

## Our Substitute and Surety

12 MR, pages 399-421

Mrs. Ellen G. White

[Matthew 26:62, 63, quoted.] According to the Jewish form of administration, Christ was placed on oath by the priest: "I adjure Thee by the living God, that Thou tell us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God." This appeal was made by the first magistrate of the nation. He occupied a position higher than any in earthly courts. But his religion was a cloak that hid the deformities of a hard, cruel heart. He lorded it over the people, making his supposed godliness a source of gain. He was not accepted by God as a typical high priest at any time. His fitness for the priesthood ended with the covering garment, set apart for the use of the priests, which he wore. He was incapable and unworthy.

The priesthood itself had become corrupt. Priest after priest filled his appointment and performed his religious duties as an actor in a theater. Christ was fully aware of the high priest's unworthiness to occupy the position that he did. He knew that he had not the character that would enable God to connect with him. But knowing all this, Christ responded. The true High Priest stood before the false priest, to be criticized by one whom the people detested.

Christ might have glorified Himself there and then. He might have shown a power that would have made His judges quail. He knew that He was appointed to His office by God. But a body of flesh had been prepared for Him. He concealed His divinity by a garb of humanity. Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, that He might be qualified to represent man in the heavenly courts. He took not on Him the nature even of angels. The highest of all angels, He girded Himself with a towel, and washed the feet of His disciples. He mourned and wept over the perversity and transgression of men. He did not rend His robe, but His soul was rent. His garment of human flesh was rent as He hung on the cross, the Sin-bearer of the human race. By His suffering and death, a new and living way was opened. By this He was to enter upon His priestly office forever. There was no longer a wall of partition between Jew and Gentile. As the high priest for the whole world, He entered the holy place.

To the charge of the high priest, Jesus said, "Thou hast said: Nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" [Matthew 26:64]. These words were spoken with dignity and assurance. They fell from the lips of One whose Spirit went with the words. Christ, the only begotten Son of God, was the speaker, and His words came with ease, as if from the depths of a soul possessing the testimony to be given on earth. Divinity flashed through humanity, and like an arrow the conviction flashed into the hearts of the hearers that this Man spake as never man spake.

"Then the high priest rent his clothes." Conviction, mingled with passion, caused him to do this. He was furious with himself for believing Christ's words, and instead of rending

his heart under a deep sense of truth, and confessing that Jesus was the Messiah, he rent his priestly robes in determined resistance.

By this act he placed himself under the penalty of death. Under no circumstances were the priests to remove their turbans or rend their robes. He who disregarded this law was to die. Nothing but perfection, in dress and attitude, in word and spirit, could be acceptable to God. He is holy, and His glory and perfection must be represented by the earthly service. Nothing but perfection could properly represent the sacredness of the heavenly service. Finite man might rend his own heart by showing a contrite and humble spirit. This God would discern. But no rent must be made in the priestly robes, for this would mar the representation of heavenly things.

The Jewish rulers said of Christ, "We have a law, and by our law He ought to die" [John 19:7]. Christ, who made the laws governing the Temple service, might have said to Caiaphas as he rent his robe, "You have transgressed the law of the God of heaven."

Every word of Christ's reply was an arrow aimed by no uncertain hand. The judges rose up and confronted Christ, and with angry vehemence one after another asked Him the question, "Art Thou the Son of God?" To all came the answer as to Caiaphas, "I AM." Oh, will not the dignity revealed in that pale face bring discernment to these men? Will not His bearing impress them with the truth of His words? On this occasion impressions were made that were never effaced. The actors in the scene went from place to place, hoping to find relief, but never did they gain the peace and quietude they sought.

The rulers did not yield to the conviction, but decided the matter as Satan hoped they would. They condemned Christ as a blasphemer. But Christ was not cowed or intimidated by their anger. With patience and without retaliation, He bore dishonor and shameful abuse. He looked forward to the time when their positions would be reversed, when He would sit on the right hand of God, clothed with power, when all--Pilate, Caiaphas, and those who mocked and derided Him--would stand before Him. When He comes in the clouds of heaven, the whole world will be cited before Him. Those who pierced Him will look upon Him. The sentence will be passed on those who have not received Him.

This is one of the times when Christ publicly confessed His claim to be the Messiah, the One for whom the Jews had long looked. Weighted with such great results, it was to Christ one of the most wonderful moments of His life. He realized that all disguise must be swept away. The declaration that He was one with God must be openly made. His judges looked upon Him as only a man, and they thought Him guilty of blasphemous presumption. But He proclaimed Himself as the Son of God. He fully asserted His divine character before the dignitaries who had arraigned Him before their earthly tribunal. His words, spoken calmly, yet with conscious power, showed that He claimed for Himself the prerogatives of the Son of God.

At this time, none of the disciples dared open their lips to acknowledge Christ as the Messiah so long expected. When asked if he was one of the disciples, Peter denied, and when again charged with being Christ's follower, he denied with cursing and swearing.

On one occasion Jesus asked His disciples, "Whom say ye that I am?" The light of the Saviour's glory flooded Peter's soul, and with inspired earnestness, he broke out into no prosaic acknowledgment, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Christ commended him, saying, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven" [Matthew 16:15-17]. Is this the same Peter that now denies his Lord with cursing?

These things are too great for me to handle, but I must mention some things to ease my mind of its burden. Many who claim to be Christians are in danger of rending their garments, making an outward show of remorse and repentance, when their hearts are not softened or contrite. This is the reason why so many continue to make failures in the Christian life. An outward appearance of sorrow is manifested for wrong, but their repentance is not that repentance that needeth not to be repented of [2 Corinthians 7:10]. May God grant to His church true contrition for sin. Oh, that we may feel the necessity of revealing true sorrow for wrongdoing.

My soul is constantly pained because of the evidence that I have of the superficial conversion of those who claim to be children of God. The question arises in my mind, Do these have any sense of the infinite sacrifice made in their behalf? It was a priceless gift, the sacrifice of One who was the foundation of the Jewish economy. All the offerings that were made pointed to Christ, the one complete offering for the sins of the world.

From the desert where single-handed Christ wrestled with the temptation of the enemy, to the cross, Satan was on the Saviour's track. All hell was leagued against Christ. And the people that God had honored by making them the repositories of sacred truth, that they might be lights in the darkness of the world, joined the ranks of the great rebel, and sought to extinguish the light that was to lighten every man that cometh into the world. "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not" [John 1:10]. Satan had thrown his hellish shadow across their pathway, to intercept the rainbow of promise. Priests and rulers confederated with him to catch Christ in His words, but they failed. At times the temptations were most painful, but step by step Christ advanced in the path of humiliation and self-sacrifice. All Satan's attempts to inspire Him with his own attributes were unsuccessful.

It is a most difficult matter to meet the wily foe, and discern his falsehoods. To do this demands more than the highest intellectual qualities. It is through Christ's sacrifice that man comes into possession of the power to do this. Throw open the door of the hidden chamber of the mind and heart, that your sins may be set in the light of God's countenance. He takes your trembling hand of faith, and lays it on the head of the atoning sacrifice. Thus every sin may be confessed and pardoned. Having therefore boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, and having an high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with full assurance of faith [see Hebrews 10:19-22].

Christ took humanity upon Himself, that as a substitute and surety, He might act in behalf of humanity. He came to earth to bear the test that Adam failed to endure. Satan thought that this was his opportunity. United with the religious nation, the apostate strove

to overcome God in Jesus Christ, to banish pure and undefiled religion from the earth. From the desert to the cross, temptation came to Christ like a tempest. As the fierceness of Satan's efforts to wound the Saviour's heel with his poisonous fangs increased, the lower Christ stepped down in the path of humiliation, self-denial, and self-sacrifice. Satan approached Christ as he approached Adam and Eve in Eden, but he failed in his purpose. Said Christ, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me" [John 14:30].

The religion of error and superstition bore its fruit--bigotry, cruelty, falsehood, murder. These were exercised on the person of the only-begotten Son of God. The priests tried in every way to entrap Christ, to find in Him something that they could use against Him. But notwithstanding the fact that they hired the ignorant tools of the enemy to bear a testimony which they had put in their mouths, nothing was found in Christ worthy of condemnation. Three times the judge declared, "I find no fault in Him." Yet instead of protecting Christ as an innocent man, and thus earning the reputation of being a just and considerate ruler, Pilate gave Him up into the hands of the mob. The only begotten Son of God was placed on trial, but it was a mock trial from beginning to end. It was shown to the world that the religion of the Jewish teachers was a religion of oppression. It proved unable to reform them. Traditions and rites of no value whatever were exalted above the Word of God. Truth indeed had "fallen in the streets, and equity could not enter."

The religious rulers rejected and condemned Him who was the light of the world, the One who shone amid the moral darkness, and who in a moment could have struck off His fetters. Christ was obliged to tell them that by their resistance of righteousness they had served their day, and that the vineyard would be given to other husbandmen. Claiming to have the only true religion of the world, they turned from the truth itself, and crucified One who was the truth, because he bore witness against their evil works. Light shone amid the darkness but the darkness comprehended it not. Injustice and fraud lifted themselves in triumph, and Satan was pleased with the success of his plans.

Christ gave the lesson of the blighted fig tree in order to teach an important lesson. For the time He invested the tree with moral qualities, and made it the expositor of truth. Pretentious in appearance, it stood in the orchard flaunting its rich foliage as if fruit in abundance might be found on it. But Christ searched from the topmost bough to the lowest branches, and found nothing but leaves. He pronounced the curse upon it, and the next morning it was found to have withered away under the curse of Him who created it. "Master," said Peter, "behold, the fig tree which Thou cursedst is withered away" [Mark 11:21].

By the fig tree Christ represented the Jewish nation. Her doom was to be as sudden and certain as that of the fig tree. The second cleansing of the Temple, the dispersion of those who were buying and selling in the courts, desecrating the place set apart for a holy purpose, connected with the blighting of the fig tree was symbolical of the future punishment of the Jewish nation. It prefigured the righteous anger of God. Standing as the representative men of the nation, the priests were corrupting the people by their false principles. As the fig tree withered, so would they.

Christ's lamentation over Jerusalem revealed His heart of love: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" [Matthew 23:37, 38].

Behold the Son of God suffering on the cross for three terrible hours of agony, enduring the penalty of the transgression of the law, that repentant, believing ones may have eternal life. In the darkest hour, when Christ was enduring the greatest suffering that Satan could bring to torture His humanity, His Father hid from Him His face of love, comfort, and pity. In this trial His heart broke. He cried, "My God, My God, why has Thou forsaken Me?" [Matthew 26:46].

As He hung upon the cross, angels gathered about the divine Sufferer. As they looked upon their loved Commander, and heard His cry, they asked with intense emotion, "Will not the Lord Jehovah save Him? Shall not that soul-piercing cry of God's only begotten Son prevail?" We ask, What if it had? What if the world had been left to perish with its accumulation of guilt, while the Commander of all heaven again took up His kingly crown and royal robe, leaving an ungrateful, unappreciative people to perish in their sins?

Not long before this, He said, "Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour" [John 12:27]. What melting, heart-stirring words. "Father, glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee." The Father responded to this request. "Then came a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again" [verse 28].

As the angels beheld the overmastering anguish of the Son of God, the words were spoken, "The Lord hath sworn, and He will not repent." Father and Son have clasped their hands, and are mutually pledged to fulfill the terms of the everlasting covenant, to give fallen man another chance.

"Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished," cried out with a loud voice, "It is finished." The work that Thou gavest Me is accomplished. Thus He gave His dying testimony to men and angels that the work He came to earth to do was to save a perishing world by His death.

When Christ spoke these words, He addressed His Father. Christ was not alone in making this great sacrifice. It was the fulfillment of the covenant made between the Father and the Son before the foundation of the earth was laid. With clasped hands they entered into the solemn pledge that Christ would become the substitute and surety for the human race if they were overcome by Satan's sophistry. The compact was now being fully consummated. The climax was reached. Christ had the consciousness that He had fulfilled to the letter the pledge He had made. In death He was more than conqueror. The redemption price has been paid. His right hand and His glorious holy arm have gotten Him the victory.

When He uttered the cry, "It is finished," Christ knew that the battle was won. As a moral conqueror, He planted His banner on the eternal heights. Was there not joy among the angels? Not a son, not a daughter of Adam, but could now lay hold on the merits of the spotless Son of God, and say, Christ has died for me. He is my Saviour. The blood that speaketh better things than that of Abel has been shed.

The darkness rolled away from the Saviour and from the cross. Christ bowed His head and died. In His incarnation He had reached the prescribed limit as a sacrifice, but not as a Redeemer. The controversy in regard to the rebellion was answered. The human race has an open door set before them. "These things saith He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of David, He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth." [Revelation 3:7].

When Christ cried, "It is finished," God's unseen hand rent the strong fabric composing the veil of the Temple from top to bottom. The way into the Holiest of all was made manifest. God bowed His head satisfied. Now His justice and mercy could blend. He could be just, and yet the justifier of all who should believe on Christ. He looked upon the victim expiring on the cross, and said, "It is finished. The human race shall have another trial." The redemption price was paid, and Satan fell like lightning from heaven.

Look at the superscription written above the cross. The Lord arranged it. Written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, it is a call for all, Jew and Gentile, barbarian and Scythian, bond and free, hopeless, helpless, and perishing, to come. Christ has made of none effect the power of Satan. He laid hold of the pillars of Satan's kingdom, and passed through the conflict, destroying him that had the power of death. A way was now opened whereby mercy and truth could meet together, and righteousness and peace kiss each other. By His death Christ perfected forever them that are sanctified. This enabled Him to proclaim with a triumphant voice on the cross of Calvary, "It is finished."

Christ's heel was to be bruised by Satan. The whole energies of apostasy gathered together in an effort to destroy Him who was the light of the world, the truth which makes men wise unto salvation. But no advantage was gained by this confederacy. They knew not what they were doing. Satan bruised Christ's heel, but Christ bruised Satan's head. He was indeed enduring the contradiction of sinners against Himself. But every pang of suffering that He endured tore away the foundation of the enemy. With every advance move Satan made, he was effecting his own eternal ruin.

Satan bruised the heel of the seed of the woman, but he could not touch the head of our Mediator. Through death Christ destroyed him that had the power of death. In the very act of grasping his prey, death was vanquished, for Christ's death brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. Never was the Son of God more beloved by His Father, the heavenly family, and by the worlds unfallen than when He humbled Himself to bear disgrace, humiliation, shame, and abuse.

When Christ bowed His head and died, He bore the pillars of Satan's kingdom with Him to the earth. He vanquished Satan in our human nature. The nature by which the

enemy was overcome is the same nature over which in Eden he obtained an easy victory. He sustained a humiliating defeat. He was overcome by the human nature of Christ. The power of the Saviour's Godhead was hidden. He must overcome in human nature, relying upon God for His power. This is the privilege of all who accept Jesus Christ. In proportion to their faith will be their victory.

Christ was crucified. The Prince of Life had been taken by wicked hands and slain. In His spotless purity, the Son of the infinite God had been killed as a disturber of the peace and customs of the people. He was lying in Joseph's new tomb. Christ descended into the grave as our Sin-bearer, opening a grave for the sins of all who will accept Him as their personal Saviour.

The night following the crucifixion was the darkest night that the church had ever known. But the redemption price for a fallen world had been paid. The sacrifice for sin had been offered. All heaven was triumphant.

The ceremonies of the Passover moved on with the usual routine. But the imposing dress of the high priest covered a heart that needed the molding of the Spirit of God, but that would never receive it. The ostentatious and ceremonious rites of their religion were mingled with selfishness, fraud, discontent, and unholy passions.

The rulers had chosen Barabbas, and Barabbas they would have as long as life should last. They cried out against Christ, "Crucify Him, crucify Him." "His blood be on us, and on our children." The blood thus invoked upon themselves would indeed be upon them. The characters they had chosen would ever be their characters. By their life and character they contradicted their grand ceremonies. The words, "His blood be on us, and on our children," would never cease to torture the hearts of the speakers. The blight of God's curse was upon them. Jesus never spurned the true penitent, but He hated hypocrisy cloaked by a garment of religion.

All heaven heard the challenge, "He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He be the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him" [Matthew 27:42]. Never in outward appearance could humanity descend lower than this. But Satan saw that his disguise was torn away, that the character he had tried to fasten on Christ was fastened on himself. It was as if he had the second time fallen from heaven. He had acted out his own attributes. After the crucifixion, he saw that he had over reached himself. The charges he had made against Christ were made against God Himself.

All heaven saw the cruel work done to Christ. In the dreadful scenes transacted in the judgment hall, God showed to the heavenly universe the spirit that would be manifested by those that are unwilling to yield obedience to His law. God then presented the once-hidden principles of Satan's power. All heaven saw them as they were. The sympathies of the heavenly angels were with Christ, and Satan was uprooted.

The principle of rebellion is incurable. Satan revealed his true sentiments through the actions of the priests, who had been blessed with evidence upon evidence, but who would be hardened, not convinced, by more evidence. By the spirit manifested by Christ all

through His trial, Satan's power as an accuser of the brethren was proved to be powerful but false. Satan is an accuser, a thief, and a murderer. He instigated men to put to death not only innocent human beings, but the incarnate God. If he could, he would have held Christ locked in the tomb. In his treatment of the Son of God, Satan showed what he would do if he had the nation wholly under his control. He would murder the innocent and save the wicked, represented by Barabbas. Barabbas represents the class that under Satan's dictation do the works of their father the devil.

Satan will be judged by his own idea of justice. It was his plea that every sin should meet its punishment. If God remitted the punishment, he said, He was not a God of truth or justice. Satan will meet the judgment which he said God should exercise.

The scenes of persecution enacted during Christ's life will be enacted by false religionists till the close of time. Men think that they have a right to take into their charge the consciences of men, and work out their theories of apostasy and transgression. History will be repeated. Christ declared that prior to His second coming the world would be as it was in the days of Noah, when men reached such a pass in following their own sinful imagination that God destroyed them by a flood.

Every power that has been exercised since the betrayal of Christ to force the consciences of men, every court that has taken upon itself to decide man's destiny by its measurement of what constitutes religion, has revealed satanic attributes. Men have betrayed and persecuted God's chosen ones. They have taken the life that God alone can give. They have done that which they will wish they had never done, when they are asked, Who gave you this authority? Who required this at your hands? Who authorized you to put God's children to death?

A large company beheld the events of this day and the day following. Some regard the publicity of Christ's death only as shame and defeat. But this God had appointed. He was betrayed by Judas, and forsaken and denied by His disciples. He was scorned as a deceiver, and hunted down as one unfit for human sympathy. He was betrayed in the garden of Gethsemane, and He underwent a mock trial in the judgment hall. He was condemned by Pilate. The governor declared, "I find no fault in Him." Yet he condemned to death an innocent Man, a God disguised by humanity.

Christ was crowned with thorns. His hands and feet were pierced by nails. Every step onward in the shameful scene was one of intense suffering. But it was God's purpose that publicity should be given to the whole transaction, point after point, scene after scene, one phase of humiliation reaching into another. It was appointed that these events should take place on the occasion of the Passover.

He who came from the heavenly courts on an embassy of love, mercy, and truth to save from sin the people that had been made the repositories of sacred truth, and to enlighten the world by the knowledge of God, was crucified. The One to whom the Jewish sacrifices pointed clothed His divinity with humanity, that humanity might become a teacher of humanity. He revealed Himself as the sent of God, the hope of Israel. He was

the foundation of the whole Jewish economy. "I find no fault in Him," was the testimony of an irreligious heathen judge. But Satan and his synagogue were leagued against divinity. Christ was rejected and dishonored as far as humanity and satanic agencies combined could do the shameful work. They chose a robber and a heathen king in the place of the Prince of Life. "We have no king but Caesar," they shouted. Thus they withdrew from the divine theocracy, choosing a heathen ruler.

He who left the heavenly courts and clothed His divinity with humanity that He might secure the salvation of Israel, and that through them the light might shine to the world, was stigmatized by the highest authorities of the Jewish nation. Heathen rulers confederated with them to put the Redeemer to death. But Christ's word to them is plain and irrevocable, "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" [Matthew 26:64].

In His life Christ fulfilled every specification of the law. Did He do this that from henceforth the law might be made void and that sinful beings might be given what Satan claimed to be their privilege--freedom from law? Has the enemy of God obtained in this world what he was refused in heaven? No. Christ declared, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill" [Matthew 5:17]. Righteousness was leagued with truth to make unrighteousness appear.

By Christ's becoming man's substitute, the lustre of an abundant vindication is shed on the faithful, obedient child of God. Though entirely innocent, Christ submitted to be punished for man's disobedience. In His own body He offered the antitypical sacrifice, thus paying the penalty and bearing the curse, that no one who believes in Him should perish, but have everlasting life. The rainbow of promise encircles the throne.

In stooping to take the habiliments of a man, Christ did not cease to be God. The human did not become divine, nor the divine human. Christ lived the law of God, showing all men and women that through His grace they can do the same. By faith, in His humanity Christ saw what we are permitted to see by faith--the atoning sacrifice connected with the Lord upon the mercy seat. The golden censer is waved, and the incense, the representation of the purity and righteousness of Christ, ascends, bearing the prayers of every soul that receives and believes on Christ to the altar which is before the throne of God. And Jesus is in the midst.

Entire justice was done in the atonement. Christ was the object of that justice. In the place of the sinner, the spotless Son of God received the penalty, and the sinner goes free as long as he receives and holds Christ as his personal Saviour. Though guilty, he is looked upon as innocent. The character of God was shown to the world by the obedience and death of the Son of God. By His own merits Christ covered everything that the justice of God demanded. God's character as a God of holiness, a God of goodness, compassion, and love combined, was expressed in His Son. In the cross of Christ God gave the mightiest pledge of justice and love. [Hebrews 9:13, 14, quoted.]

When the loud cry, "It is finished," came from the lips of Christ, the priests were officiating in the Temple. The lamb prefiguring Christ--for to Him all the sacrificial offerings pointed--had been brought to be slain. Clothed in his significant and beautiful dress, the priest stood with lifted knife, as did Abraham when he was about to slay his son. With intense interest the people look on. But the earth trembles and quakes, for the Lord Himself draws near. With a rending noise, the veil of the Temple is torn from top to bottom by an unseen hand, throwing open to the gaze of the multitude a place once filled with the presence of God. In this place the Shekinah once dwelt. Here God had once manifested His glory above the mercy seat. No one but the high priest ever lifted the veil separating this apartment from the rest of the tabernacle. He entered in once a year to make an atonement for the sin of the people. But lo, this veil is rent in twain. No longer is there any secrecy there.

All is terror and confusion. The priest is about to plunge his knife to the heart of the victim, but the knife drops from his nerveless hand, and the lamb, no longer fettered, escapes. At the moment that the expiring Saviour exclaimed, "It is finished," an unseen hand rent the veil of the Temple from the top to the bottom. Thus God said, "I can no longer reveal My presence in the Most Holy Place." Type had met antitype in the death of God's Son. The Lamb of God, slain from the foundation of the world, is dead. The way into the Holiest of all is laid open. A new and living way, which has no veil between, is offered to all. From henceforth all may walk in this way. No longer need sinful, sorrowing humanity await the coming of the high priest. It was as if a living voice had spoken to the worshipers: There is now an end to all sacrifices and offerings. The Son of God has come according to His word, "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do thy will, O My God" [Psalms 40:8]. "Behold the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" [John 1:29].

At the setting of the sun on the evening of the preparation, trumpets sounded, signifying that the Sabbath of rest had begun. The next day the courts of the Temple were filled with worshipers. The high priest from Golgotha was there, splendidly robed in his sacerdotal garments. White-turbaned priests, in their officiating dress, full of busy activity, were preparing to perform their duties. But some present were not at rest as they offered the blood of bulls and goats for the sin of Israel. They were not conscious that type had met antitype, that an infinite sacrifice had been offered for the sin of the world.

But never had the service been performed with such conflicting feelings. The trumpets and musical instruments and the voices of the singers were as loud and clear as usual, but a sense of strangeness pervaded everything. One after another inquired about the strange event that had taken place. Hitherto the Most Holy Place had always been most sacredly guarded from intrusion. It was left in sacred solitude. Only once a year was it entered, and then by the high priest. But now a curious horror is seen on many countenances, for this apartment was open to all eyes. At the very moment that Christ had expired, the heavy veil of tapestry, made of pure linen, and beautifully wrought with scarlet and purple, had been rent from top to bottom. The place where Jehovah had met with the priest, to

communicate His glory, the place that had been God's sacred audience chamber, lay open to every eye--a place no longer recognized by the Lord.

Many who at that time united in the services of the Passover never again took part in them. Light was to shine into their hearts. The disciples were to communicate to them the knowledge that the great Teacher had come.

According to their practice the people brought their sick and suffering to the Temple courts, inquiring, Who can tell us of Jesus of Nazareth, the healer? Some had come from far to see and hear Him who had healed the sick and raised the dead. With persistent earnestness they asked for Him. They would not be turned away. But they were driven from the Temple courts, and the people of Jerusalem could not fail to see the contrast between this scene and the scenes of Christ's life.

On every side was heard the cry, "We want Christ, the Healer." A world without a Christ was blackness and darkness, not only to the disciples and to the sick and suffering, but to the priests and rulers. The Jewish leaders and even the Roman authorities found it harder to deal with a dead Christ than with a living Christ. The people learned that Jesus had been put to death by the priests. Inquiries were made regarding His death. The particulars of His trial were kept as private as possible, but during the time that He was in the grave, His name was on thousands of lips, and reports of His mock trial, and of the inhumanity of the priests and rulers were circulated everywhere.

By men of intellect the priests were called upon to explain the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning the Messiah, and while trying to frame some falsehood in reply, the priests became like men insane. Upon many minds the conviction rested that the Scriptures had been fulfilled. [Luke 23:50-52, quoted.]

Joseph was a disciple of Christ, but in the past he had not identified himself with Him for fear of the Jews. He now went boldly to Pilate, and asked [for] the body of Jesus. He was a rich man, and this gave him influence with the governor. Had he delayed, the body of the Saviour would have been placed with the bodies of the thieves in a dishonored grave.

Nicodemus, a chief ruler and a rabbi, was also a disciple of Christ. He had come to the Saviour by night, as if afraid to have it known that his heart was troubled. That night he listened to the most important discourse that ever fell from the lips of man. The words he heard had penetrated his soul. He had been enlightened by them, but still he had not identified himself with Christ. He had been among the number spoken of by John: "Among the chief rulers also many believed on Him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue" [John 12:42]. But Nicodemus had endeavored, as far as he could, to defend Christ. On one occasion he had asked the priests, "Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?" [John 7:51]. "Art thou also of Galilee?" was the retort. "Search, and look; for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet" [verse 52].

After the crucifixion Nicodemus came to the cross, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes to embalm Christ's body. He had witnessed the cruel treatment of the priests; he had marked Christ's patience and Godlike bearing, even in His humiliation. He now saw more clearly the real character of the high priest, and he came boldly to take the bruised body of his Saviour, looked upon as the body of a malefactor. Thus he identified himself with Christ in His shame and death.

With the death of Christ the hopes of the disciples had perished. Often they repeated the words, "We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel" [Luke 24:21]. Lonely and sick at heart, they remembered Christ's words, "If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" [Luke 23:31]. They met together in the upper chamber, and closed and fastened the doors, knowing that the fate of their beloved Teacher might at any time be theirs.

[Luke 23:54, 56; Matthew 28:1, 2, quoted.]

Mary saw that her Lord was not in the tomb. "Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid Him" [John 20:2]. While Mary was hastening to the abode of Peter and John, other women came to the tomb from another direction, wondering how they would roll away the stone. But they found the stone rolled away, and, entering the sepulcher, they saw that the body of their Lord was not there.

"And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven." Clothed with the panoply of heaven, this angel left the heavenly courts. The bright beams of God's glory went before him and illuminated his pathway. "His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men" [Matthew 28:3, 4]. Now, priests and rulers, where is the power of your guard?

[Proverbs 1:24-31; Psalms 2:4-12, quoted.]

How impotent on this occasion was the power of the kings and rulers. They could not act their will on Him who was slain for the sins of the world. Had it been possible, the prince of darkness with his apostate army would have kept forever sealed the tomb that held the Son of God. But a heavenly host guarded the sepulcher. With majestic and terrible tread, the God of heaven, followed by the angels, walked round the tomb of Christ. They had been unseen witnesses of all that had taken place in the mock trial in the judgment hall. Every action was noted, every taunt recorded.

The hour of Christ's triumph has come. The Lord has broken His bonds in sunder. Christ came forth from the tomb proclaiming, "I am the resurrection, and the life." The Saviour's words to His disciples were fulfilled. [John 16:19, 20, 22, quoted.]--Ms. 111, 1897.