

The Life of Christ, for Family Devotions - November

by F. L. Mortimer

Christ's prayer for his apostles, disciples, and all believers is a powerful reminder of the importance of prayer and the love and protection of God.

Scripture: Matthew 27:24, Luke 18:13, Luke 23:47, John 18:37

Topics: "Christ's Trials", "Repentance Needed"

Description

Favell Lee Mortimer preaches about the various trials and tribulations Jesus faced before different judges, highlighting the contrast between the innocence and righteousness of Jesus and the guilt and corruption of those who judged Him. The sermon emphasizes the importance of standing firm in the truth, even in the face of opposition and injustice, and the need for genuine repentance and humility when confronted with one's own sins and failings.

Transcript

A Devotional Commentary on the Gospels

Arranged for family devotions, for every day in the year.

By Favell Lee Mortimer (1802--1878)

NOVEMBER 1

John 17:6-10. Christ speaks to his Father of his apostles.

It is very touching to hear a friend praying for us. The heart of a child is moved and melted while he hears a parent describe his case, and plead for him at the footstool of divine mercy. Are there not some of us who can remember such moments? How did the disciples feel when they heard their beloved Master speak of them to his Father; for they must have known it was of them he spoke, when he said, "The men whom you gave me out of the world."

Are the apostles the only men that the Father has given to the Son? Blessed be his name, they are not. An innumerable multitude have been given to the Son, as the fruit of his infinite sufferings. Paul, in writing to the Ephesians, says, "Blessed be the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with

all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as he has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world." Adam and Eve, by one sinful act, gave themselves, and all their children, to Satan; and the whole human race must have perished, had not the Father given to his Son a spiritual family. And that family is a numerous one; "that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God." (2 Cor. 4:15.)

The Lord Jesus watches over the men whom the Father has given him out of the world! Who would not water the plants, or nourish the lambs, that a beloved friend had entrusted to his care! Much more would he show kindness to his friend's children if they were left to his guardianship. But no guardian was ever so watchful, no teacher so patient, no nurse so tender as Jesus ever has been to the men whom the Father has given him out of the world. During the three years that he led the apostles from place to place, he forgot his own ease, his own pleasure, his own feelings, that he might instruct, and comfort, and edify them. When he was going to leave them, he could declare to his Father that he had faithfully discharged his trust. He said, "I have manifested your name unto the men which you gave me out of the world." On the part of Jesus nothing had been lacking.

But what did Jesus say of his apostles? Did he declare to his Father how often they had doubted his power, repulsed his poor suppliants, and disputed with each other for honor and distinction? No! he said not one word against them. He was not their accuser, but their intercessor. He said, "They have kept your word; they have believed that you did send me."

Many believers, who are now cast down, would be lifted up, if they could hear the prayers that Jesus is offering up for them at his Father's right hand. While they are lamenting their sins, their Savior is speaking well of them before the throne. While they are saying, "Surely Jesus must be ashamed of us," He is saying, "I am glorified in them." If the change already wrought in their hearts brings glory to Jesus, how much more will their perfection! Could we see the diamond as it was found in the mine, we should know how to appreciate the jeweler's skill. How unlike is the dull and rough stone to the gem that shines with liquid luster in the monarch's crown! But not so unlike as the one dark, polluted, guilty soul, is to the pure and bright spirit now rejoicing in the presence of Jesus. When millions of such happy beings surround the throne, with what rapture will their Savior say, "I am glorified in them." To have rescued those souls from the pit of hell, and to have washed them from the pollution of sin, will bring more glory to Jesus than to have created the innumerable worlds that fill the boundless regions of space.

November 2

John 17:11-19. Christ prays for his apostles.

Before the Lord Jesus offered up any petition for his disciples, he presented their case to his Father. He described the desolate situation in which they would soon be left. "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to you." Before we pray for our friends, it is well to consider their circumstances, and to spread them before the Lord. By doing this, we are enabled to offer up prayers suited to their needs. Our indolent minds are often content with saying, "Bless my friend, my father, and my child;" but we ought to inquire what blessing each of them appears to stand most in need of, and to ask for that.

What was the petition which the Savior made for his disciples? It was this--"Keep through your own name those whom you have given me, that they may be one, as we are." When the disciples heard this prayer, must they not have been reminded of their frequent contentions? How lately they had disputed which

should be greatest! But their Lord did not ask that any of them might be made great, but that all might be kept, and be made one. God is love, and every one that loves is born of God. God cannot make his creatures happy without teaching them first to love each other. The Father answered his Son's petition, and knit the hearts of the apostles together in one. We read of no more contentions among them. During the time their Lord lay in his grave, they mingled their tears together; when he appeared to them after his resurrection, they were assembled in one room; and after he had ascended, they continued with one accord in prayers and supplications.

It is the design of Jesus that all his people shall live together forever and ever. None of them could bear the idea of not dwelling with their Lord. They must, therefore, dwell together. It is sad to think that even true believers sometimes disagree when living for a little while beneath the same roof. Ah, did they but remember that they will live forever in their Father's house, they could never harbor one unkind thought.

Jesus offered up another petition--"I pray not that you should take them out of the world, but that you should keep them from the evil." The disciples longed to be taken out of this world, now that their Master was going to leave it! But they had a great work to perform in it. They were to seek those that were lost, even as Jesus had sought them. It is natural for believers to desire to leave this world. He whom they love best has left it, and they long to be where he is. But what would become of the world, if all the servants of Christ were taken out of it? The Sabbath would return, but no faithful minister would entreat sinners to flee from the wrath to come; the Bible might be opened, but no pious friend would press the truth home upon the conscience of the heedless reader; death would come, but none would point the departing soul to Christ, or, kneeling by his bedside, would implore mercy in the last hour.

Are there any who say, "I would cheerfully remain in this world, were it not for the sin that continually harasses me?" Has the Holy Spirit taught you to hate sin? Be comforted, the Savior has prayed that you may be kept from this evil. He said, "I pray not that you should take them out of this world, but that you should keep them from the evil." Your desire was once expressed by a little child, when conversing with his playmates. The question was proposed, "What is the thing you wish for most?" Several children said they would like to have nice or pretty things. But when it came to the turn of this little boy of ten years old to speak, he said, "I wish to live without sinning." This was not a mere empty profession, for the child showed by his conduct that he hated sin.

November 3

John 17:20 to end. Christ prays for all who shall believe on him.

We esteem it a privilege to hear the prayers of eminent saints, especially in their dying hours. How invaluable is the blessing we enjoy in possessing the record of this prayer of the Son of God! The apostles must have listened to each sentence with the deepest interest. Their tears may have flowed fast while their Master was praying, but those tears must have been less bitter than before. What comfort it must have given them to hear Jesus offer up this petition, "Father, I will that those whom you have given me be with me where I am!" They desired earnestly to be with him. How grieved they were, when at the supper-table they heard him say, "Where I go you cannot come." Afterwards Jesus softened the hardness of the saying by telling Peter, "Where I go, you cannot follow me now, but you shall follow me afterwards." Now they heard him pray that they might all be with him, and they saw plainly that he DESIRED to have them with him.

And was it for them alone he prayed? No! he has not left us in doubt on this subject. He said, "Neither pray I for these ALONE, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word." When he uttered this petition, he had in his thoughts every creature who ever has believed in him--who ever shall believe in him; not one so weak, so young, so lowly, as to be forgotten. The little child who in dying should lisp, with loving heart, its Savior's words, "Permit little children to come unto me;"--the diseased beggar who, as he lay on his pallet, should exclaim with lively faith, "Come, Lord Jesus;"--yes, even the condemned criminal, who on his way to the scaffold, with true penitence should smite on his bosom and say, "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner;"--each of these was remembered by the Son of God, when he said, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word."

And does not each of us hope that he was included in this petition? If we believe in Jesus, if we ever shall believe in him, we were included in it. And if he prayed for us then, he prays for us now; for he has never ceased to intercede for all believers. If anyone thinks in his heart, "What a comfort it would be to me to know that my Savior prayed for me," let him ask himself this question, "Do I pray for myself?" All who believe in Jesus, pray to the Father in his name. They ask for the very things that he asked for. He said, "Father, I will that they also whom you have given me be with me where I am." Is this our desire?--Is this our prayer? Do we ever ask the Father to let us live forever with him, that we may behold the glory of Jesus? There are many who desire to go to heaven that they may escape from pain and grief; but only those who believe in Jesus desire to behold his glory. And HE desires that they shall behold it, and he PRAYS that they may. Can His prayer be refused? Impossible. When Jesus shall be seated on his throne of glory, and shall survey the vast multitude of the redeemed, he will know if any one of them is missing. He has loved each, he has died for each, he has prayed for each; he could not forget ONE. He would not be satisfied, if one were absent. It may be that we have loved him but a little while, a few years, or only a few DAYS; but he loved us before the foundation of the world. Our prayers to him have been short, and feeble; but his prayers for us were offered up before we were born, and ever since we were born. While we sleep he prays; and even when we sin he prays. "He ever lives to make intercession for them that come unto God by him."

November 4

Luke 22:39-46. The Redeemer's agony in the garden.

Was there ever any sight, since the beginning of the world, so wonderful, so affecting, as the Prince of life passing through the valley of the shadow of death! Can the angels have continued their songs during that dreadful night? They were deeply interested in all that befell their beloved Lord. One of their number was sent from heaven to strengthen him. What must that honored angel have felt when he approached the earth, and beheld HIM who filled heaven with his glory, lying prostrate on the ground, and bathed in his own blood! But did he attempt to persuade the Lord to renounce his purpose of saving man? Did he say, "Why suffer so much for that polluted and apostate race?" Ah, no! he strengthened him. We cannot tell what words he spoke, but we may be sure they breathed love towards fallen man, and sympathy with his suffering Lord. Perhaps he spoke of the lake of fire, into which all men must sink if the Son of God should give up the work of redemption. Or perhaps he spoke of the joys redeemed saints shall taste through eternal ages, because he would persevere in his mighty undertaking. But, more than all, he must have spoken of the glory that would redound to God his Father, through the salvation of sinners. Hereafter we may know every particular concerning our Lord's last conflict.

But do we ask what was the cause of our Savior's agony? Was it the fear of the bodily pangs of death? Surely the Son of God possessed more courage than man. Fear of bodily anguish could not have overwhelmed the Captain of the hosts of the Lord. He himself told his disciples the cause, when he said, "Hereafter I shall not talk much with you, for the prince of this world comes." (John 14:30.) The cause of his sufferings was, the assault of the prince of darkness. Hell came to meet him in the garden of Gethsemane. Satan, who had been defeated in the wilderness, returned with his legions, to make a last attack. When Jesus sweat great drops of blood, he was struggling with principalities and powers. His foot was lifted up to crush the serpent's head, and his heel was in his jaws. His weapon of defense was prayer. Prayer was his sword, his shield, and his helmet.

And why did the Father permit Satan to attack his well-beloved Son? Because He had sent his Son to be the Savior of the world; therefore He laid upon him the iniquity of us all, and inflicted the punishment due to us all. Those who believe in Jesus can never suffer the punishment due to their sins, because Jesus has suffered it in their place. They may, they will suffer, but it will not be to atone for their sins. Jesus has atoned for them. Criminals cannot be punished twice for the same offence--Jesus has suffered the punishment of all the sins of all his people. Their sufferings are not penalties, inflicted by a judge, but chastenings, bestowed by a father. When they pass through the valley of the shadow of death, Satan may assault them, but he cannot distress them as he distressed their Lord. Many believers have passed through that dark valley, singing as they went, and have expired almost without a struggle or a sigh.

"Jesus can make a dying bed

Feel soft as downy pillows are,

While on his bosom I lean my head,

And breathe my life out sweetly there."

Isaac Watts.

But what will become of those who neglect this great salvation? They will drink of the cup of wrath. What a cup it is! "Deep and large--it contains much." (Ez. 23:32.) God says to the wicked, "You shall even drink it, and suck it out." And why? "Because you have forgotten me, and cast my words behind your back." He is a wicked man who forgets the Savior, and casts his promises of pardon behind his back.

November 5

Matthew 26:36-46. The disciples sleep instead of watching.

With what feelings the pious traveler now views the spot where his Savior suffered excruciating pangs! It lies just beyond the gates of Jerusalem, in a narrow and gloomy valley. The tall steep rocks on which the temple formerly stood shade one side of the valley, and the gentle sloping sides of Mount Olivet the other. The stream of Kedron flows between, though in summer its bed is dry. A bridge is placed over it, and a narrow path leads to Gethsemane. This garden covers about an acre of land, and is enclosed by a low stone wall. Eight olive-trees may still be seen casting their broad shadows over that earth which once received the precious drops of the Savior's blood. They are ancient trees of immense size; their roots have burst the soil, and form resting-places for those who come here to sit and muse. None who visit Gethsemane can wonder that the Savior often resorted there, for it seems an appropriate place for meditation and for prayer.

At the entrance of this garden the suffering Redeemer left eight of his apostles--the other three he chose as the witnesses of his agony. They were the three that had been the witnesses of his glory on the Mount of transfiguration. No doubt he had designed to prepare them by that enchanting sight for the dreadful scene of Gethsemane. Had they not beheld his countenance when it shone as the sun, their faith might have been shaken by the sight of his face marred with anguish, and bathed in blood.

These apostles must have esteemed it an honor to accompany their Lord to his sorrowful retreat; but this honor proved to be the occasion of their humiliation. Though they had said they would die with him, they failed to watch with their suffering Master, even for one hour. Three times he rose from prayer to rouse them from sleep. How gentle his reproof! "Could you not watch with me one hour?" How wise his caution, "The spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak." He knew what sharp trials were coming upon them, therefore he said, "Pray that you enter not into temptation." How often shall we find, when we look back upon our past lives, that we received warnings before we fell into sin. The remembrance of these warnings makes us feel that we are without excuse, and that we are guilty in the sight of God.

What a precious opportunity these apostles lost of showing love to their Master by watching with him in the garden! We never can enjoy such a privilege; but though we cannot watch with Jesus himself, we may watch with his suffering members. He will consider sympathy shown to them, as shown to himself. Among his people there are many in deep sorrow. Some are harassed by the sore temptations of Satan; many are persecuted by wicked men, and many more are suffering under heavy bereavements and painful diseases, inflicted by the hand of God. With these let us watch; with these let us sympathize; with their infirmities let us be touched, and in their afflictions let us be afflicted. He who once said to Saul, when he persecuted his people, "Why are you persecuting me?" will say to those who comfort his people, "You have watched with me."

November 6

Matthew 26:47-50. Judas betrays his Master.

It is impossible to conceive a greater crime than Judas committed when he betrayed his Master. It would have been a cruel act to deliver a stranger into the hands of his enemies; but Judas betrayed the kindest Friend, and the most generous Benefactor. Had he committed the deed openly, his sin would have been atrocious, but he did it secretly, and even covered it with a veil of love. What could have induced him to fix upon a token of affection as the sign by which to point out his Master to his foes? Did he hope to deceive his Lord? Surely he must have known that he was already detected by him--for when he had once dared to ask, "Is it I?" Jesus had replied, "You have said." But he may have hoped to deceive his fellow-apostles. He may not have heard his Master say to one of them, "He who dips his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me."

The Lord, however, would not permit him to imagine he had escaped detection. He said, "Friend, (or companion,) Why have you come? Why are you betraying the Son of man with a kiss?" Did the Lord's gentle appeal melt his cruel heart? O no! that heart had already resisted the strongest expressions of divine love. Judas had seen the Lord of all, girded with a towel, bending low, and washing his disciples' feet. He had felt the touch of those sacred hands around his own feet, around those feet that had already been swift to shed innocent and precious blood. He had witnessed the trouble of his spirit, when he said, "One of you shall betray me." He who could resist such expressions of love, was past feeling.

And did the Lord of glory permit the traitor's lips to touch his holy cheeks? Did heaven permit hell to draw near, and God permit Satan to approach? In this behavior, he set us an example of perfect patience. No greater provocation can be conceived, than that which Judas gave to the Lord. Not one of us can presume to say that he ever received so great a provocation. When we feel disposed to think that any creature has treated us with unheard-of ingratitude, and inconceivable treachery, let us remember Judas.

There are some who behave to Jesus now that he is in heaven, as Judas did when He was upon earth. When it seems to be their interest to appear to love him, they put on the mask of piety; but when they can gain worldly advantages by betraying his servants, they will do it, and yet all the time continue to observe the forms of religion. They do not consider how much their guilt is increased by their acts of apparent devotion. God reproached Israel with similar hypocrisy, saying, "When they had slain their children to their idols, then they came the same day into my sanctuary to profane it." (Ez. 23:39.) Satan employs such people to do his darkest deeds. Let all who, while they hear the gospel, yet remain unconverted, fear, lest they should ever become hardened in wickedness, and be driven to commit actions which they cannot now bear to think of. But if we love Christ, then we are sure we can never act the part of Judas. We may be tempted in some evil hour to forsake our Lord, yes, even to deny him, but we never shall, we never can, deliberately betray him.

November 7

John 18:1-9. The enemies of Christ fall to the ground.

How dreadful was the prospect that lay before the Savior when he went forth to meet his enemies! If we, before we passed through our light afflictions, knew all we should be called to endure, how often our minds would shrink back appalled! After having experienced bitter sufferings, we feel that had we known beforehand their minute particulars, we should have been overwhelmed with the prospect. But Jesus knew every minute circumstance of his approaching sufferings. He knew the pangs each nail would give his feeble body, and the grief each scornful speech would create in his sensitive heart. And, above all, he knew the horror that the guilt of our sins would cause his spotless soul. He might have escaped from all these torments; but he willingly gave himself up into the hands of his foes.

At the words, "I am he," his enemies went backward and fell to the ground. "The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars; the voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness." (Ps. 29.) The voice of Jesus, though so gentle that little children were not afraid to hear it, was so powerful that it broke the strength of his stubborn foes, and shook their stout hearts. His disciples had once been cheered in the storm by hearing their Master say, "It is I;" but his enemies were struck to the ground by the words, "I am he." There is an attractive power in the voice of Jesus. Those who love him feel it. When he says, "Come unto me," they draw near. There is also a repellent power in his voice. His enemies will feel it at the last day, when he shall utter the word "Depart." Then they will go backward, and fall into the pit of destruction.

What must have been the feelings of the apostles, when they beheld their enemies fallen on the ground! If they rejoiced for a moment, they must have been the more disappointed to see them rise again. Yet even then they did not forsake their Master; they intended to cleave closely to his side through all his troubles. But he knew their weakness, though they did not--He knew they were not yet strong enough to confess his name before princes; therefore he took the opportunity, when his enemies were scarcely recovered from their consternation, to make this request--"If you seek me, let these go their way." The disciples cannot have understood the deep meaning of these words. When Jesus washed Peter's feet, he said, "What I do,

you know not now; but you shall know hereafter." The disciples knew afterwards that they were washed in the Savior's blood; they also knew afterwards that Jesus was bound, that they might be forever free. If he had not surrendered himself to his enemies, we must have remained forever the prisoners of Satan.

In the Savior's last prayer with his disciples, he said to his Father, "Of those who you gave me, have I lost none." How did he preserve them? By his love, his wisdom, and his power. Love alone would not have been sufficient to keep them in safety. Jacob was a loving shepherd, but he acknowledged he had lost some of his flock; for when defending his own character to Laban, he said, "That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto you; I bore the loss of it; of my hand did you require it, whether stolen by day, or stolen by night." (Gen. 31:39.) A human shepherd cannot preserve his flock from evil accidents. But Jesus had wisdom to foresee the approach of every enemy, and had power to secure his disciples from overwhelming temptations. At this moment he foresees all the temptations that will assail us. Are we the sheep of his pasture? Do we hear his voice, and follow him? Then we shall be shielded from every fatal danger; then we may say with the apostle Paul, "The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom." (2 Tim. 4:18.)

November 8

Matthew 26:51-54. Peter cuts off the ear of the high priest's servant.

What must have been the dismay of the apostles, when they beheld their Master in the hands of his enemies! We cannot wonder that one of them drew his sword to attack the high priest's servant. We might have conjectured that it was Peter who committed the rash deed; but we are not left to uncertainty on this point. John informs us that it was Peter. Perhaps as the other evangelists wrote their gospels during the lifetime of that apostle, they were afraid of exposing him to danger by revealing his name; whereas John, who (it is supposed) wrote his account after Peter's death, had no inducement to conceal it.

It is evident that Peter had misunderstood his Lord, when at the supper-table he had heard him say, "He who has no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one." Had Jesus intended that his disciples should fight, he would not have reproved Peter's rashness by saying, "Put up again your sword into his place; for all those who take the sword shall perish by the sword." These words contained not only a reproof, but also a prophecy of the dreadful calamities that would befall the wicked men who were now wielding swords against their rightful king, the Son of God. No doubt Peter was astonished to find that his conduct was disapproved by his Master. He must have thought that Jesus would be pleased to see that, instead of forsaking and denying him, he was ready to fight for him against an armed multitude. When he had boasted of his fidelity, he little thought in what form temptation would come upon him. The sight of the murderous band did not terrify him so much as the words of the maiden in the high priest's palace.

God alone knows what circumstances would prove the most trying to each of us; for He alone knows what is in each of our hearts. We may have surmounted some temptations that appear very great, and yet be overcome by others that seem less formidable. None are safe, but those who, putting no trust in their own hearts, wait continually on the Lord for light and strength.

How useless were Peter's attempts to defend his Lord! Had Jesus but spoken the word, each of his enemies would have been the captive of a mighty angel, and he himself again seated upon his throne of light. Had he called upon his Father, more than seventy thousand angels would have come flying to his rescue. Yet he forbore to speak the word. And why? He gave the reason--"How then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" His Father from the beginning had declared, that he would provide a

sacrifice for the sins of men. To fulfill every word that his Father had spoken, was the glorious work of the Son of God.

John records a most affecting expression that he used on this occasion--"The cup which my Father has given me, shall I not drink it?" Shall we be enabled in the day of our trouble to utter these words? Yet if we are his children, the Father will never give us so bitter a cup to drink, as he gave to his well-beloved Son. That cup was bitter, because it contained his wrath against our sins. But every cup that God gives to his children now, is sweetened by his love; for he has said, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." No human mind can conceive what that cup contained which Jesus drank for our sakes. Lost spirits know its taste; for it is written of them, "The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture in the cup of his indignation." (Rev. 14:10.) But the redeemed shall never taste it. Has Jesus forgiven us our sins? Then our cup may contain pain, or poverty, bereavement, imprisonment, or death, but not one drop of the wrath of God. Let us take it thankfully from our Father's hand; and though tears may stream down our cheeks, and sobs almost choke our voice, let us say, "The cup which my Father has given me, shall I not drink it?"

November 9

Luke 22:50-53. Christ heals the servant's ear.

It is remarkable that though all the four evangelists mention the circumstance of Peter's cutting off the servant's ear, yet that Luke alone relates how it was healed. It seems that this miracle was the last the Savior performed. In one respect it was the greatest. No doubt the Lord's power was more fully displayed when the dead were raised; but his grace was most gloriously manifested when his enemy was healed. Multitudes had often surrounded him, entreating him with piteous cries to restore their blind parents to sight, and their sick children to health. But this multitude came, not to entreat, but to assault. Yet the gracious Savior healed even one of this wicked company.

What effect had this merciful act upon the heart of Malchus? Is it possible that he could join that night in the cry, "Crucify him!" that he could see with cruel joy the nails thrust through the hand that had touched his bleeding ear? It is possible, though we hope that Malchus was not guilty of such ingratitude. The heart of man is so hard by nature that no mercy can melt it. There are many now living who have received greater deliverances from the hand of God than Malchus, and who yet continue to rebel against their Savior. Until the Holy Spirit softens the heart, man remains the enemy of God.

How ungrateful were that multitude with whom Jesus had spent the last week of his life! He seemed to feel their ingratitude when he said, "I was daily with you teaching in the temple." How can we account for the conduct of man towards the Redeemer? The Scriptures reveal the secret. It was Satan who first set man against his best friend; and it is Satan who still keeps up this enmity. Therefore Jesus said to his enemies, "This is your hour, and the power of darkness." As long as the heart is under the influence of Satan, it resists both the most dreadful judgments and the most melting mercies. The following fact is an instance of this truth.

A young missionary, named Felix Carey, once resided in the Burmese empire. The viceroy who governed the province in which he dwelt, was remarkable for inflicting very barbarous punishments upon criminals who had committed very slight offences. On one occasion the missionary beheld a poor creature suspended to a cross by red-hot nails. Deeply touched with compassion, he went to the palace to plead for the release of the sufferer. Though he knew that the viceroy had forbidden, on pain of death,

intercession to be made for criminals, he was not deterred from pleading the cause of the unhappy man. At first he received a peremptory refusal; but he continued to entreat, and even declared that he would not leave the palace until he had obtained the favor he craved. By importunity he prevailed. He received an order for the criminal's release. He hastened to the cross. The man had hung there seven hours, and when taken down had scarcely strength to thank his deliverer. The missionary took him to his own home, and nursed him with tender care. In a fortnight the wounded man was able to stand, and at length completely recovered. Did he attend to the instructions of his benefactor? Did he devote his life to his service? No, he even robbed the man who had risked his own life to save his. The agonies of a cross were not sufficient to root out the love of sin; nor the tender compassion that had been shown him to plant the love of holiness in his heart.

Can we suppose that the pains of hell will make lost spirits better than they were when first they entered their dark abode? O no! pain cannot change the heart. If God were to release those souls after a thousand years of suffering, they would still be unfit to join in the songs of heaven, and to stand in the presence of the Most Holy. How shall our evil hearts be made better? The Spirit of God, by applying the blood of Jesus, can take away all their hardness. The preaching of the Gospel cannot alone soften them. If it could, those whom Jesus daily taught, would not have conspired against him. Let us ask the Father for the Holy Spirit to convert us, if we are not converted; and if we are, to make us know more of the love of Christ, and to live more to His glory.

November 10

Mark 14:51-54. A young man follows Christ.

There are many who have become known to us only on account of their having had something to do with Jesus. We should never have heard of this young man, if he had not followed him this terrible night. It was a moment never to be forgotten, when he heard the tumult, and determined to go and see what it was. It appears that he loved the Lord, and desired to be with him in the hour of danger and disgrace. But when the enemies laid hold of him his courage failed, and leaving his covering in their hands, he fled for his life. This circumstance gives us a lively idea of the terror that prevailed among the friends of Jesus. Those who had a little while before clung closely to his side, were now afraid to be known as his disciples.

This was the case with Peter. He followed Jesus afar off--so far off, that he hoped none of the enemies would perceive that he was following him at all. When he saw his Master enter into the palace of the high priest, it appears that he longed to enter also. But there was a damsel who kept the door, and she would not permit strangers to pass. However, a way was opened for the entrance of this affectionate disciple. Another disciple, who was known to the high priest, obtained permission to admit Peter. We know not who this man was. Some think it was John, because he alone mentions that it was through another disciple that Peter gained admission into the palace. Others suppose that none but a man of rank could have obtained so great a privilege for a stranger. Whoever it was, it is evident that he did not tell the doorkeeper that Peter was a disciple of Jesus.

Had the apostle, when he ventured into the palace, known what a crime he would commit within those walls, he would have shrunk back with horror. We cannot tell when we enter a place, whether we shall afterwards look back with sorrow or with joy upon our visit there. Any place where we have grievously sinned against the Lord must afterwards be regarded with mournful feelings.

Was Peter wrong to enter the palace? Had Peter gone there openly to defend or comfort his Master, his conduct would have been noble and courageous--but he went secretly to see the end. He endeavored to conceal who he was. This attempt prepared the way for his shameful fall. How could he sit by the fire, warming himself, while his Master stood exposed to the insults of his enemies? How was it that his sobs and tears did not betray who he was?

We are taught to pray, "Lord, lead us not into temptation." It is a dangerous thing to mix with the ungodly. Whenever duty calls us to enter their abodes, we should arm ourselves beforehand by earnest prayer. While we are among them we should keep watching and looking to Jesus for strength. Our conduct will soon show that we are his disciples. If the conversation turns upon worldly gaities, can we appear interested in it? If a profane jest be made, can we join in the laugh? If a servant of God be spoken against, can we refrain from defending his character? And if the name of Jesus be blasphemed, can we conceal our grief and indignation? When Henry Martyn, the missionary, conversed with the learned men of Persia, he heard them blaspheme that holy name. He could not conceal the anguish that he felt. Even the heathens themselves, when they beheld it, were touched as well as astonished. They saw that he really loved Jesus.

November 11

John 18:19-24. An officer strikes Jesus with the palm of his hand.

There are some acts of love done to the Son of God, recorded in the Scriptures to the everlasting honor of those who did them. We count her blessed who washed the Redeemer's feet with her tears; and Mary also, who anointed his head with ointment; and Joseph and Nicodemus, who wrapped his body in fine linen; and the little company of women who brought spices to the sepulcher. Even the man who lent him the donkey on which he rode, and he who lent him the room in which he supped, acquired honor by these acts of kindness.

But there are some deeds of malice recorded in Scripture, to the everlasting shame of those who perpetrated them. Such was the deed of the man who struck with the palm of his hand the Lord of glory. Had Jesus been merely a common prisoner, it would have been ungenerous to strike him when his hands were bound. But though the officer may not have known that he was the Son of God, he must have been aware that he was no common prisoner. He must have heard of his works of mercy and of power. What could have been his motive for inflicting a profane blow? Was it to please the high priest? Caiaphas encouraged wickedness in his servants. He had given the counsel that it was expedient that one man should die for the people. He was accountable for all the injuries inflicted upon the Savior from the time of his apprehension to the moment of his death, for he was the proposer of the whole scheme. But everyone who had a share in those dreadful transactions will have to answer for their part, except they afterwards repented of their deeds. Some who with wicked hands slew the Savior, were afterwards pierced in their heart at the preaching of Peter on the day of Pentecost. Who can tell but that this officer was found among those penitents? He may have washed his guilty hand as white as snow in the precious blood of the Lamb; for that blood cleanses from all sin. If so, with what anguish he must have looked back upon the insult he had once offered to the Son of God! But if he never did repent, his daring act remains recorded, not only in the Scriptures, but also in the book of God's remembrance.

Sinners have not now the opportunity of striking the Lord of glory--their puny arms cannot reach his exalted throne. But they can show their contempt and hatred by scoffing at his word, and persecuting his

people. There are many insults offered every day to the Son of God. And why does he not avenge those insults? Because his hands, though no longer bound with cord, are restrained by love. He is patience toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Some persecutors have died rejoicing in those wicked deeds on account of which they were going to be eternally condemned. It is recorded of a Roman Catholic Bishop of London, named Stokesley, that on his death-bed he gloried in having assisted at the burning of fifty men, whom he called heretics, but whom we call martyrs. In the same dreadful state of mind the holy apostle Paul would have died, had not God shown mercy to him when a blasphemer, and a persecutor; he would have died exulting in the recollection of the day when the blood of Stephen was shed, and when he was standing by consenting to his death--for at that time he thought he was doing God service by making havoc of his church. But "the grace of the Lord was exceedingly abundant with faith, and love which is in Christ Jesus." (1 Tim. 1:14.) Saul heard a voice from heaven, saying, "Why are you persecuting me?" It was the same voice that once had said on earth to another persecutor, "Why do you smite me?" The words from heaven were accompanied by the power of the Holy Spirit, and they subdued the man, breathing out threatenings and slaughter. God has sometimes displayed his almighty power, not only in conquering the most daring offenders, but in conquering them in their most daring moods. When their sins seemed to have reached the highest point, and to have broken out with the greatest violence, then his powerful hand has laid them low at the foot of the cross.

November 12

Matthew 26:59-66. The false witnesses.

Those who are bent on doing evil often wish to keep up the appearance of good. The high priest did not say to his colleagues, "Let us condemn the prisoner untried." No--but he secretly sought false witness against him. When the world desire to injure a saint, they invent excuses for treating him badly, they encourage his enemies to speak against him, and they easily find some who will gratify their wishes. Though Jesus had spent his life in relieving the miserable, yet there were many willing to bear false witness against him. How then can the servants of God expect to escape the breath of slander? God may sometimes see fit to preserve them from evil reports; but generally he appoints them a share in the reproaches that fell on his well-beloved Son.

It was difficult to find two false witnesses whose testimony agreed together; and it was contrary to the Jewish law to condemn a prisoner on that of one alone. At length two appeared whose testimony was accepted. They repeated words very much like some Jesus had really uttered, but they gave them a sense which he had never intended to convey, and therefore they are called "false witnesses." Those who attribute motives to others, without being able to prove what they say, are "false witnesses." It is a very common sin to bear false witness, and yet it is a very great one. It is the worst form of lying. It is mentioned in the ninth commandment, because it is the greatest sin of the kind. He who would bear false witness would tell any other lie.

Who can but shudder at the thought of the guilt of these two false witnesses! Ungrateful men! they had heard the words of Jesus only to distort them, and to bring them against him in the hour of his sorrow. But the guilt of the high priest towers far above even their guilt. He displayed a show of justice, by appearing to grant Jesus an opportunity of defending himself. He said, "What is it which these witness against you?" But the divine prisoner held his peace, for he knew his condemnation was already determined.

Had he refused to answer the next question, how much his enemies would have triumphed! When the high priest said, "Tell me whether you are the Christ, the Son of God?" then the Lord declared plainly that he was. He would not permit the shadow of a doubt to rest upon his divinity. He is equal with God. He and the Father are one. Jesus did not tell the wicked Caiaphas that he had come to die for him; but he did tell him that he would come again to judge him. When he spoke of himself as Judge, he called himself the Son of man. It seems as if he would prepare Caiaphas for beholding that same human form that now stood bound before him, clothed with power, and enthroned in light.

We have never seen Jesus. We cannot conceive how he looked when he was upon earth. But what will be the feelings of those who knew him and who hated him, when they see the face once so marred, shining with glorious luster, and adorned with the diadem of the universe!

November 13

Luke 22:63-65. The servants of the High Priest insult Christ.

The most remarkable night that has been known since the beginning of the world, was the night before the crucifixion of the Lord. It is written concerning the night on which the children of Israel left Egypt--that it is a night to be much observed to the Lord. But this night was far more memorable than the night of the Passover. Then all the first-born of Egypt were slain; but now the first-born of God was betrayed, accused, condemned, and insulted.

That was a memorable night, when the angels appeared to the shepherds of Bethlehem, to announce the birth of the holy Babe. Then angels rejoiced, but now angels must have wept, if angels can weep.

We are looking forward to another night, in which there will be both weeping and rejoicing. When the Son of God comes again, it will be night to half the inhabitants of the world. What terror some will feel, when the last trumpet rouses them from their slumbers!

Let us look back upon the transactions of that dreadful night which Jesus passed in the palace of the high priest. Human nature never displayed its deformity in a more glaring manner than at that season. Satan must have recognized in man every feature of his own character, and have seen that he was indeed his son. But insults could not degrade the Son of God. Sin alone degrades. The grossest insults, borne with meekness, exalt, instead of degrading. How glorious the Son of God appears, surrounded, not by worshipers but tormentors; yet bearing all their taunts with divine patience! "When he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself unto him that judges righteously." (1 Peter 3:23.) He regarded every injury as a drop in the cup his Father had given him to drink. He knew the prophecies that had been made concerning his sufferings--"They shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek." (Micah 5:1.)

"I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting." (Is. 50:6.)

Could we receive all that happened to us as the appointment of God, we should not be so easily provoked as we often are. Yet the malice of our enemies could never be vented against us, except by the decree of God.

There was an ingenuity in the torments inflicted on Jesus, worthy of Satan, their author. Perhaps there was a burst of applause, when it was first proposed to blindfold those meek and sorrowful eyes, and no

doubt a profane laugh was heard, as each blow was struck, and the question asked, "Who smote you?" How much astonished those men would have been, had Jesus told them who had smitten him! They little thought how well he knew their names; but they will find hereafter that he did know who struck him that night. Many other things they blasphemously spoke against him, though only a few of their blasphemies are recorded as a specimen of the rest.

When we think of the greatness of the Son of God, and then reflect upon the indignities he endured, the mind is filled with wonder. Though saints have been praising him, age after age, for the love he displayed in their redemption; though their chorus is continually increasing, and though their song will never cease, yet sufficient honor can never be done to our crucified Savior.

November 14

Mark 14:66 to end. Peter denies Christ.

Is there anyone who loves the Lord, who has read Peter's history without trembling? Who would have believed that so affectionate a disciple should prove so faithless in the hour of trial! But man, even when renewed by divine grace, is liable to fall. Though his spirit is made willing to obey, the flesh still inclines him to sin. The apostle Paul declares, "For I delight in the law of God, after the inward man; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind." (Rom. 7:22, 23.) There is also a tempter always going about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

The fall of Peter is related by all the four evangelists, and some peculiar circumstances are mentioned by each.

The first denial was made while Peter stood by the fire, in the palace. The damsel who kept the door accused him of being a disciple. Peter, taken by surprise, denied the fact. We know not what evil he feared, when he had recourse to this sinful means of escape--whether he thought he should be turned out of the palace, and deprived of the opportunity of seeing the end, or whether he dreaded lest he should be apprehended, like his Master, and exposed to the same insults and injuries. It appears that several other people, besides the doorkeeper, taxed him with having some connection with the holy prisoner; but he persisted in the lie he had already told. This was the first denial.

Finding he was known, he withdrew into the porch, and then--the cock crew. But he attended not to this faithful monitor, nor did he even remember the Lord's warning. While in the porch, both a maid and a man recognized him, and this time he added an oath to his declaration. This was his second denial.

Soon afterwards he returned into the palace, and was discovered, by his peculiar manner of speaking, to come from that part of Israel called Galilee; and as it was well known that most of Christ's disciples were Galileans, it was immediately supposed that he was one of them. On this occasion Peter not only denied his Lord, but he began to curse and to swear. He had now reached an dreadful pitch of iniquity. How much farther he might have gone, none but God knows. Again the cock crew. This time Peter understood the voice of the bird. And why? Because at the same moment that the cock crew, the Lord turned and looked upon him. It is probable that Jesus was now standing among the servants, enduring their insults. His eyes had lately been blindfolded, his face smitten, and spit upon. That face, thus bruised and defiled, those eyes which had shed so many tears, were turned towards Peter. No wonder he could not bear the look. He went again into the porch, and wept bitterly. Then all the past was brought before his mind; all the love that he had experienced, all the vows he had made, and all the base denials of which he had been

guilty--all--all rushed to his remembrance. "And when he thought thereon, he wept."

There are such moments in the believer's experience. Blessed moments! in which he learns more of his own wickedness, and of his Lord's goodness, than he has learned in years that have gone before. Some actions, which he had never viewed in their true light, are all at once seen to be dark offences against his gracious God. No tears shed for blasted prospects, or heavy bereavements, are as bitter as these. Yet even then he must not say, "There is no hope." Peter did not read in his Master's look, "There is no forgiveness for you." How could he have lived during the next two days, had he despaired of pardon! Had he been without hope, could he have run so eagerly to the tomb of his risen Lord, and even ventured to enter in! It was the thought that he had sinned against a Savior ready to forgive, that made his tears flow so abundantly. It was the same thought that kept him from despair. His Savior had once said, "I have prayed for you that your faith fail not." And it failed not.

True penitence is a mixture of sorrow and faith. The penitent says with sorrow, "My sin is before me;" and with faith, "There is forgiveness with you." Such is the broken heart which God will not despise. Let this be our prayer--

"If near the pit I rashly stray,

Before I wholly fall away,

The keen conviction dart--

Recall me by that pitying look,

That kind, upbraiding glance which broke

Unfaithful Peter's heart."

November 15

Luke 22:66 to end. The council condemn Christ.

It is probable that this examination is not the same as that of which Matthew gives an account. That examination seems to have taken place in the night, this in the day. It was a law among the Jews that no sentence pronounced in the night should stand good, and to this law Jeremiah is supposed to refer when he says, "Execute judgment in the morning." (21:12.) Accordingly, the council assembled at the dawn of day to confirm the condemnation they had pronounced during the hours of darkness. This council was called the Sanhedrin. It consisted of seventy people, of whom the high priest was the chief. The other members were priests, who had been high priests, or who were heads of the twenty-four courses--elders, or princes of the people; and scribes, or men learned in the law. They were all people whom the world revered. Priests who had a reputation for holiness; elders who boasted of noble birth, and scribes who had acquired great learning; all these combined against the Holy One, the Most High, the only wise God.

There were two members of that council who took no part in the proceedings of their brethren. Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea were honorable counselors and rulers in Israel. They were also disciples of Jesus, though secretly, for fear of the Jews. It is probable that they were absent when the council met to condemn the Lord, or if present, it is certain that they did not unite in pronouncing the guilty sentence.

As Jesus had already acknowledged himself to be the Son of God, no witnesses were summoned to appear against him. His own confession was enough. When he was asked, "Are you the Christ?" he showed by his answer that he would have proved his claim, had his judges been willing to listen. He said, "If I tell you, you will not believe; and if I also ask you, you will not answer me, nor let me go." On former occasions he had asked them various questions, by which he had shown he was the Christ, and that the Christ was the Son of God. This is the great truth that Jesus sealed with his own blood. By confessing it, men are saved, for John declares, "Whoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him, and he in God." By denying this truth men are lost; for John also declares, "Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is anti-Christ," (that is, the enemy of Christ,) "that denies the Father and the Son."

Do we believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God? If we believe it, we cannot feel indifferent on the subject. We may have believed some things, and yet we may now forget that we ever heard them; or though we may still believe them, we should not be grieved if we discovered them to be false. But we cannot feel in this manner concerning the great truth that Jesus is the Son of God. Would it make no difference to a mother whether she believed that the ship containing her only son was lost at sea, or safely arrived in the harbor? Would not every stranger by the first glance of her countenance discover which of these tidings she had heard? Those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God, believe that they have a friend dearer than the dearest child, and more powerful than the mightiest monarch, ever ready, ever able to support them in time of need. They believe that he died to save them, and lives to bless them--that he will walk with them through the valley of the shadow of death, and lead them forever by living fountains of waters. When they say, "I believe that Jesus is the Son of God," their hearts burn within them, and their spirits rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

November 16

Matthew 27:3-10. The death of Judas.

Should we not have supposed, after reading how Judas betrayed his Master, that he was too much hardened ever to feel remorse? But the conscience sometimes awakes when least expected; for no one can lull it into so profound a sleep that it cannot be aroused. When Judas saw that his Master was condemned he repented himself. It seems then that he had hoped that the Lord would escape, as he had done on former occasions. But if he had escaped, would the crime of Judas have been less heinous? The guilt of sin is not to be measured by its consequences. By what, then, is it to be measured? By its motives.

When Judas became conscious of his guilt, how did he act? He went to the chief priests, confessed his crime, and rejected his bribe. Was not this all he could do? No! had he loved Jesus he would have done much more. He would have shed such tears as Peter shed. He would have been willing to live, bowed down with the remembrance of his crimes, sooner than have added to his offences against his Lord, by putting an end to his own life. But he was a "devil." (John 6:70.) Satan acknowledges that Jesus is the Holy One of God, and Judas did the same. But Satan does not love him; neither did Judas love the Master he betrayed, though he was forced by remorse to declare his innocence.

How dreadful must have been the expression of his countenance when he entered into the assembly of the chief priests to return the ill-gotten money! How different from the look he wore when he came to offer to betray his Lord! Then he felt satanic joy, and now satanic misery. His heart was full of despair, not of true repentance, when he said, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood!"

How much hearing this confession added to the guilt of the chief priests! Could they believe that Jesus was a wicked man, when one of his most intimate companions declared to his own shame how excellent a Master he had betrayed? Was it not that he might bear this testimony that Jesus had chosen him three years before to be an apostle?

But how did the priests receive the testimony? They replied, "What is that to us? see you to that." In this way tempters treat their deluded victims. If a youth, who has been drawn into sin by artful companions, were to go to them and say, "See the misery you have brought upon me." What would they answer? "See you to that." They would regard his qualms of conscience as proofs of weakness and cowardice. What dreadful recriminations will be heard in the abode of despair among lost spirits! With what bitterness will the tempted reproach their tempters, as the authors of their woe!

It seems that the priests could not entirely smother the voice of conscience in their bosoms, for they looked upon the thirty pieces of silver cast on the floor with abhorrence. They did not dare to return them to the treasury set apart for the expenses of the temple services, but determined to purchase with them a burying-ground for strangers. Perhaps they thought by this charitable deed to atone for their cruel treatment of an innocent person. They were not aware that they thus fulfilled a prophecy that had been made long before by the prophet Zechariah. There was a piece of ground near Jerusalem called the potter's field. It is probable that the soil having been used for the manufacture of earthen vessels, had become unfit for cultivation, and could be obtained at a low price. At first it was set apart for the burial of those Gentiles who had embraced the Jewish religion, but who were considered unworthy to be buried with the Jews.

It is still a burying-place for Gentiles. The Armenian Christians have hired it from the Turks. The Holy Field (as it is now called) lies near the deep and gloomy valley at the south of Jerusalem. A square building, about twelve feet high, covers half this little plot of ground. Through the top, which is open, dead bodies are let down. Travelers who have looked into the building have seen the corpses lying beneath in various stages of decay. The potter's field is the memorial of the low price at which the Savior of the world was estimated. Those who behold the worthless plot may well exclaim, "He was despised and rejected of men."

We know not what solitary spot Judas chose for the commission of his last crime. It seems probable that he fastened himself by a rope to a branch of a tree that overhung one of those precipices which abound near Jerusalem, and that the rope breaking by his weight, he fell into the valley beneath. There his body became a horrible spectacle, and a token to all who beheld it of the vengeance of God.

On the same day that Judas died, Jesus died also. Nearly at the same time the betrayer and the betrayed entered into the presence of God. With what unutterable shame must Judas have seen his injured Lord received with joyful shouts by redeemed sinners! The blood he had caused to be shed never washed his own soul from its dark stains. While the penitent thief was ushered spotless into the presence of the Most Holy, the despairing apostle was consigned, with all his guilt upon his head, to "his own place." (Acts 1:25.) It has been well observed by Dr. Bennet that they crossed each other on the path. One who just before had appeared to be going to hell--went to heaven; and another who once had appeared to be going to heaven--went to hell!

November 17

John 18:28-38. Christ appears before Pontius Pilate.

We now behold the Savior delivered by the Jews into the hands of the Gentiles. Pontius Pilate was a Gentile. Caesar, the Roman emperor, who had conquered the Jewish nation, had appointed Pontius Pilate to be their governor. It was he alone who had the power of sentencing any man to be put to death. On this account the chief priests and elders led their captive to his judgment-seat; for no punishment less than death would satisfy their malice. Thus the saying of Jesus, signifying what death he should die, was brought to pass. Had the Jews put him to death, he would have been stoned; but it was necessary that he should be crucified. As our sacrifice, he bore our curse. God has declared in his word, "Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree." Thus Jesus, by hanging on a cross of wood, became a curse for us. (See Gal. 3.)

But when the Jews brought their holy prisoner to Pilate, they refused to enter into the hall of judgment. And why? Because they feared lest they should be defiled by entering into the dwelling of a Gentile, and that they should not be able to keep the passover; for that feast was celebrated during a whole week, and many peace-offerings of the herd and of the flock were eaten, besides the unleavened bread and Paschal Lamb. What must Pilate have thought of the Jewish religion, when he saw these men at once so much occupied with empty forms, and so much distorted with evil passions! Many think poorly of the Christian religion from the same cause. They see people who would not on any account miss attending church or the sacrament, filled with envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness. The fault, however, is not in the religion, but in the hearts of its professors.

As the Jews refused to enter into the judgment-hall, they were not present when Pilate examined their innocent victim. Thus the Lord enjoyed a short respite from their angry and noisy accusations. They had not told Pilate that Jesus said he was the Son of God, because they knew that such an accusation would not be regarded by a heathen; but they had accused him of making himself a king.

The first question that Pilate asked the Lord was, "Are you the king of the Jews?" The holy prisoner did not refuse to answer the question. He made a good confession before Pontius Pilate, and acknowledged that he was a king. What an opportunity Pilate now enjoyed of hearing the truth to the saving of his soul! Like the woman of Samaria, he was now conversing with a stranger who could teach him all things. The Lord was willing to answer his questions, and to enlighten his ignorance; but Pilate was not willing to listen to his voice. He broke off the conversation abruptly. Though he asked, "What is truth?" he did not wait for an answer. How unlike he was to the Samaritan, who left the Savior only that she might call together the men of her city to hear his wonderful words! Had Pilate acted as she did, he might have lost his monarch's favor--he might have incurred the Jews' displeasure--he might have forfeited his honors and even his life, but--he would have saved his soul. What must he now think of his conduct on that occasion! A price was then put into his hand to buy wisdom, but he had no heart for it. Jesus knew this when he said to him, "Everyone that is of the truth hears my voice." Pilate was not of the truth, therefore he did not hear his voice.

Those only are of the truth who love the truth; all others turn away their ears from hearing it. Multitudes have opportunities of hearing the truth, who will not hear it. Though conscience tells them, "This is the truth," they find excuses for neglecting it. They say, "I have no time," or, "I shall offend my relations," or "I shall injure my business," or "I am too young, too fun-loving, and too happy;" and they often end by saying, "It is too late." There was one who made this dreadful answer to the last messenger of mercy who approached his dying bed, "It is too late."

November 18

Luke 23:4-12. Christ appears before Herod.

The Lord Jesus stood before the tribunals of four judges. Two of them were priests, Annas and Caiaphas; and two were rulers, Pilate and Herod. Of Annas, we know nothing, except that he did not unbind his sacred prisoner. For it is writt

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