

whatever painful discipline, to drive us out of that easy smiling self-content, to lift our wills into a fuller harmony and concert with his will, to compel us to say, from the heart and in our lives, "Thy will, not ours, be done." For when once God has so far prevailed with us as that, we shall prevail with Him, we shall gain power both with God and man. We shall not then have to wring a reluctant gift from Him; He will already have conferred his greatest gift on us, the gift which includes or guarantees all others. A man cradled and lapped in good fortune may lose all that he has at any moment, and by a thousand different strokes of change; he, therefore, is not the man most blessed of God. But he whose will blends with God's will, and whose feet take and keep the ways of God—this man is both truly and most greatly blessed; for since all changes are ruled by God, and express his will, no change can injure *him*; he sits with God in the heavenly places, high above the reach of change; and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, fills and satisfies his heart.

NIGER.

STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

XIII.—JERICHO AND JERUSALEM.

THE mission to Bethany had been one of danger and of mercy: of danger to Jesus, of mercy to the sisters who had loved and lost. In their home sorrow had been turned into joy; their brother lived and their Friend was present.

From every house the neighbours met,
The streets were fill'd with joyful sound,
A solemn gladness even crown'd
The purple brows of Olivet.

But over in Jerusalem another spirit reigned. Into the city the strange news had been carried. Through the bazaars and the market-place, from gate to gate, and home to home, into the temple and the schools the whisper ran, "Behold, a man raised up by Christ!" The common people heard it gladly, and said, "Lo, a sign from heaven; the Son of David has come; He will break the yoke of the oppressor, and we shall be free." Tumult was in the air, and the priests knew it; a great spiritual act by a great spiritual Person had blown the slumbering political desires of the multitude into flame, and the scribes felt the glowing heat underfoot. The Pharisees were anti-Roman, loved to foster in Israel dislike of the alien and devotion to the hopes and ideals proper to the people of God; but they could only fear and oppose a movement that might end in saluting Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ. The Sadducees were tolerant to Rome, knew, feared, obeyed her, and dreaded nothing so much as the revolt that might rouse her unpyting wrath. So the ancient rivals, united by common hate for hateful ends, met to plot. No man comprehended the situation better than Caiaphas, high-priest that fateful year; and he, cynically, though diplomatically enough, formulated the need of the hour—"It is expedient that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not."¹ What he meant was this: "We are on the eve of disaster; the enthusiasm of the people for this Galilean will carry them into revolt, unless we strike it through the heart by bringing him to death." The scribes and Pharisees understood the priest, complimented his astuteness by adopting his policy and working out his scheme. They

¹ John xi. 49. 50.

did not mean to be bad, only patriotic, and so obedient to the maxim, "Salus populi suprema est lex." It was in this heroic spirit that the ancient enemies, who so cordially despised each other, made their covenant, and as new but dear friends assumed their parts in what was to be a drama at once more infamous and more glorious than they knew. Their expedient was both to succeed and fail. The one man was to die for the people, but the nation was to perish. The eternal righteousness that restrains the wrath of man, and even forces it to praise Him, was to turn their selfish expedient into a Divine Sacrifice, which, while it saved man, was only to help the more surely to throw their proud city under the iron heel and devouring torch of Rome. So in the wisdom of God does a soul of good issue from things evil to do the will alike of his mercy and justice.

But Christ knew that though his hour was at hand, it was not yet come. The Prophet was not to perish out of Jerusalem, or in it, save at his own time. So He withdrew "into a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim,"¹ and there waited the coming of the feast that was to mark the moment of his sacrifice. When the roads were thronged with pilgrims from Greece and Egypt, from Italy and Gaul, from Spain and Syria, He, too, turned his face to the holy city, and began his great march to brief bitter death and eternal glorious power. For the time He had become an enigma to his disciples. They could not understand his sorrow, especially as they were still living in the sunshine of his greatest miracle. In his supreme moments society was impossible to Christ.

¹ John xi. 54.

He lived in an atmosphere where human sympathy had to sleep or die, and the human voice to speak unheard. The grief of God is too deep for the thought of man. He who embodied the first could only be a riddle to the second. Life by death, salvation by sacrifice, were truths lying outside the horizon of the spirits then around Christ. The feeling that made Peter rebuke Jesus at the first mention of his sufferings was common, was, too, finely natural.¹ Why should He speak of suffering and death? What need had He who had raised Lazarus to die? So his words seemed mysterious, enigmatical, created shadows of the mind all the deeper because of the recent sunshine. Like men puzzled, they became bewildered, dubious, suspicious, feeling as if they were threatened by evils they had no right to anticipate. St. Mark, after his manner, gives us a glance of real and living insight into the sacred circle just at the moment the pilgrimage of sorrow began: "And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid."² With their expectations unfulfilled, without the experience that could act as interpreter or guide, perplexed by hearing prophecy contradict miracle, and seeing miracle contradict prophecy, they grew bewildered, astonished, doubtful, fell out of fellowship with their Master, and left Him to begin his high and glorious way alone. The shadow that rested on his Spirit so awed and "amazed" theirs that they could not walk by his side, or listen with quick interpretive sympathy to his speech, could only follow after, full of uneasy fears, with thoughts they could speak to each other, but not

¹ Matt. xvi. 22.

² Mark x. 32.

to Him. Yet though they were reluctant learners, the suffering that was to make Him perfect was teaching them. He could not leave them in the pleasant illusions their fancies had woven out of their own desires and his great deeds. To do so had been worse cruelty, had made the awakening an awakening to sorrow that could never have blossomed into joy. And so he turns ever to them with his unwelcome speech of suffering, death, and resurrection,¹ leaving time to be his interpreter. The process was painful, but from it almost all were to come forth purified, one alone was to issue dark in soul, angry in spirit, prepared for worst and darkest deeds, yet with goodness enough in him to be remorseful, and pass hence to his own place, not a seared and conscienceless ruffian, but an anguished and self-despising man, who had by fell experiment made the dreadful discovery that to no man is evil so bad as to the evil-doer.

The miracle at Bethany was thus a centre whence had issued the most conflicting influences; and we must watch their operation in the various circles, friendly, indifferent, inimical, that surround Jesus. Within his own society it created the high hopes that listened amazed, incredulous, to his prophetic words. The disciples found it more agreeable to believe the eye than the ear: on the act they could place their own interpretation, which was so much happier than any meaning they could get out of his speech. The miracle was a prophecy in act, signifying that the hour of his power was at hand. In its light certain former words of his were re-read and made by their quickened imaginations to speak the thing they

¹ Mark x. 32-34.

wished. The Palingenesia,¹ in their sense, was as good as here; the twelve thrones as good as seen, and they seated judging the twelve tribes of Israel. How heedless the new ambitions were of the new prophecies an event significantly shews. He had hardly ceased speaking of the betrayal and death, when Salome, with her sons, came to him, saying, "Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, the other on thy left, in thy kingdom."² The nearest to Him were yet far from Him; even love was too blind to divine the truth; and so in his answer there seems to live the infinite sadness of a spirit not understood, where understanding is life: "Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" Their answer is a tragic revelation of ignorance, and the vain courage that is born of it: "We are able." They did not dream of Gethsemane and the cross, but of the chalice of victory, the baptism that consecrated the throne and purified for judgment. For these they were "able"—qualified for the highest seats, offices, acts in the kingdom. Men who think themselves equal to rule are often found unequal to obedience; and so this conscious ability for the throne was soon to be proved inability to serve in suffering and obey in sacrifice. They did not know that men must suffer with Christ before they could reign with Him; and, in their ignorance, they wished to reign before they had been perfected. And the truth He stated: they *were* to drink of his cup, and be baptized with his baptism; his agony and cross were to be theirs; in Him and with Him

¹ Matt. xix. 28-30.

² Matt. xx. 21.

they were to suffer. Fellowship with Him in life involved fellowship with Him in death, and as the joy of the first had been, the sorrow of the second would be. But the seat on his right hand or his left was not an absolute or arbitrary, but a conditional gift; it was reserved for those "for whom it is prepared of my Father." The reward was to the worthiest; proximity was to depend on affinity. His must suffer with Him, if they were to "be glorified together."¹ But his words were as yet a parable whose meaning they could not read; the Cross, with the mingled agonies and joys that followed it, was needed to teach them. The brothers, puzzled, turned to face the disciples; the disciples, angry, turned to rebuke the brothers; all confused, bewildered to listen to the words, "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant; even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for the many."² A generation later, one of the men who stood there as in a dream, with a deed of highest power in his memory, visions of judicial glory in his imagination, words of sorrow and death in his ears, was to be a prisoner in Patmos "for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."³ There, with the blue Ægean all around him, he was still to feel as in the presence of the Son of man, hearing Him speak with a voice like the sound of the multitudinous waves ever breaking in music on the beach. There, too, he was to dream of "dominion and glory," of a heaven that ruled earth, and a Christ that made men "kings and priests unto God and his Father."⁴ But

¹ Rom. viii. 17.

² Matt. xx. 27, 28.

³ Rev. i. 9.

⁴ Rev. xx. 1-6.

there he had no vain vision of a throne to him who first claimed it. His visions were now of "a multitude no man could number" "before the throne and before the Lamb." And he does not ask, as of old, for a place, but simply rejoices to hear, "These are they which come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."¹ He knows now what he knew not then: to drink Christ's cup and to share his baptism is to live and reign with Him.

So Jesus begins to go up to Jerusalem with the vision of the cross standing out clear before his own soul, while the disciples dreamt of his kingship and their own coming authority. The pilgrimage that was now beginning was to be his last, a strange contrast to his first. Then he was a boy, full of great wonder, of large questions, of dim foreshadowings of what was to be; now he is a man, who has realized the ideal of humanity the ages behind had been straining after and the ages before were to worship; a man, who has lived his high, holy, lonely life, and is going forward to the death which is to finish the work his Father gave Him to do. Then He was an object of beauty and delight; the nature within Him rejoiced, and nature without whispered to Him her divinest secrets; now He is like a root out of the dry ground, without the beauty that awakens desire, "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." Then man turned to Him his best and most amiable side, as man ever does to a child; parents were trustful, neighbours kindly, the very doctors of the temple gentle, admiring, fond, won by the winsomeness of the glorious

¹ Rev. vii. 14.

boy ; now that his physical is sublimed into spiritual loveliness, they can see in Him nothing to admire ; leave Him so unloved that he feels more homeless than the fox that, when hunted, can hide in the earth, or the bird that can sit and sing to its brooding mate. And his homelessness was now becoming loneliness ; the men that had known Him were ceasing to know, dreaming dreams that made them unconscious of the realities that awed his spirit. Earth has its changes for every man, but to whom did it change as to Thee, O Thou Lamb of God ? Heaven was about Thy infancy ; may we not say, hell was about Thy manhood ? In Thy cradle Thou didst hear the song of the heavenly host ; but on the cross Thou wert to hear the hoarse and angry cries of men who mocked Thy sufferings and demanded Thy death.

Yet when the pilgrimage began it seemed a triumphal procession. The spirit that lived in the disciples possessed the multitude, and the fame of this great miracle clothed Him to their eyes in the attributes of the expected Messiah. So we see Him approaching Jericho, on his way from Ephraim to Jerusalem, the centre of a wondering crowd.¹ Though He still bears the name "Jesus of Nazareth," it is used as if big with latent significance. Curiosity is on tiptoe, and reigns over rich and poor alike. As He enters, a blind beggar invokes his aid. The multitude, vain of their wonder, wished to silence him ; the person they marvelled at must be above hearing a blind man's prayer. But the "Son of David" heard and healed, and the people, gratified while surprised, only the more "gave praise unto God." As He passes through

¹ Luke xviii. 35-36.

Jericho the crowd thickens, and a rich publican, determined to see Jesus, but unable to do it for the crowd, climbs up into a sycamore tree. He was a very different man from Bartimæus; notice of him was a far more serious thing. The publican was always an offence to the Jew. He was the symbol of bondage, of Gentile conquest and tyranny: He was worse than an outcast; he was one who had sold himself to the alien as an agent of his robbery and oppression. He was a son of Abraham who had not only dishonoured his father, but was helping the heathen to work his death and shame. And to love such a son, nay to recognize his sonship, was to sin against the father and all the hopes represented by his name. But the most hated of the hated race was the rich publican, whose wealth had grown by extortion, who had with un pitying hand robbed the widow and made the orphan destitute. And Zaccheus was a man of this type, an object of horror to the pious and hate to all. It was the right and religious thing to pity and help the beggar, and to despise and avoid the publican. Yet the Jesus who came clothed in fresh glory from his work on Bartimæus suddenly pauses, looks at Zaccheus, invites him to descend and receive Him into his house. The people saw and heard with amazement which deepened into anger; the new horror eclipsed the old admiration, and displeasure silenced praise. Yet the act was one that expressed the Actor's mind, especially in its contrast with the minds about Him, far more forcibly than the most forcible speech. It was symbolical, signified that He had come not to work miracles, but to change men; not to dazzle and delight the curious, but "to seek and save the lost." The

men around Him were saying, "Here is our Messiah; his deeds shew Him to be the power of God. He is on his way to Jerusalem to establish and proclaim his empire, to fulfil our law, to make the Jew the conqueror of the world and the king of man." And He to their evident, though unexpressed, thoughts made answer, "I am come to do, not your will, but My Father's, to be no political, but a spiritual King, to be not the tool of the priest and the scribe, but the Saviour of the fallen and outcast. And look how simply, yet thoroughly, My spiritual work can be done. You have had your will with Zaccheus, hated him, despised him, dealt with him as with a heathen and an alien, and he has answered your hatred with extortion, your anathemas with oppression, your censures with heavier exactions. But see how potent are gentle words and gracious acts; under them the bad publican becomes the good Hebrew, dutiful to Israel and obedient to the law of love, giving half his goods to feed the poor, and restoring fourfold what he had wrongfully obtained." Yet the results only aggravated the offence. To fanaticism good done in ways that displease it is no better than evil, or rather worse, inasmuch as fatal to its exclusive claims to be right. So Jesus, to get at the root of the matter, strikes at their false hopes the thought "that the kingdom of God should immediately appear."¹ He would not go to Jerusalem as their Messiah, to be in their sense the Christ. The Jews had been citizens of the Divine kingdom, servants of the King. Their duty was to develop its resources, guard his interests, and extend his authority. Some had done so. Lawgivers and

¹ Luke xix. 11.

prophets had splendidly served the ideals and ends of the kingdom of God ; but one, the one, too, in possession, had not. He, the living Jew, had bound the eternal truth in his napkin of legal maxims and ceremonies, and buried it in the soil of rabbinical and sacerdotal formalism. He feared God as "an austere man" feared to use his trust; and so buried it, cast it out of his spirit into the earth that it might suffer and waste there unused! And Jesus declines to be judged by this faithless servant, claims rather to judge and condemn him ; refuses to be measured, by his acts and ideas, asserts rather his right to take from him the treasure he had so abused. The Jew had thrown away his splendid opportunity, and now he was to lose it. His infidelity to his trust had, as its punishment, his inability to understand the Christ of God, and now he was to be to the ages the grand illustration of the truth, "To him that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him."¹

Six days before the Passover the pilgrims reached Bethany, and there paused. Wonder still lived in the village. Love still dwelt in the home of Lazarus. Into it Jesus entered, and there He was consecrated, anointed the Divine Sacrifice which should abolish the old faith and create the new. Love has often a sweet unconscious wisdom, and in its humblest ministries meanings may lie so great as to be visible to the eye of God alone. And here its kinship with the saintliest stood confessed. In these closing hours nothing seems so tragic as the blindness of the disciples, and the clear open vision of the Master as to the doom that

¹ Luke xix. 26.

was to be. They were full of hope in a soon to be manifested glory, He full of prophetic agony as to the death to be endured. Like those who knew his power and believed in its impending final victory, Lazarus and his sisters thought only of a glad welcome to their Friend. The hour was all sunshine; the fast-falling shadow was unseen and unfear'd. So his coming was celebrated by a supper, and He who had known the gloom of the grave tasted the deepest joy of his life. But Mary's love, too deep for speech, too great for tears, as if she felt within the joy the cold heart of sorrow, stole, while Martha waited, behind Jesus, and anointed his feet "with ointment of spikenard very costly."¹ And then, as the fragrance filled the room, strange things became manifest. The feeling that had long slumbered in one breast broke into speech. "Why this waste?" cried Judas. "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?"² But the unholy avarice which dared to clothe itself in the form of sacred charity was rebuked by the sad voice which revealed the heart sad by the realized presence of death: "Let her alone, against the day of my burying hath she kept this."

The words of Judas were characteristic—the familiar words of his kind the world over. A work of what seems splendid improvidence may be greater than what seems a work of needed beneficence. Some men cry out against waste when what they mean is some loss to their sordid selves. If the money that bought the "ointment of spikenard" had been "given to the poor" it would have done them little good; but, used as it was, it became the condition of an act which has filled

¹ John xii. 3.

² John xii. 5.

the world with its fragrance, and enriched our poverty with one of the loveliest deeds of devotion. In Mary and Judas two opposite spirits live : in the one, a love to Christ that seeks to live for Him ; in the other, a love to self that means to use rather than serve Him. For Mary to give, for Judas to receive, was to be blessed. To the one, Christ's suffering was a welcome opportunity for service ; to the other, a detested occasion of weakness, an inexplicable and disastrous moment of failure. Mary is an ideal disciple, one with love great enough to transform Jesus of Nazareth into the Christ of Christianity ; Judas is the type of the disciple by accident, seeking by association with Christ personal advantage rather than assimilation to Him. And the results of the discipleship were to be tragically unlike : a growing joy to Mary, a growing misery to Judas. In the society of Jesus she found a congenial home, but he an irritating and hateful element. As his nature and Christ's developed alongside each other, their dissimilarities and antipathies must have become ever more pronounced. The man must slowly have come to feel himself an alien ; and as truth dawned upon him, he would be first bewildered, then wretched, feeling like Satan among the sons of God, only without the serene cynicism that could sneer at eternal goodness in its very presence and to its very face ; or rather like an evil spirit, moody and melancholy, who had strayed into a circle of angels, where the contrast of their light and his darkness deepens his misery tenfold. A man that so feels is near to despair, and may do the deed of the desperate. When the last hope perishes, the desperation that seeks revenge and begets remorse is sure to come. For Judas the moment is at hand. If Jeru-

salem does not reveal Jesus as the Messiah, he will forswear Him, forsake his society, destroy himself, and be over and done with the profitless misery that is now paralyzing spirit and spoiling life. So within the chosen circle devotion waited to be perfected by suffering, and disappointment to be avenged by treason.

On the next day Jesus entered Jerusalem. The part of the pilgrim band that had gone forward carried into the city the news of his coming, and the people, all enthusiasm for the "Son of David," the Man who had raised the dead, prepared for Him a fitting welcome. Those who had passed the night at Bethany joined the circle that surrounded the Master, partook of its spirit, and shared its hopes. As they ascended Olivet, feeling as if they had in their midst the sent of God, the salvation of Israel, they were joined by pilgrims hastening to the feast, and on the summit they were met by the multitudes who had sallied from the city to meet the advancing Christ. The enthusiasm grew as the crowd increased; clothes were spread, palm-branches scattered in his path, and as each fresh stream blended with the river, the shout rose, "Hosannah! Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord."¹ That might have seemed the proudest moment in the life of Jesus, the moment when the homage of man was most spontaneous and most real; but, in truth, it was one of the saddest. The enthusiasm only deepened his solitude, made it more awful to his spirit, while throwing upon the coming events a more tragic colouring. Their praise was pain, for what they praised was the idol of their own imaginations, not the Christ who was coming to suffer and to die. In the midst of

¹ John xii. 13.

their joy He rode possessed of the vivid consciousness that the discovery of the truth would change their jubilant cry of welcome into the delirious shout of passion and revenge. So, as they swept round the shoulder of the hill, and the city burst upon his view, turreted, temple-crowned, lying white and radiant in the glorious sunlight, hallowed by a thousand sacred memories, darkened by a thousand sins, the pathos of the place and the moment, the then and the to be, the ideal and the actual, the men and city as they seemed and as they were, was more than his heart could bear, and He wept, saying, "If thou hadst known, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes."¹

Once within the city, the great drama began to unfold its successive acts. Jesus asserted his authority as the Christ by purging the temple and teaching in it.² The enthusiasm of the people paralyzed the priests and the Sanhedrin.³ They could not as yet use popular passion against Him, and so they cautiously assailed Himself, seeking to involve Him in conflict with the multitude, or with Rome, or with Moses. Their first point was to question his authority. Whence had He it? Who gave it?⁴ He replied by subtly revealing the purpose of their question and their consequent inability to judge his truth: "The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven or of men?" If they said, "From heaven," they condemned their own unbelief; if "Of men," they broke with the people—a dangerous thing while they were moved with Messianic enthusiasm and inspired by Messianic hopes. So they could

¹ Luke xix. 42.

² Ibid. 45-47.

³ Ibid. 47, 48; Mark xi. 18.

⁴ Luke xx. 1, 2; Mark xi. 25, 26.

only plead ignorance. But how could men too ignorant to judge of the Baptist's claims judge as to Christ's? The next point was political—an attempt to find occasion for “delivering him into the power and authority of the governor.”¹ The men chosen for this work were, significantly enough, “Pharisees and Herodians.”² The Pharisees were a religious, the Herodians a political, party. The former were the exponents and representatives of the ancient theocratic ideal; the latter, the adherents of the house of Herod. The Pharisees hated the alien, believed that there could be no true king in Israel, unless he came of the family of David; the Herodians served and upheld the kingdom of the alien, the brood of the cruel and abhorred Idumean. The Pharisees stood in absolute antagonism to Rome. To them its sovereignty was the worst bondage, the dominion of the heathen over the people of God; but the Herodians accepted, diplomatically at least, the authority that had placed the sons of Herod in their respective kingdoms or tetrarchies. Now these parties, thus radically opposed, combined against Jesus, submitting this question, “Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar?”³ On this point they were divided. The Pharisees held it wrong, but the Herodians held it right, at least as a matter of political expediency. Hence they would, with fine innocence, submit their difference to his arbitrament. But the innocence masked a deep design. If He said, “It is lawful,” He would offend the people and the strongest and noblest national beliefs and hopes; if He said, “It is not lawful,” He would come into collision with Rome, the power

¹ Luke xx. 20.

² Mark xii. 13.

³ Luke xx. 22; Mark xii. 14.

that, with equal ease and equal coldness, crushed its least and its greatest opponent, and then passed serenely on. But it is not in the nature of wisdom to play into the hands of cunning. He said, "Show me a denarius," and asked, "Whose is the image and superscription?" "Cæsar's." "Then the coin is his—minted, issued by him, used, circulated by you. It is a coin by his act, is, too, regarded and treated by you as money, and therefore the question is none. The use of Cæsar's money is tribute to Cæsar. Render to him his, and to God God's."

But though the Pharisees were vanquished, the Sadducees were, if not of a subtler, of an astuter race. They had been educated in a fine contempt for vulgar superstitions, the traditions and doctrines for which the Pharisees were so zealous. They did not believe in development or a continuous revelation. God had spoken to Moses, but had been silent ever since. The Law embodied his will; what was not law was of man, not of God. And so they were exceedingly jealous for Moses, and exceedingly jealous of "the traditions of the fathers." They had hitherto left the conflict with Jesus to the Pharisees, rather pleased that their rivals should be so beset and bewildered; but now that Caiaphas had declared his death to be necessary, they would confront and overpower Him with the authority of their Lawgiver. They selected their point carefully. Jesus had explicitly affirmed his belief in a future state,¹ and the Pharisees were here weak, for they believed as firmly as He. But the Sadducees were strong; they did not find the belief in Moses, found it, indeed, conspicuously absent and explicitly disproved. So they

¹ Luke xvi. 19-31.

elaborated their most conclusive argument, and presented it thus : " Master, Moses wrote unto us, If any man's brother die, having a wife, and he die without children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. There were therefore seven brethren ; and the first took a wife, and died without children. And the second took her to wife, and he died childless. And the third took her ; and in like manner the seven also : and they left no children, and died. Last of all the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife of them is she ? for seven had her to wife." ¹ The case was a splendid one for discussion in the schools, excellent for the exercise of subtle wits. If there is a future state where all these husbands are alive, and this poor over-married woman alive also, " whose wife shall she be ? Come now, good Master, tell us." They did not raise the question whether immortal relations must be adjusted to provisional arrangements ; they took for granted that a temporary and barbarous expedient was an eternal law. Yet their own hearts might have answered their question. We may imagine in the company that came to Jesus a young Sadducee with the wistful sadness in his eyes that can be seen only where the light that has gladdened life has been extinguished. He has known the joy of possession and the agony of loss. A gentle womanly presence had once made his manhood beautiful, his home happy, his life rich with sweet and soothing grace. But just when his joy was deepest, hateful death had come, and left him sitting dumb in the shadow of a great affliction. The first desolation is past, but only that a level and

¹ Luke xx. 28-33.

cheerless melancholy might come, which forces ever to his lips the cry—

O for the touch of a vanished hand
And the sound of a voice that is still !

Yet no hand is stretched through the darkness, no voice answers out of the eternal silence ; and he can only mourn—

The tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.

But had such an one been in the company, would not the longing, the strong desire, that could almost create the belief in immortality, born of necessity and the very nature of his own spirit, have made him loathe the cruel frivolity of the case supposed, with its primitive and provisional law, and listen for words that might shed upon his own sorrow the consolation of a great hope ? And if he had been there, he would not have been disappointed. Jesus lifted the question into a region above the heaven of the Sadducean spirit. They erred through ignorance.¹ He recognized no sanctity, no universal and eternal validity, in the law of a semi-civilized people. In the resurrection men were not governed by the law of Moses ; they were “ as the angels of God.” Their natures determined their relations, affinities created society. And the Highest was the regulative nature. The living God involved the life of those that lived to Him. Men who lived in communion with Him became as needful to Him as He was to them. And this truth was expressed in the ancient saying, “ I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” He could not be their God unless He was a real Being to them ; they could not be real beings to

¹ Matt. xxii. 29.

Him unless they still lived. To be the God of them, He must be a God to them; and He could be a God only to living persons, not to silent memories or empty names.

Jesus thus found immortality at the very heart of the Mosaic law, involved in the distinctive name of God, Jehovah, the living, the creative. The Sadducees erred because they did not know God. If they had rightly conceived Him, they had strongly believed in the immortal being of man. The man who is made in the image of God is made to be as God, and be like Him for ever. The thought embodied in his answer was so new and strange to the Sadducees that it was almost like an answer in an unknown tongue. They were silenced, bewildered, and humiliated before the multitude, who "were astonished at his doctrine."¹

And so his enemies could not so involve Him either with the people or with Cæsar or with Moses, as to carry through their expedient. But what they failed to do his own revelation of Himself accomplished. The revelation was double, by antipathy and by sympathy, the one shewing what He was not—to the Jews; the other shewing what He was—to his disciples. As regards the first, it was made both by action and speech. He acted like the Man of sorrows, not like the victorious Messiah. There is nothing more marvellous, even in the Gospels, than the self-repression of Jesus in his latest hours. He was in every respect a contrast and contradiction to the Messiah of tradition, and He emphasized, as it were, the points of difference. The homage of ignorance was to Him only latent aversion, and He

¹ Matt. xxii. 33.

could not allow his true nature to remain unknown. And so, the more He revealed Himself, the cooler grew their enthusiasm; the less He fulfilled their expectations, the more dubious, suspicious, watchful for offence they became. And what they wanted they found in his words. His discourses in Jerusalem predicted the overthrow, not the triumph, of Judaism, denounced the hypocrisy that reigned in high places, praised the piety that lived in poverty and seclusion.¹ The city, the temple, the worship, the very people were to perish, and only a remnant was to be saved. False Christs were to rise, be welcomed, believed, followed; confusion was to grow into anarchy, and anarchy to end in death.² This was strange language for one who claimed to be the Christ to use in Jerusalem, and respecting the Jews. History was to prove it true; but meanwhile it was held worse than the worst falsehood. But while He was becoming to the people as an enemy by telling them the truth, He was privily drawing his disciples round Him, opening to them the inmost secrets of his spirit, the deepest mysteries of his truth. They heard, but were slow of heart to believe. Yet in speaking to the men that were, He spoke to the men that were to be; and words not understood then became in later days words of spirit and life. What estranged the heart of Jerusalem was to draw the heart of the world; and the wisdom of Christ was to be justified to all after ages by the events which proved that his antagonism to Judaism was the sublimest service to man.

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¹ Matt. xxiii. 13 ff.; Luke xxi. 1-4.

² Luke xxi. 5-24; Matt. xxiv. 3-31.