Christ has so dearly won for us and not receive it in vain. How many utterly reject this grace, refusing to hear the Word of God and having no desire for the holy sacraments ! And how many receive it in vain ! We receive the grace of God in vain when we hear His Word, but do not repent nor bring forth fruits meet for repentance ; when, having been cleansed by the water of Holy Baptism, we wallow again in the mire of sin ; when we partake of the body and blood of Christ, but yet do not suffer ourselves to be controlled by His life. Remember how dearly the grace of God was won for thee, and receive and cherish it in true faith that thou mayest be saved at last.

2. *Verses 3-7.* As Christ humbled Himself for us, and endured poverty, want, distress, persecution and temptation, so should we, following His example, willingly bear all manner of affliction and trial. The servants and followers of Christ cannot be exempted from want, affliction, persecution, toil, watchings and fastings. Satan, who tempted the Lord Himself, and the world around us and within us, will leave us no rest. The Christian’s life is therefore a continuous conflict.

Amid all allurements from without and temptations from within we should be steadfast and of good cheer, and manifest in purity, knowledge, longsuffering, kindness, love, and truth the holy life of Christ that is to reign within us. The Holy Spirit is ready to strengthen us, and the power of God will become mighty in us, so that we shall be enabled to wage a good warfare to the right and to the left, and gain the victory as Christ in His sufferings won the victory and overcame the world.

3. *Verses 8-11.* If we have committed ourselves to Christ in true faith, it should not seem strange to us that we are called upon to bear His image in the whole tenor of our lives. In Him we see glory and humility united ; so should it be in His followers. As He, though held in honor by His Father and all the angelic host, endured shame on earth, so must His followers press on their way through honor and shame, through evil report and good report. As He, who is the way, the truth and the life, was reviled on earth as a deceiver, so must His followers, though sincere and truthful, be called deceivers. As He, well-known in the presence of God and the angels, wandered on earth poor and unknown, so fares it often with those who follow in His footsteps. The world knows them not, but their names are written in heaven. As He dying yet lives, so have His followers passed from death unto life ; they die daily to sin and the world, and live in God. Faithful Chris-

tians are chastened by God, for He chastens most severely the children whom He loves the best ; but the chastening leads to life, not death. With Christ, believers mourn under the pressure of the sins and sorrows of life, and yet are they ever rejoicing in faith and hope. As Christ for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich, so are His followers also poor and counted as having nothing ; and yet through Him they are rich, possessors of all glory and grace, and make many rich, who accept their testimony of Christ and receive not His grace in vain. Thus are Christians, both in glory and in humility, a copy of Christ, their great Pattern. After their Passion Season on the earth come the blessed Easter morning and a joyful eternity with the Lord. In this may we be partakers through His grace.

PRAYER.

O God, our Father in Heaven, we praise Thee for the wonderful love wherewith Thou hast loved us. We are not worthy of the least of Thy mercies ; but though we have daily grieved Thee by our sins, Thou hast continued to bless us and hast not punished us according to our iniquities. We bless Thy name, that when we were lost in sin, Thou didst lay help upon One that was mighty to save, and didst send Thine own dear Son to fight for us and deliver us. O may we receive not this Thy grace in vain, but may we be enabled to repent of our sins and believe on Him whom Thou hast sent. O, our blessed Saviour, it was our sins that brought Thee down to poverty and persecution, to suffering and death. Thou didst willingly endure it all, that Thou mightest bring us to God. We give ourselves to Thee. Teach us to love Thee with our whole heart and to follow in Thy footsteps. Help us to bear the trials of life with patience, looking

ever unto Thee who art able to succor them that are tempted and to give us the final victory. Amen.

SECOND WEEK IN LENT.

The Lord exerts His power over the spirits of darkness. As He responds to the importunate pleading of the Canaanitish woman by delivering her daughter from the distress inflicted by Satan, so is He ever bringing relief to the victims of the evil one. The spirits of darkness must, however reluctantly, obey His voice. Thus the Saviour manifests His glory in the midst of His time of suffering.

SUNDAY. *Christ Heals the Daughter of the Canaanitish Woman.*

21. Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.

22. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.

23. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.

24. But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

25. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.

26. But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs.

27. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.

28. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour (Matt. xv. 21-28).

1. What a delightful incident! How cordially must we not all admire the Canaanitish woman, and bow in recognition of her rich development

of the spirit of prayer. Her prayers and supplications—her wrestling in prayer, persevering till the Lord blesses her—her faith, it is all so precious and so beautiful to behold. And yet, noble as this woman may be, great as is her faith and sincere her supplications, the study of the narrative will serve only in the end to glorify the Lord, who condescends to deal thus kindly with the humblest suppliant. We will therefore to-day dwell upon this woman's confession and humility, her prayer and her faith, only in order that we may, through them, gain a fuller view of the glory of Him to whom all honor belongs.

2. *Verses 21 and 22.* Our Saviour in his journeys came into heathen territory. He did so because He knew that a pious soul was there waiting for Him and longing for His help. He always seeks out those who sincerely long for Him. Behold, there approaches Him a woman of Canaan, a heathen, and cries after Him : “Lord, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me : my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.” Oh, what faithful mother-love ! What heart-felt intercession ! Here learn what the love of a parent is and what true intercession means. But observe, too, what a notable confession of faith ! She acknowledges Christ as the Lord and as the son of David, the promised Messiah of Israel—yea, and as having authority over the devil and all his power and cunning. Her confession thus reveals the glory of Him to whom it is addressed. He

accepts the homage and permits her to attribute such power to Him, for all honor is His due and He really possesses the power ascribed.

3. *Verses 23-26.* The Lord makes no response to the supplications of the woman. He even repels her, saying : “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” But the woman does not cease to plead, crying, “Lord, help me!” Even when the Lord again repulses her (verse 26) she is not frightened away. Like Jacob, she wrestles with the Lord and will not let Him go, except He bless her. By her urgent pleading she makes it evident that she knows the love of Christ—knows that He will in the end help her, that He cannot do otherwise—His love compels Him to have compassion. Thus the persistent supplications of the woman reveal to us in clearest light the glory of the Saviour’s love. Yea, truly, He cannot do otherwise—He must help, for He is love. Courage, servant of Christ ! Be of good cheer in every time of trial. Though He may often for awhile forbear to help, yet at length He will speak the word, for *He is love*. Like this heathen woman, persevere in prayer and supplication, and His help will come when needed.

4. *Verse 27.* Great and glorious, too, is the humility of this woman. She acknowledges the superior rights of Israel ; concedes without murmuring that she, as a heathen, has no just claim upon the Lord : but yet she trusts in His grace alone. She captivates our hearts entirely by her humble

response : “Truth, Lord : yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.” Truly, this is humility ! Lying prostrate before the Lord, with no appeal to our own righteousness, but only to His mercy. What the Lord bestows upon thee is of grace and of grace alone ; thou art lost without His grace. The more humbly this poor woman bows before the Lord, the more she rests her hope alone upon His grace, the more clearly beam upon us the dignity and glory of Him, before whom the whole creation, even the angels of heaven, bow with reverence as profound as that of this poor heathen woman.

5. *Verse 28.* “O woman, great is thy faith !” said the Lord to the poor suppliant. Truly her faith is marvelous. Examine thyself and see if thou hast not need to stand abashed beside this poor woman and pray that the Lord may thus strengthen thy faith also. Her faith is great, for although she has seen and heard so little of the Lord, yet she firmly believes that authority and power have been given Him to help, and triumphantly to overcome the wiles and assaults of the devil. Faith is the work of the Lord alone. As the rays of the sun in spring-time awaken the sleeping earth and make it glow with fresh life, so the Lord, who is the true, eternal Sun, awakens faith and makes the hearts of those who do not resist His influence glow with new life. All faith on earth therefore redounds to the glory, not of the believer who exercises it, but of the Lord, from

whom alone comes every grace, even the gift of faith. As thou learnest the power and glory of the sun from the ripening fruits of the earth, so recognize in this woman's faith, and in all faith here below, the grace and glory of the Lord.

6. The Lord really possesses the power which the woman in her faith attributes to Him, and by the help which He here grants He reveals Himself as Lord over the prince and kingdom of darkness. All the sufferings of the Lord may be traced to the agency of Satan ; for it is our sins that bring Him to shame and death, and Satan is the originator and cherisher of sin. Through the sin of the world, which comes from him as the father of lies, he tortures the Holy One of God, upon whom the sin of the world has been laid. But just in the midst of the humiliation thus inflicted upon Him, the Lord reveals His glory and His power over the kingdom of darkness.

7. Just as Israel finally rejects her Saviour and Redeemer, and prepares to nail Him to the cross, this heathen woman bows the knee before Him as her Lord, and in reward of her faith is permitted to witness His act of glorious deliverance. Thus ever in the time of his deepest humiliation does the Lord show forth His divine glory. May He grant us His Holy Spirit, that we may in faith recognize His twofold nature as the God-man.

PRAYER.

Our faithful Lord and Saviour ! Though Thou art ascended to the Father and sittest at the right hand of

power and majesty, Thou art not far from everyone of us. Thou art very near us in the hour of trouble. In all our sicknesses and sorrows we come to Thee, who alone canst heal us. O, Thou Son of David, have mercy upon us. We are sorely vexed by the devil, and assailed by the temptations of the world. Our own hearts deceive us and betray us into sin. Wilt Thou not have compassion upon us? We are not worthy that Thou shouldst hear us, but we hope in Thy mercy. Speak Thou the word, and we shall be made whole. Graciously hear Thou our prayers, and save us from eternal death by the power of Thy bitter sufferings and death. Help us to praise Thee and to serve Thee while we live on earth, and bring us at length to Thy glorious heavenly Kingdom. Amen.

MONDAY. The Lord has Authority over the Spirits of Darkness, who Know Him well. When He Commands, they must Obey.

30. But he passing through the midst of them went his way,
 31. And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days.
 32. And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power.
 33. And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice,
 34. Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the holy One of God.
 35. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold Thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not.
 36. And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out.
 37. And the fame of him went out into every place of the country round about.
 38. And he arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon's house. And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever; and they besought him for her.
 39. And he stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her: and immediately she arose and ministered unto them.
 40. Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them.
 41. And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God. And he rebuking them suffered them not to speak: for they knew that he was Christ (Luke iv. 30-41).

1. Verses 30-34. The Lord in His free grace healed the daughter of the woman of Canaan who

had been grievously vexed of the devil. He often in like manner for our comfort displays His power over evil spirits. There were in Israel at that time many such miserable persons possessed of evil spirits and under the control of the powers of hell. Such an one had found his way into the synagogue at Capernaum. They were poor, wretched people, made sick in body and soul by the influence of Satan. They were under the control of evil spirits, and hence were masters of neither their own bodies nor their souls. They manifest a double consciousness—the weak, suppressed consciousness of their own personality and the dominant consciousness of the evil spiritual power dwelling in them. Bound by the power of darkness, they appealed for deliverance with pitiable cries of anguish in ineffectual struggles against their malady and the power of Satan. But the evil spirits were too strong for them, and their subjection is manifest in their rejection of the proffered aid of Christ, in their distress in presence of His superior power. Hence the strange and mysterious outcries of the possessed : “What have we to do with Thee, Jesus of Nazareth? Thou art come to destroy us. I know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God.” Their own consciousness draws them to Christ, the only One who can help in their sore distress ; while at the same time the foreign Satanic consciousness drives them from Him. There was an unusual number of these victims of demoniac

possession during the period of our Lord's sojourn on earth. As He had come to destroy the works of the devil, it was natural that the prince of darkness should in the emergency send out his minions for a life-and-death conflict with the power of his Assailant. He would not willingly surrender the booty of which the Lord came to despoil him. There are not wanting similar afflictions in our own days, displaying only too plainly the power of darkness and of Satan. Demoniac agencies and dark, supernatural powers appear to be again peculiarly active in this age. But the Lord is also upon the field, and we may boldly sing :

And were the world with devils filled,
All waiting to devour us ;
We'll still succeed, so God hath willed,—
They cannot overpower us :
The Prince of this world
To hell shall be hurled :
He seeks to alarm,
But shall do us no harm ;
The smallest word can fell him.

2. *Verses 35-41.* We have no cause to fear the might of the powers of darkness if we stand firm in our faith upon Him who has destroyed the works of the devil. Even here He displays His glory ; He speaks with authority and power to the unclean spirits and they depart. We have only to implore His aid ; He is well able to protect and save us. But our faith must be genuine and our prayers earnest, as those of the woman of Canaan ;

for the power of Satan is great. Forgetting this, we too often neglect to pray as we should for his overthrow and the destruction of his hellish kingdom.

3. As the devils were driven out by Jesus, they cried aloud and said : “Thou art Christ, the Son of God.” They knew Him and recognized His glory, and their confession was the same as that of Peter : “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” But there is this infinite difference : Peter believes on the Lord and His Grace, and the Lord pronounces him blessed ; the devils do not believe and the Lord therefore rebukes them, and they are accursed forever. It is not knowledge that saves, but faith ; and only a confession springing from faith can be well-pleasing to God. The confession of the devils is still upon the lips of many, but few hearts enshrine the faith of Peter.

PRAYER.

O Christ, Thou Son of God ! All power is given unto Thee in heaven and on earth. Even the devils must obey Thee. We bless Thy name that Thou didst come to earth to destroy the works of the devil and deliver us poor, sinful men, who are by nature bound down under his power. O Lord, Thou knowest that we are too weak to resist the evil that dwells in our own hearts—too weak to overcome the temptations that assail us from without. Have compassion upon us. By Thy bitter conflict, by Thy sufferings and death, Thou hast gained the victory for us. Let not sin again have dominion over us. Keep us by Thy power and help us to walk at liberty, and to serve Thee in holiness until Satan himself shall have been put under Thy feet and Thou shalt reign among Thy saints forever in Thy heavenly glory. Amen.

TUESDAY. Jesus Displays His Power over Evil Spirits in Delivering the Demoniac in the Country of the Gadarenes.

26. And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee.

27. And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs.

28. When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not.

29. (For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness.)

30. And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him.

31. And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep.

32. And there was there an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them.

33. Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked.

34. When they that fed them saw what was done, they fled, and went and told it in the city and in the country.

35. Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.

36. They also which saw it told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed.

37. Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought him to depart from them; for they were taken with great fear: and he went up into the ship, and returned back again.

38. Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought him that he might be with him: but Jesus sent him away, saying,

39. Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him (Luke viii. 26-39).

1. *Verses 26-29.* A demoniac meets the Lord in the country of the Gadarenes. There were in those days many in such miserable state. Their condition reveals the awful power of darkness and of Satan, and should incite us to contend with unwavering fidelity in prayer and faith against

these gloomy powers. He who answered the prayer of the woman of Canaan will not despise our petitions. In Christ we shall gain the victory, for He is the Lord who commands even the evil spirits and whom they, however unwillingly, obey. At His name every knee shall yet bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord.

2. *Verses 30-33.* The devils besought the Lord that He should not bid them to go "out into the deep," to their own place in the abyss of hell. They have so much pleasure in working ruin that they desire at least to be allowed to enter swine if not permitted to destroy men. The Lord grants their petition, and they hasten away upon their errand of destruction. But why does the Lord permit them thus to gratify their evil lust? "First, that the restored man might see from what diabolic power he had been delivered and what would have been his end if the Lord had left him in the power of the devils that possessed him. Second, that all who should hear of the strange occurrence (and thus we also) might recognize the power of the devil and his angels, and not say that the existence of such power is only a dream of the imagination—for it was certainly not simply imagination that led the swine to plunge into the sea. Thirdly and chiefly, the Lord permitted the devils thus to have their way in order that the Gadarenes might be brought to reflection, and led to decide for themselves whether they thought the more of the Lord Jesus, the Redeemer from sin, death and

the devil, or of their swine. Those who think that it was hard that the poor Gadarenes should lose two thousand swine only make it evident that they, too, think more of their cattle than of their souls. The Lord in our own day sometimes permits the death of cattle in order to arouse dead men from the sleep of sin. If the Gadarenes had received the Lord in faith, He could have given them more than two thousand swine (Luke xii. 31; xviii. 30). But they were so absorbed in their business that they accounted the deliverance of their brother's soul as a small matter compared to their loss of earthly possessions. They would not believe and be saved at the cost of loving Jesus more than their swine" (Besser).

3. *Verses 34-39.* Where earthly possessions are imperiled, there is life and activity enough ; but there are very few who lift hand or foot to secure the salvation of their souls. The Gadarenes come out from their homes, behold the restored man and the Lord who has so wonderfully revealed His glory and power—but they do not see their swine, and their hearts are stirred. They are afraid of the Lord instead of the devil and his power here so appropriately revealed, and they beseech the Lord of Glory to depart from their midst. The woman of Canaan implores the help of the Lord ; the Gadarenes reject Him. The latter is the course of the world to-day, since it has more regard for its luxury and pleasures than for the salvation of the souls of men. The Lord

departs, for, be it observed, He never forces Himself upon anyone ; but in His infinite mercy He leaves behind Him the man delivered from the power of the devil as a witness and a herald of His grace and glory. May the Lord bless to us the testimony of His redeemed on earth.

PRAYER.

Our blessed Saviour, we bow before Thy throne of heavenly grace, to praise Thee for all that Thou hast done for us. Thou hast borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. Thou didst behold us held in cruel chains of bondage by our great enemy and didst arise for our deliverance. Thou camest into a world of sin to shed the pure rays of Thy divine holiness upon our hearts and to make us long to be freed from the dominion of Satan. Thou hast broken the shackles for those who put their trust in Thee, and canst by Thy word put to flight all the hosts of evil. O, dear Lord, drive out all the demons of darkness from our hearts, and make us pure and holy, that we may rejoice in Thee and serve Thee with all our powers and with all our possessions. Depart not out of our coasts, but abide with us forever. Amen.

WEDNESDAY. *Passion History. Part IV. The Last Passover and the Warning to Judas.*

And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer : for I say unto you I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves ; for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. But behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.

And he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. Then the disciples looked one on another, and they were exceeding sorrowful, and began to say unto him one by one, Lord, is it I ? He answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto

him, Lord, who is it? Jesus answered, He it is to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, and said, The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born. Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Is it I, Rabbi? He saith unto him, Thou hast said. And after the sop, Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly. Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him. For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor. He then, having received the sop, went immediately out: and it was night (Matt. xxvi. 21-25—Mark xiv. 18-21—Luke xxii. 15-18—John xiii. 21-30).

1. "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you," says the Lord. His heart-felt desire for us poor sinners brought Him to earth. Hast thou, too, a heart-felt desire to receive Him? He heartily desired to die for us, and we often do not eyen desire to live with Him. He heartily desired to be with His disciples, and to-day, wher-ever two or three are gathered together in His name, He joyfully enters into their midst; but we have so often far more desire for the world and its joys than for Him and His fellowship. He heartily desired to eat the passover with His dis-ciples, and ever in His church does He still dis-pense the true Passover in the Holy Supper; but there is so little heartiness in our desire to eat this Passover, to receive the body and blood of the Lord in the Holy Supper. Our hearts often long far more for the husks of this world than for the Table of the Lord, laden with food and drink to nourish us for eternal life.

2. The Lord is sorrowful in spirit as He thinks of His betrayer. He grieves, not because the

betrayal will bring Him to His death, but because one of His disciples will be thereby given over to eternal death. Thus He mourns to-day over everyone of His followers who betrays Him by sin and unbelief. And should it not grieve Him, when an immortal soul is lost forever?

The Lord sees Judas hastening to his ruin, and, moved by holy love and boundless mercy, makes earnest effort to rescue his poor soul upon the very verge of perdition. He therefore gives him warning. He seeks to terrify him by the utterance of the solemn, "Woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed." He reveals to him his sinful heart and shows him the depths of the abyss before him. But it is all in vain. Judas hardens his heart against the loving approaches of the Saviour and disregards the warnings given him. At length, therefore, Jesus gives the lost one up, with what feelings of anguish no human heart can know, since no other heart can be so full of love. The time of grace is ended. The judgment of heart-hardening has fallen upon Judas. Satan has won his prey. The Lord gives him over to his fate in the words, "That thou doest, do quickly," and immediately he went out. "And it was night." Around about him it was dark; but there was a deeper night in his soul. The light of grace has been extinguished by his own fault, and before him stretches the night of eternal death and damnation. Here let every Christian pause, and beating upon his own breast

exclaim, "God be merciful to me, a sinner!" Let every soul arouse itself from its false security. The day of grace, the time when Jesus Christ yet lovingly beckons us on and strives to make salvation ours, is passing rapidly away. He who dreams this precious time away in idleness shall surely be overtaken by destruction. When once for us the light of grace goes out, we will be enshrouded in eternal night. May the mercy of the Lord preserve us from such awful fate.

PRAAYER.

Omniscient and merciful God! How dark and sinful in Thy sight is the heart of man! Thou alone knowest the depths of human depravity. Thou knowest the evil of my life and that I am unworthy to stand in Thy presence. Yet Thou dost not cast me from Thee. Patiently dost Thou bear with me, waiting only for the confession of my sins before Thee. O, Lord, Thou hast searched me and known me. My secret sins are not hid from Thy sight. Alas! I have a thousand times betrayed Thee. I have transgressed against Thy holy commandments. My heart has found delight in the pleasures of sin. But Thou art my Saviour and wilt in mercy deliver me. I flee for refuge to Thee. O, cast me not away forever. Though I have so often forgotten Thee, remember Thou me and have compassion upon me. Let me not fall into the snares of Satan, and let not the powers of evil snatch me out of Thine hand. Chasten me for my iniquity and rebuke me in Thy displeasure, lest I go on in sin and perish in misery, as did the son of perdition who betrayed Thee to Thine enemies. Give me true sorrow for sin, that I may come to Thee with penitent heart and find pardon and life. Amen.

THURSDAY. *Passion History. Part V. The Institution of the Lord's Supper.*

And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of me.

After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, gave thanks and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it. This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins. This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom. When Judas was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him; and God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him (Matt. xxvi. 26-29—Mark xiv. 22-25—Luke xxii. 19, 20—John xiii. 31, 32—1 Cor. xi. 23-25). ~

1. "Christ has given Himself to us as a brother, friend and surety. But that was not enough to satisfy His love. He gave Himself also to us as food." All the blessings which He secured for us by His life, sufferings and death, *i. e.*, the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation, He gives to us when He gives us Himself in the Holy Supper. "He thanks His heavenly Father that He has given Him power to institute this holy sacrament as the fulfillment of the passover. With this prayer of thanksgiving, or eucharist, He blessed the bread and wine—dedicated and consecrated both for the presentation of His body and blood. The Word of the Lord once uttered has always the efficacy of an almighty 'Become,' when the Church assembles to celebrate the Holy Supper."

2. In connection with the eating of the passover, the Lord instituted His blessed sacrament, indicating thereby that in the latter is fulfilled what was only typified in the ancient passover. The children of Israel in the sacrificial feast of the passover celebrated the gracious protection granted them when the destroying angel slew the first-born in the houses of the Egyptians, and their deliverance from the house of bondage. The

Passover Lamb sacrificed for us is Jesus Christ. By His sacrifice and blood we are saved from eternal destruction and delivered from the bondage of sin. The Lord's Supper is our holy sacrificial feast, wherein the Lord with His body and blood bestows upon us and imparts to us all the grace which He, as our eternal High-priest, secured for us by His death upon the Cross.

3. The Lord indeed yet stood before His disciples in the form of a servant. "But it was His loving desire that they might eat His body given for them. He therefore reveals His glory, and at His word His body is in a mysterious way united with the consecrated bread. With, in and under the visible bread He presents to them His body to be eaten as an invisible heavenly treasure. And with, in and under the wine, He offers His blood, shed for the forgiveness of our sins, and thus pours His divine life into His followers; for the life of the body is in the blood." All therefore who in faith receive this blessed sacrament are most intimately united with the Lord Jesus. They become members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones (Eph. v. 30), filled and inspired by the life-currents of His holy blood. And as the Holy Supper unites us to Him, so does it bind us also one to another in true and loving fellowship. "For just as from many separate grapes trodden together in the press there flows in mingled current ONE wine and ONE drink; and as from many grains ONE meal is ground and one loaf or cake is

baked," so are we in the Holy Supper nourished into ONE mysterious body and made to drink into ONE spirit.

4. "This do, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." By this injunction the Lord appoints that we shall also observe His holy ordinance and receive His body and His blood in the Holy Supper with grateful remembrance of His boundless grace and sacrificial death. This ordinance and the blessings it conveys are to be continually observed and enjoyed until the time of its consummation in heaven. As the Jewish passover pointed forward to the true Passover which we received in the Lord's Supper, so does the Holy Supper point us forward to the time when the Lord shall celebrate it anew with His disciples in His Father's kingdom. Then will the fellowship of the Lord and His followers be complete, when, delivered from the body of this death and glorified, we shall be forever with the Lord, beholding Him in His glory and enjoying the blessedness He has prepared for us from eternity to eternity. "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb."

PRAYER.

Our dear Lord and Saviour, who hast mercifully prepared for us a table, at which Thou dost impart to us Thy grace and blessing, grant that we may come to it with hearts well prepared to receive Thy benefits. As Thy body was broken and Thy blood was shed for the remission of our sins, enable us by true faith to lay hold upon the hope of pardon and reconciliation with Thee

We are not worthy of Thy grace nor of a place with Thee, but Thou art merciful above all that we can ask or think. Be graciously pleased to heal our wounds, to soothe our sorrows, and to shed abroad Thy peace in our hearts. With marvelous kindness and grace Thou feedest us with Thyself, the true Bread of Life, and dost quench our deep thirst by giving us Thy blood to drink. For this, Thine infinite mercy, we render Thee our feeble praises, and we would give ourselves to Thee as a living sacrifice of thanksgiving. Preserve to us, we beseech Thee, and to Thy entire holy Church, this heavenly blessing, and take not from us on account of our sins the pure and true sacrament of Thy body and blood. Grant that in Thy Holy Supper all heavy-laden and weary souls may find comfort and strength; and all Thy dying saints obtain support and joy in their last hour. Amen.

FRIDAY. Passion History. Part VI. The Disciples Offended in Christ.

And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives. Then said Jesus, Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go ye cannot come, so now I say to you. A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards. Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake. Yea, Lord, I am ready to go with thee both into prison and to death. Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. And he said unto them all, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee. Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples. And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing. Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one. For I say unto you that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end. And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough (Matt. xxvi. 30-35—Mark xiv. 26-31—Luke xxii. 31-39—John xiii. 33-38).

1. The Lord gives to His disciples a *new commandment* before He leaves them. In the old commandment of love, which He repeats, there is a new element, *i. e.*, the manner of love, as He says : “As I have loved you.” Such love, surrendering everything for suffering and death, purchasing with its own life the life of others, is new. May the Lord teach us to comprehend this love, and grant us the power ourselves to practice it that we may be adjudged His disciples.

2. The Lord warns His followers of the coming time of spiritual trial. Such seasons come to all believers. How often we seek for Him and cannot find Him. Our faith is so poor and lifeless, our heart so empty and drear, our prayer so weak and lame of wing. In such hours we should simply cast ourselves upon the mercy of Christ. He often hides Himself from us for a season, in order that our hearts may yearn the more for Him. But His face afterward beams again upon us in love. The sun of His grace penetrates at length every cloud and drives away the mist.

3. “Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.” Thus the faithful Lord warns Peter, when, confiding in his own strength and fidelity, he declares his willingness to die for his Master. The Lord warns against such self-confidence. The hour of sifting is sure to come, for Satan always desires to have those whom Christ loves. It is not our love for Him that will preserve us in the hour of sore temptation, but

His love for us. That He, as High-priest, has given His life for us, and that He prays for us as for Peter, is our ground of comfort, the foundation that standeth far more sure than our own deceitful and desperately wicked hearts. This Peter was soon to learn by sad experience. The Lord shows him beforehand how deep will be his fall, but indicates also that he shall rise again, and then be able to strengthen his brethren. Thus the Lord is ever lifting us up again after our falls, and who of us does not daily require such assistance? Who has not need to pray every day and every hour : “ Forgive us our trespasses ” ?

4. The Lord foretells the coming of the time of open conflict when He counsels His disciples to buy each a sword. The conflict has come, and is not yet at an end. Every Christian must daily take the field against the world, and the flesh, and the devil. There must be valiant fighting, too, for it is a life-and-death struggle. The sword which the Lord here means is the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. We, too, must wield this weapon ; yet, if He does not stand by us in the conflict, we shall still be overpowered. But He is with us, and He has conquered for us the world and Satan. We, by faith, make His victory our own, and thus trample the old enemy under our feet.

PRAYER.

O, Lord Jesus ! For us, too, hast Thou prayed that our faith fail not. Thou pleadest for us before Thy Father’s

throne, and in answer to Thy prayers we find protection in the midst of an evil world. O, Lord, do thou preserve us by Thy love and grace, that we falter not in the hour of temptation. May we never be offended in Thee, nor forsake Thee; but may we, by Thy grace, be enabled to overcome the adversary. The days are evil. Thy people are being sifted as wheat. Dear Master! hold Thou Thy hand over us, and may we be comforted and strengthened by the thought that Thou hast died for us, and that, having conquered death, Thou ever livest to intercede for us. Thou knowest that we have tribulations as our portion in this world, but Thou hast also been tempted and tried. By Thy pain and agony, by Thy sighs and tears, by Thy bloody death, Thou hast overcome the world. Therefore do we draw near to Thee with holy confidence. Remember us, dear Lord, and grant us Thy peace. Amen.

SATURDAY. *Freed by Christ from the Power of Darkness, We should Follow after True Holiness.*

1. Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort *you* by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, *so ye would abound more and more.*

2. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus.

3. For this is the will of God, *even your sanctification*, that ye should abstain from fornication:

4. That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;

5. Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:

6. That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord *is* the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.

7. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness (*1 Thes. iv. 1-7.*)

1. In the Scripture readings for this week, we have had illustrations of the Lord's power over evil spirits. Satan, who in those memorable days of salvation exerted his power and dominion upon so many poor human souls, has still much to do with us. Sin comes originally from him, and it is he that continually prompts and incites us to sin. "He that committeth sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning." But, "for

this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.” The Lord has with His innocent sufferings and death, and with His holy and precious blood, delivered us from all sins, from death and from the power of the devil, in order that we might be His, live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness.

2. *Verses 1-3.* If Christ has thus delivered us from the power of the devil and shed His blood for us that we might be free from sin and be His own forever, we should not fall back into the old bondage, but strive daily after perfect liberty. Therefore St. Paul admonishes us, urging us ever to strive after perfection—to “increase more and more.” The will of God is our sanctification. Who of us has attained this goal? Since we all alike are not holy, but very unholy, it is for us to strive against sin with all earnestness and to follow after true holiness, as St. Paul confesses: “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.” The bitter sufferings of Christ, which He bore for our sake, should awaken in us a genuine hatred of sin. The deliverance which He has effected for us should impel us with all earnestness to follow after holiness. For this His grace will give us all needed strength. Of ourselves we can do nothing. The Lord must

work in us to will and to do, and only when His strength is made mighty in our weakness can we make constant progress in holiness.

3. *Verses 3-7.* The apostle warns believers with special emphasis against two sins—fornication and fraud. It would seem as though Paul were writing especially for our times. Bold, unbridled licentiousness and the mad and unscrupulous pursuit of wealth are the leading sinful tendencies of our age. By inciting lust and avarice Satan gains power over so many souls. When the heathen, who know nothing of God, surrender themselves to the dominion of their carnal passions, we cannot greatly wonder. But O, what triflers are many who are called Christians, how hopelessly ensnared in the toils of lust! There is no other sin which so surely closes the heart against the influences of grace. How can He, who is holy and pure take up His dwelling in a heart that is filled with impurity and sinful lust? God, who is holy, desires that the body, as well as the soul and spirit, be preserved blameless until the coming of the Lord. A temple of God, and not a vessel full of sin and abomination, should be the body which the Lord has sanctified by the giving of His body and blood, and which He desires to sanctify more and more until after death it arises in a blissful resurrection. Like carnal lust, the service of Mammon has turned many hearts away from God. This is the highest aim of so many in our age—to become quickly rich,

in order thereafter to live in carnal luxury. Where avarice is found, there are not wanting also fraud and unrighteousness. Of these the world to-day is full, and thus wealth often becomes the snare by means of which Satan entraps immortal souls to their eternal ruin. The poverty of Christ should crucify in us the greed of gain, so that we should not pursue the perishing things of earth, but the eternal riches which He by His poverty has won for us and the true joy which He through His sufferings has prepared for us.

PRAYER.

O Christ, Thou Son of God, we thank Thee that Thou didst become the Son of man and dwell in mortal flesh. Thou hast thus revealed to us the Father. We thank Thee for Thy pure and holy life, and for Thy many miracles. Thou hast healed the sick and called the dead to life again, and restored to their right minds those who were possessed of devils. O, do Thou have compassion on us. Heal Thou our diseases—drive out from our hearts every evil passion and awaken in us pure desires. Make us holy as Thou art holy. Help us to walk in Thy footsteps and to do Thy will. May we have daily communion with Thee and thus become ever more like Thee. Keep Thou us free from the evil that is in the world, and prepare us to serve Thee in perfect holiness when our pilgrimage on earth is ended. Amen.

THIRD WEEK IN LENT.

Yet once more, in the readings of this week, we behold the Lord manifesting His glorious power over the kingdom of darkness. He is the Stronger One who has fallen upon the strong man armed and taken from him his booty. He thus displays

His eternal Godhead, while the further study of the passion history reveals ever more fully His deep humiliation.

SUNDAY. Christ Drives out Devils and thereby Proves that the Kingdom of God is Come, and that He is the Stronger One who can Overcome the Strong Armed Man.

14. And he was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered.

15. But some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils.

16. And others, tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven.

17. But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth.

18. If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub.

19. And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast *them* out? therefore shall they be your judges.

20. But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.

21. When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace:

22. But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.

23. He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.

24. When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out.

25. And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished.

26. Then goeth he, and taketh *to him* seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first.

27. And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked.

28. But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it (Luke xi. 14-28).

1. Here, again, we hear of the Lord's power over the devil and his kingdom. Why so often? Because all the enmity against the Lord, His sufferings, shame and death, spring from the king-

dom of darkness ; because Satan has been a liar and a deceiver from the beginning ; because through him sin, and through sin death and every misery entered the world ; because, although held in reserve for judgment, he has yet power over the unbelieving, and goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. With this same enemy and his horde of evil spirits we, too, must contend. God help us, that we may not be overpowered, but hold the field against him. From our lesson to-day it is clear that there is a devil and a kingdom of darkness, with which all evil stands intimately connected, and that the devil and his hosts hold sway over the lives of very many men. Were it not so, the Lord must here have corrected the error and not have allowed the Pharisees to cherish their false belief. But, on the contrary, He Himself speaks of a prince of the devils and his kingdom. Just as certainly, then, as no deceit was found in the mouth of Christ, must we accept it as beyond dispute, that there is a devil and a kingdom of darkness, whose power extends to this world. This fact remains, despite all the wisdom of men and all the contradiction of the world which is no longer willing to bow before the Word of God. Dost thou recognize this terrible truth ? Shouldst thou not, then, watch and pray earnestly against the devil and his kingdom, that thou mayest not fall into his power ? O, what a comfort to know that the Lord is the Stronger One, before whom the spirits of darkness must yield

and flee ! In our Gospel to-day we see Him, though in the midst of His sufferings, yet invested with divine glory ; and, rage as he may, Satan is compelled to submit to His authority.

2. *Verses 14-16.* Not all the people are prepared to acknowledge the Lord's power. We find three classes of persons, with three different opinions in regard to the miracle performed upon the dumb man. Of the first class it is said : "The people wondered." They were astounded and amazed at the power of the Lord. Others were not willing to acknowledge His power so readily ; they stood aloof, waiting for further signs from heaven. The third class cannot deny that He has power over evil spirits, but they close their eyes against the light, and choose to revile the Saviour and His works rather than acknowledge Him in His glory. They accuse Him of performing His miracles through the chief of the devils. The Lord is still in His church, winning one victory after another over Satan, and those who witness them are, as of old, divided in opinion. Some are filled with amazement and bow in reverent worship ; others hesitate and are not willing to come out fully upon the Lord's side, nor to actively oppose Him ; while others begin to mock and revile. To which class dost thou belong ? Be honest with thyself.

3. *Verses 17-22.* The Lord has a most appropriate message for each of these three classes. To the revilers He clearly points out their folly, and

shows them how absurd it is to maintain that the devil is seeking to destroy his own kingdom. If devils can be driven out only by the help of the chief of the devils, then must the followers of the Pharisees (who also drove out devils, or professed to do so) be also enlisted in the service of the devil. But when the Lord, by the finger of God, drives out devils, it is an evidence that the kingdom of God is come, by which Satan's kingdom must be overthrown. The Stronger One has come upon the strong man armed—Christ has come to conquer Belial, and has overcome him and taken from him all his armor wherein he trusted. But Satan's armor is the sins of men, and his palace is the world and every unguarded human heart. Christ has vanquished the enemy, and wresting from him the booty which he had taken from men—*i. e.*, peace, righteousness, and joy—restored them to those who accept Him as their Lord.

4. *Verse 23.* Jesus then turns to the wavering and urges them to decision in the earnest words : “He that is not with me is against me.” Note well the words ! No one can be neutral here. Half-hearted service counts for nothing with the Lord. For Him or against Him ! The solemn choice must be made. Where dost thou stand ? It is the greatest blessing of our turbulent age, that this saying of our Lord is coming to be ever more clearly understood. The line is being constantly more sharply drawn between the friends and the enemies of the Lord. The kingdom of light is

withdrawing more and more from the kingdom of darkness. The half-hearted are everywhere despised. Blessed is he who chooses the better part ! If we are for Christ, He will be for us now and in the day of judgment ; and if Christ be for us, who can be against us ?

5. *Verses 24-26.* Finally, the Lord addresses those who believe on Him, warning them and exhorting them to watch and pray. If the evil spirit has been driven from thee and thou believest on the Lord—yet O, rest not in security, but watch lest the old enemy still overcome thee. Be not indolent nor careless. Let there be but one unguarded moment, and the enemy will come with seven other evil spirits and your last state will be worse than the first. Watch, therefore, and hasten to Christ. He is the Lord who overcomes the world and the devil.

6. *Verses 27 and 28.* While the Lord is thus speaking, suddenly a voice of praise arises from the midst of the throng : “Blessed is the womb that bare Thee, and the paps which Thou hast sucked !” It is a beautiful and truthful exclamation. But more glorious is the Lord’s response : “Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the Word of God, and keep it.” Thus would He lovingly allure thee and all the world to accept salvation. May He graciously bestow upon us all the priceless boon, and ever protect us by His power from the great enemy, that he may not be permitted to entice us into sin and drag us to perdition.

PRAYER.

Lord God our Father, we praise and magnify Thy name, that Thou didst send Thy Son into the world to destroy the works and kingdom of darkness, and free us from the chains of sin and death and from all the power of Satan. To Thee, Lord Jesus, we come for refuge and for help in every hour of need. Thou art the Eternal Son of the Eternal Father. Thou hast robbed the tyrant Satan of his power to control us. But Thou seest, Lord, how temptations still beset us. The powers of darkness still hold sway on earth and threaten to overwhelm us. Grant to arm us with Thy might, and help us to put on the whole armor of God. Give to us the shield of faith and the helmet of salvation, and help us to grasp firmly the sword of the Spirit and wield it manfully by Thy power, that we may stand in the evil day and come off at last victorious, to live and reign with Thee forever. Amen.

MONDAY. God the Father has, through Jesus Christ, Freed us from the Dominion of the Devil. The Apostle Reminds us of the Glory of the Lord and the Value of His Sacrifice in our Behalf.

12. Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light :

13. Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son :

14. In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins :

15. Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature :

16. For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him :

17. And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

18. And he is the head of the body, the church : who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead ; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

19. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell ;

20. And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself : by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

21. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled

22. In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprovable in his sight :

23. If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven ; whereof I Paul am made a minister (Col. i. 12-23).

1. *Verses 12-14.* As the Lord in ancient Israel so gloriously displayed His authority and power over Satan, coming upon the strong man armed as the Stronger One, so is He manifesting His power to-day. We are all by nature, in consequence of our sinfulness, under the hand and power of the "strong man," who is armed with lies and artful schemes, with insolence and treachery. We are living in his kingdom, the kingdom of darkness, and are far too weak to free ourselves by our own strength from his hellish chains and bonds and from the power of darkness. But God has sent Christ, His only Son, to destroy the works and the kingdom of the devil. The Lord wrestled with the adversary in deadly combat and shed His blood. Thus has God delivered us from the dominion of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son, the blessed kingdom of grace, where righteousness and peace and joy have become our portion. This grace is bestowed upon us in Holy Baptism. We *have* redemption, namely, the forgiveness of our sins, if we only in faith keep it. We have been bought by the precious blood of Christ. This is the enormous price which He gave for us poor sinners, for which we should give hearty thanks, praising God, that He has thus made us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

2. *Verses 15-17.* That we may be enabled to appreciate more highly the inestimable price paid for our redemption, St. Paul reminds us who it

is who has shed His blood for us. It is none other than the eternal Son of God, the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of the whole creation, through whom all things were made, in whom all things have their being. It is He who is true God and true man, the Son of God and son of Mary. The true, eternal divinity of Christ is plainly enough proved from the lips of the Lord and His apostles, in their utterances recorded in the Scriptures.* But it is precisely at the confession of this great truth that the world takes the greatest offense. It moves the world to mockery and hatred, that in Jesus Christ the divine and human natures should be thus mysteriously united. But faith grasps the mystery and finds in it a rich and blessed consolation.

3. *Verses 18-23.* What could be more comforting for us than to know that our God and Saviour, through whom all things were made, who is exalted above the angels and all heavenly principalities, has so deeply humbled Himself and has become man? He has died for us, has by the body of His flesh through death atoned for us, and has by His blood upon the cross made peace between us and the God of holiness. Thus has he made us free from sin, death and the devil, and has sanctified us and received us as members of His body, the church. But He Himself is the Head of the body. We remain in

*John i. 1-14; v. 23; viii. 58; x. 30; xiv. 9; xvii. 5; xx. 28—Matt xviii. 20; xxviii. 20—Col. ii. 9—Rom ix. 5—1 John v. 20.

Him and are partakers of all the grace which He has obtained for us, if we remain firm and well-grounded in the faith, and do not depart from the teachings of the Gospel. May God grant us His Holy Spirit, that we may with the entire holy Church, in true faith, confess Jesus Christ as true God and true man, Son of God and son of Mary, blessed to all eternity.

PRAYER.

Our Heavenly Father, who dwellest in light unto which no man can approach, we thank Thee that Thou hast caused Thy light to shine upon us in the face of Jesus Christ Thy Son. Lord Jesus, who art the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person, we thank Thee that Thou hast come to be this dark world's light and to deliver us from the power of darkness and from the shadows of death. O, dear Saviour, it was at the cost of Thine own life that we have been snatched from the jaws of death. Thou didst go down into the darkness of the grave, that the light of life might arise for us, and that we might walk in the light of hope and joy. O, Holy Spirit, shine upon our hearts, that we may behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and that we may be kept by Thy power until we shall rejoice with all saints and angels in the land where all is light and joy and peace. Amen.

TUESDAY. *Christ, in Whom Dwelleth All the Fullness of the Godhead, has Made us Free from All the Powers of Darkness.*

6. As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him :

7. Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

8. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

9. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

10. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power :

11. In whom also you are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:

12. Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

13. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

14. Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

15. And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it (Col. ii. 6-15).

1. *Verses 6-10.* The holy apostle admonishes the Colossians and us all who have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ that we must now also live in Him. Christ must be the Way in which we walk, the Root from which we draw our strength and life, the Rock upon which we rest. By no human wisdom must we suffer ourselves to be led astray, for all the wisdom of the world cannot offer us what Christ gives. "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," testifies St. Paul. The eternal Godhead has united itself so intimately with humanity that the man Jesus now partakes of the glory and all the attributes of the eternal Godhead. He is, therefore, able to bestow all fullness of blessedness upon us, and in Him we have all that we need.

2. *Verses 11-15.* That we may be the more strongly moved to fidelity in the service of the Lord, deciding positively for Him in true faith, the apostle now shows how we possess in Christ deliverance from sin, from the Law and from the power of the devil. We were dead in sins, but He has freely forgiven us all our sins, and be-

stowed upon us the blessed fruits of His death in Holy Baptism, which is the true spiritual circumcision. The Lord has awakened us from the death of sin, and will also one day awaken us from bodily death ; for now that we are free from sin, the wages of sin must also be abolished. The Law, with its commandments and ordinances, is against us. It is a mirror of our guilt, from which we learn how flagrantly we have sinned against God. Who can pay the inestimable debt of sin ? “None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him. For the redemption of their soul is precious.” Therefore God the Son became man and made a ransom for us by His life, sufferings and death. The handwriting that was against us is henceforth no longer valid. The Lord has removed it. It was blotted out with His blood. It was torn and canceled by the nails driven through His hands and feet upon the cross. Through our sins we had been brought under Satan’s power. But He, the Stronger One, has come upon the strong man armed. He has in bloody conflict won the victory over the principalities and powers of hell, and in His resurrection triumphed over them. For all those who now lay hold upon the Lord in faith, the power of Satan is broken. It is true, he yet assails us with his wiles, but the Lord, our God, is with us. We need only strive earnestly and pray in faith, and we shall ere long be enabled to trample Satan forever under our feet.

PRAYER.

Almighty Saviour, with thankful hearts we come before Thee, for Thou hast made us free from sin and death. We were dead in our sins, but Thou hast called us to newness of life. We were under condemnation, but Thou hast by the sacrifice of Thyself upon the cross made atonement for our sins and for the sins of the whole world. We were bound by the adversary of our souls, but Thou hast overcome the prince of the powers of darkness and set us free. O, do Thou fill our hearts with gratitude and love to Thee. May we never be again entangled with the yoke of bondage. Let sin have no more dominion over us. May we glorify Thee in our bodies and in our spirits, which are Thine ; and when our life on earth is ended, grant, O blessed Lord, that we may have a place in the heavenly mansions which Thou hast gone to prepare for those that love Thee. Amen.

WEDNESDAY. Passion History. Part VII. Christ in Gethsemane.

Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, where was a garden into which he entered and his disciples. And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place : for Jesus oft-times resorted thither with his disciples. And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Sit ye here while I go and pray yonder. Pray that ye enter not into temptation. And he took with him Peter, and James, and John, and began to be very sorrowful and very heavy, and saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death : tarry ye here and watch with me. And he was withdrawn from them and went forward a little, about a stone's cast, and fell on his face on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him, and said, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee ; take away this cup from me : nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt. And he came to his disciples, and found them sleeping, and he said unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou ? Could ye not watch with me one hour ? Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. And he went away the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. And he returned and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy, neither wist they what to answer him. And he left them and went away again, and prayed the third time, and spake the same words, saying, Father, if thou' be willing, remove this cup from me : nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in agony he prayed more earnestly : and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. And he rose up from prayer and came the third time to his disciples, and found them sleeping for sorrow, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest : it is enough. Behold, the hour is here that the son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going : behold, he is at hand that doth

betray me (Matt. xxvi. 36-46—Mark xiv. 32-42—Luke xxii. 39-46—John xviii. 1-2).

1. “ My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death,” said the Lord. What has plunged His soul into such sorrow? What is the cause of His heaviness of heart? It is the heavy burden of sin that oppresses Him. Our sins, and the sins of the whole world, are laid upon Him. His soul is horrified at the thought that He, the Holy One, must bear sin and death, the wages of sin. What could give more pain to His pure nature than sin? He who has reposed in the love of God from all eternity feels now the burning fire of the divine wrath against our sins. God hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin. It is no trifling matter that the Holy One should now bear the sins of the world; that life should be committed to the power of death; that the only-begotten Son of God should experience the fire of divine wrath; that He, who is God from all eternity, must lie struggling and pleading in the dust. *For us*—for me and for thee—did He endure all this. He was made a curse for us. Let us mark well the words, *for us*, that we may learn from the Lord’s deep agony how deep was our ruin, which brought the Holy One into such anguish and distress, and that we may then also find comfort when distressed by our own sins, knowing that He has borne them all. Thus the sufferings of Christ in Gethsemane become for us an earnest admonition to repentance, and a blessed means of consoling us and strengthening our faith.

2. Three times does the Lord fall upon His face in earnest prayer. Three times He implores that, if it be possible, the bitter cup be removed from Him. Three times He humbly surrenders Himself into His Father's hands, submissive to His will. We may gather from this some idea of the terrible price of our redemption. "The Lord's pure and holy nature must have shrunk from the pangs of death ; His holy soul, by nature full of life and blessedness, must have revolted at the thought of the pangs of the lost, and He pours out this feeling of His heart before His Father" (Besser.) We can never fully *understand* the depths of His sufferings and agony, but let us *believe* that it was for us that He lay prostrate upon the earth and agonized in prayer. Let this be our consolation in our hours of temptation and of deepest distress. He who was without friends to comfort Him in that night of anguish and distress, with whom even His own most faithful disciples could not watch, will not be far from us, but will watch with us, and with all His followers, through every dark night of sorrow and tears. And if it be not possible to take from us every cup of suffering, yet will he let fall into each a drop of His heavenly comfort. When your soul is sorrowful unto death, think of Gethsemane.

3. "And being in agony He prayed more earnestly, and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood, falling down to the ground." The terrors and agony of death make His very bones to shud-

der. The floods of ungodly men are roaring about Him. The pains of hell take hold upon Him. So deeply does His divine pity bring Him into sympathy with us poor sinners that He feels our sins as His own, and experiences for us the pains of hell. The struggle was an awful one, but the Lord came off victorious. An angel appeared and strengthened Him. He conquered for our good. Blessed be His holy name !

PRAYER.

O, Lord Jesus Christ ! In anguish of soul didst Thou weep, and pray, and sweat bloody drops upon the cold ground in the dark night of Thy humiliation. Our sins, and the sins of the whole world, were laid upon thee. In order that we might be redeemed, didst Thou writhe in the dust. Thou didst suffer torment, that we might be delivered from the pains of hell. Fill us, we pray thee, with a deep sense of Thy wonderful love and mercy, that we may evermore hate sin, and abhor ourselves in dust and ashes. We, too, would weep, and pray, and mourn in anguish of soul, that our sins and guilt were the cause of Thy bitter agony. O Lord have mercy upon us, and let the precious drops of blood that fell from Thy sacred body cleanse us from all sin. We would lie down in the dust with Thee, and confess that we are not worthy of the least part of all the sweat, and tears, and blood which Thou hast poured out for us. But Thou hast not suffered in vain. By Thy groans, and agony, and death Thou hast redeemed us poor, lost and condemned sinners from eternal death. Keep us faithful to Thee. May we suffer with Thee here on earth, and reign with Thee in Thy heavenly kingdom. Amen.

THURSDAY. *Passion History. Part VIII. Christ Betrayed and Arrested.*

And while he yet spake, lo, Judas came, one of the twelve, who had received the band (of soldiers) and servants of the high-priests and Pharisees, with lanterns and torches, and with swords and staves, and led them to the place. And he that betrayed him had given them a token, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; take him and lead him away safely. And as soon as

Judas was come, he goeth straightway to Jesus and saith, Hail, Master, and kissed him. And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss? Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground. Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he; if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: that the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none. And they laid their hands on Jesus and took him. When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword? And behold one of them which were with him had a sword and stretched out his hand, and smote the servant of the high-priest and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him. Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath into his place, for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? Or thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be? Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus and bound him. Then said Jesus unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple and the elders and the multitude which were come to him, Are ye come as against a thief, with swords and staves, for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye stretched forth no hand against me and took me not; but this is your hour and the power of darkness. And all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him and fled. And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; and the young men laid hold on him: and he left the linen cloth and fled from them naked (Matt. xxvi. 47-56—Mark xiv. 43-52—Luke xxii. 47-53—John xviii. 3-12).

1. The hour of the betrayal is at hand. Judas approaches the Lord and kisses Him. With the sign of love and friendship he betrays his Master. What a deep pang must have pierced the Saviour's heart that one of His own disciples should betray Him and sink to eternal perdition before His very eyes. In vain had He stretched forth His hand to help; he would not be saved. The kiss of Judas caused the Lord more pain than the piercing of His hands by the cruel nails or than all the slanders of His enemies. And yet even to the

betrayer He shows a Saviour's love. No word of rebuke falls from His lips. Even to the traitor He speaks with holy mildness. "If He deals thus mildly and gently with the tool and slave of Satan, how much more will He not treat with sympathy and kindness those who have fallen through weakness!" (Augustine). But we should give earnest heed lest we fall into the sin of Judas, drawing near to the Lord with our lips while our hearts are far from Him.

2. With Judas come the band of soldiers and the servants of the chief priests and the Pharisees with torches and with spears and staves. They come in the night-time. Courage fails them for the evil deed they are about to do; they draw near therefore with treachery and in the stillness of the night. The Lord meets them with wonderful majesty and glory, with the holy courage of the righteous. "I am he whom ye seek"—at the word they fall back and sink to the earth. All men are to know that He was not taken by force, but, moved by love, freely surrenders himself to the hands of the ungodly. "What will He do when He comes to judge, if He acts thus when He is being judged? What power will He have when He comes to reign, if He had such power when He came to die?" (Augustine). "Then will all fall upon their knees. Some will be like Judas and his band, and will fall backward to the earth; others will fall upon their faces and worship" (Besser). The Lord willingly gives

Himself into the hands of sinners, to bonds and fetters, in order that we, released from all bonds, might be free in Him. "Let these go their way." Thus does He pronounce us free, that sin, death, the world and Satan may have no power over us.

3. Peter, in his rash and impetuous way, would defend his Lord, and smites angrily with his sword. But the Lord gently admonishes him to keep the peace. He does not wish the help of the sword, nor even the defense of angels. He submits in humility to the will of His Father. He is not overpowered, and is not driven by force to His death, but He in His free grace surrenders His life as a ransom and propitiation for us poor sinners. We should learn that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal; the sword which we are to wield is the holy Word of God. The weapons of the Church are prayers and tears. With these we overcome the world.

4. The Lord meekly permits Himself to be bound by the soldiers of the band; not because He must, but because it was His will. But even in His bonds, He is a mighty preacher of repentance for the rabble of His enemies. His disciples forsake Him. What pain must their faithlessness have given Him! But no word of complaint escapes His lips. He remains faithful though all others fail. How often do not our hearts wander from Him? How often do we shun the cross as did they? But He does not forsake us. Let it be our consolation, in suffering and in the hour of

death, that He is so faithful and that He holds us ever in His pierced hands. May He preserve us to eternal blessedness.

PRAYER.

O Christ, our Lord ! Thou wast betrayed into the hands of Thine enemies by one who had been among Thy familiar friends. Make us faithful to Thee and to Thy holy Word, that we may not betray Thee by our unbelief and sins. O, how often have we by our evil deeds grieved Thy loving heart ! Forgive us, we pray, and take not Thy mercy from us. Thou didst permit Thine enemies to bind Thy hands, when Thou mightest by the word of Thy power have smitten all Thine adversaries to death. Thousands of angels stood ready to do Thy bidding ; but Thou didst willingly endure the bands of the wicked that Thou mightest free us from the bands of sin and Satan. O Lord, how can we ever fitly thank Thee for Thy rich love and mercy. Mercifully accept the tribute of thanksgiving and praise which we bring Thee to-day. Enable us to follow Thee with fidelity day by day, and bring us at length to that great company of saints and angels who gather around Thee in heaven, bound to Thee by the bands of love, where we shall render Thee worthier praise for all Thy love and mercy, world without end. Amen.

FRIDAY. *Passion History. Part IX. Christ before Annas and Caiaphas.*

And they that had laid hold on Jesus and bound him led him away to Annas first; for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, which was the high-priest that same year. Now Caiaphas was he which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people. The high-priest then asked Jesus of his disciples and of his doctrine. Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world : I ever taught in the synagogue and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort ; and in secret have I said nothing. Why asketh thou me ? Ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them : behold, they know what I said. And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high-priest so ? Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil : but if well, why smitest thou me ? And Annas sent him bound to the high-priest Caiaphas. And the men that held Jesus mocked him and smote him. And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophesy, who is it that smote

thee? And many other things blasphemously spake they against him (Luke xxii. 54; 63-65—John xviii. 12-14; 19-24).

1. Christ is led first to Annas. *For us* He endures the ignominy of being led from one unrighteous judge to another, and of being finally condemned. He is entirely innocent, and is yet judged, in order that we who are entirely guilty might be free from the judgment. He is the true God from eternity, and yet patiently endures smitings with the hand and fist, in order that we might not be called upon to endure eternal perdition. *For us*—in the light of these words must we always consider the ignominy which He endured. For that which Caiaphas, without intending it, by virtue of his office as high-priest prophetically declared, when he gave the counsel that it was “expedient that one man should die for the people,” has been fulfilled. It is good for us all, that the *One* man, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has been offered up for all peoples. Alone through this sacrifice are we saved from eternal death.

2. How meekly and quietly the Lord endures the gravest insults. He permits Himself to be struck by a miserable servant—He, the Lord of glory! “Our Lord faced His accusers with meekness, and not only turned the other cheek for new smitings, but held His whole body in readiness to be nailed upon the cross, and thereby proved that His great injunctions to patient endurance are to be fulfilled not with outward movements of the body, but by preparations of the heart. For one

may outwardly turn the other cheek, and yet cherish anger in the heart. Christ answers His accusers truthfully and with entire moderation, and stands ready to endure more serious assaults with calm and gentle courage" (Augustine). How different are we ! How easily our hearts swell with carnal wrath when anyone transgresses against us ! Let us learn from our Lord and Saviour long-suffering, patience, humility, and composure of mind.

3. The servants smite the Lord in the face, mockingly addressing Him as a prophet, saying, Prophesy unto us, who is he that smote thee ? and reviling Him. What will be their feelings when they shall one day see the face that they smote radiant in the glory of the eternal Godhead ? How will it be with them when they shall see the One whom they judged and condemned sitting as the Judge who shall pronounce irreversible and unchangeable judgment upon them ? And what will then be *our* feelings ? It is our sins which have brought Him into shame, suffering, and death. "For the evildoers, the Jews, were the servitors of thy sin, and it is most certainly thou who hast by sin crucified and slain God's Son" (Luther). Our sins are the smitings which grieve His soul more than all the strokes received from the hands of the ungodly servants of the high-priest. His gentleness should therefore lead us all to repentance, while yet there is time. When He comes again, He will not come thus patient and gentle, but as the holy Judge of all

the earth. Woe be to those who have wantonly abused His long-suffering, and who have dreamed and idled away the day of grace !

PRAYER.

O, my Lord and Saviour ! What reproaches and contempt didst Thou endure on account of my sins. Thou innocent and holy Son of God ! Thou wast led as a lamb to the slaughter, yet Thou openedst not Thy mouth. Cruel blows and mockery didst Thou bear in silence. O, may Thy meekness and Thine uncomplaining patience be ever before me, that I may never yield to angry passion and thus deny Thee before men. May I become like Thee and be thus enabled to bear the scorn of the world and the reproaches of them that hate Thee. When I am reviled, may I revile not again. May I do good to them that injure me, and pray for my enemies. O Thou meek and lowly Jesus ! may Thy love and patience allay the storms of hatred that fill the earth with strife, and shed abroad upon the world Thy holy peace. Amen.

SATURDAY. Christians, Freed from the Dominion of Darkness, should be Followers of God and Children of Light.

1. Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children ;
2. And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.
3. But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints.
4. Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient : but rather giving of thanks.
5. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.
6. Let no man deceive you with vain words : for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.
7. Be not ye therefore partakers with them.
8. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now *are ye light in the Lord* : walk as children of light :
9. (For the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) (Eph.v. 1-9).

1. *Verses 1 and 2.* Christ has overcome the “strong man armed” who held us in his power.

He delivered us from the kingdom of Satan, for He is the Stronger One. We are now freed from the dominion of darkness and translated into the kingdom of Christ. It was at the cost of no slight sacrifice, no trifling conflict. He who is the image of God, the firstborn of ever creature, in whom dwelt the fullness of the Godhead bodily, interposed in our behalf. Consider how He agonized in Gethsemane and on Golgotha ; how patiently He permitted Himself to be bound by wicked men in order that we might escape from Satan's bonds ; how meekly He submitted to unrighteous condemnation, in order that Satan might no longer have power to accuse us ; how He shed His blood for us and gave Himself as a sacrifice for our sins, that we might be saved. Should we not now be followers of God, walking in love, as Christ has loved us ? For to this end Christ has delivered us from the power of darkness, that we should henceforth walk as children of light. He who remains in his sins is yet under the dominion of darkness, serving the prince of this world.

2. *Verses 3-7.* Since Christ has at such a sacrifice, by so terrible a conflict and such bitter sufferings, freed us from the dominion of darkness, we should not willingly again take upon us the yoke of bondage. The latter state of him who permits the evil spirits to return and again take him under their control will be worse than the first. On the contrary, the whole life of the

Christian believer should be a continuous thank-offering. We should dedicate our lives without reserve to the Lord, who has delivered us from the sway of the kingdom of darkness. To Him who has freely offered Himself up for us, we should offer ourselves as living sacrifices, in order that we may at last dwell with Him in eternal glory. He who lives unto the world shall perish with the world, for the world and its pleasures pass away. He who serves sin, and thus also serves the devil, shall receive due reward from the master whom he serves. The apostle names particularly three roots of evil from which in all ages most injurious and poisonous fruits are produced : fornication, uncleanness in speech and avarice. He who commits such sins as these forsakes the pure and holy God, becomes an idolater, and forfeits all part and lot in the kingdom of Christ. Let no one of us then suffer himself to be betrayed into the service of these sins, lest he lose his citizenship in the kingdom of Christ, which the Lord has so dearly purchased for us and assured to us in Holy Baptism.

3. *Verses 8 and 9.* “Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord.” O, that this word of the Lord might be truthfully applied to us. Darkness we are by nature. The Lord has brought light into the world, and, if we have truly received Him, we are illuminated, become each a light in the Lord. Our most inward nature is light if He who is the Light of the world dwells

in us and we have become one with Him through faith. But where the light is, its shining will be seen in the daily life. Where the Holy Spirit manifests His power, there are found also the fruits of the Spirit, *i. e.*, *Goodness*, or holy love, filling the heart, *Righteousness* in all the conduct of life, *Truth* in every utterance of the lips. The presence of these fruits of the Spirit is an evidence that we are indeed the children of light. Wher-ever love is wanting and where unrighteousness and untruthfulness are found, there the kingdom of darkness still reigns. Who will dare to claim that his heart has been completely illuminated by the rays of the eternal Light? Who is there who can find in himself no darkness at all? There is need of a daily struggle, that all darkness may be driven out of our hearts and that all may be clear and bright within through the gracious in-shining of Jesus Christ, the Light of the world. This struggle must continue so long as we live on earth. For the deep darkness of our natural state and of our evil hearts will not be entirely overcome, until, freed from the body of this death, we are with the Lord in glory, walking in the light eternal.

PRAYER.

Lord Jesus, Thou Light of the World, shine upon us, that we may behold Thee as Thou art. Thou art the fairest among ten thousand and the One altogether lovely. Yet Thy image was marred by the cruelty of men and Thy brow was pale with anguish in Gethsemane and upon the cross. O, blessed Saviour, what bitter agony was Thine! How didst Thou love us Thus to die for us! May we

render Thee the sacrifices of praise and of a holy life. Help us to walk before Thee in purity, and to resist every temptation to evil. May we never be found in the company of them that hate Thee, but may we be companions of all them that love Thee. Give to us pure thoughts and holy desires, that we may glorify Thee in our daily lives and have an inheritance at last among Thy saints on high. Amen.

FOURTH WEEK IN LENT.

The Lord feeds the multitude in the wilderness, thus pointing prophetically to the giving of Himself for the sins of the world, and picturing for us the Holy Supper, in which He offers us as food His body given to death for us, and as drink His blood shed for us. He is come that we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly.

SUNDAY. *The Miraculous Feeding of the Multitude in the Wilderness.*

1. After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is *the sea of Tiberias*.
2. And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased.
3. And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples.
4. And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.
5. When Jesus then lifted up *his eyes*, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?
6. And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.
7. Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.
8. One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him,
9. There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?
10. And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.

11. And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.

12. When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.

13. Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.

14. Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.

15. When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone (John vi. 1-15).

1. In our meditations of the last week we beheld the Lord as the glorious Deliverer from the authority and dominion of the devil and from all evil. He stands before us to-day as an ever-ready Helper and a bountiful Dispenser of grace. Such is His work and way, for to this end He came to earth, to free us from the power of darkness, to deliver us from all evil, and to bestow upon us grace and rich gifts of life, abundance, peace, and everlasting salvation. In His discharge of both these gracious offices, His glory beams brightly upon us.

2. *Verses 1-6.* A great multitude followed Him as He went up into the mountain, desiring to witness the gracious exercise of His miraculous power upon the sick and miserable. O, if it could only be said to-day that great multitudes were following the Lord ! “And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh,” just as we are now approaching the Holy Easter time. Then Jesus lifted up His eyes and saw a great company come unto Him—and He thought at once of their bodily needs, the hunger which they must soon feel. The multitude

does not ask for bread—He provides for them before they ask. He is the perfect embodiment of pity and love, and it is His way to help before we ask, and more abundantly than we ask or think. It was His love, and not our prayers, that moved Him to come to earth and become man. His love and pity led Him to go down into reproach and sufferings ; no one had asked this of Him. All that He has done and suffered for us, and all that He is continually offering us from His almighty hand, is of grace, free grace. Grace, free grace, is the source of all our blessings, temporal and spiritual.

3. *Verses 7-15.* Philip has no counsel to offer ; Andrew as little. “Five barley loaves and two small fishes,” cries the latter in despair, “what are they among so many ?” But the Lord is never at a loss for counsel or help in the time of need, even though the whole world were hopelessly perplexed. Therefore is it that He is called : “Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God.” Even here in the wilderness He is able to provide abundantly.

The people must be seated, for God is a God of order; and there, as always and everywhere among His people, becoming order must be observed. His regulations and ordinances are always fitting and adapted for our good. Adapt thyself to them and thou shalt receive blessing as did the people in the wilderness.

He then takes the bread and gives thanks. He stands there as a house-father in the midst of His

large family, and teaches to receive and give with thanksgiving. “The Lord gives thanks for the bread which He distributes to others ; dost thou always give thanks for that which thou dost eat ? We, too, should give thanks as we offer our gifts to the poor whom the Lord sends to our door. The bread which we give should be the bread of thanksgiving, and the cup of cold water which we offer a cup of thanksgiving. For to be able to give is a joy and blessing well worthy of our warmest expressions of gratitude. It is more blessed to give than to receive ; he who gives should, therefore, render heartier thanksgivings unto God than he who receives ” (Löhe).

After giving thanks, He begins to distribute. The disciples again and again receive bread from His holy hands, carry it out to the people, and return. His hand is never empty until the whole company of five thousand men are fully satisfied —and there are twelve basketfuls remaining. What gracious abundance ! The Lord is always thus rich and bountiful in all His gifts of grace and blessing, and from His hand we are continually receiving food for our bodies and spiritual blessings for our souls. It is so beautifully human, that the Lord should have pity upon the people and think even of their common bodily needs ; it is so beautifully divine, that He should stand in the midst of the hungering multitude, with hands of blessing, distributing food, multiplying the scanty store by His miraculous power until all were filled !

4. That which was here done for the bodily comfort of men is continually repeated in a spiritual way in the Church of Christ. As the hunger of the multitude in the wilderness was stilled, so the Lord satisfies with life, peace and joy all those who love Him. In Him we find fullness of life, and none but He can still the deep yearnings of the soul that longs for the grace of God. Our lesson to-day directs our thoughts upon this spiritual nourishment, to which the Saviour refers in the discourse which follows the performing of the miracle. He here teaches us that He is Himself the true Bread of Life, which alone can satisfy our hunger. In giving Himself for us, He gives to us all that He has won by His deep humiliation, and especially by the sacrifice of Himself upon the cross. He gives Himself to us spiritually in the Word, bodily in the sacrament of His body and blood, in order that body and spirit, which were both ruined in the fall, may through Him be sanctified and preserved unto everlasting life. Thus He stands to-day in the midst of His holy Church, as in the wilderness in days of old, with blessings in His hands. He gives to His servants, the ministers of the Church, who of themselves have nothing whatever to give, the living bread of His Word, and they bear it forth to all that hunger for it. No soul remains unsatisfied. He places in the hands of His servants the sacrament of His body and blood, and they go forth to all the people gathered unto the

Lord from every land and tongue, offering them the blessed food and distributing the wonderful drink of life ; and every hungering soul is satisfied and everyone that thirsts is refreshed. And yet the supply is never exhausted, and the Lord never grows weary of distributing the rich gifts of His grace.

PRAYER.

Merciful and gracious God, our Heavenly Father, we render praise and thanksgiving unto Thee, that Thou hast sent to us from heaven in the person of Thy dear Son, Jesus Christ, the true Bread of Life. O grant us Thy quickening grace, that we may earnestly long for this Bread from heaven, and refresh Thou every fainting soul. Dwell Thou richly within our hearts, O Lord our Saviour. Grant that we may in Thee have life abundantly. We thank Thee that Thou hast to-day fed us with Thy holy Word. May it strengthen us in our faith, and enable us to grow in all spiritual graces that we may become more worthy to bear Thy name, and that our humble service may be acceptable in Thy sight. In Thee we live. May we be Thine forever. Amen.

MONDAY. Jesus Christ is the True Bread of Life, Stilling all the Hunger of the Soul and Imparting Abundance of Life.

35. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life : he that cometh to me shall never hunger ; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

36. But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not.

37. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me ; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

38. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

39. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

40. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life : and I will raise him up at the last day.

41. The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven.

42. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know ? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven ?

43. Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves.

44. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him : and I will raise him up at the last day.

45. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

46. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.

47. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

48. I am that bread of life.

49. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.

50. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die (John vi. 35-50).

1. *Verses 35 and 36.* The Lord had fed the multitude in the wilderness. On the following day great throngs again gathered about Him. After His usual manner, He makes the outward miracle of the bodily feeding the basis of instruction in spiritual things, showing the people, and showing us, how and where may be received that true spiritual food, in which our souls may find fullest satisfaction in time and eternity. "I am the Bread of Life," says the Lord. With Him may all that hunger be fed till satisfied and all the thirsty be refreshed abundantly. No earthly good can satisfy the inmost longings of the soul. True peace is nowhere to be found but with Jesus. He who lays hold upon Christ in faith has all that he needs. But, alas ! so many know nothing of this hunger and thirst of the soul, but say in their hearts : "I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." Hence they will not come to Him who so lovingly offers Himself to them as the true Bread of Life.

2. *Verses 37-40.* We have all been given to

Christ by God, our heavenly Father, if we only allow ourselves to be thus given and do not refuse to be His. He will turn away no one who comes to Him, however poor and miserable. True, the courage to approach Him would fail us if we looked only upon ourselves and our sins ; but He invites us so kindly. He has so humbly condescended to our lowliness, that we may well venture at all times to draw near to Him. He whose grace accepted the thief upon the cross will not cast us off. O, that all would come to Him ! He offers such precious gifts—resurrection and eternal life ! He who has Christ in faith can never die, and even his poor body must rise again, since the living forces of the Saviour's body and life have permeated it.

3. *Verses 41-46.* He who would taste the grace of Christ must not, like the Jews, take offense at His lowliness, nor rashly declare His coming from heaven impossible. By thus despising the Lord, thousands in our day close to themselves the only way that leads to life. When the Father draws us to the Son, we should yield to the divine impulse and draw near. His love so often invites and draws us. His Spirit moves our hearts whenever we hear the Word of God with its invitations, threatenings and admonitions ; whenever in trials and distress we vainly sigh and seek for help and comfort ; when in solemn moments the sinful depths of our own hearts are revealed to us ; when thoughts of the coming judgment arouse us

from our security. Thus the Father draws us to the Son, not with compulsion, but with loving invitations. But we must allow ourselves to be drawn—that is all that we can do for our salvation. On the contrary, we so often resist the grace of God and reject the hand that is outstretched to lead us to Christ, and thus to life.

4. *Verses 47-50.* The Lord now summarizes His discourse in a few words : “ He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.” “ He that”—thus the Lord lovingly invites each one of us ; no one is excluded. We must “ believe”—thus all works of merit and all self-righteousness are condemned. “ On me,” saith the Lord—upon Him, who is true God and true man, who died for us and rose again, and upon His work must we repose all our trust and confidence, accepting Him entirely. He calls Himself the Bread of Life, in order that we may learn that as bread nourishes the body by entering into it, so should we by faith take the Lord into ourselves, that He may permeate and sanctify our whole life. He who thus believes on Him has eternal life, for he has Christ, and Christ is life.

PRAYER.

O, holy and merciful Father, who hast no pleasure in our death, but wouldest have us turn to Thee and live, in deep humility we praise Thy grace, that Thou didst not spare Thine only-begotten Son, but didst freely give Him up as a sacrifice for us all, and as a ransom for our sins. Lord Jesus Christ, we praise Thee that Thou didst come in love and mercy to seek and to save the lost. By Thy death upon the cross Thou hast reconciled us to God.

Do Thou now remember us in our weakness and grant us faith to receive Thee into ever closer fellowship. May our souls feast on Thee, O Thou Living Bread, that we may be transformed into Thy likeness. May Thy peace be shed abroad in our hearts and Thy love uphold us, that we may never die ; for though our flesh shall slumber in the tomb, we know that Thou wilt raise us up at the Last Day. Then, in the world of everlasting life, we will praise Thee more acceptably for the rich gifts of Thy love. Amen.

TUESDAY. He Who in Faith Partakes of the Flesh and Blood of Christ has Eternal Life, for He has Christ.

51. I am the living bread which came down from heaven : if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever : and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

52. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat ?

53. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

54. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life ; and I will raise him up at the last day.

55. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

56. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

57. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father : so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.

58. This is that bread which came down from heaven : not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead : he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever (John vi. 51-58).

1. Verses 51-53. He who in true faith receives Christ, the true Bread of Life, has eternal life and will be raised up at the Last Day ; for Christ is the resurrection and the life. Genuine faith unites us with the entire Christ, not with His power and divinity alone, but with Him who is true God and true man in most intimate union. Faith receives Him (John i. 12); puts Him on (Rom. xiii. 14); places us in Him (Rom. viii. 1; Phil. iii. 9); moves the Lord to take up His abode within us (John xiv. 23); so that He may live in us (Gal.

ii. 20). We so lay hold upon the entire Christ by faith that we become “members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones” (Eph. v. 30). It is primarily and chiefly this partaking of Jesus Christ in faith that is spoken of in the verses before us. He who does not in faith eat Him, partake of His flesh, *i. e.*, His life, Himself, given for the life of the world in His sacrifice upon the cross, and fully take Him into himself, has no life abiding in him. Body and soul have through sin become subject to death. That which is born of the flesh is flesh and cannot inherit the kingdom of God. But Jesus Christ took upon Himself flesh and blood and gave Himself to death for us, in order that our sinful nature might be sanctified by His holy nature, and that our bodies and souls might be permeated by His life, and we be thus spiritually and bodily transformed into His nature. He who does not thus partake of Christ remains in death.

2. Although such spiritual partaking of Christ by faith is the immediate subject of our Saviour’s discourse, we all feel that His words have a further significance. They have prophetic reference to the Holy Supper which the Lord was about to institute before His departure. This does not indeed exclude the eating in faith, but includes it. The partaking of the body and blood of Christ in the Holy Supper is a blessing to us only when it is received in faith. This supreme gift of grace brings only condemnation upon the unbelieving. For “he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and

drinketh damnation unto himself." In the Holy Supper the Lord, our God and Saviour, comes down wholly to meet with us. For the strengthening of our timid faith He has sacramentally included His holy body and His precious blood in the visible elements of the bread and wine. Not common flesh and blood, corrupted like our own by sin, does the Lord give us, but His flesh and blood, which is holy, permeated by His eternal divinity, and has therefore power to give us life. He gives himself to us not only spiritually, but also bodily, because soul and body are to be transformed into His image. When we partake of Him in the Holy Supper, "He is not transformed, but He transforms us, the soul into righteousness, the body into immortality."

3. *Verses 54-58.* The Lord four times repeats His mysterious declaration concerning the partaking of His flesh and blood, in order to impress us with its great importance. What the blessings are which we are to enjoy from this most intimate union with Him, the Lord thus describes: "Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." "He dwelleth in me, and I in him." "He shall live by me for ever." He in us and we in Him—therefore all that is His is ours also. His obedience and holy life, His sacrifice and death, His resurrection and eternal glory, are all our own, since He has given Himself to us. He is risen from the dead—we cannot therefore remain

in the grave. He lives eternally—we must therefore through Him live to all eternity. The Lord grant that His rich and gracious promises may be fulfilled in us all.

PRAYER.

O Lord our Saviour, in Thee only is life. Thou hast come into a world of sin and death, to deliver us from our misery and from the powers of evil. Do Thou feed our souls with heavenly manna, that we may be strong to resist temptation and may not return again to the beggarly elements of the world. Thou hast promised that whosoever cometh to Thee shall never hunger. We come to Thee, dear Lord, in humble faith, that we may be fed and may grow strong in the power of Thy might. Have compassion upon us, for we are weak. Look upon us in mercy, for we are full of sin, and are in no wise worthy of Thy favor. In Thee is fullness of life. Impart unto us, that we may live forever. Amen.

WEDNESDAY. *Passion History. Part X. Evidence that Christ is the Son of God.*

And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes came together in the palace of Caiaphas the high-priest, and led him before their council. And the high-priest and the elders and the whole council sought false witness against Jesus to put him to death, but found none. Yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none; for their witness agreed not together. At the last came two false witnesses and said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days. But neither so did their witness agree together. And the high-priest arose and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? What is it which these witness against thee? But Jesus held his peace, and answered nothing. And the elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes said, Art thou the Christ? Tell us. And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe: and if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go. Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? Again the high-priest said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of the Blessed God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: I am. Nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the throne of the power of God and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high-priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy: what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye? And they all condemned him, and answered and said, He is guilty of death. And some began to spit on him,

and to cover his face, and to say unto him, Prophesy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee? And the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands (Matt. xxvi. 57-68—Mark xiv. 53-65—Luke xxii. 65-71).

1. The Lord stands before Caiaphas the high-priest and the chief council of the Jews. It had been already determined that He should be put to death. It was only as a matter of form that search was made for witnesses against Him. But none were found. Not even His enemies could find any flaw in His holy life. At length two false witnesses appear, but their testimony is conflicting, and the Lord calmly holds His peace. The poor condemned prisoner, by His glorious majesty, perplexes the whole company of His unjust judges. He maintains unbroken silence ; His silence is itself a condemnation. When He is silent, it is because He has given over the souls of those before Him to destruction ; for, until all is lost, He still knocks at the heart's door, alluring with His gentle words of love. "When Jesus answered nothing, His silence was that of a lamb ; but when He answered, He taught as a shepherd. He must be silent in the Passion, since He shall not be silent in the Judgment ; for He—who will one day come to judge—had come to be judged" (Augustine).

2. In sorest perplexity Caiaphas at length puts Jesus under oath, saying, "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God, the Blessed." The Lord honors the existing government even as represented in His unjust judge, and does not refuse to recog-

nize the obligations of the oath thus imposed upon Him. "Thou sayest it; I am." He thus solemnly confirms by an oath the acknowledgment that He is the promised Messiah, the only-begotten, eternal Son of God. We rejoice that, in addition to all other clear evidences of His divinity, we have this testimony—a solemn oath from the mouth in which no deceit was ever found. Before such testimony must be silenced all the forms of unbelief which turn to right and left, acknowledging Christ as a divine teacher and prophet, the best of all men, even the Saviour—anything short of the simple and honest confession: "I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord." To the Jews this testimony of the Lord was a savor of death unto death. May it be to us a firm support of faith, a shield against all the doubts that spring from an evil heart, a weapon against all the contradictions and slanders of the world.

3. "Hereafter ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Thus the Lord proclaims His credentials as the Son of God in His glory. And the members of this chief council of the Jews beheld His glory, as have all His enemies since that day. The eternal power and glory of the Crucified have been made manifest to all in the signs on Calvary, in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, in the Church's victories. Thus the

Son of man has been revealed and has come in His kingdom, and so shall it always be until His final visible coming in the clouds of heaven. Blessed shall he then be who has believed the Saviour's oath before the high-priest.

4. "He hath spoken blasphemy. He is worthy of death." If Christ were really, as many say, no more than an extraordinary man, then this verdict of the Jews would have been a true one, and He would have been a blasphemer. There must be here a clear line of demarcation. "Either the Scriptures are right and Christ is true God, or the Scriptures are wrong and He is a blasphemer. There is here no middle path. Either believe and cast safe anchor to the right, or deny and suffer shipwreck to the left" (Besser). Let him who would be saved say: "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief."

5. Christ was condemned because He "made Himself the Son of God." In reality and truth, the fact that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, was the real cause of His death. For God sent His Son into the world, that He might become our Saviour and suffer death for us, in order that He might by His death deliver us from sin, death, and the power of the devil.

PRAYER.

O dear Lord! Thou didst submit to be judged by mortal worms and pronounced "worthy of death." This horrible judgment was not for Thee, but for me. How keenly do the words pierce my soul! Like a two-edged sword, they cut and wound my heart. I am the guilty

one, for whom Thou didst become substitute and surety. Against me, as guilty of death, an accusing conscience and the broken Law, and the insulted majesty of God, cry out. Thou, O Holy One of Israel, guilty of death ! Ah, where shall I hide myself for shame, that upon Thine innocent head such dreadful sentence should be pronounced. Whither shall I flee to shield myself from the terrible judgment : "He is guilty of death !" Ah, whither but to Thy cross, that I may hide myself in Thine open wounds ! I am guilty, but Thou didst for me, and in my stead, suffer death upon the cross, that I might not die. O, Thou who art the Christ, the Son of God, when Thou comest to judge the world, cast me not away from Thy presence, but have mercy upon me, and give me a place among those whose guilt is pardoned and who are justified and saved by faith in Thee, the innocent and suffering Saviour of the world. Amen.

THURSDAY. Passion History. Part XI. Peter Denies His Lord.

And Simon Peter followed Jesus afar off, and so did another disciple, to the palace of the high-priest. But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high-priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter. And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals in the midst of the hall, for it was cold, and were set down together and warmed themselves. And Peter sat down with the servants and warmed himself at the fire to see the end. And one of the maids of the high-priest, the damsel that kept the door, when she saw Peter warming himself at the fire, looked upon him and said, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples ? Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth from Galilee. Yea, this fellow was also with him. But he denied before them all, and said, Woman, I am not, and I know not what thou sayest. And he went out into the porch, and the cock crew. And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth. And the damsel that kept the door saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by, This is one of them. And after a little while another saw him and said, Thou art also one of them. (Then Peter took his place again among the servants before the fire.) And he stood and warmed himself. And they said unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples ? And again he denied with an oath, and said, I am not ; I do not know the man. And after a little while, about the space of one hour, another confidently affirmed, Of a truth, this fellow also was with him, for he is a Galilean. Then came unto him they that stood by and said to him, Surely thou also art one of them, for thy speech agreeth thereto and betrayeth thee. One of the servants of the high-priest, being his kinsman, whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him ? Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man of whom ye speak. And immediately, while he yet spake, the

cock crew. And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter. And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and when he thought thereon he wept bitterly (Matt. xxvi. 58; 69-75—Mark xiv. 54; 66-72—Luke xxii. 54-62—John xviii. 15-18; 25-27).

1. The floods of suffering roll with increasing fury about the Lord. More bitter, assuredly, than all the reproach which his enemies cast upon Him was the faithlessness of His disciples, particularly the denial of Peter, whom He had Himself named the man of rock. We are familiar with the fiery, impetuous nature of this man, his courageous spirit. But his heart is yet unbroken. He yet trusts in his own power, and hence his fall. Satan, too, sifted him most severely. Whichever way he turned temptation beset him, and because he forgot to watch and pray, because his courage was not rooted in true humility, because he relied not upon the grace of Christ, but upon his own strength, he fell in the hour of temptation. It is the deepest fall recorded in the Scriptures of any servant of God. To us it is above all a mirror, in which we may see how poor and weak is our heart, when it depends upon its own strength and virtue. O, how often have we not, too, by our sins, denied the Lord ! We should learn from the example of Peter that no Christian dare live in false security, and that it is better, with Paul, to boast of our weakness, that the power of Christ may be revealed in us.

The fall of Peter is, further, a humiliation for us

all, for we can here see how deceitful and desperately wicked is the human heart. Who will dare to account himself stronger and better than Peter, the man of rock ?

We should take warning, finally, from this sad example, never to think ourselves secure. “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.” “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”

2. Peter falls, but he does not sink beyond hope. The Lord does not permit him to be snatched out of His hand. He turns and looks upon him with wondrous, divine love, just when he most needs help. The crowing of the cock had already awakened the conscience of the poor disciple ; this glance from the eye of the Saviour breaks his heart. And what a look must that have been ! By it the Lord expressed to His fallen disciple all that he had to say to him in that hour : “Peter, dost thou remember what I said to thee ? Dost thou thus requite my love ? Is this the fidelity to me which thou hast sworn to preserve ? Behold, I am going to death for thee—and thou deniest me ? Even thou, my beloved Disciple, thou man of rock, provest faithless ! Be a man. Yet there is time. Behold, I have prayed for thee. Yet there is time. Let me lift thee up, my poor fallen follower ! ” All of this was in that look of Jesus—but who can worthily interpret it ? Peter understands his Lord. The straying sheep permits the Shepherd’s love to find it. His heart

is broken. There remains not a shred of confidence in his own strength. He bows down in humility, buries his head in his hands, and weeps tears of the deepest grief and penitence. Peter goes forth from that hour a new man. He has become weak, and just in consequence of that has grown strong in the Lord. God has humbled him, and thereby made him great. “The fall of Peter should terrify the strongest Christians ; his restoration at the hand of Jesus should fill the most wretched sinner with good cheer” (Besser). May the Lord grant us after every fall the godly sorrow of St. Peter, with tears of true repentance, and comfort us by His loving glance, as He comforted Peter, until we are welcomed at last into His glorious presence, where, delivered from all evil, we can no more fall nor sin.

PRAYER.

My Lord and my God ! Let me not fall from Thy grace. I am weak and sinful, but Thou art merciful and mighty. I flee for refuge to Thee. Do Thou preserve me for the sake of the shed blood of Thy dear Son. Lord Jesus ! Thou didst drink for me the bitter cup of suffering. Thou hast redeemed me at the cost of agonizing struggles, of scornful persecutions and of awful death amid unutterable torments—and I—alas ! I have forgotten Thee and have often denied Thee by open sins and by shameless unbelief. I have been unwilling to endure the reproaches of them that reproach Thee, and I have murmured beneath the cross which Thy followers are called to bear. O, do Thou in mercy forgive me, and make me faithful to Thee. If in days to come I should in any evil hour forget Thee or deny Thee, O do Thou look upon me in love and pity, that I may, like Peter, shed tears of penitence and taste again Thy pardoning love. O, strengthen me, Dear Lord, that I may serve

Thee in this life and at length behold Thee in Thy glory.
Amen.

FRIDAY. *Passion History. Part XII. The End of Judas.*

And straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council against Jesus to put him to death. And they bound him and led him away into the hall of judgment, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate, the governor. And it was early. And they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover. Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? See thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself. And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood. And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy, the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me (Matt. xxvii. 1-10—Mark xv. 1—Luke xxiii. 1—John xviii. 28).

1. “For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of ; but the sorrow of the world worketh death.” Peter furnishes an example of the first kind ; Judas of the second. Judas repented, but his sorrow was only a sorrow of the world. He was grieved, not because he had sinned so terribly, but because he saw the gulf of perdition yawning before him. He mourned, not on account of his sin, but on account of its consequences. He trembles at the thought of his own deed. He is filled with dread. He sees before him a life of torment, and the terrors of conscience and despair more and more enshroud his soul in darkness. He goes to the chief priests and elders, his partners in crime, instead of to

Him who alone could have forgiven and blotted out his sin. O, that Judas had been willing to repent. The merciful Saviour, who said, "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out," would not have turned away even His betrayer. He who accepted the thief upon the cross would have had consolation even for the soul of a Judas. His blood, which cleanses from all unrighteousness, would have had power to wash even Judas clean from his awful sin. But to the only One who can help Judas will not go. He hates Him, because it is on His account that he now suffers such torment of soul. Thus many in our day scorn to seek the only One who can give forgiveness, life and salvation, and would rather be lost with Judas than fall humbly in the dust before the Saviour.

2. Judas is compelled against his will to acknowledge the perfect innocence of Jesus. If he could only have found a single fault in Him he would have found some alleviation of his torment. But he can discover not a single flaw. "I have betrayed the innocent blood"—the testimony has double weight, coming from the lips of the betrayer.

3. The chief priests and elders repel the betrayer : "What is that to us? See thou to it," they unblushingly reply, as though they were not partners in his crime. They themselves call the wages of the betrayer "blood-money," and do not venture to place the thirty pieces of silver

which Judas cast at their feet in the treasury of the temple. They thereby condemn the sin, but in their blindness do not perceive that they are themselves most deeply involved in its horrible iniquity. So it is ever in the world—sin enough, but no knowledge of sin, and theretore no repentance and no forgiveness. How often are we ensnared in the sins of others and do not observe it ! We dare never say, “What is that to us ?” for we have only too much to do with the sins of our times. They form a common burden resting upon us all. Our Lord and Saviour did not think, “What have I to do with that ?” or He would never for our sakes have become a poor child of man, nor endure a death on the cross for us. He, in pity, took our sins upon Himself, and thus bestowed the gift of life upon us.

4. Distress and torment of soul drive Judas to the last extreme. He goes out and hangs himself. An immortal soul sinks into eternal perdition ! Lost forever—when he might have sat with Peter and all the holy apostles upon the twelve thrones judging the tribes of Israel. He was called to glory, and chose perdition !

That one of His disciples should be lost was one of the deepest sorrows of the Lord. We should give good heed lest we cause Him like pain. May the Lord grant us His grace, that we may not be lost, like Judas, but repent, like Peter. • The anguish of a Judas leads to eternal death ; the tears of a Peter to eternal life.

PRAYER.

O, Thou faithful Friend, who, having loved Thy disciples from the beginning, lovest them unto the end, have compassion upon us in our weakness. Thou knowest our hearts, that they are deceitful and desperately wicked. May we not trust in an arm of flesh, but in Thee alone. Thou hast given us a place among thy disciples. Thou callest us friends and preparest Thy table before us in the presence of our enemies. O, strengthen us, that we may never desert Thee nor betray Thee. O Lord, preserve Thy people from the traitor's kiss in the false friendships of the world. May those who bear Thy name be Thine in deed and in truth, and have no part nor lot with the workers of iniquity. May Thine enemies be their enemies, and may they be willing to go with Thee to persecution and death. May none follow in the footsteps of the son of perdition, and be lost forever, but, faithful unto death, may we all receive at last the crown of life. Amen.

SATURDAY. *He who would Find Life and its Fullness in the Fellowship of the Lord must Hope Only in His Mercy, and must Accept as a Child Whatever the Free Grace of God Extends to Him.*

- 21. Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?
- 22. For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman.
- 23. But he *who was* of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman *was* by promise.
- 24. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.
- 25. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.
- 26. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.
- 27. For it is written, Rejoice, *thou* barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.
- 28. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.
- 29. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him *that was born* after the Spirit, even so *it is* now.
- 30. Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.
- 31. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free (Gal. iv. 21-31).

1. With the Lord is fullness of life. As He fed

the multitude in the wilderness till they all were filled, so He is continually offering to His followers the bread of life. He secured for us this gracious bread at a terrible price. It cost Him His own precious blood. He earned it by great toil and suffering. But it is offered to us for naught, as a gift of free grace. All that we can do in the matter is to accept the gift which He offers to us and receive what His hand of grace presents to us. But we are so often unwilling to live from His grace alone. It is hard for our proud hearts to accept everything as a free gift, and so we easily fall back again into the way of legality, resting our hope not upon the Lord, but upon our own deeds and merit. But reproach is thereby cast upon Christ; His sufferings and death are declared of no avail for us; His blood trodden under foot, and the grace of God rejected.

“If righteousness come by the Law, then Christ is dead in vain.” The Galatians had fallen into such false legality, and were therefore in danger of losing the free grace of God. The apostle therefore in our epistle points out to them that even under the Old Covenant salvation was attributed to grace.

2. *Verses 21-25.* St. Paul interprets in a wonderful way and in exalted spirit the history of Abraham, his wife Sarah, and his bondwoman Hagar. Hagar represents the old covenant, and Sarah the new. Hagar’s son was born of the flesh in the ordinary course of nature. As son of

the bondwoman, he was not free but a servant. Thus the old covenant on Sinai was one in which the natural law was enforced, "Which statutes if a man do, he shall live in them." The children of the old covenant are therefore servants and not freemen, for they are called upon to secure salvation by their own works and merit. The Jews were servants of God and could be nothing more until the day of grace should dawn, when the mercy of God should accept them as children. "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." He who insists upon securing salvation by the works of the Law, who is too proud to accept the grace so freely offered, remains in bondage and can never become a child of God.

3. *Verses 26-28.* In this allegory, Sarah represents the new covenant, the covenant of grace, the Church of God. The question is now no more one of legal right, but of free mercy. Just as Isaac was not born in the ordinary course of nature, but in fulfillment of a wonderful promise and through the grace of God, so do we become children of God and of the new covenant, not through the natural course of the Law, but by virtue of the promise and free grace of God. Are we children of God and citizens in His holy city, the true Jerusalem, the Church of Christ, which has its secure centre in heaven above? Then have

we also a share in all the blessings of grace which He has so dearly purchased for us. He has prepared His Zion to be a true Mother to all her children, who shall from time to time, through the sacred means of grace, be born in her as the dew is born from the morning dawn. Through the hands of Zion He dispenses His rich grace and satisfies the spiritual thirst of all His people. With His own flesh and blood He nourishes and satisfies the children of His promise. We need only come as the poor in spirit, hungering and thirsting. He has filled abundantly the hands of our Mother, the Holy Church, and is still, as in the wilderness, placing in the hands of His ministers the Bread of Life. It is only required of us that we draw near to Him as His children and hope in His grace.

4. *Verses 29-31.* Those who hope to be saved through the Law and their own works and merit shall miserably fail. As Hagar was driven out and her son could not inherit with Isaac, the son of the promise, so can we not obtain our blessed eternal inheritance through the Law, but only through the free grace of God. We are children of the free woman, of the new covenant. All the blessings of the Lord's grace are prepared for us. Let us only in simplicity of heart accept and preserve what the Lord bestows upon us. His free grace is the foundation of our hope. Freely and without any merit of our own He gives us life and its rich blessings in His Church on earth, but

more gloriously still and to all eternity in His heavenly Jerusalem, in the eternal City of God, with its gates of pearl, its golden streets and the holy light of grace which shall shine on forever. Blessed shall he be who shall share in this inheritance of grace in the eternal City of God.

PRAYER.

Our blessed Redeemer, we would bring to Thee our tribute of thanksgiving and praise. Thou didst come from Thy throne in the heavens to save us. Thou, the Lord of Glory, wast delivered into the hands of wicked men. Thine own disciples denied Thee, forsook Thee and betrayed Thee; but Thou wast faithful unto death. Thou hast redeemed us. Thou hast made us free from the law of sin and death. Thou hast given us a place in Thy kingdom among them that are sanctified. O do Thou help us to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Thou hast made us free. Enable us to serve Thee in holiness of heart and purity of life. Sustained by Thy free grace, may we be kept faithful to the end and welcomed to eternal joy in Thy heavenly Kingdom. Amen.

FIFTH WEEK IN LENT.

Christ testifies His divine glory in attributing to Himself sinlessness, truthfulness, the power to give life, fullness of knowledge, honor from His heavenly Father and eternity. The apostle John has preserved for us some of these testimonies of Christ concerning Himself.

SUNDAY. *Christ Speaks of His Divine Glory.*

46. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?

47. He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.

48. Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?

49. Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me.

50. And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth.

51. Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.

52. Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death.

53. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?

54. Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God:

55. Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying.

56. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw *it*, and was glad.

57. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?

58. Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

59. Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by (John viii. 46-59).

1. The prophecy of the aged Simeon concerning the infant Jesus, "This child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against," was frequently fulfilled in the experience of the Lord. Our Gospel lesson to-day presents a marked illustration. What pain must not such opposition have given to the loving heart of Christ! His great love met as its reward only contempt and hatred. In response to all the oppositions of that day and of our own, the Lord here presents a powerful testimony in His own behalf. All restless, opposing spirits are given to understand Whom it is that they are rejecting, and by this testimony the Lord makes the last attempt to win them to Himself. Meek and lowly of heart, He stands in the midst of His foes, humanly so

humble and poor, and yet, in His whole bearing and in His clear assertion of His stupendous claims, so divinely glorious, so calm and secure in the consciousness of His glory and His divine majesty, exalting Him far beyond the reach of all calumniators. It appears as though He thought it best yet once more thus to reveal His majesty and glory plainly to the people before descending to the lowest depths of His humiliation.

2. *Verses 46-50.* "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" Who will dare to repeat these words after Christ? Here we must all alike stand dumb. Only the Lord, the Son of God, dare so speak, for we are all poor sinners. The Jews dispute with Christ, blasphemously charging: "Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil." Do thou, Christian brother, rejoice that the Lord bears this testimony to His own character, "for such an high-priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." He is holy and without sin, and could therefore take upon Himself our sins. Impelled by love, He has done so, and therefore we who are in ourselves poor lost sinners, may now be of good cheer. Satan can no more convict us of sin, since the Lord has removed it from us.

3. *Verse 51.* The Lord endures with wonderful meekness the opposition of His Jewish enemies, but He meets their detraction with the bold words: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man keep my saying, he shall never see death." He has life in

Himself ; He is the Life. It is beyond all measure wonderful that the Life should have gone down to death for us. He who now holds fast His word in faith, who lays hold upon Him, has life in himself and shall not see death. For him, death has no terrors. He looks to the life that is in Christ and which he is ever more fully to share. He rejoices that, freed entirely from the body of this death and from all the misery of sin, he is to behold his Saviour, and he is fully confident that the Risen Lord will at the last day awake even the slumbering body to everlasting life and unspeakable glory.

4. *Verses 52-54.* The greater the power and glory which the Lord claims for Himself, the greater and more violent becomes the opposition of His enemies. They accuse Him of ascribing too great honor to Himself ; but He replies : “ If I honor myself, my honor is nothing : it is my Father that honoreth me.” Thus the glory of our Lord shines forth with ever-increasing brightness. He now claims “ honor from the Father.” What think you? Can any creature upon earth, can the highest angel in heaven, say that God gives him honor? All creatures must cast themselves with reverence into the dust before the Lord their God. Who then is Christ, that He should receive honor from the Father? He is the eternal Son of the eternal Father—God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God.” Thus the entire Church confesses. Confess thou likewise and worship the Son, whom even the Father in Heaven honors.

5. *Verse 55.* “ I know Him, the Father, and keep His saying [Word],” says the Lord further. He knows the Father, for He was with Him from all eternity ; but “ though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered.” In this lies the secret of His glory, that He knows the Father, since He was with Him from eternity, and He gives evidence of this throughout His entire holy life on earth.

6. *Verses 56-58.* The Lord has thus testified of His holiness and veracity, of the living power of His Word, of His knowledge of the Father, and of His obedience. He now rises yet higher, and represents Himself as the object of Abraham’s longings and joy. To the mocking contradictions of the Jews He finally responds in the words full of triumph and glory : “ Before Abraham was, I am.” The saying stretches back through many centuries, yea into the eternity of eternities past. “ I AM ” abolishes all time, for the Lord applies the declaration to days long past. “ I AM ”—thus can only He speak who is and was and is to come. Thus the Lord claims eternity of existence for Himself. But there is only One eternal Being, the Living God.

7. *Verse 59.* The Jews took up stones to cast at the Lord. His wonderful testimony concerning His divine glory arouses their wrath. Thus the world to-day mocks at such testimony and refuses to bow the knee before the Lord, or to give Him the honor which is His due. But all the opposition

and hostility of the world must be in vain. As He then in the temple walked through the midst of His opposers, so does He to-day ever walk in wonderful majesty through the midst of His enemies. However the world may rage and set itself against Him, He is still the Lord—still the true God and eternal life, and before Him must one day bow every knee, in heaven and on earth and under the earth. Blessed be He, our God and Lord !

PRAYER.

O Thou Holy one of Israel, we adore Thy name. Thou art from everlasting to everlasting. In Thee there is no sin and no darkness at all. All the hosts of heaven worship Thee. We praise Thee that Thou didst dwell on earth among men, shedding abroad the light of Thy pure and holy life. Teach us to walk in Thy light. Do Thou drive away the darkness of our minds and help us to behold Thy glory, that we may rejoice in Thee. We confess unto Thee our many sins. We are unclean in Thy sight, and unworthy to approach Thy throne. But Thou art our merciful High-priest and hast made atonement for our transgressions. We cast the burden of our sins on Thee, and know that Thou wilt not refuse to bear them. Yea, Thou hast borne them for us and set us free from the curse of the Law. O dear Saviour, keep us as Thine own and give us strength to serve Thee all our days, that we may not see death, but may with all saints and angels behold Thee in Thy glory and worship Thee with the Father and the Holy Spirit, world without end. Amen.

MONDAY. Christ Proclaims His Divine Glory, as Attested by His Divine Works, and Demands Divine Honors.

17. But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.

18. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

19. Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he

seeth the Father do : for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

20. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth : and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.

21. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth *them* ; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.

22. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.

23. That all *men* should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

24. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation ; but is passed from death unto life (John v. 17-24).

1. *Verses 17 and 18.* Because Jesus calls God His Father, the Jews seek how they may put Him to death. They understand with perfect correctness that, by the language used by Him, He makes Himself equal with God. He does so because He is in reality equal with God. He who sees Him, sees the Father. We must either honor Christ as the eternal Son of God, of the same nature as the Father, very God of very God, or, with the Jews, reject Him as a blasphemer. O, what an innumerable company of men do thus actually reject Him, the eternal Son of God, and in Him cast away their own life !

2. *Verses 19-22.* The Lord further attests His eternal unity of essence with the Father, and meets the opposition and wrath of the Jews with the clear announcement of the full scope of His glory. The works of the Father and of the Son are one. What the Father does, He does through the Son. What the Son does, He does in full fellowship and oneness with the Father. No one can here divide or separate. He will yet do greater works than

He has hitherto, in conjunction with the Father, done for the revelation of His glory, at which the world shall be filled with amazement. “He will glorify Himself in all men—in those who hear and believe His word, by the work of awakening to life ; in those who will not hear His voice, nor believe in His name, by the work of condemnation” (Besser). As the Father, so also the Son hath life in Himself. He is the Life. Hence He calls to life whom He will. He displayed this power in the raising of Lazarus, of the young man of Nain, and of the daughter of Jairus. He is ever awakening to spiritual life those who do not resist Him. His life-giving power will be one day exerted also upon the bodies of those who believe on Him ; while all who will not allow themselves to be saved and made alive by Him must inevitably fall at length under His condemnation in the day of judgment. For all judgment has been given into His hand.

3. *Verses 23 and 24.* If the Son is one with the Father, it is fitting that equal honor be given Him. And this the Lord demands : “That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father.” In those who thus honor Him, hearing and believing His Word, His grace is magnified. From death, to which we are all by nature in bondage, to life is the path upon which the Lord leads His followers. His grace is imparted to us in His Word. He who receives the Word in true faith has Christ Himself, who draws near to us in

His Word and who is Himself the Living Word. But he who has Christ has eternal life, for Christ is the Life. And he who has eternal life in Christ cannot be condemned in the judgment, since Christ, the Judge of the living and the dead, would in that case condemn Himself. Even the death of the body can then not harm us, since we will still live in Christ. Death can only lead us out of the land of faith to the blessed vision of our Lord in the better world. And the body itself cannot remain in death, but must pass through death to eternal life, since the power and life of Christ have sanctified the bodies of His saints for immortality.

PRAYER.

O Thou Eternal Son of God, we would render Thee the sincere homage of humble and believing hearts. Thou hast suffered for our sins, but God hath highly exalted Thee, and given Thee a name that is above every name. Thou art worthy to be worshiped by all Thine intelligent creatures. How shall we render unto Thee, Lord, that which is Thine! We have too often forgotten Thee and been unfaithful to Thee. O draw our wayward hearts nearer to Thee. Thou hast kept us hitherto. Suffer us not to fall from Thee. We have chosen Thee as our portion. May we hold Thee fast forever. But, O Lord, we are weak. Do Thou graciously hold us up and preserve us in living union with Thee, that we may be one with Thee as Thou art One with the Father. May we not come into condemnation, but, through the merit of Thy blood shed for us upon the cross, may we inherit everlasting life. Amen.

TUESDAY. *Christ Bears Witness to His Unity of Essence with the Father, and Rebukes the Unbelief of Those who will not Hear His Voice.*

22. And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter.

23. And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch.
 24. Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.
 25. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me.
 26. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.
 27. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:
 28. And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.
 29. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.
 30. I and my Father are one.
 31. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him.
 32. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?
 33. The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.
 34. Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?
 35. If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken;
 36. Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?
 37. If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.
 38. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.
 39. Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand,
 40. And went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized; and there he abode.
 41. And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true.
 42. And many believed on him there (John x. 22-42).

1. *Verses 22-30.* At the Feast of the Dedication, which was celebrated in commemoration of the re-dedication of the temple after its desecration by the Syrian king, Antiochus Epiphanes, the Lord walks in the porch of Solomon—Himself the true, eternal Solomon, in whom all wisdom dwells. The Jews, gathering about Him, demand that He now tell them plainly whether He is the Christ, the promised Messiah. He had often enough testified this before them by word and deed. He therefore replies, “I have told you,” thus once more telling

them plainly, but at the same time taking occasion to remind them that there had been no lack of testimony upon His part, but a lack of faith upon their part. And is it not the same to-day? His eternal divinity, His grace and redemption, are clearly enough proclaimed and attested; it is our own fault if we remain among the doubting. His shepherd-voice is clear and plain; but only His sheep, who hunger for His pastures and, sensible of their own weakness, long to be led by Him, hear His voice. He who is contented with himself, who is rich and satisfied with earthly goods, does not hear the voice of the Good Shepherd nor belong to His flock. Blessed are they who, in simplicity of heart, follow this Shepherd! To them He promises eternal life. They shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of His hand; for that would be to snatch them out of the hand of the Heavenly Father Himself, since the Father and the Son are one—of one nature, equal in majesty and glory. We are thus well sheltered in our Saviour's hand. The hand which was pierced for us upon the cross holds us fast—a hand at once of love and of omnipotence. Out of that hand can neither the world nor the devil snatch us, if we only suffer ourselves to be held, if we only do not ourselves stray away from our faithful Shepherd.

2. *Verses 31-33.* The Jews perfectly understand that the Lord thus claims equality with God, and they therefore seek to stone Him. So there is

nothing which to-day so arouses the world to hatred and hostility as the cordial confession, by true believers, of the true divinity and humanity of Jesus Christ. That which is our richest consolation—that the eternal Son of God has become our brother and died for us upon the cross—this corner and foundation stone of the whole Church of Christ is to the world, above all else, a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. But there are here only two possible positions to hold. Either we must, with the Holy Church of all ages, confess that Jesus is God, or, with the Jews, stone Him as a blasphemer. Many seek to avoid the decision by half-hearted acknowledgments and ambiguous terms. They hesitate to reject Christ, and yet they lack the faith, and hence the courage, with the whole Church to acknowledge Him as their Lord and God. But the Lord says of these half-persuaded and lukewarm ones : “I would thou wert cold or hot. So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth.”

3. *Verses 34-42.* The Jews despised the kindly admonition of the Lord and His appeal to the evidence of His works. They heard His testimony and beheld His works, but they would not believe. Across the Jordan, in Peræa, the Lord found simple honest hearts, hungering for the gifts of grace ; while Jerusalem, the city of God, cast Him out. Thus to-day many a poor heathen greets the Lord in faith as His Saviour, while thousands

upon thousands in Christian lands, in their vain imaginations and hardness of heart, reject Him. May the Lord in mercy save us from such unbelief.

PRAYER.

O Christ, our Lord, the Only-begotten of the Father, we draw near to Thee with holy confidence, for Thou hast manifested Thy love for us and hast invited us to come to Thee. Thou hast been a faithful Shepherd of Thy flock, and didst lay down Thy life for Thy sheep. May we always know Thy voice and gladly follow Thee. Help us to honor Thee as the Son of God and to worship Thee with holy reverence. Help us to do Thy will and glorify Thee. And do Thou lift us up, preserve us from every sin, and inspire us with holy purposes, that we may walk worthy of our vocation as Thy followers. Let not our enemies triumph over us, and let none snatch us out of Thine hand. Thou art our Saviour and our almighty Friend. We hope in Thy mercy; we rest in Thy sure word of promise. When we shall have served Thee for a season here, do Thou take us to Thyself, that we may be with Thee forever. Amen.

WEDNESDAY. *Passion History. Part XIII. Christ, the King, Before Pilate.*

Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man? They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee. And Jesus stood before the governor. And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that he himself is Christ, a king. Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death: that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die. Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews? Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth my

voice. Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews and said to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man. And the chief priests accused him of many things; but he answered nothing. Then Pilate said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? Hearrest thou not how many things they witness against thee? And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marveled greatly. But the chief priests were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.

When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilæan. And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time. And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him. Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing. And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him. And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate. And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves (Matt. xxvii. 11-14—Mark xv. 2-5—Luke xxiii. 2-12—John xviii. 29-38).

1. The Jews conduct the Lord before Pilate, the governor. He to whom has been given the power of judgment over the whole world willingly allows Himself to be led before the unjust judgment-seat of the heathen governor. He does this *for us*, in order that we may not have occasion to tremble with dread before His righteous judgment.

Pontius Pilate had at this time been governor of Judæa for six years, under appointment from the Roman emperor. Now had come the fullness of time when all the gracious promises of old concerning the land of Canaan were to be fulfilled, and the eternal Son of God, the Saviour of the whole world, was traveling about in the land of Israel. Pilate was living in Judæa during this period of gracious visitation. He must have heard of the wonderful prophet who was, through His teachings and miracles, stirring the whole nation.

But this occasioned no concern to him, the honored agent of imperial power. To his own soul he gives no thought. Honor and glory, wealth and power, are the idols which he worships. How many hundreds in our day fritter away their lives in the vain conceit of greatness, and give themselves no concern whatever for the Lord and His Church, nor for the salvation of their own souls.

2. Pilate has hitherto paid little attention to the Man of Nazareth. But now He appears before him, and the hour is come when he must decide for Him or against Him. Such an hour comes also, sooner or later, for each one of us. Pilate attempts to avoid the responsibility of making the decision. He casts about to right and left for some way of escape. Now he talks to the people, and now he questions the Lord, who stands before him as a prisoner. He is anxious to win the favor of the people, and yet this wonderful prisoner has strangely impressed him. He endeavors to free himself from the whole matter, and hence sends the Lord to Herod. But he cannot escape. Christ has been set for the fall and rising again of those who come into contact with Him. There must be a decision. "He that is not with me is against me," declares Christ Himself. We, too, must make the decision. May we all choose the better part.

3. With what lofty dignity does not Christ stand there before His unjust judge! "Thou sayest that I am a king" are His calm words in

the midst of His deepest humiliation. Yea, He is a king, the King of kings and Lord of lords. His kingdom is not of this world, but of heaven. "Not the sword is the weapon of His kingdom, but the Word and the Holy Spirit. Not by strokes of violence shall His followers conquer, but by patience and suffering. Not towns and castles are the royal residences in this kingdom, but the hearts of men in which He dwells by faith. Not wealth nor outward prosperity and security are the blessings of His kingdom, but forgiveness of sins, peace with God, righteousness, and eternal life. Not honor and parade before the world are the attractions of His kingdom, but the despised form of a cross, beneath which it grows and flourishes. Not several, nor many, provinces does His kingdom embrace, but the circuit of the whole wide world. Not a hundred nor a thousand years shall it endure, but to eternity" (Besser). Such is the nature of the kingdom in which Christ reigns as the King of Truth for the salvation of the world.

4. The truth to which Christ bears witness is that "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Pilate, with his miserable doubts, with his fancied greatness, would hear nothing of an eternal, indubitable truth. "What is truth?" he skeptically asks, pitying the poor man Jesus, who is so simple as to speak of truth as a veritable reality. He

doubtless regarded Him as a fanatic and half-demented man ; and perhaps, on that account, disliked to condemn Him. The question of Pilate, which reveals to us an utterly poor, empty heart, is still to-day in the hearts and upon the lips of many. But our faith knows what is truth : Christ is the Truth ; and he who has Christ has the Truth. Blessed is he who dwells in the kingdom of this King, and under the protection of His sceptre ! We have been, by Holy Baptism, implanted in this kingdom ; and we, in the Lord's Prayer, daily plead that this kingdom may come ever more fully unto us and unto all men, until the kingdom of glory shall dawn, when the Lord shall come again as the Judge of the living and the dead. Then shall the whole world recognize Him as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

PRAYER.

O Lord Jesus, Thou King of Saints ! Once despised and rejected of men, but now seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high. How low was the state of humiliation before Pontius Pilate to which Thou didst submit in order to exalt us to heaven. O, Thou King of Truth, grant that we may so hear Thy voice and follow Thy call that we may enter into Thine everlasting kingdom. Thy kingdom is not of this world, and Thy dominion is spiritual and heavenly ; but we are earthly and full of sin. O, cleanse Thou us by Thy blood, that we may at length stand before Thee with joy as the blessed of Thy Father. O, Thou King, once crowned with thorns, graciously grant unto us the crown of life. O, Thou suffering King, mercifully grant to us an entrance into Thy kingdom of rejoicing and glory. O, Thou King dying upon the cross, have mercy upon us and bring us to everlasting life. O, Thou holy and eternal King, we prostrate ourselves before Thee and offer unto Thee our homage and our prayers. Accept us

as Thy subjects, and keep us faithful to Thee forever. Amen.

THURSDAY. Passion History. Part XIV. The Foolish Choice of the Multitude.

And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me as one that perverteth the people: and behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him. No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him. I will therefore chastise him and release him.

Now at that feast the governor was wont to release unto the people one prisoner, whomsoever they desired. And there was at that time a notable prisoner, called Barabbas, who for a certain sedition made in the city and for murder was cast into prison. And the multitude crying aloud began to desire him to do as he had ever done unto them. Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Ye have a custom that I should release unto you one at the passover. Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ? For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy.

When he was set down on the judgment-seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him. But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas. And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas. Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, said again to them, What shall I do then with Jesus, which is called Christ? What will ye that I shall do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews? And they all cried, Crucify him, crucify him! And Pilate said unto them the third time, Why what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him. I will therefore chastise him and let him go. And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him! And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed.

When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he was willing to content the people. And he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. Then answered all the people and said, His blood be on us and on our children! And he gave sentence that it should be as they required, and he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will, to be scourged and crucified (Matt. xxvii. 15-26—Mark xv. 6-15—Luke xxiii. 14-25—John xviii. 39, 40).

1. We see in the case of Pilate how it fares with those who are of a divided heart, unwilling to decide either for or against Christ. Restless and anxious, he turns hither and thither. He would

fain please men and yet hesitates to condemn innocent blood. The warning of his wife, "Have thou nothing to do with that just man," increases his perplexity and distress. He proposes therefore to satisfy his conscience by releasing Jesus, but first to chastise Him, and thus gratify the rabble whom he fears. Let us take to heart the lesson, that half-heartedness and indecision lead to miserable failure. He who now treats the Lord as Pilate did will soon be forced to decide against Him.

2. Pilate makes yet another attempt to extricate himself. There was a beautiful custom of celebrating the annual passover, which commemorated the deliverance of Israel from the house of bondage and servitude in Egypt, by the release of some prisoner. Pilate now hopes that the multitude may be induced to call for the release of Jesus. But his hope is vain. Satan will not allow him thus to escape, since he has already half yielded. The people choose Barabbas, the murderer, and reject Jesus, their Saviour. "Away with him!" thus do they reject their God and with Him their own salvation. "Crucify him, crucify him!" shouts the multitude that had shortly before greeted Him with hosannas. "His blood be upon us and upon our children," thus do they call down a curse upon themselves. God heard the curse and has executed it. The blood of the Holy One has come upon Israel in judgment. The remainder of the ancient people of God still

wander about among us as memorials of the veracity and holiness of God. Every Jew whom we meet reminds of the curse invoked upon the nation by his ancestors, and of the righteous judgment of God. We, too, cry—but with another meaning in the terms—“His blood be upon us and upon our children.” May it be upon us in pardoning grace, for the washing away of our sins, for the blotting out of our iniquities! His precious blood comes upon us in Holy Baptism. It gives power to the comforting words of absolution, in which His ministers assure the penitent of the forgiveness of their sins. It is offered to us in the Holy Supper. Thus is fulfilled to us in blessing what has brought a curse upon Israel. According to the attitude which we assume toward the Lord, do His Word, His blood, His grace, prove a curse or a blessing, a savor of life unto life or of death unto death. May He grant us faith, that we may have in Him a merciful Saviour and not a terrible Judge.

3. “As Barabbas here changes places with Jesus—as Barabbas goes free while Jesus is crucified—so does the first Adam, whose likeness is reflected in Barabbas, and all his posterity, change places with the second Adam. The latter is condemned to death, the former is set free. This is the unfathomable mystery of Divine Love, in which justice and mercy kiss each other and dwell together in most delightful harmony. Justice is here satisfied, since the sentence of death which

it dictates is executed, though not upon the sinner himself, upon his Surety. Mercy can now bestow grace upon the sinner and set him free, since his Surety has taken the condemnation and punishment upon Himself. O, wonder of Love, before which we should humbly worship and adore" (Rambach).

PRAYER.

Our dear Father in Heaven, we thank Thee that Thou didst give Thine only and well-beloved Son to death for us. Do Thou, by the power of Thy Holy Spirit, enable us to accept Him as our Saviour and cling to Him with true and faithful love. May we never choose the world and sin as our portion and reject Thy Christ, as did Thy people of old. Thou art a righteous and holy God, and hast visited the blood of Thy dear Son upon the faithless nation that refused and slew Him. May we not fall into like condemnation. O Lord Jesus Christ, let Thy blood be upon us, not unto condemnation, but as the seal of Thy mercy and of our salvation. We have often forgotten Thee, and been unfaithful to Thee—have rejected Thee and preferred before Thee the sinful pleasures of the world. But Thou art merciful and faithful. Hitherto hath Thy mercy spared us—wilt Thou not yet bear with us! We renounce the world and choose Thee with our whole hearts. Thou only canst give peace and save from everlasting misery. Therefore to Thee we flee for refuge. Lord Jesus, have mercy upon us. Amen.

FRIDAY. *Passion History. Part XV. Christ Scourged, Mocked and Condemned.*

Then Pilate therefore took Jesus and scourged him. And the soldiers of the governor took Jesus and led him away into the judgment hall, and gathered unto them the whole band, and they stripped him and put on him a purple robe, and platted a crown of thorns and put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand. And they mocked him, and began to salute him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And they spit upon him, and took the reed and smote him on the head, and, bowing their knees before him, worshiped him.

Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no

fault in him. Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man! When the chief priests, therefore, and officers saw him they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him! Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him and crucify him; for I find no fault in him. The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God. When Pilate heard that saying he was the more afraid; and went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. Then saith Pilate unto him, speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above; therefore, he that delivered thee unto me hath the greater sin. And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him; but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend; whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar.

When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour. And he saith unto the Jews, Behold your king! But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him! Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your king? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Cæsar. Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified (Matt. xxvii. 26-30—Mark xv. 16-19—John xix. 1-16).

1. The Lord of Glory descends into ever deeper depths of distress and shame. Ever more bitter becomes the cup of His suffering. Pilate took Jesus and scourged him. Thy Saviour there bears stroke after stroke and receives wound after wound—He, the Holy One, the very Son of God. He was scourged *for thee*, in order that He might deliver thee from the scourgings of the wrath to come. There was fulfilled the word of prophecy : “He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities.” But the scourging of the Lord admonishes us also to scourge and crucify our own flesh, most impressively proclaiming our need of repentance.

2. The Lord had said, “I am a king.” The soldiers of the governor now set themselves to

mock at His royalty, as the servants of Caiaphas had mocked at His priesthood. They call together the whole band, that they may all join in the mockery of the prisoner. They strip Him, and He submits to the indignity in order that we might not be found naked upon the great judgment day. Upon his wounded shoulders they hang a purple robe, an old garment taken from one of the soldiers. His blood deepens its dye. *For us* He wore this robe of scorn, in order that we might one day stand before Him clothed in the wedding garment of His righteousness. The suffering Saviour mercifully covers all our faults with His robe of purple.

The soldiers press a crown of thorns upon His sacred head. Our sins are the thorns that wound His brow. His wreath of thorns should impel us to repentance and to the crucifixion of the flesh. He wore it, that one day He might lay the crown of everlasting life upon our heads.

They place in His right hand a reed, as the sceptre of His royalty. The kingdom of this Monarch is a poor and unpretentious one, without worldly pomp or glory. His sceptre, the Word, appears to the world to be but a frail reed ; yet it is a sceptre of power, by which He graciously leads His loyal subjects, puts to flight his enemies, and gloriously rules the whole world.

In scornful travesty they salute him, “Hail, King of the Jews !” But the Lord endures their taunts in silence, just as He to-day endures

the mockery of His enemies. But how will the scene be changed when He comes again to judge the living and the dead? All mockery will then be silenced.

They spit upon Him and smite Him with their hands and with the reed, growing bolder and bolder in their insults, as Satan urges them on. For *our* sakes He quietly submits to all this reproach. It is not possible for us to conceive how deeply He was thus humiliated. He was true God from all eternity. Learn here the magnitude of thy sins, which could bring the Holy One into such depths of ignominy. But how will not this countenance, now smitten and spit upon, glow with divine majesty when our Lord shall come again in the day of His glory?

3. "Behold, the man!" With such words of scorn Pilate places the tortured prisoner before the people whom He came to save. Behold, the man! He is not worthy of your wrath; He is far too lowly and miserable to excite even hatred. There stands the Lord, according to the prophecy of Isaiah, "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." And He endured it all *for us*. The words of Pilate, "Behold, the man!" should prove for us an earnest call to repentance and an admonition to forsake sin and crucify our flesh with its evil lusts. But they should also prove for us a word of blessed consolation. When our sins oppress us; when distress and grief assail us; when our last hour draws near;

when thoughts of the judgment and eternal punishment fill us with dismay—then will we cry, “Behold, the man!” Then shall the Lord, standing before us in His deepest humiliation, become our comforter; for He has borne all this for us. May He mercifully grant unto us His Holy Spirit, that we may believe this and daily meditate upon it.

PRAYER.

O Lord Jesus, Thou Son of God and Son of Mary! How great was Thy humiliation, how distressing Thy agony, how painful Thy stripes and wounds! O, Thou Lamb of God, how heavy were the sins of the world as they lay upon Thee. Lord Jesus, how great and crushing was the burden of *our* iniquities, which pressed Thee down and brought Thee into unutterable sufferings and death upon the cross. In heartfelt sorrow and repentance we cry unto Thee: O Jesus, have mercy upon us miserable sinners. May Thy wounds and stripes, Thy deep disgrace, Thy thorn-crowned head, stand out so plainly before our souls that we may never forget our sins, nor lose sight of Thy great mercy. O Lord Jesus, our hearts are full of distress and anguish. We must have been forever lost on account of our sins if Thou hadst not had mercy upon us. We know no other refuge but in Thee. Cast us not away, dear Lord. For the sake of Thy bitter sufferings and death, O, cast us not away! We behold Thee in penitence and faith. Look Thou upon us in mercy, and save us, for Thy name’s sake. Amen.

SATURDAY. *Christ, being God’s Only-begotten Son, of the Same Nature with the Father and Perfectly Holy, could Be our High-priest and Accomplish through His Blood an Eternal Redemption.*

11. But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;

12. Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us.*

13. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh,

14. How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

15. And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance (Heb. ix. 11-15).

1. *Verse 11.* Christ is pure and without sin. “Which of you accuseth me of sin?” could He fearlessly demand. Canst thou utter the challenge after Him? O, if we only could! But conscience testifies, and we cannot hide the truth, that we have been polluted by the dead works of our sinful nature. Where can we find cleansing, peace, forgiveness? Lo! Christ has come as the true High-priest to purify us through His sacrifice. He has obtained eternal redemption for us. Consider well this, our glorious High-priest. The children of Israel had their high-priest from ancient times, whose office and work it was to reconcile the people to God. But he but typified the High-priest of things to come, who was yet to appear, like those who had preceded him indeed, but as much more exalted as real and eternal things are higher than things temporal and typical. The ancient high-priest was taken from among his brethren, and it behooved Christ also to be made like unto His brethren—a true man—in order that He might be merciful and a true High-priest to atone for the sins of the people.” The earthly high-priest was a sinful man, who had first to offer sacrifice for himself; but Christ is holy, innocent, without spot,

and separate from sinners—yea, higher than the heavens, for He is God's only-begotten Son, one with the Father, and in Him appeared the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

2. *Verses 12-15.* What has this “High-priest of things to come” done for us? As the high-priest of Israel went into the Holy of Holies through the tabernacle and the temple, so our High-priest, Jesus Christ, entered into the Holy of Holies above through a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands as was the tabernacle of the Jews, that is, through His body, conceived of the Holy Ghost—a living tabernacle filled with the glory of God. Our High-priest entered this greater and more perfect tabernacle on the day when He was born in this world as a man, and His life on earth was a passage through the tabernacle of His flesh. It was a journey full of arduous toil, amid reproach and contempt, full of pain and suffering. His whole life was a progress toward the consummation of His self-sacrifice, and therefore itself a sacrifice for our sins. O, how deeply our sins wounded Him! How much He suffered at the hands of His wicked judges and the mocking soldiers and on Golgotha! There He consummated His offering and passed through His own blood, which He shed upon the cross for us, into the heavenly sanctuary and obtained eternal redemption for us.

3. At a terrible cost did the Lord thus gain for us an inestimable blessing, *i. e.*, eternal redemption, which has an abiding power and becomes the

portion of all who accept it in faith. He has thus cleansed us from dead works. Thus the apostle designates our sins, because they come from death and lead to death. A heart alienated from God is under condemnation of death. All the works that come from it are therefore dead, and their final fruit can be nothing else than eternal death. Now from such dead works Christ has cleansed us. To this true cleansing the various bodily purifications of the Jews pointed forward. In Christ is fulfilled what was there but typified. He has obtained for us the promised everlasting inheritance, eternal salvation. We have only to respond to the call which is still constantly sounding in our ears and humbly accept the grace which is offered to us. It is still for us the accepted time, the day of salvation and grace. The Lord still calls to us, offering forgiveness of sins, life and salvation. Come, let us arise and obey the gracious call, that we may share in these rich gifts of grace, obtained for us at such a cost, that His precious blood may not have been shed for naught and His sacrifice offered in vain.

PRAYER.

Almighty God our Heavenly Father, who hast given Thine own dear Son to be our eternal, holy and faithful High-priest, we praise and magnify Thy holy name, that Thou has so graciously remembered us. Grant unto us Thy Holy Spirit, that we may truly reverence Thy Son and by faith commit the keeping of our souls to Him. Lord Jesus, our only Saviour, who wast from the beginning with God, show us the Father, that we may know Him. As Thou art one with the Father, do Thou make us one

with Thee, that we may not perish on account of our sins, but may attain eternal life, and may enter at length into the heavenly sanctuary into which Thou hast entered for us through the sacrifice of Thyself upon the cross. Amen.

SIXTH WEEK IN LENT.

With the triumphal entry of Christ into Jerusalem begins the proper Passion Week, called "Holy Week." He enters amid the acclaim of the multitude to complete His work on Golgotha. Royal honors are given Him just as He is preparing to take upon Himself the deepest humiliation and shame. Hosannas greet Him as He goes to meet His death.

SUNDAY. *The Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem.*

1. And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples,
2. Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me.
3. And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them.
4. All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying,
5. Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.
6. And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them,
7. And brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon.
8. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way.
9. And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest (Matt. xxi. 1-9).

1. This same Gospel lesson was the theme of the Church's meditation on the first Sunday in Advent. It then reminded us of Christ's entrance

into this poor world as the meek King, bringing us grace and life. Now, at the beginning of the solemn Holy Week, it has a different significance. We now think of His entrance to the holy city as the journey to the place of sacrifice where He will offer Himself upon the altar of the cross for the sins of the whole world. “As it was customary to set apart for sacrifice the passover lamb four days before the feast of the passover, so the Lamb of God sets Himself apart for sacrifice four days before His offering of Himself upon the cross. He prepares Himself for suffering. That was the meaning of coming up to Jerusalem—and such was the experience now awaiting Him in the immediate future. As it was customary to adorn and bedeck with wreaths the beasts designed for sacrifice as they were led to the altar, so He was led, amid homage and the waving of palm branches, toward the consummation of His solemn calling to suffer and die. The disciples know not what they do. Had they guessed the meaning of the scene, they would have had no heart for palms and outward tokens of homage” (Löhe).

2. It is for the last time that the Lord now enters Jerusalem. He had often entered the city before, but never thus nor with such an object in view. Hitherto He had come to teach ; He now comes to die—but in either case He comes in holy love. His last entry is particularly a revelation to us of His great and warm love. He was not in ignorance of what there awaited Him. He knew

from the beginning that suffering and death were to be His portion. With boundless mercy He willingly executes the counsel of eternal Love. His love brought Him into this poor earthly life, and it leads Him, too, to death. His whole life is a work of mercy, a revelation of love growing ever more distinct and glorious from Bethlehem to Golgotha. "From the incarnation of the Son of God until He rides through the valley of the Kedron on His way to Jerusalem, His whole life and activity are but a ladder of love for His fallen creatures" (Löhe). No one hath greater love than that he should lay down his life for his brethren. After all the rich displays of love which marked His life on earth, there remained but this last and convincing evidence—that He should offer His life as a sacrifice for the sinful world. He draws near to Jerusalem, there to perform the last and glorious act of love. The procession starts from the Mount of Olives. There lies the garden of Gethsemane, and it is not hidden from the Lord how sorely He must there suffer, as He lies prone in the dust, nor how He shall there be betrayed by one of His disciples. The gates of Jerusalem open before Him. He well knows, and has announced beforehand, that He shall there be scourged and mocked and spit upon. There stands out to view the hill of Golgotha; and what He is there to endure is not concealed from Him. He knows much more fully than we can even conceive. We see but the outward agony and the

bitter bodily sufferings. What human heart can understand or conceive the unfathomable sufferings of His holy soul? "Punishments of earth and hell, the guilt and punishment of all sins, of all sinners, and of all ages, will He bear"—He who is Himself holy and without sin. His entire life is a continuous suffering. Step by step He descends into the profoundest depths. And now the hour is at hand when He is to take the last step—to drain to its last drop His cup of suffering. The Almighty One becomes powerless. The Holy One is numbered among the transgressors. The Blessed One, worshiped by all the angels, endures the mockery and scorn of men. The Eternal Judge suffers Himself to be condemned. Life descends into death. Only in His love can we find an explanation of these contradictions. Let us not forget that His love also beams upon us. For us He entered the holy city, there to finish His work. For us, too, did He offer the ever-availing sacrifice upon the cross as our merciful High-priest.

3. The Lord often before entered Jerusalem, but never before in such a formal and solemn way. He sends His disciples before Him to bring the ass' colt, revealing thereby His omniscience and authority. He permits Himself to be placed upon the colt by His disciples, and accepts the tokens of homage with which the people greet Him. He thus reveals the glory which is rightly His, before He descends into the depths of shame and death.

And how plainly the Lord thus makes it manifest

to us that He is willingly surrendering Himself to suffering and death ! No one compels Him. He is not hurried and dragged away to the cross by violence against His will, but He goes to death because He wills to do so. He thus wills, because His love impels Him. That can never be a sacrifice acceptable to God which is brought under compulsion, or necessity, and against the will of him who brings it. Only the free-will offering dictated by holy love is a true sacrifice. Therefore the Lord came not at this time quietly and unobserved, nor did He permit Himself to be secretly seized and put to death ; but He came in right royal and priestly style, entering solemnly before the eyes of all Jerusalem and amid the hosannas of the people, in order that Israel and all the world might know that it is in free love that He offers Himself in sacrifice.

4. The multitude in Jerusalem greet the Lord with joyous hosannas. The meaning of the word hosanna is, “Lord, help.” Praise and petition are combined in the cry. The people thus greet the Lord as the true Helper ; and it is indeed He alone who can truly help. O, that Israel had but accepted the aid which He offered! He is also *our* Helper. He helps all who are willing to be helped from sin to grace, from death to life. And who does not stand in need of this gracious help ?

He has entered into His eternal glory ; we yet wander upon earth. He is triumphant ; we are yet engaged in fierce conflict with Satan, the world

and our own flesh. He is in the midst of life ; we yet dwell in the valley of death. Without His help, we cannot reach the eternal goal. “Therefore let us all unite in the Hosanna ! and may our ‘Lord help ! O Lord, give prosperity !’ arise with earnest longing from our Kedron Valley to His everlasting heavenly heights. Hosanna to Him—and to us if we obey His Word ! Hosanna, when we go to the Holy Supper ! Hosanna, when we are tempted to sin ! Hosanna, when we die ! Hosanna, when we rise again and on the Day of Judgment !” (Löhe).

PRAYER.

All hail to Thee, Jesus our King ! Meek and lowly Thou art, but Thy sceptre is an everlasting sceptre, and to Thy dominion there shall be no end. Zion rejoices at Thy coming, for Thou bringest salvation. Thou camest to Jerusalem to suffer and die, yet in dying Thou hast conquered death, and opened the pathway to eternal life. Accept Thou our humble praises and permit us to follow Thee step by step upon Thy pathway of sorrow and stand beneath Thy cross. Thou didst wear a crown of thorns. O may we see Thee seated on Thy throne, crowned with majesty and glory. We open our hearts to Thee in sympathy and love. Wilt Thou not enter, dearest Lord, and reign within us ? Drive out every evil thought and passion, and may our bodies be as holy temples, purified by Thy power and dedicated to Thy praise. Preserve us free from all the pollution of sin and fill us with Thy peace and love. Amen.

MONDAY. *The Humiliation and Exaltation of Jesus.*

5. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus :
6. Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God :
7. But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men :
8. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

9. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:
10. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;
11. And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. ii. 5-11).

1. *Verses 5-8.* We have entered upon the great week which we rightly regard as the central point of all time. In this week we commemorate the completion of the holy sacrifice by which the world has been delivered from eternal ruin and reconciled to God. It is a time of the deepest humiliation and shame for Him who Himself was God from all eternity. Christian believers therefore spend this week in quietness and in meditation upon the sufferings of our blessed Saviour. Our Epistle to-day treats of His deep humiliation and the exaltation which followed.

Christ was “in the form of God,” *i. e.*, of the same nature as the Father, for with God nature and form are one. He was from all eternity “the brightness of the Father’s glory, the express image of His person.” But He did not retain this glory as His rightful prerogative nor make a show of it, but moved by free grace and love He “emptied Himself.” He laid His divine glory by and refrained from the assertion of His divine powers and prerogatives, in order that He might become entirely like us. His whole life, from His incarnation to His death, was a continual emptying of Himself of the glory which was His by right. He knows that He is the Son of God and one with the Father, but He refrains from the exercise of His

divine power and glory. Who can understand such love? He, though omnipresent and eternal, adapts Himself to the narrow confines of a human body. He, the Lord Almighty, becomes a babe. He, the Judge of all the earth, bows beneath the unrighteous verdict of men. He, whom all the angels worship, endures reproach, mockery and scorn. He who is Life goes down to death. In all this, He willingly empties Himself of the glory which is rightfully His and conceals the rays of His eternal Godhead under the unseemly garb of humanity.

2. There are five stages in the course of His humiliation. He *became a man*, conceived by the Holy Ghost. He was born of the Virgin Mary, and thus took upon Him the *form of a servant* and led a life of lowliness and poverty. He humbled Himself, when He *suffered* under Pontius Pilate. He became obedient unto death, even to death on the cross—was *crucified and died*. And so deeply did He humble Himself that He was even *buried* as are other men.

And all this He did for *our* good. For us He became man, took upon Himself the form of a servant, suffered, died upon the cross, and was laid in the grave. May the Lord enable us to heartily believe this, that we may learn to be of such humble mind as was He. May His humiliation and deep reproach quench all our pride and ever restrain us from all vain self-exaltation.

3. *Verses 9-11.* He that humbleth himself shall

be exalted. It was thus with the Lord Himself. Because He so deeply humbled Himself, God has so highly exalted Him. Because He of free grace toward men imprisoned His eternal divinity in the form of poor humanity, God has now exalted also His human nature to divine glory. As there were five stages in His humiliation, so may we trace also five stages in His exaltation. He *descended into hell*, not to remain there, but there to reveal His glory to the spirits in prison, and display Himself as the Victor over death, the devil and hell. Thus He robbed Satan of his power and became the plagues of death and the destruction of hell (Hos. xiii. 14), thus openly triumphing over the powers of darkness. He *arose from the dead*, for He is the Life, that cannot be swallowed up of death. He *ascended to heaven*, and *sitteth on the right hand of God*, having received a glorious name that is above every name. At the name of Jesus every knee must bow—angels in heaven, men upon the earth, and evil spirits under the earth. Every tongue must confess that He is Lord. They who will not now confess it shall be compelled to do so when He *comes again to judge the quick and the dead*.

Again, it is *for us* that He is thus exalted. For us He burst the bars of hell. For us He arose from the dead, that we might have the comfort of an assured resurrection for ourselves. For us He ascended to heaven, that a place might there be prepared for us. For our benefit He sits enthroned at the right hand of the Father. For our sakes He

will come again, to deliver His followers from all evil and elevate them to eternal glory, as He has Himself been exalted. We await in hope His coming. O, that the day would hasten on ! May our Lord grant us grace that we may draw rich consolation from His glorious exaltation, and that we may willingly bow the knee before Him, confessing Him as Lord, in order that we may eternally enjoy the blessed fruits of His humiliation and exaltation.

PRAYER.

O Christ, our Lord and Saviour, how glorious Thou art ! Thou art equal with God the Father, and yet Thou didst for our sakes condescend to dwell in human flesh. Thou didst lay aside the glory which Thou hadst with the Father before the world was to become a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Thou wast despised and rejected of men. Thou wast betrayed into the hands of Thy cruel enemies, and they have done unto Thee whatsoever they listed. But Thou art yet a King—the King of Kings and Lord of Lords ! We prostrate ourselves before Thee. We are but dust and ashes. We have offended Thee and denied Thee before men. O, reward us not according to our iniquities, but have mercy upon us. Thou hast come to save Thy people from their sins. O, blot out the remembrance of our transgressions and extend to us the sceptre of Thy pardoning love. As Thou hast been lifted up for us, O draw us unto Thyself, and make us meet to serve Thee in Thy heavenly kingdom, and to enjoy forever Thy favor, which is better than life. Amen.

TUESDAY. *The Sacerdotal Prayer of Christ.*

1. These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee :
2. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.
3. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.
4. I have glorified thee on the earth : I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

5. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

6. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.

7. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.

8. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received *them*, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.

9. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.

10. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.

11. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

12. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.

13. And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

14. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

15. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

16. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

17. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

18. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

19. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

20. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

21. That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

22. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

23. I in them and thou in me, that they be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

24. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

25. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.

26. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare *it*: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them (John xvii. 1-26).

1. It was among the duties of the high-priest under the old covenant to offer up prayers in

behalf of the people. Thus also Jesus Christ, the true High-priest, prayed for His followers and His Church, and is now our Advocate, always standing for us before the Throne and pleading for us. In this seventeenth chapter of St. John's Gospel the Holy Spirit has preserved for us a wonderful and unfathomably profound and glorious prayer, which our eternal High-priest offered up in our behalf shortly before He made the sacrifice of Himself for us.

The Lord prays first for Himself (1-5)—that He may be glorified, since He is the foundation and corner-stone of the Church. Then He prays (6-19) for His apostles, the divinely appointed teachers of the world—the first men who were called and commissioned to call others to eternal life. Finally, He prays (20-26) for the whole company of believers—for the Church on earth, that they may all be one in the truth and partakers of His glory.

2. Of this sacred prayer, which can never be worthily expounded in human words, and whose fullness and glory only a simple believing heart can begin to appreciate, Luther says: "It is truly beyond all comparison an ardent heartfelt prayer, in which He reveals and pours out the very deepest emotions of His heart, both toward us and toward His Father. But the power, nature and efficacy which mark this prayer, I very much fear we shall never be able to sufficiently portray; for however plain and simple it

may sound, it is yet so profound and rich and broad that no one can fathom it.” Melanchthon says of it: “No worthier, no holier, no more fruitful, no sublimer utterance was ever heard in heaven or on earth than this prayer of the Son of God Himself.” Spener had this prayer read to him three times when on his death-bed, but would never venture to preach upon it, “under the conviction that he did not understand it, and that the proper understanding of it required a measure of faith beyond that which the Lord commonly imparts to His followers during the time of their sojourn upon earth.” Bengel remarks: “This chapter is in wording the easiest, in meaning the most profound, in the whole volume of the Holy Scriptures.” Besser, who in His “Hours with the Bible,” expounds this chapter in the form of prayer, says of it: “In all ages, the Church, for whom her Head and faithful High-priest utters this prayer of eternal force and efficacy, has found comfort in it, as the noblest jewel in the treasury of the Holy Scriptures, and has drawn refreshment from it as from the fullest stream of living water.”

3. We can do nothing better than to refresh and strengthen our souls at this full stream of living water. This prayer of the Eternal High-priest is surely heard. How could the Eternal Father despise the pleadings of His only-begotten Son? It brings good to us also, if we are only willing to accept in humility and simplicity the blessing

which flows out toward us from this prayer of our High-priest. We shall understand it only when it has been completely fulfilled in our own experience, when we shall have been admitted to the eternal glory and to full communion with the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. To this eternal consummation, to this glorious and transcendently blessed exaltation, may the Lord bring us all by the virtue of His costly sacrifice and of His availing prayer for the sake of His eternal and unchanging love.

PRAYER.

Lord Jesus, Thou eternal High-priest, who hast, through Thine own blood, entered in once into the holy place and obtained eternal redemption for us—we render Thee praise and thanksgiving that Thou hast by the sacrifice of Thyself reconciled us to God, our Father, made us free from sin and cleansed us from dead works to serve the living God. O, grant us the aid of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may find consolation in this Thy holy sacrifice, resting all our confidence upon it, and that we may in return give ourselves to Thee, with body, soul and spirit, as living sacrifices. With Thy whole Church on earth, we turn to Thee as our refuge from all the storms and trials of life, for we know that Thou hast a tender sympathy for us in our human weakness. Thy priesthood is an imperishable one. Thou livest evermore and dost plead for us. Therefore are we of good cheer amid all the misery of this earthly life. Thou art our advocate with the Father, and the power of Thy pleadings for us upholds and strengthens us and lifts us up again when we fall. O Lord, by Thine intercessions cause our prayers to be always effectual and well pleasing to God our Father, that they may not be offered in vain, but graciously heard and answered.

O, Thou spotless and innocent High-priest, who art higher than the heavens, bless us, Thy poor, needy people, from Thine heavenly throne and lift up the light of Thy countenance upon us. Bless us through Thy Holy

Word and sacrament. Bless us through the office and labors of Thy ministering servants whom Thou hast appointed as pastors of Thy flock, and pour out the rich streams of Thy grace upon us, that our hearts thus refreshed may flourish and blossom in holy faith and love unfeigned. Blessed be Thy holy Name forever. Amen.

WEDNESDAY. *Passion History. Part XVI. The Suffering Saviour Led to Calvary.*

And they took Jesus, took off the purple robe from him, and put his own raiment on him and led him away to crucify him. And he, bearing his cross, went forth. And there were also two other, malefactors, led with him to be put to death. And as they led Jesus away, and came out (of the gate) they found a man who passed by coming out of the country, by name Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus; him they laid hold upon and compelled him to bear his cross after him and on him they laid the cross.

And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus, turning unto them, said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry? (Matt. xxvii. 31, 32—Mark xv. 20, 21—Luke xxiii. 26-32—John xix. 16, 17).

1. Israel rejected her God and Saviour. The verdict has been spoken. The Lord of glory is given over into the hands of the soldiers to be crucified. Out to Golgotha, the place of execution, which has become for us the place of salvation, is led the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. The Lord is led through the streets of Jerusalem, which but a few days before resounded with the hosannas of the multitude. He goes forth as He in His office as Prophet has announced beforehand. The High-priest goes to the place of sacrifice, to offer up the eternally valid sin-offering. The King, wearing His crown of thorns, leads His

coronation procession and prepares to ascend His throne.

The cross lies upon His shoulders. How heavy must have been the burden for the body exhausted by the long night of torture ! How infinitely more heavy for the sinless soul ! It was the sins of the whole world then laid upon Him that gave the cross its crushing weight.

2. The holy Cross-bearer is a pattern for us. "Whosoever will follow after me," says Christ, "let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow after me." The Christian dare never be without his cross. Our pathway to everlasting happiness must be a pathway beneath the cross. The cross is a veiled blessing of God's grace, which only faith can understand even by anticipation, and which we cannot fully appreciate until we shall through the cross have pressed on to wear the crown. The Lord lays on no one more than is for his good, and chooses for each precisely the cross which will be best for him. May He enable us to be as patient and humble under our crosses as was He under His heavier cross. And may His cross be our comfort as we toil onward under our own.

3. Simon of Cyrene, a stranger, relieves the Saviour of His burden. He is compelled to bear the cross for the almost fainting prisoner. No one of His disciples or friends is near Him in that bitter hour. We count that stranger highly favored who was permitted to bear the cross of Jesus and afford Him this relief upon His pathway of suffering.

That the Lord thus Himself experienced how comforting it is to find assistance when struggling beneath the cross should give us courage to call upon Him for His gracious help when our crosses weigh heavily upon us. We may say : “Lord, Thou hast Thyself felt how heavy is the cross. For the sake of the help which a poor child of man tendered Thee when on Thy path of pain, do Thou now support us and help us to bear the burden of our cross.”

4. It was a part of the humiliation of Christ that He, the Lord of glory, should be bewailed and lamented by the women of Jerusalem. And yet were their tears a cordial for Him in that hour when there was no other source of comfort. He then felt the sweetness and comfort of human sympathy and is therefore so merciful and sympathetic a Saviour, to whom we can so confidently flee in every hour of distress.

5. The Lord rewards the sympathy of the weeping women by uttering His last call to repentance. May it be for us, too, a reminder of the awful solemnity of the judgment that shall come upon the whole world, that we may repent before the day of grace is ended. The wrath of a holy God burns like fire, as we may see in the “green tree,” the tree of life, Jesus Christ. Because He took upon Himself our sins, He bears now the wrath of God against sin. How terribly will not the righteous judgment of God not come upon us, unfruitful trees and dry wood, if He spared not

His only-begotten Son, but so terribly visited the sins of the world upon Him ! May the Lord be merciful to us on the Day of Judgment for the sake of Jesus Christ, who has borne the heavy burden of our sins.

PRAYER.

O, dearest Lord Jesus, who didst bear the heavy cross on Thy dolorous way to Golgotha, grant that we, who are by nature strangers to Thee, may be permitted in sympathy and love to feel the pressure of the cruel burden laid on Thee. May we go forth with Thee without the gate, bearing Thy reproach. May we share Thy sorrows with Thee and be drawn ever closer to Thy burdened, loving heart. For us art Thou led forth to be crucified. Our sins are the real cross that rests upon Thy heart. Teach us to hate them with a perfect hatred, and to love Thee sincerely, O Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world. Grant us Thy heavenly strength, that we may bear after Thee whatever crosses Thou mayest, in Thy wise and good providence, lay upon us. And may we bear them meekly and in patience, ever remembering the burden Thou didst bear and thus remove from us forever. Amen.

THURSDAY. *The Celebration of the Lord's Supper.**

23. For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the *same* night in which he was betrayed took bread :

24. And when he had given thanks, he brake *it*, and said, Take, eat : this is my body, which is broken for you : this do in remembrance of me.

25. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had sopped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood : this do ye, as oft as ye drink *it*, in remembrance of me.

26. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

* The Gospel for Maundy-Thursday (John xiii. 1-15) was the basis of our brief meditation upon the Third Part of the Passion History. We, therefore, now present the Epistle lesson, and with it a short commentary upon the Fifth Part of the Catechism, following mainly the excellent treatment of the latter found in Besser's "Hours with the Bible." It is thought that this may prove helpful as a preparation for the celebration of the Holy Supper.

27. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink *this* cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

28. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of *that* bread, and drink of *that* cup.

29. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

30. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

31. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

32. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world (*1 Cor. xi. 23-32*).

1. Before parting from His disciples, the Lord gave them in the Holy Supper an inestimably precious and comforting legacy. The holy sacrament is the Church's brightest jewel. What can be more comforting and glorious than the gracious presence in His Church of Him who is true God and true man? What can unite us to Christ more really and intimately than the reception of His body and blood? How can the eternal grace of God be more surely imparted and appropriated than when Jesus Christ gives Himself to us as our portion? In Him is wrapped up our salvation, life and everlasting happiness. If we have Him we have all that we need, and more than heaven and earth can offer us.

If we wish to gain a view of the full blessedness and glory which are imparted to us in the Holy Supper, so far as this can be revealed in poor human thought and language, we must first of all bear clearly in mind and write it upon our hearts, that it is the eternal Son of God Himself who has established this legacy in clear, plain words. To this fact St. Paul appeals when he says: "I have received it from the Lord." It is,

therefore, a secure and firmly established legacy. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away," says the Lord. This word, therefore, by which He institutes the Holy Supper, shall not pass away—no jot nor tittle of it. We therefore humbly bow before this word and pray to Him who is Eternal Love, who therein bestows upon us such rich blessings.

2. The Lord said : "This is my body. This cup is the new testament in my blood." We, therefore, in our beloved Church, to the question of the Catechism, "What is the Sacrament of the Altar?" respond and confess with the assurance of unwavering faith : "It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread and wine, instituted by Christ Himself for us Christians to eat and to drink." The eyes see only the bread and wine. But faith recognizes the true body and the true blood of Christ *in, with* and *under* the bread and wine, because the Word of Christ cannot deceive us. "Here stands the declaration," says Luther, "and reads bright and clear, that Christ gives His body to eat when He offers the bread. Upon this we stand, believing and teaching that in the Lord's Supper we truly and bodily take to ourselves and eat the body of Christ." Therefore also does St. Paul testify : "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" Bread and

wine are the visible signs and elements ; the body and blood of Jesus Christ are the invisible, promised, gracious gifts.

“The Lord made bread and wine the vehicles of His grace, because bread is the noblest food and wine the noblest drink, by which the body of man is nourished and strengthened. In a similar way the Lord desires to nourish and strengthen us with His precious body and blood. Holy Baptism is the sacrament of the new birth ; the Holy Supper the sacrament of nourishment for the new life. By Baptism we are implanted in new life ; by the Holy Supper preserved and strengthened in it. Surely, a great and trustworthy pledge of our salvation ! A greater the Lord could not have given us ; for what is greater than He Himself ? What is more intimately united with Him than His human nature, which has been taken up into the most blessed fellowship of the adorable Trinity, and has been made, as it were, the custodian and dispenser of heavenly blessings ? What is more closely bound up with Him than flesh and blood ? And now, behold ! With this truly heavenly food He quickens us poor worms of the dust, making us partakers of His nature, and, therefore, certainly of His grace. Christ esteems us highly, for He purchased us at an amazing price ; He esteems us highly, for He nourishes us with the most noble and precious gifts ; He esteems us highly, for we are His flesh and members of His body. Lo ! here is more than Para-

dise ! Here the Creator feeds the creature with His own flesh. The blood of the Son of God cleanses the penitent heart. The body of Christ, which has become one with the one divine Being worshiped by the angels, adored by archangels, before whom principalities and powers tremble—this body becomes our spiritual food. Therefore rejoice, O Heavens, and be glad, O Earth ! But far more exult thou, O believing Soul, that such glorious gifts are bestowed upon thee” (John Gerhard). So precious is this sacrament to the believer. Of it Mathesius in his old age wrote to a friend : “O, my friend, cling fast to the Word ! When I, some years ago, lost sight of the four words, ‘This is my body,’ and looked upon them with human eyes, I was terrified and fell into great temptation, anxiety and distress. But I persevered in prayer, and found refuge again upon the mother’s breast ; then I became again quiet in conscience and full of joy, for which I shall thank God to all eternity.” So do we, too, stand by our confession, that the body and blood of the Lord are given *in*, *with*, and *under* the bread and wine in the Holy Supper, and that through this sacramental communion, or fellowship, is effected also the true communion, or fellowship, of the Lord with His believing followers, and of these with their fellow-worshipers. But how this wonderful communion is effected, we do not desire to fathom, but commit the problem to the Divine Omnipotence. “We know nothing more of this mystery

than that the Word of God is true, and powerful, and almighty ; the *How* is inscrutable. It is not the word or work of any man—whether the worthiness or language of the administrator, or the act of eating and drinking, or the faith of the communicants—which secures this true presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Holy Supper ; but it is to be attributed solely to the power of Almighty God, and to the Word, institution and appointment of Christ. For the true and almighty words of Jesus Christ, which He uttered at the original institution of the sacred ordinance, were not alone effectual in that first celebration of the Holy Supper, but they yet endure, avail, act, and exert their power, so that in all places where the Holy Supper is celebrated according to the appointment of Christ, and His words employed, by virtue and power of these same words which Christ employed in the first celebration, the body and blood of Christ are truly present, distributed and received. For wherever the ordinance of Christ is properly observed, His words spoken over the bread and the cup, and the consecrated bread and wine distributed—there, through the words spoken, and by virtue of the original institution of the sacrament, Christ Himself is yet effectually present, through the Word which He appointed to be there repeated ; as Chrysostom says in his sermon upon the passion of Christ : ‘Christ Himself prepares this Table, and blesses it, for no man makes the bread and wine here presented

the body and blood of Christ, but Christ Himself, who was crucified for us.' The words are spoken by the mouth of the administrator, but it is by the power and grace of God that through the words which He utters, 'This is my body,' the elements presented in the Holy Supper are consecrated. And as the words, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth,' were spoken but once, but are yet, through all ages, effectual in the realm of the natural life, enabling it to grow and multiply ; so was this Word also spoken but once, but it is powerful to this day, and will be effectual until the (second) coming of Christ, bringing it to pass that His true body and blood are present in the Holy Supper of the Churches" (Formula of Concord). By this we stand, and do not permit ourselves to be enticed from this simple and comforting faith, either by Satan or by the world and all its hosts ; but, on the contrary, we pray every day : "Lord, make us steadfast in these evil days, that we may preserve Thy Word and sacrament in their purity until our life on earth is ended."

3. In the second place : "Of what use is such eating and drinking?" It is shown us by these words : "Given and shed for you for the remission of sins ; for where there is forgiveness of sins there is also life and salvation."

For the forgiveness of sins the Lord gave up His body and shed His blood. We partake of this sacrifice of Christ in the sacrificial meal of

the new covenant as an assurance to us that it was really presented to God for us, and for us accepted by Him. He who thus becomes a partaker with Christ has also the power and blessing of His holy sacrifice ; his sins are all forgiven and he is reconciled to God. The forgiveness of sins is the sum and substance of all blessings of grace announced in the New Testament. He who has obtained the forgiveness of his sins is graciously accepted of God, and has, therefore, life and everlasting happiness. We received the forgiveness of sins, indeed, in Holy Baptism. But inasmuch as sin is not yet entirely extinguished, the old Adam not yet entirely crucified, and the new man not yet grown to full maturity, we are constantly again falling into sin. We must, therefore, be constantly again drawing near to God in true penitence. In the Sacrament of the Altar we receive ever anew grace and forgiveness : “ We are thereby assured that although we have aroused the anger of our Father in Heaven, He will yet pardon us for this, and will still be and remain our gracious Father. And, therefore, while Baptism is a certain assurance that God has accepted us as children, the Lord’s Supper (is such an assurance) that He will not make us suffer for our disobedience.”

Through the Word of God also, it is true, are given to us strength and comfort. But since our faith is so very weak and timid, our dear Lord Jesus Christ has been pleased to attach His body and blood to the bread and wine in the Sacrament,

and in these elements offer them for our reception, in order that we might the more firmly, and without any wavering, believe with confidence that His body has been given and His blood shed *for us* for the forgiveness of sins, and that they nourish us unto life and everlasting blessedness. Thus the Sacrament is chiefly a food for the soul ; but not only such. The eternal life which he who in faith partakes of Christ's body and blood possesses is a life of the whole man. As truly as Christ is risen again from the grave, so truly shall also the body of His members, which is nourished with this His holy body, arise again and not see death forever. “ Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day,” saith the Lord. Hence some of the Fathers of the Church have very beautifully called the food offered in the Lord’s Supper a “ medicine of immortality.” “ By virtue of this body of Christ,” cries Chrysostom, “ I am no more dust and ashes—no more a prisoner, but free. By virtue of this body, I hope to enter the heavenly Paradise.” And Luther says : “ If we eat Him spiritually through the Word, He remains in us spiritually in the soul ; if we eat Him bodily, He remains also in us bodily. As we eat Him, so does He remain in us and we in Him. For He is not digested and transformed, but He without ceasing transforms us, the soul into righteousness, the body into immortality.”

It was alone through sin that death entered the

world. If we receive in the Holy Supper the forgiveness of sins, then must death be thereby overcome and eternal life imparted to us. Jesus Christ, by His sacrifice, makes good *all* the damage wrought by sin. He heals us entirely, and frees body and soul from their inherited infirmities. It is in order that the body also may be thoroughly healed and prepared for everlasting life that He gives us for our nourishment His body and blood. And it is just this complete union with Christ, both spiritual and bodily, which affords us our most precious consolation. . . . Since now such extraordinarily precious gifts, embracing in themselves such rich blessings, are offered to us in the Lord's Supper, we should often desire and receive them, and thus, with true gratitude, show forth the Lord's death as the ground of our reconciliation with God, and thus of our life and salvation. Our approach to the Lord's Supper is thus always a proclaiming of the salvation-bringing death of Jesus Christ, through whom the gracious blessings of the sacrifice have at such a price been procured for us.

4. The third question of our Catechism is : “How can bodily eating and drinking do such great things?” And the reply : “It is not the eating and drinking, indeed, that does it, but the words which stand here : ‘Given and shed for you, for the remission of sins.’ These words, together with the bodily eating and drinking, are the chief thing in the Sacrament ; and he that believes

these words, has what they say and mean, namely, the forgiveness of sins.” Just as the preached Word of God enters the ears of all with its sound, but displays its saving power only in those who do not resist it, but hold still and surrender their hearts to the Lord that He may open them ; so does also every communicant at the Lord’s Table receive with the mouth the body and blood of Christ, but this reception proves a blessing to those only who at the same time receive spiritually the heavenly gift, *i. e.*, who believe in their hearts that it is the body given for them, the blood shed for them, for the remission of sins. He who does not hear the Word of God unto life hears it unto death ; and thus he who does not receive the body and blood of Christ unto blessing receives it unto condemnation. “ Whoso eateth of this bread and drinketh of this cup unworthily eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.” Thus the loftiest blessings and the heaviest curse lie here side by side. “ The treasure is indeed opened and placed at everyone’s door, yea, upon everyone’s table ; but it is necessary that you also take of it and confidently regard it as the words give it to you ” (Luther, Larger Catechism). We should therefore come to the Lord’s Supper in true faith, and so receive the costly gifts that they may serve us unto life, for which purpose they were given, and not, on account of our unbelief, unto death and condemnation.

5. To the fourth question : “ Who then receives this sacrament worthily ? ” we have been taught to reply : “ Fasting and bodily preparation are indeed a good outward discipline ; but he is truly worthy and well prepared who has faith in these words : ‘ Given and shed for you, for the remission of sins.’ But he who believes not these words, or doubts, is unworthy and unprepared ; for the words, *for you*, require truly believing hearts.” They are, then, worthy guests, who need the forgiveness of sins, and believe that they may find it in the Lord’s Supper. In our own nature we are all alike unworthy to partake of the precious blessings of the Holy Supper, and must confess : “ Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof.” But our merciful Saviour will kindly receive everyone who feels his need and from his heart desires the forgiveness of his sins. “ He filleth the hungry with good things, and the rich He sendeth empty away.” All that labor and are heavy-laden He calls to Himself that He may give them rest, and to the sick He offers His true help. Hence it is above all things necessary that we recognize our sickness, that we feel weary and heavy-laden, and that we experience a hungering and thirsting for the grace of God. Whoever follows the admonition of the apostle and earnestly examines himself must surely recognize his own need. In the Ten Commandments a mirror is held up before us in which we can see what is our own spiritual condition. To him who proves Himself

by this Law and by the Apostles' Creed, and earnestly examines his own heart and life, there is left no other course but humbly to smite upon his breast and cry: "God have mercy upon me a sinner." He who thus judges himself and bows in sincere penitence, thereafter gladly lays hold upon the forgiveness of sins and the grace of God when offered by the mercy of Christ. It is indeed a wonderful thing, that the Lord should be willing to give life and salvation to lost sinners—that He should even have given His body to death and shed His blood for them. To believe this requires "truly believing hearts." But the mouth of the Lord says, "Broken for you, shed for you," and we should therefore not doubt, but lay hold in faith. The more our sins oppress and burn us, the more readily are we prepared to believe the incomprehensible miracle of grace.

For our proper preparation for receiving the Holy Supper, *Confession* has been appointed, in which we acknowledge our sins and receive the blessed absolution and forgiveness of the same. May the Lord grant us always truly penitent and believing hearts, that we may receive the Lord's Supper unto blessing and not unto condemnation. To him who receives it worthily, that is, in true penitence and real faith, will be therein imparted the power of eternal life to his sanctification and everlasting salvation. For where Christ is, there must be also salvation and sanctification. It must be our aim to become entire and completely one

with Christ. His life must become manifest in us. He desires to be formed within His followers, that the glory of the Head may be recognized in the members—that our life may be the life of Christ in us. What can bring us nearer to this goal than partaking of the body and blood of Christ? Born to the new life in Christ through Holy Baptism, cheered and led by the Word of God, nourished and strengthened through the Holy Supper, we press onward amid conflicts and earnest strivings toward the end of our course, when, perfectly transfigured into the image and character of Jesus Christ, we shall behold Him, and live and walk with Him to all eternity.

PRAYER.

O, Lord Jesus Christ, we thank Thee that, out of Thy great love for Thy Church on earth, Thou hast ordained a holy Sacrament, in which Thou givest us Thy body to eat and Thy blood to drink, for the strengthening of our faith, and for the spiritual comfort of our hearts. What shall we render unto Thee for this, Thy grace, that Thou hast honored and blessed Thy Church with such precious gifts? In the Holy Sacrament of Baptism, when we yet lay in our mother's arms, Thou didst receive us as Thy children by the washing of regeneration, and incorporate us into Thy body; and now, in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, Thou dost nourish our souls with divine food, that thereby we may be more closely united with Thee, be strengthened in all holy desires, have more of Thy pure and holy mind, and be, and remain, in body, soul and spirit, Thine forever. Grant us Thy help, O Lord, that we may be at all times prepared to receive Thee in this Holy Sacrament. Take Thou up Thine abode within us, and give us grace, that as living branches in Thee, the true Vine, we may ever bring forth the fruits of holiness to Thine eternal glory. Amen.

GOOD FRIDAY.

The Divine High-priest, Jesus Christ, offers upon Calvary the eternally effectual sacrifice for the sins of the world, and passes through His own blood into the Holy Place to reconcile us and the whole world to God. He has thus obtained an eternal redemption for all who in faith receive His grace.

Passion History. Part XVII. The Crucifixion of Christ.

And they brought him to the place which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, the place of a skull. And they gave unto him wine and myrrh, vinegar mingled with gall, but he received it not; and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink. And there they crucified him, and the two malefactors with him, one on the right hand and the other on the left, and Jesus in the midst. And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors. It was about the third hour, when they crucified him. Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

And Pilate wrote a title, the superscription of his accusation, JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS, and they set it up over his head upon the cross. This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew and Greek and Latin. Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written, I have written.

Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part, and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did. And they sat down and watched him there.

And the people stood beholding. And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. And the rulers also with them derided him. Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes and elders, He saved others, himself he cannot save. If he be Christ, the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. Let him save himself, if he be the chosen of God. He trusted in God, let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God. And the soldiers also mocked

him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar, and saying, If thou be the King of the Jews, save thyself. And one of the malefactors also, which were crucified with him, railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalena. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then said he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour, and the sun was darkened. And at the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? Which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? And some of them that stood by, when they heard it, said, Behold, he calleth Elias.

When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished.

And again he cried with a loud voice, and said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he bowed his head and gave up the ghost.

And behold the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; and the graves were opened: and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and appeared unto many. And when the centurion, which stood over against him, and they that were with him, saw the earthquake and those things that were done, they feared greatly and glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man; truly this was the Son of God. And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts and returned.

The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day (for that Sabbath day was a high day), besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and broke the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was dead already, they broke not his legs: but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bear record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced (Matt. xxvii. 33-54; Mark xv. 22-39; Luke xxiii. 33-48; John xix. 18-37).

1. The sacred narrative to-day places us beneath the cross on Golgotha. It is the proper position for every believing soul. Let us there remain

throughout all the hours of this hallowed day, beholding our crucified Lord.

On Mount Sinai God gave the Law—on Mount Calvary He through Christ abrogated the curse of the Law. From Sinai sounds forth the stern voice of the Law—from Calvary the sweet and gracious tones of the Gospel. On Sinai the old covenant was established—on Calvary the new covenant in Christ. Sinai is sacred to us, but Calvary is bathed in the very glory of heaven ! Behold the Lord approaching—the King of the world ! What a Coronation Day ! The Lord escorted by malefactors, soldiers, a curious multitude and reviling Pharisees ! The King, wearing His crown of thorns, leads on, to ascend His throne, the cross. To common criminals, the Jews gave wine mingled with myrrh, to mitigate the sufferings of their dying hours ; to the Lord they offered vinegar mingled with gall, to add to His torture. Such was the libation poured in honor of the King ! He had given them manna in the wilderness and water from the rock ; they gave Him vinegar and gall ! The Lord refused to drink. He wished to die calmly and with unclouded mind. But He noted their base cruelty, and it was more bitter to Him than gall. *Our* sins are the bitterest ingredient in His cup of suffering.

Here was fulfilled the Psalmist's prophecy : “Reproach hath broken my heart ; and I am full of heaviness : and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none ; and for comforters, but I

found none. They gave me also gall for my meat ; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink."

2. "And there they crucified Him." Few and simple words—but they record the greatest and most wonderful event of all the ages ! "They crucified Him." See ! they bind Him to the cruel cross. His lacerated back is pressed against the rough timbers. Rude nails are driven through His hands and feet. And there the suffering Victim hangs in the glow of mid-day, unprotected from the scorching rays of the noon-day sun. Every slightest movement of His body causes unutterable torment. O, Lord Jesus ! what hast Thou borne for me, who have so oft forgotten Thee ! When I look upon the cross, I learn how great my sins, that press so heavily upon Thee, the Holy One of God.

Behold, there flows His sacred blood ! It falls to the ground. To think that this poor earth has drunken its Creator's blood ! That blood cries to heaven with a louder voice than the blood of Abel ; but it calls not for vengeance, but for grace and forgiveness.

With outstretched hands Christ scatters His blood as seed, from which springs our salvation. With what pain, and yet how exultantly, must not the angels have looked upon that scene. Look thou, too, upon thy dying Lord with sorrow for His sufferings and thy sins—with joy in His rich grace and thy deliverance. Then shall He for thee not have died in vain. See, He reaches out toward

thee the arms of love ! Fall upon His breast, O child of man, and there find deliverance and peace. O Lord ! how much Thou hast borne and suffered for us ! Help us to love Thee as we ought !

3. Upon the cross behold thy Lord and Saviour. Until this time the cross has been an emblem of shame; it is now sanctified, and shall henceforth be the symbol of richest blessing and glorious victory. We place it now upon the robes and caskets of our dead, as a testimony that the Lord upon the cross conquered death and obtained for us eternal life. We carry the cross before the casket as we bear the bodies of the dead to the tomb, for since the Lord has died for us upon the cross every funeral procession for a departed saint becomes a triumphal march. We plant the cross upon our graves, as a token of victory, to signify that they who here sleep have through Jesus and His cross overcome sin and sorrow, the world and death, and are now but awaiting the final proclamation of their victory and their eternal glory.

The early Christians associated many beautiful ideas with the cross of Christ. In Paradise, observes one, a green and flourishing tree led our first parents into sin ; here an old tree, a piece of dry and accursed wood, becomes the true tree of life. The cross is a sword, drawn in the service of Satan, but inverted, its point piercing the head of the serpent—a sword which vanquishes the world, death and the devil. It is a ladder reaching from the earth to the skies—see that thou ascend

upon it into heaven ! It is a throne of grace ; upon it hangs between heaven and earth He who is to be the Mediator between earth and heaven. It is planted in the earth ; but it points upward toward heaven, as an intimation that we are through the cross to overcome the world and press upward to the skies. It stretches out its arms to right and left above the earth, as though to indicate that all the nations may, in its shadow, find rest and peace.

4. Upon the cross, in addition to the suffering, the Lord endures reproach and scorn. A word—a glance from Him—and the earth would have swallowed up His revilers and murderers. But He bears all in silence. Thus was fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah : “ He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter.”

Even upon the cross He opened His lips only in prayer and blessing. For His murderers He prays : “ Father, forgive them ; they know not what they do.” Wonderful, unfathomable meekness ! His enemies have only words of mockery and scorn upon their lips ; He, only prayer and blessings. Their delight is in murder ; His, in forgiveness. Shall we not learn from Him to forgive our enemies and to pray for them ? For the penitent thief, too, He has words of comfort and blessing : “ Verily I say unto you, to-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.” Up to the last moment, He finds His joy in forgiving and blessing. Bless me, too, O

Lord, and forgive all my sins, that when Thou call-
est me away, I too may be with Thee in Paradise !

Words of love He speaks until His lips are cold
in death. "Woman, behold thy son," says He to
His sorrowing mother. O, Thou Lord of love and
comfort ! Let Thy loving compassion comfort me
in all my sorrows.

5. About the third hour they crucified Him,
and about the sixth hour, at noon, a great darkness
covered the land and the sun was darkened.
Nature refuses to smile while her Creator suffers.
She hides herself in mourning when He mourns.
The sun is darkened, because the Light of the
World is extinguished.

Then draws near the most trying hour for our
suffering Lord. His soul is plunged into the
deepest agony. Enshrouded in gloom by the
hiding of His Father's face, He exclaims : "My
God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"
O, what pangs of grief, what depths of sorrow!
The Holy One, the Eternal Son, co-equal with the
Father, must experience the curse of divine aban-
donment. His inmost nature lacerated and torn
asunder ! How is it possible that God the Son
should be forsaken by God the Father ? No one
can explain it. The pain which the Saviour there
endured, no human soul can comprehend. We
can only understand that for the Lord the most
trying hour has now come. In that moment the
Holy One of God experiences the pains of hell.
The fire of the divine wrath burns in His soul. To

be forsaken of God is nothing less than to suffer the pains of perdition. And even this deepest suffering of all the Lord endured, not on His own account, for He was pure and without sin, but for us. In order that we might not be eternally forsaken of God and cast into hell, He here appeared as our substitute. How can we ever suitably thank Him for such love? For such compassion the complete surrender of our whole life to His service will be but a poor and meagre tribute of thanksgiving.

6. In the deep anguish of His soul, the Saviour's bodily strength fails Him and He almost faints away. "I thirst," He cries. O, the depth of His humiliation! He who provides for us so abundantly the water of life, refreshing so many fainting souls with draughts so quickening that they can never thirst again, now yearns for a drop of cold water to cool His tongue.

Amid the scorn and mockery of his foes, He accepts the last poor boon; then faintly cries: "It is finished." Blessed word! Finished is the work of redemption—for all men, for thee and for me! Finished, the cruel, bitter sufferings! Finished, the mighty conflict! Jesus, my Saviour, closes His eyes in death. The Prince of Peace has peacefully fallen asleep. The Son of Life sinks to rest in the silent night of death. O, precious word! It is finished! When the night of death draws near, gladly would I lay my head to rest upon the stone that closes the Saviour's

sepulchre. Pillowed thus, like Jacob, I shall softly slumber. The angels of God will hover around me, while the gate of heaven opens above me. O, blessed word of life, "It is finished!"

7. Yet once more we look upon our dying Lord, and once more hear Him speak, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit," and "having said thus He bowed His head and gave up the ghost." Thus simply does the pen of inspiration record this most wonderful, sublime and glorious event. The Lord bows His holy head—pale, bleeding, beneath the crown of thorns. O, man! look upon this pale, tortured, and yet so peaceful, countenance. Look upon this glazing eye—full of anguish, and yet full of love. On account of thy sins, this bright star goes out in night. To deliver thee from death, upon this noble brow falls the pallor of death.

"He bowed His head and died." There is a deep tremor of the heart—and—the Saviour is dead! Who can fathom the mystery? He is dead, who has life in Himself, and who longs to give life to all men! Break, my poor heart! in grief and penitence. Alas! alas! my Saviour, Jesus, is dead!

8. The Eternal Son of God has died upon the cross. Life is dead. Nothing can seem more absurd than thus to speak; but it expresses the deepest truth. He gave Himself to death, that we might have life. The earth trembles when He dies. The veil in the temple is rent in twain.

The way of approach to the Holy Place is now no longer closed against us. The rocks are torn asunder and the graves are opened. The life-giving power of the Mighty One, who now submits to the embrace of death, is manifested upon the sleeping dead. Many bodies of the saints arise, and appear to many after His resurrection. Thus shall we all one day feel the thrill of the Lord's life-giving power. All the graves shall be opened and we shall arise. By His death Christ has despoiled death of his power, and the complete victory will be manifest to all at the resurrection of the last day.

The Easter morning is approaching, when we shall celebrate the resurrection of the Lord. And soon will come the last Easter morning, when the Crucified One shall appear in His majesty. Then shall we behold the Despised and Rejected One in His eternal glory. May the Lord grant us in this earthly pilgrimage of sorrow true repentance and simple faith, that we may bear a part in the joys of the eternal Easter Day, and join with happy voices in the everlasting hallelujahs of the risen saints. May He lead us through all earth's trials and sufferings to eternal glory by the power of His bitter sufferings and death. There shall we praise him more worthily than we can do in our weak, mortal life; and there, too, shall we more clearly understand His wonderful love than we can do amid the storms and conflicts which beset us here. Lord Jesus, accept our poor thank-

offerings, until we shall bring Thee worthier sacrifices and render loftier songs of praise before Thy throne, for ever and ever. Amen.

PRAYER.

O, Jesus Christ, our dear Lord and Saviour, we draw nigh to Thee to-day in holy Sabbath stillness, and earnestly implore Thy grace. The Holy Passion Season is ended. We have followed Thee with sorrowing hearts through the midst of cruel persecutions to Gesthemane and Golgotha, where Thou didst bow Thy sacred head and die. O, may we never forget how heavily the chastisement of our peace was laid upon Thee. Our faithful Redeemer ! Thou hast finished the great work of our deliverance. O may Thy death be our life, Thy righteousness our salvation, Thy death-struggle our victory and eternal peace. Lay hold upon us with the hand of Thy Holy Spirit and translate us into the fellowship of Thy life, that from henceforth our old man may be with Thee crucified and buried into death, and that we may arise to a new life with Thee. Enkindle our hearts with the love wherewith Thou hast loved us even unto death, that we may love Thee in return with true ardor of soul and bear Thy cross after Thee in faith and patience. Lord Jesus, as Thou didst commend Thy spirit into the hands of Thy Heavenly Father, so do we, with full confidence in the power of Thy redeeming work, commit our spirits, with our souls and bodies, into Thine almighty hand. O, Lord, may the preaching of Thy cross become a message of peace and the power of God to all men and to all lands, that even those who are yet afar off may be delivered from their sins, and with us magnify Thy grace and glory. For Thou, Lord, hast bought us with Thine own blood, and art worthy to receive strength and power, and honor and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

GOOD FRIDAY EVENING.

Passion History. Part XVIII. The Burial of Christ.

And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, came a rich man of Arimathæa, a city of the Jews, named Joseph, an honorable

counsellor, a good man and a just, who had not consented to the counsel and deed of them, for he waited for the kingdom of God, and was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews. He went in boldly unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus, that he might take it away. And Pilate marveled if he were already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead. And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph and commanded that it be delivered to him. And Joseph went and bought fine linen and took down the body of Jesus. And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. Then took they the body of Jesus, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, which Joseph had hewn out in the rock, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus therefore, because of the Jews' preparation day, because the Sabbath drew on, and the sepulchre was nigh at hand. And they rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed. And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses, and they sat over against the sepulchre, and beheld how his body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath day, according to the commandment.

Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch, go your way, make it as sure as ye can. So they went and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone and setting a watch (Matt. xxvii. 57-66—Mark xv. 42-47—Luke xxiii. 50-56—John xix. 38-42).

1. Joseph of Arimathaea, a rich man and honored counsellor, ventures to go to Pilate. Thus was fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: "He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death." Joseph and Nicodemus, who have hitherto been only secret followers of the Lord, now come out openly upon His side. Crucified love has overcome their fear of man. Jesus has not been ashamed to die for them upon the cross, and they are now no longer ashamed of Him. Thus should all timid souls and all secret adherents of the Lord Jesus take courage, and by word and

deed openly proclaim their loyalty to the crucified Saviour, that He may also acknowledge them in the day of His glory.

2. Joseph begs the body of the Lord. It is a large request—"for the body which has been the very temple of the Godhead, the dwelling-place of the living Word and the instrument of God's miracles of grace." Pilate gives away the body of the Lord Jesus. He does not suspect what an incomparably precious gift he is bestowing. Fittingly may we exclaim : "Hear what the unjust judge doeth ! And shall God refuse His Son, once given up to death, to those who ask for Him ?" (Rambach).

3. They take down the body of the Lord from the cross and bear it reverently to the sepulchre in the garden of Joseph of Arimathæa. "In a garden, sin and the curse entered the world through Adam's transgression ; in a garden, the atoning sufferings of Christ began ; in a garden, sin, death and the curse were buried with Christ" (Besser).

The Lord of Life is laid in the grave. Even in this He would be like us, and by His descent into the grave hallow the way for us and shed the rays of His grace upon the darkness of our tombs. "As Christ by His baptism in the water of the Jordan has hallowed all the water of the earth as a fit medium of the washing of regeneration, so has He by His burial in Joseph's sepulchre hallowed all our graves and made them but the sleeping chambers of the living. As Christ was born for us, and suffered and died for us, so likewise was He buried

for us, for He thereby secured for us a blessed rest in the grave. God rested on the seventh day after the work of the creation and celebrated it as a Sabbath day. Thus Christ, having completed His atoning work, would keep His Sabbath in the grave, that our souls might rest peacefully in God and our bodies in the tomb, and that the way might stand open before us into everlasting rest" (Gerhard).

4. Jesus Christ, who is our Life, rests in the tomb. This day is the most solemnly quiet of the year. It intervenes between the day of deepest sorrow which the earth has witnessed and the most blessed day of joy that has ever dawned. The disciples of Jesus spent the day in quietness, and so should we spend quietly the little time of our sojourn on earth until the last Easter Morning shall dawn in its eternal glory. As the Lord rose from His grave triumphant and glorious, despite the guard and seal, so shall we then arise and gain the victory over all our enemies—sin, death and the devil! And it is just this glorious hope which can preserve the soul in quietness and peace in every storm and conflict, in suffering and in death. May the Lord strengthen our faith, and help us to rest quietly in Him, that we may say with David : "Truly my soul waiteth upon God."

5. We have now followed the inspired history of the Passion of our Lord to its close. Let us lay to heart the words of Luther : "Thus, beloved, have you heard the whole history of the sufferings

of our Lord Jesus Christ, from which we should learn particularly how great and horrible a burden is sin, since the Son of God Himself was compelled to struggle so terribly in bearing it and to make recompense for it by His own death—in order that we may keep ourselves in the fear of God and be on our guard against such burdens. In the second place, we should learn to find comfort against sin in the sacrifice of the Lord Christ, in order that, although sin and death assail us, we may yet firmly preserve the consolation, that Christ has made recompense for our sins and that God will for His sake be satisfied with us and no more remember our sins. These are the two chief doctrines which are presented to us in the Passion (of our Lord), and which should be kept in mind and taught by us. This history may further teach us patience and quiet endurance of suffering, since the Son of God goes before us here with His own example. Again, it may impel us to love for our neighbors, as the Lord Himself so often urges, saying : ‘As I have loved you, so do ye also love one another.’ But who will undertake or be able to recount all the lessons which we may learn from the sufferings of our Lord Christ?’’ May the Lord preserve to us and increase the blessings of the Passion Season, and grant to us a joyful and blessed Easter, filling our hearts with true Easter joy, until we shall have overcome all the sorrows of earth and are permitted to enter upon the enjoyment of the Easter Day that shall know no end.

PRAYER.

Lord Jesus ! Thou hast entered the darkness of the tomb. Thou, who art the Life of the World, hast gone down to death that Thou mightest taste death for every man. Thy disciples are filled with grief and heaviness. We mourn for Thee, for the hope of a lost world was buried with Thee in Joseph's sepulchre. But we know that Thou canst not be holden of death. Thou art the Holy One of God, and canst not see corruption. Soon will the Easter morning dawn, when Thou shalt rise victorious over death and the grave. We praise Thee, that Thou hast thus hallowed the tomb for us. There may our slumbering bodies rest until the glorious morning of the resurrection, when Thou, the firstborn from the dead, shall come with the voice of the trumpet and all Thy holy angels with Thee. Then, O Lord Jesus, do Thou remember me and call me forth to life, that I may enjoy the fruits of Thy sacrificial death and live with Thee forever in blessedness and glory. Amen.

SATURDAY BEFORE EASTER.

The Descent Into Hell.

15. But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts : and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear :

16. Having a good conscience ; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.

17. For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.

18. For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit :

19. By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison ;

20. Which sometimes were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water.

21. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ :

22. Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God ; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him (1 Peter iii. 15-22).

1. Christ is dead. He has suffered for our sins, the just for the unjust. Be thou ready, if need be, to suffer with Him (15-18). In the grave reposes the Lord, slain according to the flesh, but made alive according to the Spirit. In the spirit He has entered the prison-house—Hades, hell—where the spirits of those who have died without Christ, and before Christ, are awaiting the last judgment and the resurrection of their bodies. The life of that world is enwrapped in deep mystery. Thou canst not penetrate or understand it by the power of thy reason, for the Lord has veiled it from our view. All that has been revealed to us is that there are two places, separated by a great gulf, whither the souls of men go after death, *i. e.*, Abraham's bosom, or paradise—and the prison-house of the lost. To both places the Lord went after He was slain, accompanied to paradise by the penitent thief, and also, as here declared, to the world of the lost.

2. But was it not a deep humiliation for Christ to descend to the prison of lost souls? Yea, if would have been if the prison-bars could have kept Him there. But it had been already prophesied : “Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, nor suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption.” He does not go thither to remain, but to preach to the spirits in prison, who had not believed in the days of Noah, and to all the dead. As the Victor over sin, death, and the power of the devil, He ap-

pears in hell to the dismay of all lost souls, but to the unspeakable delight of all who have believed. The unbelieving who have despised the Word of God and His grace must now with terror realize that their condemnation shall endure forever, and that for them there is no hope. All the pious who from the beginning of the world have waited for redemption—the holy patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ; Moses and Joshua ; David and all the holy prophets ; Simeon and Anna, with John the Baptist—this entire Old Testament Church of God—what must have been their unutterable delight when the Lord, having finished His work on earth, appeared among them as the conqueror of all evil ? They had long fixed their hopes on Him. They had by the power of the Spirit borne testimony to Him on earth. Now is His glorious work completed, and Jesus Christ appears in His eternal majesty and glory in the midst of the departed spirits, to make it manifest to all that the work has been accomplished. Even there must every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God, the Father. Thus the descent to hell, which at first appears so great a humiliation, is transformed into a wonderful exaltation and a great triumph. He enters the prison-world, not as a prisoner, but as the Lord, who despoils principalities and powers, and makes a show of them openly, leading them in triumph ; who has ascended on high and led captivity captive, and sitteth at the right hand of

God, angels, and authorities, and powers being made subject unto Him.

3. The descent of Christ into hell is, and must remain for us, an impenetrable mystery, and yet a source of richest comfort, concerning which the Fathers of our Church have very fittingly confessed : “ It is sufficient that we know that Christ descended into hell, destroyed hell for all who believe on Him, and delivered them from the power of death and of the devil, from eternal damnation and the jaws of hell. But how this occurred, we should [not curiously investigate, but] reserve until the other world, where not only this point, but also still others, will be more fully revealed, which we here simply believe, and cannot comprehend with our blind reason ” (Formula of Concord). Thus also Luther, and with him our Church, admonishes us : “ But [as to] how this occurred, we should not worry ourselves with lofty and shrewd thoughts ; for this article cannot be grasped by the reason and the five senses, but requires that we simply believe it and hold fast to the Word [of God concerning it]. Thus we retain the kernel and comfort of it, that neither hell nor the devil can capture or injure us, nor any who believe on Christ.”

4. We have during the solemn weeks now past commemorated the deep sufferings of our Lord. Yesterday His painful death upon the cross was held before us. But the time of His conflict and sufferings is now past forever. To-morrow dawns

the day of His glorious resurrection, which shall make manifest His triumph. For us He died ; for us He was buried ; for us He descended into hell. In the resurrection we have the seal of the approval of His work and sacrifice by God, the Father. We can, therefore, no longer fear. All the conflicts and sufferings of this present world are already overcome. Who can harm us, since Jesus Christ, our Saviour, has vanquished for us all our foes ? Peace and blissful rest are now our happy portion. It cost the Lord great effort, anxiety, distress and blood ; but it is all bestowed upon us of free grace. Therefore can we calmly place ourselves in the hands of Jesus, and say with David : “ Truly my soul is quiet before God : from Him cometh my salvation.” A holy calm and quiet rest to-day upon the hearts of all believers. The week of torture is at an end. Between the greatest day of sorrow which the earth has seen and the day of most exultant joy lies this silent day of waiting. Christ rests in the tomb—and there is a solemn silence throughout the world wherever His name has been made known. May such holy calm hallow our whole lives. We have peace through the death of the Lord Jesus. Our hope is fixed upon the blessed Easter Day which the Lord has promised us. We know that He will come again. Then shall His life-giving power penetrate the graves of all His saints. O, when shall the Eternal Easter morning dawn ? Even so, come, Lord Jesus !

PRAYER.

Lord Jesus Christ, Thou ever-blessed Son of the living God, we render Thee praise and thanksgiving, that while Thy sacred flesh was resting in the tomb Thou didst descend into hell and preach unto the spirits in prison. Thy mercy is so great and glorious that Thou didst remember even the dead, and make known to them the only way of salvation. Grant that we may accept in simple faith this mystery, and that we may so sincerely repent and obey Thy Word while we live, that we may not in the end endure the pangs of eternal death, but may, with Thee, rise to everlasting life. We praise Thee for Thy glorious triumph over principalities and powers. Help us to remain steadfast in our faith in Thee, and as Thou hast burst the bars of death and hell, may we share the glorious fruits of Thy victory, and by Thy mercy enter into everlasting blessedness in that bright world where death is unknown, and where there is fullness of life and joy for evermore. Amen.

HISTORY OF THE PASSION OF OUR LORD

AS RECORDED BY THE FOUR EVANGELISTS.

PART FIRST.

Then gathered the chief-priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we ? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him ; and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high-priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this spake he not of himself : but being high-priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation ; and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad. Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death.

And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on : and they shall scourge him, and put him to death ; and the third day he shall rise again. And they understood none of these things : and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.

Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper in the house of Simon the leper ; and Martha served : but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. And as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment and spikenard very precious ; she brake the box and poured it on his head, and anointed

the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair ; and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment. Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor ? This he said, not that he cared for the poor ; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. And Jesus said, Let her alone ; why trouble ye her ? she hath wrought a good work on me. For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good ; but me ye have not always. She hath done what she could : she has come beforehand to anoint my body to the burying. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.

On the next day, when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her ; loose them, and bring them unto me. And if any man say aught unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them ; and straightway he will send them. All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying : Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them, and brought the ass and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon. The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record. And many spread their garments in the way ; others cut down branches from the trees, and strewed them in the way. And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David ; Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord ; Hosanna in the highest.

And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples. And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out. And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace ! but now they are hid from thine eyes.

For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee ; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another : because thou knowest not the time of thy visitation.

And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this ? And the multitude said, This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee. And Jesus went into the temple of God and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves. And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer ; but ye have made it a den of thieves. And it came to pass, that as he taught the people in the temple, and preached the gospel, the chief-priests and the scribes came upon him with the elders, and spake unto him, saying, Tell us, by what authority doest thou these things ? or who is he that gave thee this authority ? And Jesus answered and said unto them, I will also ask of you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men ? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven ; he will say, Why then believe ye him not ? But and if we say, Of men ; all the people will stone us ; for they be persuaded that John was a prophet. And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things. There was a certain householder which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a wine-press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country. And when the time of the fruit grew near, he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard : but the husbandmen beat him, and sent him away empty. And again he sent unto them another servant ; and at him they cast stones, and wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully handled. And again he sent another, and him they killed, and many others ; beating some, and killing some. Having yet therefore one son, his well beloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw him they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir : come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be

ours. So they cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him. What therefore shall the Lord of the vineyard do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same has become the head of the corner; this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.

And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them. And when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet; and they left him, and went their way.

PART SECOND.

Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed. And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat. And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare? And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in. And ye shall say unto the good man of the house, The Master saith unto thee, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples. And he shall show you a large upper room furnished: there make ready. And his disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.

Now when the even was come he sat down with the

twelve. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth. Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father has appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him; Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things unto his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; he riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean. So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet;

ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord ; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake. Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I ? He said unto them, thou hast said. Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it ? Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly. Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him. For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast ; or, that he should give something to the poor. He then, having received the sop, went immediately out ; and it was night. And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat ; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not : and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death. And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.

And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to the disciples, and said, Take, eat ; this is my body, which is given for you : this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it. This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins : this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me ; and they all drank of it. And when they had sung a hymn they went out into the mount of Olives.

PART THIRD.

And Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come ; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee : as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth : I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world : thine they were, and thou gavest them me ; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me ; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them : I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me ; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine ; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name : those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition ; that the Scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to thee ; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word ; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth : thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word ; that they all may be one ; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may

be one in us ; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them ; that they may be one, even as we are one : I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one ; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am ; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me : for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee : but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it ; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, which was named Gethsemane : into which he entered, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death : tarry ye here, and watch with me. And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed. And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me : nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt. And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour ? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation : the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. And he came and found them asleep again : for their eyes were heavy, neither wist they what to answer him. And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me : nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly : and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow,

and said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.

And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came; and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people. Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; hold him fast. Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus said unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. As soon as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward and fell to the ground. Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: that the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none. And forthwith Judas came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Master; and kissed him. And Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss? When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword? And one of them, Simon Peter, having a sword, smote the high-priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. And Jesus said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear and healed him. Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be? In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me, but this is your hour, and the power of darkness. But all this was done, that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled. And they that had laid hold on Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high-priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. But Peter followed him afar off into the high-priest's palace.

PART FOURTH.

Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him, and led him away to Annas first ; for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, which was the high-priest that same year. Now Caiaphas was he which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people. Now Annas had sent Jesus bound unto Caiaphas the high-priest, where all the chief priests and the scribes and the elders were assembled. The high-priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine. Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world ; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort ; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me ? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them : behold, they know what I said. And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high-priest so ? Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil : but if well, why smitest thou me ?

Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death : but found none. For many bare false witness against him, but their witness agreed not together. At the last came two false witnesses, and said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days. And the high-priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing ? what is it which these witness against thee ? But Jesus held his peace. Again the high-priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed ? I adjure thee by the living God that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus said unto him, Thou hast said : I am ; nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high-priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy ; what further need have we of witnesses ? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye ? They answered and said, He is guilty of death. Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him ; and others smote him with the palms of their hands, saying, Prophesy unto us, thou Christ : who is he that smote thee ?

But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple which was known unto the high-priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter. Then said the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not, and went in, and sat with the servants to see the end. And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals, for it was cold, and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself. There cometh one of the maids of the high-priest; and when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked upon him and said, Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth. But he denied before them all, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest. And he went out into the porch; and the cock crew. And about the space of one hour after, another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him; for he is a Galilean. One of the servants of the high-priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did I not see thee in the garden with him? And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech betrayeth thee. Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man, of whom ye speak. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew the second time. And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter. And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out and wept bitterly.

When the morning was come, the whole multitude of them arose, bound Jesus, and carried him away from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor. And they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the passover.

Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself. And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood. And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in.

Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value ; and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.

PART FIFTH.

Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man ? They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him unto thee. Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death : that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die.

And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that he himself is Christ a king. Then Pilate entered the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews ? Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me ? Pilate answered, Am I a Jew ? Thine own nation, and the chief priests, have delivered thee unto me. What hast thou done ? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews : but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then ? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. Pilate saith unto him, What is truth ? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all.

And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee ? And he answered him to never a word ; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly. And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee

to this place. When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilean. And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time. And when Herod saw Jesus he was exceeding glad : for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him ; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him. Then he questioned with him in many words : but he answered him nothing. And the chief priests and scribes stood, and vehemently accused him. And Herod with his men of war set him at naught, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate. And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together : for before they were at enmity between themselves.

And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests, and the rulers, and the people, said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people : and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him ; no, nor yet Herod : for I sent you to him ; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him : I will therefore chastise him, and release him.

Now at that feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would. And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas, that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired ; and the multitude crying aloud began to desire him to do as he had ever done unto them. But Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews ? Whom will ye that I release unto you ? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ ? For he knew that for envy the chief priests had delivered him. When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man : for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him. But the chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them. And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews ? But they cried, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. He said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done ? I have found no cause of death in him : I will therefore chas-

tise him, and let him go. And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him. And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified : and the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed.

Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him. Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man. When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him : for I find no fault in him. The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid ; and went again unto the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou ? But Jesus gave him no answer. Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me ? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee ? Jesus answered, Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above : therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin. And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him : but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend : whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour : and he said unto the Jews, Behold your King ! But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King ? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Cæsar. When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person ; see ye to it. Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children. Then released he Barabbas unto them : and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.

PART SIXTH.

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers. And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand : and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews ! And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head. And after that they had mocked him they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him. And there were also two others, malefactors, led with him to be put to death.

And he bearing his cross went forth : and as they came out they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus. And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us ; and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry ?

And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull, they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh : but he received it not. There they crucified him. Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them ; for they know not what they do. And it was the third hour. And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. This title then read many of the Jews ; for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh unto the city : and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin. Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews ; but that he said, I am King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.

Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part ; and also his coat : now the coat was without seam, woven

from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be : that the Scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did. And sitting down they watched him there. And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others ; let him save himself, if he be Christ the chosen of God.

Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus, therefore, saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son ! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother ! and from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.

And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking him with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others ; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God ; let him deliver him now, if he will have him : for he said I am the Son of God. The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth. And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ save thyself and us. But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation ? And we indeed justly ; for we receive the due reward of our deeds : but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani ? that is to say, My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me ? And some of them that stood by, when they heard it, said, Behold, he calleth Elias. After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. Now there

was set a vessel full of vinegar. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished : and cried with a loud voice, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit : and having said thus, he bowed his head and gave up the ghost. And behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom ; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent ; and the graves were opened ; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. Now when the centurion, and they that were with him watching Jesus, saw the earthquake and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man. Truly this was the Son of God. And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts and returned.

PART SEVENTH.

And all his acquaintance and the women that followed him from Galilee stood afar off, beholding these things. Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses, and Salome the mother of Zebedee's children. Who also, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto him ; and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem.

The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day (for that Sabbath day was a high day), besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs : but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true ; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled. A bone of him shall not be broken. And again another

Scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.

When the even was come, a rich man of Arimathaea named Joseph, an honorable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, a good man and a just ; (the same had not consented to the counsel and the deed of them;) being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, came and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus. And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead : and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead. And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph.

And Joseph bought fine linen, and took him down. And there came also Nicodemus (which at the first came to Jesus by night), and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pound weight. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.

Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden ; and in the garden a new sepulchre, hewn out in the rock : wherein never before was man laid. There laid they Jesus therefore, because of the Jews' preparation day ; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand. And Joseph rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.

And there was Mary Magdalene and the other Mary sitting over against the sepulchre. And the women also which came with him from Galilee followed after, and beheld the sepulchre and how his body was laid. And they returned and prepared spices and ointments, and rested the Sabbath day, according to the commandment.

Now the next day that followed the day of preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead : so the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch ; go your way, make it as sure as ye can. So they went and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone and setting a watch.

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