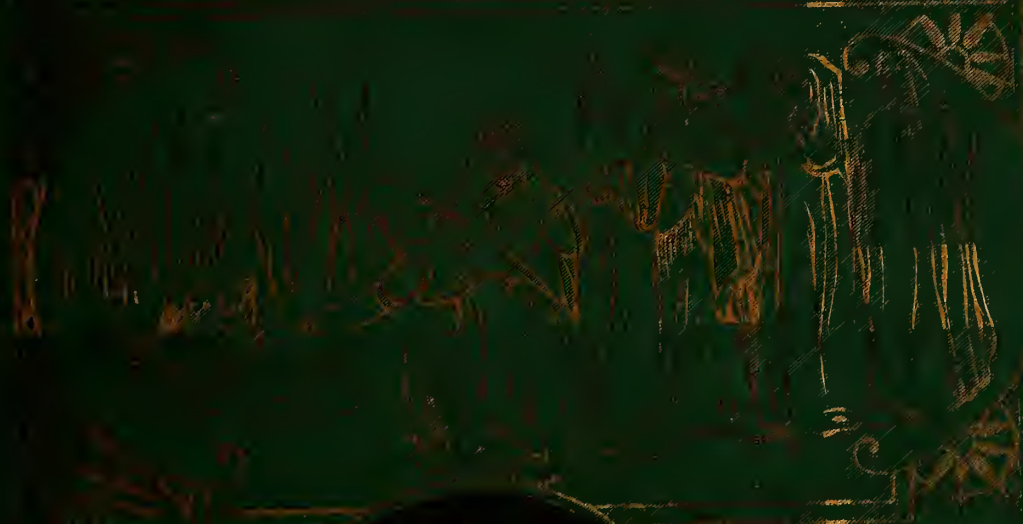


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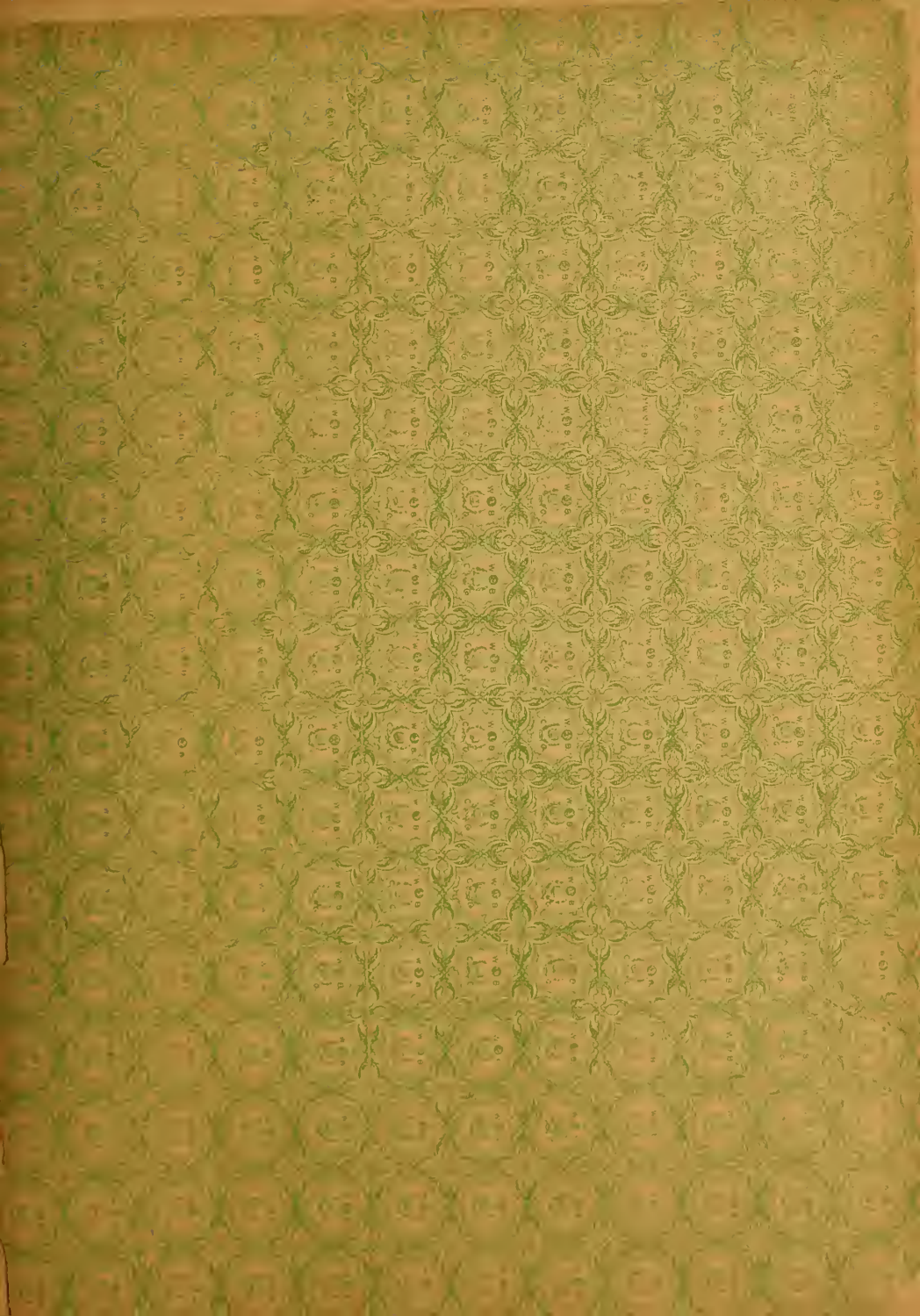
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CHRIST BLESSING LITTLE CHILDREN

BEAUTIFUL BIBLE STORIES

GEMS FROM THE HOLY BOOK RESET FOR
CHILDREN

BY
FANNIE E. OSTRANDER

Author of "The New Boy at the Burke School," "Happy Hours A. B. C.
Book," "Jingles and Rhymes for All Times," and
Other Favorite Juveniles

WITH CHOICE ILLUSTRATIONS OF SACRED SCENES

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Beautiful Bible Stories

ADAM AND EVE.



of the garden. This tree He had forbidden them to taste, saying that if they did they should die.

But finally Satan, in the form of a serpent, tempted Eve to eat of the fruit of the forbidden tree. The serpent told her that the fruit of the tree would give her knowledge, and when Eve said that God had com-

Adam and Eve, the first people upon the earth, were very beautiful and perfectly pure and innocent. They lived in the lovely garden of Eden, where everything that they needed grew, and God had given them permission to eat of all the fruits and plants except the fruit of one tree in the center

manded them not to eat it, saying that if they did they should die, Satan told her that it was not so.

At last Adam and Eve disobeyed God and ate of the fruit; as soon as they had done this, however, they commenced to be unhappy, and nothing seemed to them as it had before. They were no longer innocent, and when they heard God speaking to them, they were afraid to answer and tried to hide from Him.

But no one can hide from God. Their sin was at once known to Him, and in punishment for it they were sent out from the beautiful garden and God placed angels called Cherubim at the entrance, with flaming swords in their hands, which turned in every direction, so that Adam and Eve could not go back again.

He made the serpent creep upon the earth, hated by everybody, and told Adam that he must henceforth work to earn his food, and that trouble and sorrow should come both to himself and his wife.

He gave them a comforting promise, however, that at last One should come into the world to conquer sin. In this promise He referred to the coming of Christ; but Adam and Eve were never again as happy as they had been before their disobedience.

CAIN AND ABEL.

The first little children upon the earth were Cain and Abel, the sons of Adam and Eve. Cain was the elder of the two boys, and he became a tiller of the soil, or farmer, like his father, Adam. But Abel was a shepherd.



Abel had a gentle nature and loved God; he also had great faith; while, although Cain also worshipped God, he was not as sincere as his brother, and so God was not as well pleased with him.

One day Abel killed a lamb and offered it up to God as a sacrifice, and at the same time Cain brought an offering of fruit. But God saw that Abel worshipped Him truly, while Cain did not,

and He would not accept Cain's offering. This made Cain very angry; but God said to him, "Why art thou wroth? And why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door."

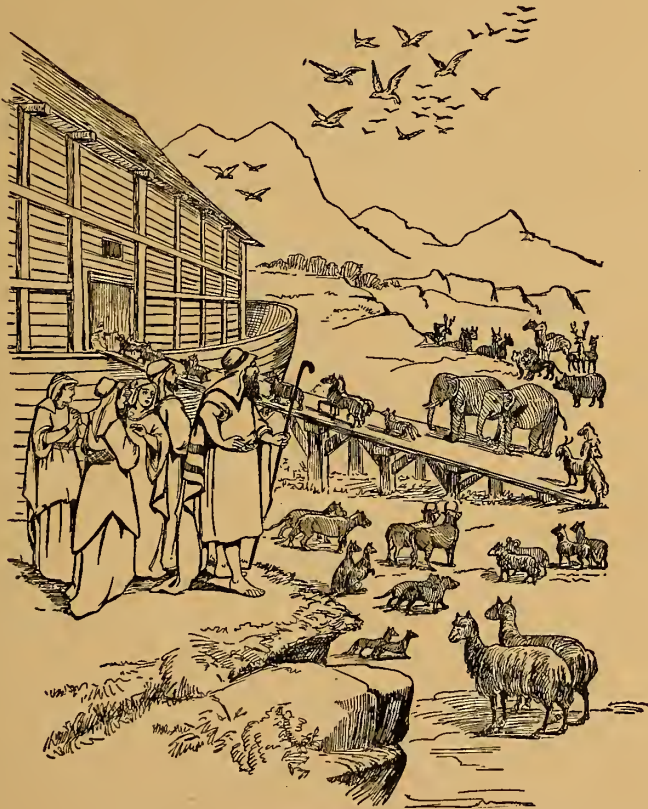
But Cain continued to be angry, and at last, when he was talking with Abel in the field, he lost control of himself entirely and killed his brother. Afterward, when the Lord asked him where Abel was, he answered, "I know not; am I my brother's keeper?"

But God knew what Cain had done, and told him that because of this sin he should be a fugitive and a vagabond; that is, that he should wander about without any home, and that he should be disliked by all men.

Cain cried out that his punishment was more than he could bear; but it was only just, for he was a murderer. So he went away from his pleasant home and his father and mother, and traveled to the land of Nod, which was east of Eden. There he married, and sons were born to him; but because of his great wickedness, his life was never a happy one.

THE FLOOD.

The world had grown very wicked indeed since the time of Adam and Eve, and the people were getting worse and worse instead of better, so God



saw that He must destroy them, or all would in time become bad.

There was one good man, however, named Noah, and God wished to spare him. So He told



Noah that He would bring a great flood upon the earth and drown all the wicked people; but that Noah must build an ark in which he and his family should escape. This ark was to

be a large, house-like boat, or ship, and God told His faithful servant just how to make it.

At last all was ready, and God told Noah to take into the ark beasts and fowls of the air and creeping things of every kind, each one with its mate; also enough food to last for a long time, because the flood would continue forty days and forty nights without ceasing, and the earth would be covered with water.

Noah did in everything as God had commanded, and when he himself and his wife, his three sons and their wives, and all the creatures which were to be taken into the ark, were safely inside, the flood commenced.

At the end of the forty days the rain ceased, and

Noah opened the window of the ark and sent out a raven to see if the earth had appeared above the waters. The raven did not come back, so Noah was sure that it had found some place to light upon and something to eat.

He sent forth a dove, also, which returned to the ark. Then he waited a number of days, and sent forth the dove again; this time it returned with an olive leaf in its mouth. After a few more days he sent the dove out again, and this time it did not return; so Noah knew that the waters were going down.

Later, Noah removed the covering from the ark, and looking out, found that the earth was dry. So he went out of the ark with all his family and the creatures that were with him, and he built an altar and worshipped God.

And the Lord was pleased with Noah and blessed him and his sons, and promised that He would never again bring a flood upon the earth to destroy all the people as He had done before; and in token of this promise He placed the rainbow in the sky after the rain.



THE TOWER OF BABEL.

The sons of Noah were named Shem, Ham and Japheth. These sons in turn became the fathers of children so that the descendants of Noah were very numerous.

One of these descendants, named Nimrod, was a mighty hunter and a man of power and authority in the land, and it has even been said that the people worshiped him as a god.

In those days men liked to build high towers reaching away up toward the heavens. Perhaps they were afraid of another flood, and perhaps they simply wished to show what they could do; but however that may be, ruins of towers can still be seen in various parts of the world, one of the most noted of which is that of the "Tower of Nimrod." It is forty feet high and stands on the top of a hill near the River Euphrates in Asia.

In the time of Nimrod, the people said, "Let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto Heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." So they began to build the tower, and they made it very strong indeed, and kept raising it higher and higher toward the heavens, thinking, Jewish tradition, or story, tells us, that they would have a shelter in which they would be perfectly safe from any flood which might come, or any fire. There were some of the people also who wished to use the tower as a temple for the idols

which they worshiped. Six hundred thousand men worked upon this wonderful tower, so the story goes on to say, and they kept up the work until the tower rose to a height of seventy miles, so that, toward the last, it took a year to get materials for the work up to the top where the laborers were employed. Of course this story is exaggerated, but without doubt the tower rose to a great height and was a wonderful piece of work.

God was not pleased with what the people were doing, however, because they thought themselves so great and powerful that they had no need of Him, and so He put an end to their bold plans.

Up to this time all the people of the world had spoken the same language; but now, when they were working upon this wonderful tower, they commenced to talk in different tongues so that they could not understand each other, and there was great confusion. Owing to this, they were obliged to give up the building of the tower, and they separated themselves into groups, or divisions, each division speaking the same language, and then they spread out over the world, forming the various nations.

The tower was called the Tower of Babel because of the babel, or confusion, of tongues which had taken place there, and it was left unfinished to be a monument of God's power and man's weakness without Him.

These men were skillful in building, else they

never could have gone as far as they did in their stupendous work, and God was willing that they should exercise their skill, as He is willing that people shall do now; but when they thought themselves equal to Him, they learned how weak they really were in comparison. The story teaches the great lesson of dependence upon God and submission to His will and His laws.

HAGAR AND ISHMAEL.

The story of Hagar and Ishmael is one of the strongest in the Old Testament, for it shows the power of a mother's love and what a true mother can endure for her child; while it also teaches that God can care for His faithful people under all cir-



cumstances, and that He is able to change a seeming misfortune into a very great blessing.

Ishmael was the son of Hagar and Abraham. When he was still a little boy, God commanded Abraham to send him away with his mother, because Isaac, the son of Sarah and Abraham, was the rightful heir to all of his father's prop-

erty and was the "true son of promise." Abraham did not wish to send either Hagar or Ishmael away; but when he believed it to be God's will he did so, giving them some provisions to take with them and saying good-bye to them very sorrowfully.

Hagar was sad and lonely and very anxious

when she went out into the wilderness with her little boy; but she journeyed on with him until he grew weak and faint, and the water which they had brought was all gone. Then when he cried for more and there was none to give him, she laid him upon the ground in the shade of a bush and went away by herself where she could sit down and hide her face and weep, for she was almost discouraged. She thought her dear little boy was going to die and that she would be left all alone in the world.

But finally God sent comfort to her, and she believed that her son would live and that he would be a great man in the future. So she rose again with hope in her heart and went to search for water, which she soon found, cool and refreshing. She filled the bottle joyfully and took it to the boy, who drank it eagerly and was refreshed and able to go on again.

God took care of both Hagar and Ishmael. The boy grew to be a man, and, living in the wilderness as he did, he became a great hunter and was skilled in all things pertaining to his wild life.

Hagar was born in Egypt, and she wished her son to marry a woman from that land; so she found a wife for him among the Egyptian women, and God's promise to her was fulfilled, for her son became the head, or chief man, of a nation.

If Ishmael had staid with his father and Isaac, his brother, the two boys would, perhaps, have

quarreled over their inheritance, and Abraham would not have known how to divide it between them so that both would be satisfied; in any case they could not both have been the head of the tribe, or nation, after the death of their father.

God saw all this, and because He loved Ishmael as well as Isaac, He sent him forth to be the founder of another tribe.

The story teaches this lesson, also, that although a child may be cast off without any rightful inheritance or even a family name, if he is brave and true and leads a noble life, the Lord can build up a name and an inheritance for him; and make him great and honored.

When Ishmael started out into the wilderness with his mother, it did not seem possible that he would ever become a great man, and Hagar must have had wonderful faith in God to trust Him through all her trial; but she did trust Him, and her faith was rewarded, as true faith always will be.

ISAAC.



Abraham, the father of Isaac, was called "The Friend of God," because he loved the Lord so truly, and obeyed Him in all things without questioning. Abraham, with his family, lived in the land of Canaan; but he had not always lived there. He had come from a country where they wor-

shipped idols, and often he had seen human beings offered up to these idols as sacrifices.

As has been said, he loved God very truly and had perfect faith in Him; but a great trial of his faith was coming. God told him to take his son—his only son, Isaac, whom he loved better than his own life—and to go away to a distant mountain and there offer him up as a burnt offering.

Of course Abraham was almost heart-broken when he received this command, but he never thought of disobeying it. So he took Isaac and two of his young men, and journeyed toward the place which God had pointed out to him.

When they came in sight of the place, Abraham

bade the two young men remain behind, while he went forward with Isaac to worship. Abraham gathered the wood for the burnt offering and laid it upon Isaac's shoulders, and with his knife in one hand and a little vessel containing fire in the other, he went forward with his son.

As they went along, Isaac said: "Behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"

Abraham answered: "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering."

When they came to the place where the sacrifice was to be offered, Abraham built an altar there; then he placed the wood upon it, bound Isaac, who made no resistance, and laid him upon the altar, and was about to kill his son, when an angel appeared to him, and, calling him by name, forbade him to go on, saying that God had told him to sacrifice Isaac only to test his faith.

Then Abraham saw a ram caught by the horns in a thicket near, and he took the ram and offered it up instead of his son, and they rejoiced together and gave thanks.

When Isaac was older, Abraham was anxious that he should have a wife from among his own people, so he sent his chief servant back to the land from which he had come, to find a wife for Isaac.

The servant started with his camels and attendants, and also with rich presents, to be given to the

woman who should be chosen and to her family, and he prayed that God would guide him.

The Lord heard his prayer. He met the beautiful Rebekah at a well where she had come to draw water, and when he asked her to give him a drink, she at once did as he requested, and also offered to draw water for his camels. This was the sign by which the faithful servant was to know the maiden whom he should choose for his master's wife, and when the marriage was arranged with her family, Rebekah went to the land of Canaan and became the wife of Isaac, who loved her very tenderly.



JACOB AND ESAU.



Jacob and Esau were twin brothers, sons of Isaac and Rebekah. Esau was the dearer to his father; but Rebekah loved Jacob more, and she wished her favorite son to have the birthright, or larger portion of the property, which really belonged to Esau because he was a little the older.

One day Esau came in from hunting, very tired and hungry, and sold his birthright to Jacob for a kind of stew called pottage.

Afterward, when Isaac had grown very old, he sent Esau one day to get some of his favorite meat, saying that when he returned he should have his father's blessing.

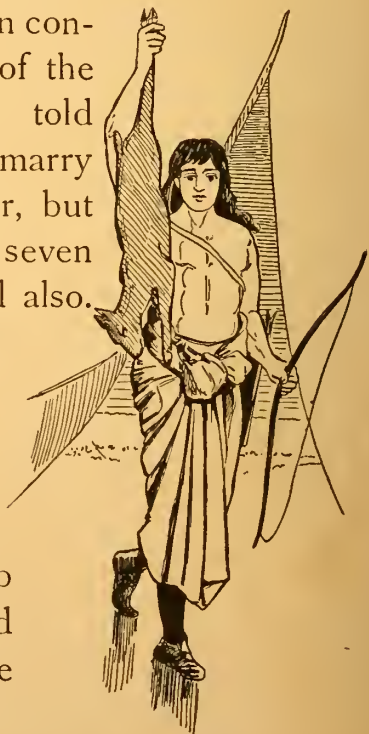
But Rebekah heard this and determined that Jacob should have the blessing instead. So she prepared meat, then dressed Jacob in some of his brother's clothing, covering his hands and neck with the skin of the kids, and sent him to his father;

and Isaac blessed him, for his sight was dim, and he thought it was Esau.

When the elder brother returned, he was very angry with Jacob, and Isaac was deeply grieved to think he had been deceived; but he blessed Esau as well, who became prosperous and had large possessions and great power.

After this Jacob went to his mother's people, where he met Rachel, whom he loved very dearly. He told Laban, her father, that he would serve him faithfully seven years if Rachel might be his wife, and Laban consented to this; at the end of the seven years, however, he told Jacob that he must first marry Leah, as she was the older, but if he would serve another seven years he might have Rachel also. So Jacob served another seven years for Rachel, and then they were married.

Later Esau and Jacob met and were very glad to see each other, for Jacob had repented of his sin, and God had forgiven him; while Esau forgave him also.

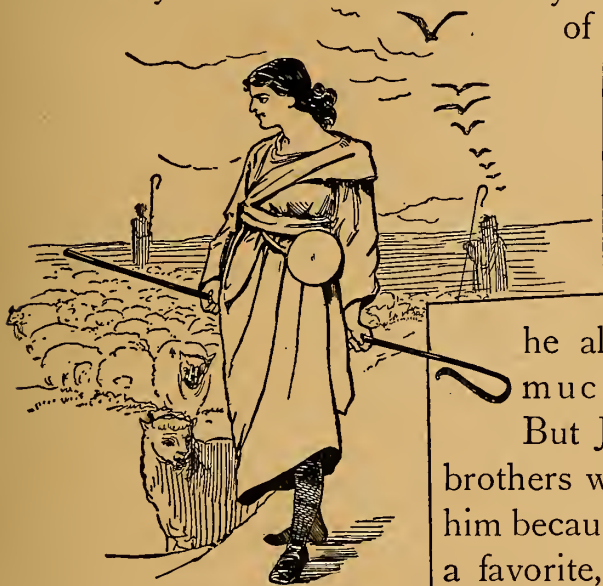




DAVID WATCHING THE SHEEP

JOSEPH, THE FAVORITE SON.

The story of Joseph is one which children always love, and which is full of interest for older people as well; for it is as wonderful as a fairy tale, and yet deals with the history and biography of ancient times.



Joseph was the eleventh son of Jacob, and dearly loved by his father, whom

he also loved very much in return.

But Joseph's older brothers were jealous of him because he was such a favorite, and because their father had given

him a beautiful coat of many colors.

Joseph helped care for the flocks, and sometimes he had strange dreams, which he told to his brothers. This was one of them: "Behold," he said, "we were binding sheaves in the field; and lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about and made obeisance to my sheaf."

This made the brothers more jealous than ever,

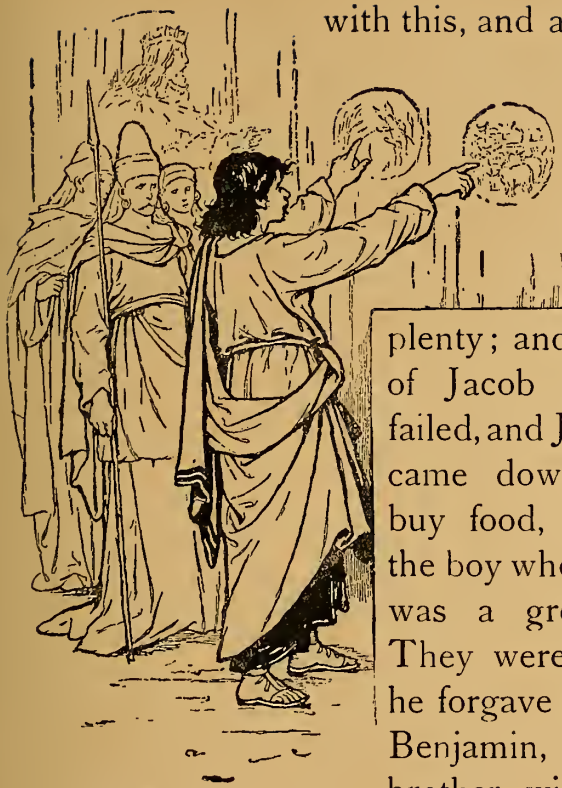
for they thought that his dream meant that he would rule over them, and they hated him for it.

They planned to put him out of the way, and soon had an opportunity to sell him to a party of strangers, who carried him



away to Egypt and sold him there.

Pharaoh, King of Egypt, dreamed some strange dreams, which Joseph interpreted to mean seven years of plenty, followed by seven years of famine, and he advised the king to provide for those years of famine. Pharaoh was pleased



with this, and appointed Joseph himself ruler over the land.

In due time the famine came, but Egypt had

plenty; and when the crops of Jacob and his people failed, and Joseph's brothers came down to Egypt to buy food, they found that the boy whom they had sold was a great ruler there. They were frightened, but he forgave them. He kept Benjamin, his youngest brother, with him, and sent

for his father, inviting him to make his home in the land of Egypt, and at last there was a very joyful reunion.

Jacob and his family lived in their new home for many years, and Jacob blessed the children of Joseph and called them his own sons. When he died, they took him to the land of Canaan to be buried, as he had requested. But Joseph and his brethren continued to dwell in the land of Egypt.

MOSES



Pharaoh, the King of Egypt, had made a law that every boy baby of the Hebrew race should be killed, and there was great sorrow because of it. But when Moses was born, his mother managed to hide him for three months; then she made a cradle, or little ark, and putting him into it, car-

ried him down to a river and hid the cradle among the reeds there.

Soon after this, Pharaoh's daughter came with her maidens to the river-side, and when she saw the beautiful child, she sent one of her maidens to bring it to her.

She took the little boy to the palace and named him Moses, and he became a great man among the Egyptians; he knew, however, that he belonged

to the Hebrew race, and when he saw how badly his own people were treated, he tried to help them; but at last he was obliged to leave Egypt, and became a shepherd, taking care of the flocks of a priest called Jethro. He also married Jethro's daughter.

After a time, God spoke to Moses out of a burning bush, and told him that he must go and rescue his people from the cruel Egyptians. Moses thought he could not do this; but God promised to help him, and to show him what he would be able to do with that help, God turned the rod which Moses carried into a serpent. Then God told Moses to pick the serpent up by the tail, and as he did so, it became a rod again. He showed him another sign, also; but Moses was still afraid, because he could not talk well and thought that Pharaoh would not listen to him. So God told him to take his brother Aaron for a spokesman.

Moses and Aaron, therefore, went into Egypt, where they called together the chief men among their own people, the Hebrews, or Israelites, and told them what God had commanded. Moses also did the miracles which God had given him power to do, and the people believed that God had sent him.

After this Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh, and told him that it was the Lord's command that

he should let the Israelites go. Pharaoh knew nothing about God, and became very angry, saying that Moses and Aaron kept the people from their work by telling them such things; and he treated the poor Israelites worse than before.

But Moses had faith in God; so he was able to perform before the king the wonderful things that he had done before his own people; still, Pharaoh would not let the children of Israel go.

Then Moses turned the waters of the rivers into blood; and after that he caused large numbers of frogs to run over the land and through the houses, doing great harm. He also brought locusts and other insects to be a pest to the people, and caused many of the useful animals which belonged to the Egyptians to grow sick and die, doing all these wonders with the rod



which God had given him. But Pharaoh would not listen to him.

Then God commanded Moses again, and he brought other plagues upon the Egyptians; but Pharaoh would not give up.

At last, however, God sent a still more terrible trouble; for the first-born of every Egyptian family, and even the first-born among their flocks, died;



although the Israelites, who were constantly praying to the Lord and making sacrifices, were spared, as they had been all the time.

Then Pharaoh was frightened into obeying God, and he let the Israelites go; so they started at once for the land of Canaan, and the Lord guided them by a cloud, which at night looked like a pillar of fire.

When the Israelites had reached the Red Sea, they found that Pharaoh was pursuing them with a large army. But God commanded Moses to stretch forth his rod over the sea; he did so, and the waters parted, making a high wall upon either side, so that the children of Israel passed through and reached the other side in safety. Pharaoh and his hosts followed and were all drowned.

When the children of Israel saw that they were safe, they sang a beautiful song of praise to God, and then they went on their way again.

After they had traveled for some time, they were in need of bread and meat, and they complained about Moses because he had brought them to a land where they had not enough to eat. But God sent them plenty of quails and also a substance which they could use for bread. Later, when they wanted water, the Lord commanded Moses, and he struck a rock with his rod, and pure water poured out of it, so that the thirsty people and their animals had all that they wanted.

In this way God took care of them as they journeyed through the new and strange country toward the promised land, and Moses became the law-giver of the Israelites, receiving his commandments from God.

SAMSON

As a child Samson was set apart to the service of the Lord, who gave him great strength and courage, so that he did many wonderful things.

One day he met a lion, and when the beast roared at him, he caught and killed it as



though it had been a very small animal.

Later, the Philistines, who were enemies of the Israelites, did Samson a great wrong, and he wished to punish them; so he caught three hundred foxes and tied fire-brands to their tails; then he turned them loose in the corn-fields of the Philistines and burned up all their corn, also their vineyards and olives. At another time he killed a thousand of them with the jaw-bone of an ass.

Later still, Samson did a very wonderful thing. He had gone to a place called Gaza, and when the people knew he was there, they shut the gate

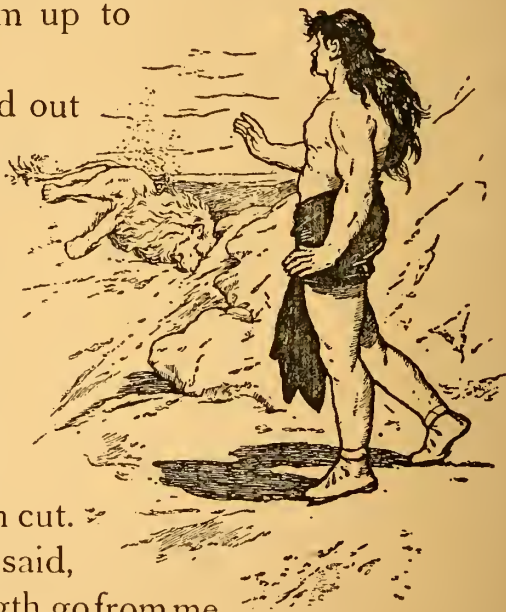
of the city so that he could not get away; for they meant to kill him. But Samson arose in the night and took down the heavy doors of the gate, carrying them off upon his back.

After Samson had lost his wife, he loved a woman named Delilah, and she pretended to love him; but she was a very wicked woman and wanted to give him up to the Philistines.

She tried to find out what gave Samson his great strength, but for a long time he would not tell her. At last, however, he yielded to her pleadings and told her that his hair had never been cut.

"If I be shorn," he said, "then will my strength go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like other men."

Delilah told this to the Philistines, and they came and cut off Samson's hair while he slept; when he awoke, they took him prisoner and put out his eyes, besides treating him cruelly in many other ways.

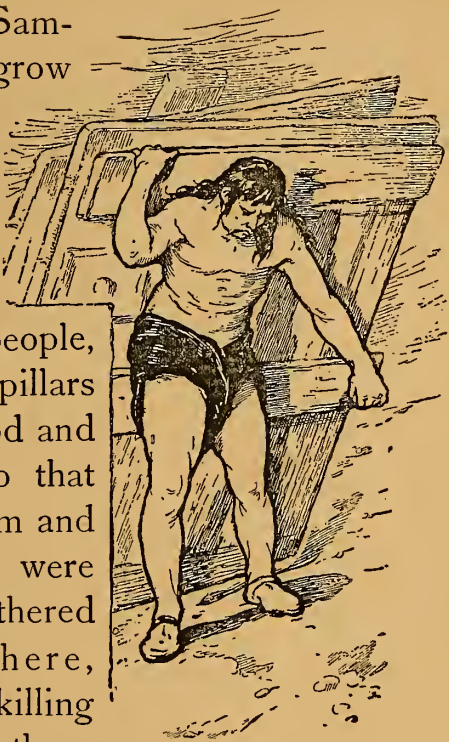


But after a time Samson's hair began to grow again, and his strength came back, and one day when they had taken him outside the building to make sport for a great number of people, he took hold of the pillars between which he stood and pulled them down, so that the house fell upon him and all the people who were

gathered there, killing thou-

sands of them.

Samson was taken back to his own country to be buried in the burying-place of his father; for he had judged Israel twenty years, and it was only right that this honor should be shown him.



RUTH AND NAOMI.

The story of Ruth and Naomi is one of the sweetest and most touching of all the Bible stories. It shows the beauty of unselfish devotion and constant love, and the happiness which they brought, and teaches a lesson which is very helpful to us all.

A long time ago, in the days of the judges of



Israel, there was a famine in the land of Canaan, and a man named Elimelech, whose home was in Bethlehem, went with his wife Naomi and his two sons to live in Moab.

After they had been there a while Naomi's husband died, leaving her with the two sons. Then, by and by, the sons married, and their wives were very good to Naomi, and loved her. But it was only ten years before both of the sons died, and Naomi thought it was best for her to go back to her old home in Canaan; for she had been told that there was plenty in the land once more, and she wanted to see her own people

and the relatives of her husband who was dead. So Naomi told her daughters-in-law to return to their own homes, because she could not expect them to be willing to leave everything for her sake.

“Go, each of you, to your mother’s house,” she said; “the Lord deal kindly with you as ye have dealt with the dead and with me.” But they both wept and clung to her, saying, “Surely we will return with thee into thy land.”

Naomi, however, thought they would be unhappy if they left their own country, and she urged them to stay there and let her go alone; so one of them kissed her over and over again and promised to do as she bade; but the other, who was named Ruth, would not leave her.

“Entreat me not to leave thee,” she pleaded, “or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest I will die, and there will I be buried; the Lord do so to me and more, also, if aught but death part thee and me.”

Then Naomi stopped urging her to return, and they went together to Bethlehem, where the friends of Naomi were very glad to welcome her and greeted her in a very friendly manner, saying again and again, “Is this Naomi?”

But she answered: “Call me not Naomi, but call me Mara, for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.” She said this because Naomi

means "pleasant" and Mara means "bitter," and the sorrowing widow felt that her life was a bitter rather than a pleasant one, since she had been bereaved of her husband and sons.

There lived in Bethlehem a man named Boaz, who was a relative of Naomi's husband, and who was also very wealthy. He had a large farm, and many people, both men and women, worked in his fields, and as it was about the beginning of the barley harvest when the two women came to Bethlehem, these fields presented a busy appearance.

Ruth wished to do something to help support herself and her mother-in-law, so she begged Naomi to let her go into the fields and glean after the reapers—that is, to gather up the barley that was left after they had made up the sheaves—and Naomi told her that she might go.

Ruth happened to choose the field of Boaz to



work in, and when the wealthy man came into the field and saw her, he said, "The Lord bless thee!" but he did not know who she was.

As he went away he inquired of the head reaper about the young woman, and afterward he said to Ruth: "Go not to glean in another field, but keep here close to my maidens." He also spoke to his young men about her, telling them to be kind and courteous to her, and he bade her go and drink of the water which they drew whenever she was thirsty.

When Ruth wondered at his kindness and asked him why he was so good to a stranger, he told her that he had heard of her love for Naomi and her unselfish devotion, and he said: "The Lord reward thee, and a full recompense be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust." He invited her also to sit with his reapers at meal-time, and he waited upon her that she might have enough to eat and drink.

When she had gone he commanded his young men to let her glean among the sheaves and to drop some handfuls purposely for her, and not to find fault with her or reprove her.

So Ruth worked in the field all day, and then beat out the barley which she had gleaned and took it to the city to show Naomi, who was very glad, indeed, and very thankful.

Naomi asked Ruth where she had gleaned, and when she had heard the whole story, she told her

that Boaz was a near relative and that it was well for her to stay in his fields, as he had given her permission to do, until the end of the harvest, So Ruth kept close to the maidens who gleaned in the fields of Boaz until the end of both the barley and the wheat harvests.

Then one night when Boaz was to have a winnowing of barley, Naomi told Ruth to make herself ready, putting on her best clothing, and to go to the winnowing and the feast and to ask Boaz what she should do.

The winnowing is the fanning out of the straws from the kernels after the husks have been beaten off. A great many people helped about the work, and a feast was prepared for them.

Ruth did as Naomi had told her to do. When she had informed Boaz that she was a near relative he said, "Blessed be thou of the Lord, my daughter." Then he told her not to be afraid, but to bring the long veil which she wore, and when she had brought it he poured a large quantity of barley into it. She carried this to the city and gave it to her mother-in-law, telling her what Boaz had said, and Naomi was comforted; for she knew that Boaz would advise them wisely.

After this Boaz went to the city and consulted with the chief men and those that were interested in the welfare of Naomi and Ruth, and when he found that it would be wronging no one, he told the people that he was going to take Ruth for his



MOSES IN THE BULRUSHES

wife, and the people said, "We are witnesses." So Boaz married Ruth; but in her new position as the wife of a very wealthy and influential man, this noble woman did not forget her love for Naomi, whom she still tenderly cared for. When a little son came to bless the union, Naomi rejoiced, for she felt almost as though it was her own little son, and she named him Obed and delighted in taking care of him.

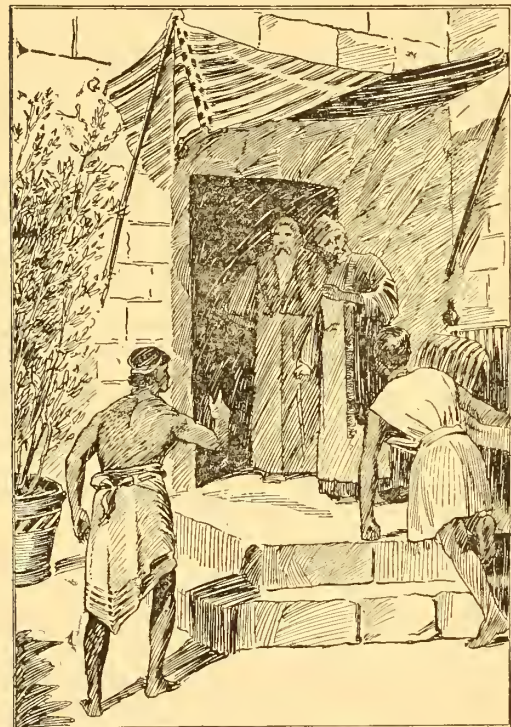
When Obed became a man he married and had a son named Jesse, who in turn became the father of David, the great king of Israel. Jesus Himself was of the House of David, and so God's promise to His chosen people was fulfilled.

THE TRIALS OF JOB.

The story of Job teaches how strong and patient it is possible for any one to be who believes in the goodness and justice of God and is willing to be guided entirely by Him and to submit to His will

in all things.

Job was a very good man, and a man also of great wealth and highly respected by the people who knew him. He had a pleasant home and a large family, there being ten children—seven sons and three daughters; while his large fields contained flocks and herds of great numbers, and many servants



called him master. He was loved and honored for his kind and noble life, and was looked up to above all the men in the country where he lived.

Job did not abuse his power, as so many great men do; he worshipped God and taught his family to do so, and he gave thanks to the Lord for all the blessings which had been given him.

But all these years Job's life had been prosperous and easy; there had been no test of his faith and strength, and sometimes it is necessary that trouble should come to make people stronger.

God saw that it was necessary to send trouble to Job in order that his character might be made still more beautiful; so He permitted enemies to rise up against him and to take away some of his possessions. He also allowed a part of his flocks and a number of his servants to be destroyed by lightning, and what was the worst of all, He permitted a great whirlwind to come and kill all the sons and daughters of Job.

These were terrible trials, and Job was very sorrowful when he found himself so afflicted. He rent, or tore, his robe, as people did in those days as a sign of mourning, and he threw himself upon the ground, bowing before the Lord, and said, "I came as a little child with nothing into this world, and I shall go out of it taking nothing with me. The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Was it not wonderful that Job could have such faith and trust in spite of his great sorrow?

But he was tried still more, for he was obliged to suffer great physical pain as well as the mental agony which he had endured. His body was covered with boils so that he could not rest either night or day; but still he would not complain.

His wife became impatient with him and thought

that God was treating him unfairly; but Job said, "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" Was not that a wise and noble answer?

In the midst of his sufferings three old friends came to him and tried to comfort him; but when they saw how he was afflicted, they thought he must have sinned very wickedly or God would not have punished him so severely. They wept with him, however, and staid with him a long time without saying anything. Then, when Job was suffering so much that at last he could not keep quiet, he commenced to complain. He wanted to die and be out of his misery.

His three friends were shocked at this and began to talk to him, telling him that he had not done as he ought, or God would not have brought all this suffering upon him. Of course this was very hard to bear, for now Job had not only his former sufferings to endure, but he was hurt as well because his friends had turned against him. Yet he answered them in a wise way, telling them that he did not believe his trouble had been sent for a punishment, because he had always tried to serve God faithfully and to do His will.

But the three men kept on blaming him, until Job told them that they were miserable comforters, and that if they were suffering as he was he would never think of treating them as they were treating him. He said that he could bring up many things

against them, but he would not do it if they were ill, he would comfort them instead and try to make their lot a little easier.

Then Job cried out that God had delivered him to wicked people; that he was given up to suffering; that his friends had turned from him, and even his relatives had forsaken him. And he called upon his friends to have pity upon him.



But in the midst of his distress hope came to him again, and he cried out, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." That should have made his companions ashamed of what they had said against him, for unless his faith in God had been very great he could not have trusted through all his agony.

When he complained after this because his pain was so great, he was sorry and prayed to God to forgive him, saying, "I know that Thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from Thee. Wherefore, I abhor myself in dust and ashes."

And God was pleased with Job for his patience and faith through all the trials that had been sent upon him; and was displeased with the three false friends, because they had not treated him as they ought. But Job prayed for the men who had been so cruel, and that proved the nobility of his character.

After a time God cured Job of all his diseases and also restored his wealth, even giving him more than he had ever had in his most prosperous days. Then people gathered around him again, bringing him presents and making much of him, for they saw that the Lord was pleased with him.

And Job had seven sons and three daughters born to him after his affliction; he also had larger flocks than ever, and more servants, and he was even happier in the later years of his life than when he was younger. He lived to a very old age, and God blessed him bountifully.

SAMUEL.



When Samuel was born, Hannah, his mother, sang a beautiful hymn of praise to God, and as soon as her son was old enough, she took him to live at the tabernacle, or house where the priests lived and where services were held. There Samuel studied with Eli, the high priest, and was taught to serve the Lord; for Hannah had promised that if God would send her a son, he should be

given to the service of the Lord all his days.

Samuel prayed to God and lived a very beautiful life, and after the death of Eli, he became the judge over Israel. He was only twenty years old at this time, but the Lord was with him and told him what to do, and he became not only a judge, but a prophet also.

The people of Israel had displeased God by worshiping idols. So Samuel called them together and told them that if they would return to God He would save them from the Philistines, who were constantly troubling them.

They listened to the words of their prophet, and

fasted and prayed; then the Lord forgave them and caused them to gain the victory over their enemies.

When Samuel had grown old, he made his two sons judges over Israel, to help him in his work. But the prophet's sons were not good men, and they cared more about making money than they did about judging Israel as they ought; so the people came to Samuel, and asked him to give them a king to rule over them.

Samuel did not wish to do this; he thought it would not be as well for the people. But they still cried out that they wanted a king, and finally he anointed Saul to be king over them. Saul displeased God, however, and Samuel told him that the Lord would take his kingdom away. He also anointed David to be king after Saul's death.

When Samuel died, the people mourned sincerely for him, because he was a good man and a great prophet and judge.



THE FIRST KING OF ISRAEL.

Saul was the son of a man who belonged to the tribe of Benjamin. He was tall and handsome and kingly-looking, and when Samuel had chosen him to be King of Israel and had brought him before the people, saying, "See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people?" They were pleased and shouted, "God save the king!"

Then Samuel wrote out the laws of the kingdom in a book which was to be very carefully guarded, and after that he sent the people away to their own homes. Saul also went home, a band of faithful men going with him. But there were some who were not pleased with the new king.

It was not long before the Ammonites, who were enemies of the Israelites, came up to fight against one of their cities, and Saul gathered a great army and defeated them. Then there was rejoicing in the kingdom, and Samuel told the people that although they had done wrong in demanding a king, yet if they served God faithfully, He would care for them; but if they were wicked, they and their king should be destroyed.

The Philistines were very powerful enemies of the Israelites, who had been treated as their servants and were not allowed to have weapons such as the Philistines had. Saul, however, raised an army to go against these mighty enemies, and made his son Jonathan captain over a part of the army, while

he himself led the remainder. Then Jonathan gained an important victory, and the Philistines, although they were so powerful, fled before the armies of Saul, because God was on his side.

But Saul disobeyed the Lord, who had helped him so wonderfully, and the words of Samuel the prophet came true, for at last the king was destroyed and his kingdom was given to another.

There is a great contrast between the characters of Samuel and Saul. Samuel was obedient to God in all things; Saul wanted his own way, even after God had shown him such great favor as to make him king of Israel.

His reign might have been a wonderful one had he done right. He was handsome, brave, strong, and generous, and well liked by the most of his people. It is true that the children of Israel had displeased God in demanding a king against the judgment of Samuel, the prophet of the Lord; but this would have been forgiven, and Saul's reign would have been blessed if only he had proved himself worthy. Instead of that he grew to be very unworthy, and the punishment of his sin came surely, as it always does, sooner or later, to all who disobey God.

DAVID.

David, the son of Jesse, was a beautiful boy, who could charm by his wonderful music. But he was to be more than a "sweet singer." for Samuel, the prophet of the Lord, declared that he should be King of Israel, and poured the sacred oil upon his head.

Saul, who was then the King of Israel, had spells of insanity, and David was sent for to try and calm him by his music. In this he was so success-

ful that after a time the king seemed to be entirely cured; so David returned to his home, and staid there quietly until his father sent him to the camp of the Israelites, with food for his brothers.

He found Saul's army in great commotion, because Goliath, a mighty warrior of the Philistines, had come out before both armies and had offered to fight any man who should be sent against him.

Goliath had a cap of brass on his head, and his body was well protected with a covering of iron and brass, while he carried a monstrous spear and



sword, and a heavy shield. As he came before the two camps, he cried out: "I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together!"

When David came up and heard the story, he said: "Who is this Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?" And David offered to go forth against Goliath.

So he went out in his shepherd's dress, with only his staff and sling; and Goliath, who was very angry at this, cried out: "Am I a dog, that thou comest against me with a staff?" Then he began to make fun of David. But David answered: "Thou comest against me with a sword and a shield; but I come against thee trusting in the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, whom thou hast defied."

Then, as Goliath came nearer, David took a stone from the bag at his side, and putting it into his sling, he took good aim, and it struck Goliath in the middle of the forehead and stunned him. As the giant fell, David ran up to him, and taking the mighty sword, cut off his head with it.

This act of David's brought a great victory to Saul's army, and the king was delighted with his courage; while Jonathan, Saul's eldest son, loved the boy from that time, and they became like brothers. David also married the daughter of Saul, and was placed over his men of war.

But when all the people praised David, and

Saul knew how much they loved him, he grew jealous, and David was obliged to fly for his life and hide himself from the king. During these wanderings, he wrote some of his most beautiful psalms.

Saul, however, was finally killed, and at last David became king. He ruled Israel for nearly forty years, making it a great and powerful nation; and when he died he was buried at Jerusalem, which was called "The City of David," because he had caused it to be taken from the enemy.



THE DEATH OF ABSALOM.

Absalom was the son of David, King of Israel, and his father loved him very dearly. But Absalom killed one of his brothers who had committed a great crime, and then he hurried away from his home at Jerusalem and did not return for three years, because he feared for his own life.

After the three years, however, David sent word to him that he might come back and live in his own house, but that he must not visit the king; for he felt that it was his duty to punish Absalom, even though he still loved him.

So Absalom returned, and as soon as he could he sent a messenger to his father, begging that he might be allowed to see him, and saying that if the king found him evil, then he was ready to forfeit his own life.

When David heard this he sent for his son, and Absalom came and bowed to the ground before him; and David kissed him and forgave him.

Absalom was very beautiful indeed, with a strong and noble figure and a magnificent head of hair, which he wore long, as was the custom in those days, and everybody admired him; but he was not a good man, for he wished to take his father's kingdom away from him, that he himself might be king.

He tried to win the hearts of the people away from David and to make them believe that they were not treated justly; he told the men that if

only he were judge every one should be treated fairly, and when they bowed down before him, he took each one by the hand and kissed him. Then, after he had won many hearts, he planned a rebellion, sending out spies and raising troops to fight against David.

When the king heard all this and knew that



Absalom was coming against him with many men, he left Jerusalem and went into the wilderness, or forest. He made his way up to Mount Olivet, weeping as he went, with his head covered and his feet bare, and all that went with him wept also and had

their heads covered to show their sorrow, for that was the custom in the time of David.

When David had reached the top of Mount Olivet, he worshiped God and prayed to Him, and he also sent back a messenger to find out what was being done at Jerusalem. They learned that

Absalom was ready to fight against the king; so David raised an army to go forth to meet the army of Absalom, but he commanded his men to deal gently with the undutiful son for the sake of the father who loved him.

The two armies met in a great battle, and twenty thousand of the soldiers of Absalom were killed. Absalom's long hair caught in the branches of a tree as he was riding under it, and he could not get away; so when David's men came up they killed him, in spite of the king's words, they were so angry with him, and putting his body into a pit, they covered it with stones. Then they sent a messenger to David, telling him that his son was dead.

When David heard the news he wept and mourned, crying, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" And all the people mourned with him, in spite of the great victory that had been won.

But after a time they grew tired of the mourning and wished to see their king who had been spared to them, and they thought he should care something for them as well as for the son who had been so cruel; so David went out and sat in the gate, and the people came there to see him and rejoiced that he was safe, and for their sakes he tried to control his sorrow.



ABRAHAM'S SACRIFICE

THE JUDGMENT OF SOLOMON.

The reign of King Solomon is one of the most remarkable in all the history of Israel, for Solomon was a very wonderful man, and his fame spread out over all the land, so that people came from great distances to see him. The visit of the Queen of

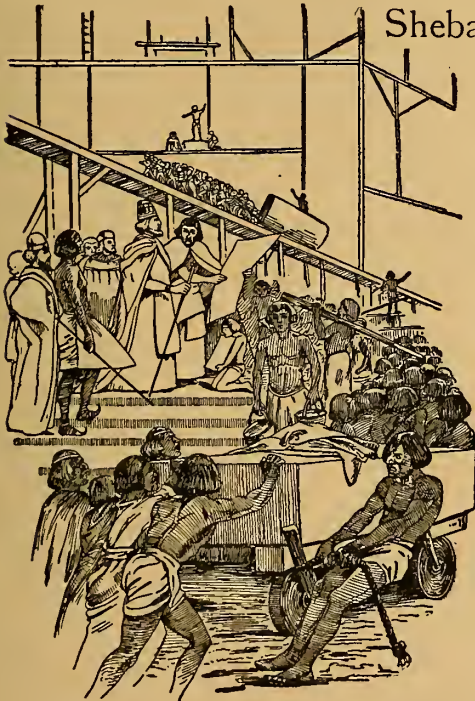
Sheba is particularly mentioned in the Bible.

Solomon was the son of King David, and when his father died, he became King of Israel, although he was only a boy at that time.

Now, to be a king requires great wisdom and judgment; but Solomon trusted in God, so God helped him and gave him wisdom and knowledge when

he asked for them. God also gave him riches and honor and long life, so that there was never another king like King Solomon.

This great man ruled not only over Israel, but over other nations as well; for David, his father, had conquered many people. These people brought



presents of great value to the king, and Solomon's wealth constantly increased, while his wisdom was talked about everywhere.

Very early in his reign, Solomon had won the confidence of his people by the wise manner in which he had settled a dispute between two women who both claimed the same child.

It was impossible to tell which was the mother, so King Solomon commanded that a sword be brought and that the living child be cut in two, in order that half could be given to each of the women who claimed him.

But the mother of the child cried out to the king not to have her baby killed, saying that the other woman might keep him if only his life could be spared; while the woman whose child was really dead was willing that the boy should be killed. So King Solomon knew at once that the infant belonged to the woman who begged to have his life spared, and he gave the child back to her.

When the people heard this, they believed that God had put wisdom into the heart of the king, and they obeyed him still more willingly; while Solomon went on judging them wisely, and advancing in knowledge and power. But later, he married a great many heathen wives, who brought idolatry with them, and this was not pleasing to God.

Solomon caused a magnificent temple to be built at Jerusalem, and he had a number of beauti-

ful palaces for himself and his wives. His extravagance, however, was not pleasing to the people; so, in spite of his wisdom, the king was not loved as well as when he first came into power.

King Solomon wrote many proverbs and psalms, but a great many of his writings have been lost. He was King of Israel for forty years and when he died, was buried at Jerusalem.



THE TWELVE TRIBES.

At the death of Solomon the kingdom of Israel was very great and powerful. It was divided into twelve parts called tribes; but all of these tribes were under the rule of King Solomon, and after his death they were under his son, Rehoboam.

The people were displeased with the way they had been treated during the later years of King



Solomon's reign, and they appealed to Rehoboam to give them more liberty. Rehoboam asked the advice of the old men who had been the friends of his father, and also of the young men who had been his own companions; but although the old men advised him wisely to grant the petition of his people and be kinder to them, he liked the advice

of the young men better, and answered according to their wishes, saying to the people:

“If my father made your burdens heavy, I will make them still heavier, and if he punished you with whips, I will punish you with scorpions.”

This cruel answer made the people angry, and they said they would not be governed by Rehoboam. Then ten of the twelve tribes of Israel declared that they would have Jeroboam to rule over them, and they rebelled against Rehoboam, leaving him with only two tribes.

These ten tribes which rebelled against the authority of Rehoboam, established a kingdom of their own which was called the kingdom of Israel. They became idolators and led a very troubled life until finally they were captured by heathen nations and were known as the “Lost tribes.”

The two tribes which remained faithful to Rehoboam were the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and they kept the religion of their fathers. They were carried into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, who burned their temple; and for seventy years they were forced to remain in Babylon. Afterward, when a new king took the place of Nebuchadnezzar, they were permitted to return to their own land. At this time the name of the territory of Judah was changed to that of Judaea, and the people were called Jews. Before this they had been known as Hebrews. The Hebrews worshiped the true God.

JOASH



The father of Joash was King of Judah, and when he died, his mother, who was a very wicked woman,

put her grandchildren to death, so that she might be queen. But the sister of the king hid Joash, and for six years he was under the care of the high priest in the temple.

During this time the wicked queen reigned over the land; but at the end of the six years, the high priest called together some of the captains of Israel, and also the priests and Levites, and when they had come, he showed them Joash, and said, "Behold the king's son shall reign, as the Lord hath said of the sons of David." And they all agreed that Joash should be king.

Then Joash was anointed and crowned, and they clapped their hands and cried, "God save the king!"

They also brought the little King Joash out of

the temple and put him upon the throne. Joash was only seven years old at this time, but he had good men to advise him; so he repaired the temple, and his people destroyed their idols and worshiped God.

Afterward the princes of Judah wished to go back to the worship of idols, and Joash gave them permission to do so.

But God punished both the king and his people for their disobedience. When enemies came against them in battle, God gave those enemies the victory over the men of Judah, and Joash, who was very ill, was killed in his bed by his own servants.



DANIEL.

After the ten tribes of Israel had rebelled and formed a kingdom of their own, the other two tribes had a separate history, which it is very interesting to study.

The people of the Kingdom of Judah had been ruled over by many kings, some of them good, and

others very bad; but God had been with them all the time, and had saved them from their enemies, until at last they refused to listen to the prophets and obey the Lord; then He permitted Nebuchad-



nezzar, the King of Babylon, to conquer them.

Among the princes taken to Babylon, were four who were especially strong in character and who worshipped God with all their hearts and obeyed all His commandments. At last Daniel, one of these four princes, told the king the meaning of a dream which the wise men of the kingdom had not been able to interpret, and this pleased Nebuchadnezzar so much that he made the young prince a great ruler; while he also gave high positions to the other three.

Nebuchadnezzar had caused an image of gold to be made and had commanded his people to fall down and worship it. Daniel was probably in some other part of the kingdom at this time, but his three companions refused to obey the command and were bound and cast into a furnace of fire. The king was astonished, however, to see the young men, free from their bonds, walking about in the furnace with a fourth man, who "looked like the Son of God."

The three princes came out of the furnace unharmed, and the king made a decree, or law, that no one should speak against their God; and he gave them higher positions than they had held before.

Daniel kept his power for many years; but he had cruel enemies, and at last, in the reign of

Darius, these enemies got the king to make a law that any one who offered a petition to any god or man except the king for thirty days, should be cast into the den of lions.

When Daniel went on with his worship of God, these wicked men reported it to the king, who, although he was much troubled, could not refuse to have the law executed.

So Daniel was thrown into the den; but he was not harmed, for God would not permit the savage beasts to injure him, and when he was taken out, the men who had caused him to be so cruelly treated were themselves thrown to the lions. After this King Darius sent out a decree that all the people of his kingdom should worship the God of Daniel.



ESTHER.

The story of Esther is one of the most beautiful in the Bible. It tells of a lovely orphan Jewess, who had been adopted by her uncle, Mordecai, and who became a queen.



One of the king's best friends was a man named Haman, whom every one flattered. Mordecai, however, would not flatter Haman, because he knew that the man was bad at heart; he had also

discovered a plot which the wicked Haman had made to kill the king; so Haman feared and hated him, and planned to destroy all the Jews, that he might get rid of this man.

When the Jews learned that they were to be destroyed, there was great mourning. Mordecai clothed himself in sackcloth and prayed to God, and he also sent word to Esther, asking her to go to the king and plead for her people, although it was a law in the land that if any one should go to the king without being summoned, that person should be put to death, unless the king held out to him the golden scepter.

Esther, however, determined to make this attempt to save her people, even if she lost her own life; so she fasted and prayed, and then went before the king to make her petition.

King Ahasuerus was touched by her beauty as she stood before him, and he at once held out the golden scepter to her, saying, "What wilt thou, Queen Esther, and what is thy request? It shall be even given thee to the half of the kingdom."

So Esther saved her people, and the wicked Haman was hanged upon the very gallows which he had caused to be made for Mordecai.

JOHN THE BAPTIST.

John the Baptist was the son of a priest named Zacharias and his wife Elizabeth, who was a cousin of Mary, the mother of Jesus.

John was born when his parents were very old. It had been prophesied of him that he should be filled with the Holy Ghost and should do a great

work in the world, and these prophecies were all fulfilled, as were the prophecies about Jesus Himself.



After John was born, his father, Zacharias, the priest, foretold the coming of Christ. John lived in the wilderness, becoming strong and preparing himself for his duties, until,

when he grew to be a man, he went forth as John the Baptist, and the people flocked to hear him preach.

He was of very nearly the same age as Jesus, and he told the people of the Savior's coming, urging them to repent of their sins, and many of them were baptized by him in the River Jordan.

But he thought of his own work as small compared with that which Jesus was to do, and said:

“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear. He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.”

After a time Jesus came from Galilee to Jordan to be baptized as the others were; but John felt that this was not fitting, and he said: “I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?”

Jesus said to him: “Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.” And then John baptized Him.

This shows us that Jesus believed in doing all things in accordance with the laws and rules which had already been given to the people, if those laws were right and just.

When Jesus came out of the water after His baptism, He prayed to God, and the place was full of light; while the Spirit of the Heavenly Father thrilled all hearts, so that they knew that Jesus was the Son of God.

At this time our Lord was about thirty years of age. He had left His home and the mother whom He tenderly loved, to go forth and teach the people wherever He felt that He was most needed. The next few years of His life were crowded full of work and suffering such as no human being can fully understand, because it was the suffering of a perfect nature, and His love for the world was a

greater love than any earthly heart is capable of feeling.

It was John the Baptist's nearness to God which made him able to comprehend that Jesus was more than human. John himself had lived so close to the Heavenly Father that he had a clearer vision than would have been his had he simply gone to work as other men did, or studied the books that they studied, and it was his great mission to prepare the way for the Savior—to make the people ready as far as possible. This was a grand and beautiful work.

John the Baptist lived a noble life in every way; he was not afraid to condemn sin, whether



the sinner was humble or powerful. He had even told Herod the king and Herodias his wife that they had done wrong. For this Herod had him put in prison; but Herodias was not satisfied with his imprisonment, she wanted him to be put to death. Herod, however, was

afraid to have him killed, because he feared the people.

When Herod's birthday came he made a great feast, and the daughter of Herodias, who was named Salome, came in and danced before the king and his company, pleasing Herod so much that he told her he would grant her whatever request she made, even if she asked for the half of his kingdom.

Then Salome, who had been told by her mother what to claim in fulfillment of the promise, asked for the head of John the Baptist to be brought to her upon a charger, or large platter.

So, because the king had sworn to give her anything for which she asked, he caused John the Baptist to be beheaded and his head to be brought to Salome upon a charger. The young girl took this dreadful present to her mother, and the wicked queen rejoiced.

Thus ended the life of the great preacher. His disciples came and took his body from the prison and buried it; but John's work was already done and his noble destiny was fulfilled.



THE INFANT JESUS

THE INFANT JESUS.



The story of the Christ-child is the sweetest story in the world, and pictures of the infant Savior with the gentle Mary, His mother, are full of a grace and tenderness and purity that appeal to all of us, from the youngest child to the most aged man.

On that night when, in a lowly manger at Bethlehem, Jesus was born, wondering shepherds came from the hills near by to worship Him; for they had seen a great light, and the angel of the Lord had appeared to them, saying, "Fear not, for I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." He told them where they should find the holy child, and they made haste to seek Him and to tell the wonderful news in the city.

Later, wise men from the East came with costly gifts to worship Him; they had seen His Star,

and had followed it, knowing that He was the Messiah for whom they had been waiting.

But Herod, the wicked King of Judea, feared the new-born King, and sought to destroy Him ; so Joseph, who had been warned by an angel, took the child and His mother and went into Egypt, where they remained until the death of Herod. Then they came back and lived in the city of Nazareth, and Jesus grew in wisdom, as well as in stature, living a perfectly pure and spotless life, because He was the Son of God.



THE BOYHOOD OF JESUS.

There are many beautiful stories of child-life, but the story of the Boyhood of Jesus is the most beautiful of all. It teaches a wonderful lesson of obedience to parents and love and respect for them, as well as of the charm of a pure and consecrated childhood, and the lesson is all the more helpful because it is full of the human interest of everyday life.



Although the boy Jesus was gifted with a wisdom far beyond His years—a wisdom which was His because He was the Son of God, yet He lived much as other boys lived, doing the tasks that were given Him by His parents and being subject to them in all things.

Probably the people around Him did not think very much about what He said or did during those years. When they saw Him helping Joseph, the carpenter, or doing the little things which Mary, His mother, bade Him do, He seemed much like other little

boys to them; they thought Him bright and pleasing, and it may be that there was something in His looks and in His manner which puzzled them, which set them to thinking of holy things in a wondering way; but Mary was the only one who dwelt upon the mystery of His life with a constant prayerful questioning as to just what the meaning of it was.

Mary treasured all His sayings in her heart and believed that the time would come when everyone would know that He was not simply an ordinary child like those around Him.

After Joseph had brought his family back from Egypt because, now that Herod was dead, it was safe for them to come into their own country again, they lived in the city of Nazareth, and so the words of the old prophets were true, that Jesus, the Savior of the World, should be a Nazarene, or dweller in Nazareth.

Every year the Jews held a feast at Jerusalem called the Feast of the Passover, in memory of the time when God passed over, or spared, His chosen people in Egypt, although He destroyed the first-born of the Egyptians. When Jesus was twelve years old He went to Jerusalem with Joseph and Mary to attend this feast.

There were many of the relatives and friends of the family there, and when they started home after the feast, there was probably some confusion about getting the company under way, for they traveled

in a train consisting of people on foot and mounted upon donkeys, and they had, of course, some needful provisions to take with them, together with the things which they had brought for their comfort upon the journey and during their stay in Jerusalem; and as the parents of Jesus did not think of His remaining behind, they neglected to look for Him, supposing He was somewhere in the train; so, when they had traveled for a day on the return trip, they were greatly surprised and troubled to find that He was missing.

They immediately started back for Jerusalem, wondering as they went what could have happened to their boy and fearful about it; but after three anxious days they



found Him in the temple talking with the learned men there, listening to their wise words, and asking questions which astonished everybody who heard them, because they were full of an understanding of holy things that was not to be expected

of a boy. When His parents had found Him, Mary said to Him, sorrowfully, "Son, why hast Thou dealt thus with us? Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing."

Then Jesus turned to her with sad and gentle respect, and asked, "How is it that ye sought Me? Wist ye not"—that is, "Do you not know"—"that I must be about My Father's business?"

Perhaps in these words He tried to give them an insight into the great meaning of His life; but they were puzzled, although Mary dimly felt all that He would have her understand. He did not at this time, however, explain to them further regarding what was in His own heart. It may be that He did not yet fully comprehend just what He was to do. He had taken upon Himself the human nature which He was to raise to something grander and nobler than human nature had ever been before, and in becoming a little child like other little children, perhaps it was God's plan that He should not yet have the judgment of a man in all things.

However that may have been, He went back with His parents and obeyed them as before, for the time had not come for Him to leave them and begin His teaching, except as He taught by the force of a beautiful example. But that example formed a great part of the purpose for which He was sent into the world, because one of the noblest truths that He impressed upon humanity was the

duty of children to parents. His own life taught this better than any sermon could have done, for in all the history of the world we have no better example of what a child's conduct should be toward his parents. It is the more beautiful because Jesus was not like other children, but, having the wisdom of God in His heart, was far better able to judge for Himself between right and wrong.

During all these years Jesus grew in stature as well as in wisdom, and those around Him felt, without understanding it, that in some way He was different from the rest. The divinity of His nature could not be hidden, even in those early years, but it shone through all the small acts of everyday life, making them beautiful; while every one who knew Him was better and happier for coming near such a noble nature.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

One day when a great multitude of people had gathered to hear the words of Jesus, He went up on the top of a mountain, and when His disciples had joined Him there, and the people had also followed, He taught them in one of the most wonderful sermons that have ever been preached. He said:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for they shall be comforted.

“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

“Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.

“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.

“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

“Ye are the salt of the earth,” He said to His disciples; and He also called them the light of the world and bade them let their light shine before men that others might see their good works and give the praise and glory to God.

How full of truth are all these utterances! Everyone should try to be a light to those around, that is, always to set a good example that it may help

the people who are brought under its influence. Jesus said that He had come to fulfill—that is, to show the truth of all the good that had been taught before in the world; that He had not come to tear down, but to build up.



He spoke strongly against hypocrisy, saying that His disciples must live far better lives than those of the Scribes and Pharisees, a class of people who were very desirous of being thought better

than those around them, although in their hearts they were not good.

He also taught them the beauty of a forgiving disposition, bidding them pray even for their enemies. He bade them be charitable and always thoughtful for the poor, to lay up treasures in Heaven and not care too much about the good things of this life, although Christ Himself always liked to see people happy, and encouraged all harmless enjoyment; but He held the life to come so much higher than this life that He wanted all people to try and prepare themselves for it, as though this life were merely a school which, however happy or sad it might be, was fitting humanity for a much longer period of existence beyond.

He bade them trust in God, who would care for them as He cared for the lilies of the field and the birds of the air, and He said that if they prayed with faith and sincerity, God would answer their prayers and give them all that they really needed of the good things of earth.

The way to Heaven, He said, was a narrow way; that is, wrong doing is so much easier than right that the path of right often seems hard and bounded by fields of wickedness on either side, which appear very pleasant and tempting, so that one wishes to step aside into them; while the way of sin is broad and smooth, and very easy to walk in, especially at first.

Jesus spoke very strongly against judging others

for their wrong doings, or the things which appear wrong in them.

“Why beholdest thou the mote in thy brother’s eye?” He asked, “but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?” That is, why should a person see the wrong in another and fail to see the evil in his own heart?

“Thou hypocrite,” He said, “first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye.”

Jesus taught many more great truths in this wonderful sermon. All things which are needful for a true and pure and holy life, He explained in words of power and wisdom. It was such a grand and complete view of what human life should be, that never in all the history of the world before or since has any plan so perfect been laid down for the guidance of humanity.

The people were astonished when they heard these noble words, and they looked upon Him with awe because he spoke as one inspired and as though He were conscious of an authority from Heaven itself.

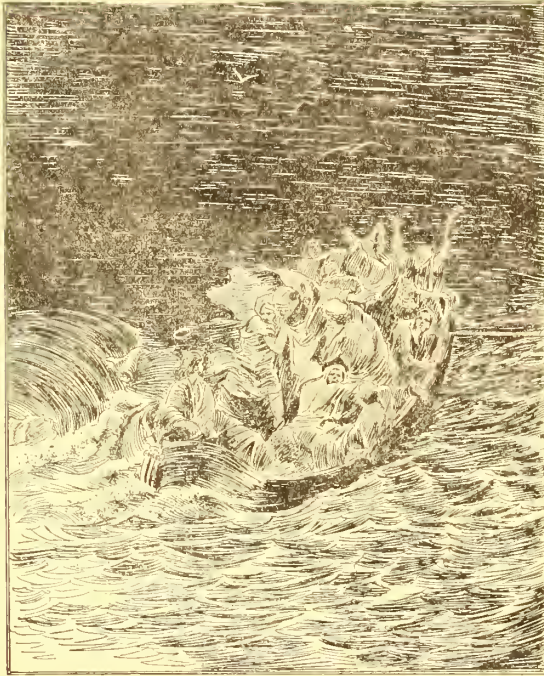
JESUS CALMS THE TEMPEST.

At one time when Jesus had entered a ship to cross the Sea of Galilee with His disciples, a great storm arose and the waves nearly covered the little vessel, so that they were apparently in great danger.

The disciples were frightened, but Jesus was asleep and the storm did not disturb Him.

As it grew worse and worse and the disciples became more than ever afraid, they went back to where Jesus lay and wakened Him, crying out, "Master, dost Thou not care that we perish?"

When they said this, Jesus arose and spoke to the winds and the sea, saying, "Peace, be still!" Then at once the wind went down and the sea became calm, and the hearts of the men were filled with wonder and still greater faith and awe, while they said to one another, "What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?"



They had not yet learned that Jesus had power over all things whenever He chose to exercise it.

At another time when the disciples had crossed the Sea of Galilee, expecting that Jesus would join them upon the other side, a storm came up, suddenly as before, and the waters were quickly piled up in great waves; for the lake was narrow and deep, and the storms usually burst in full fury with little



warning, doing much harm before there was a chance to escape. At this time the disciples had hard work to row the boat against the wind; and it was tossed about here and there by the waves in the middle of the sea until, toward morning, Jesus went out toward it, walking upon the water.

When the disciples saw Him coming they

thought it was a spirit and were frightened; but He spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer; it is I, be not afraid."

Then Peter said: "Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water."

Jesus said, "Come," and Peter stepped out upon the water and started toward the Master; but his faith was not strong enough, and as he began to sink he cried, "Lord, save me!"

Jesus stretched out His hand and held him up. "O thou of little faith," He said, "wherefore didst thou doubt?"

When Jesus came into the boat the storm ceased, and soon they reached the shore. Then the disciples worshiped Him and said, "Of a truth Thou art the Son of God."

RAISING THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS.

Jesus did so many wonderful works that if all were told it would take whole books to describe them. He performed miraculous cures, even healing people of that terrible and deadly disease, leprosy, restoring sight to the blind, giving cripples



the power to walk again, sending the healthy, life-giving blood through palsied hands, bringing back to sound judgment the poor, demented minds of the insane, and granting health to the souls as well as to the bodies of those who believed in Him. He also restored

to life some who had died before His healing hands were laid upon them.

The raising of Lazarus was one of those great miracles. Jesus also gave back to life again the son of the poor widow of Nain, whom she had mourned as lost to her forever in this world, and when one of the rulers of the synagogue, or Jewish

place of worship, came to Him and fell at His feet saying, "My little daughter lieth at the point of death; I pray Thee come and lay Thy hands on her that she may be healed," Jesus started at once to answer his prayer.

But so many crowded around Him as He went that He was very much delayed, and before He had reached the ruler's house a messenger came and said to Jairus: "Thy daughter is dead; why troublest thou the Master any further?"

But Jesus heard this and said to Jairus, "Be not afraid, only believe."

When they came to the ruler's house they found a great many people gathered there, mourning and weeping; but Jesus said, "Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth."

They laughed at Him for this, because they thought He did not know what He was talking about, and that there was no hope; but Jesus put the crowd out, and taking with Him only the parents of the child and Peter, James, and John, He went into the room where the child was lying. Then, taking her by the hand, He said, "Maid, arise!" At once life came back, and the parents rejoiced to clasp their daughter in their arms once more.

What a marvelous thing this was! Probably the father and mother could hardly realize their great happiness when they saw, restored to health again, the little girl who a moment before had lain



THE GOOD SAMARITAN

there still and cold in death. How they must have loved the Man who had given them back again this precious treasure!

But Christ gave to all His people even more than the treasure of life. He gave them an immortal hope and a promise that is dearer than the promise of any earthly joy—the promise of a life and love that shall be eternal.



FEEDING THE MULTITUDES.

Jesus had chosen twelve out of the many who flocked about Him wishing to be His disciples, and these twelve were called apostles. He sent them forth to preach the gospel, giving them power to cast out evil spirits and to heal diseases; and when they were about to go forth upon their mission, He gave them instructions regarding what they were to do, and warned them of the persecutions which would be heaped upon them. He also bade them be strong and not fear those who had power to kill the body only, because the soul was far more precious. So the apostles went out into the cities and towns and preached the word of God and carried blessing with them.

When they came back they told Jesus what they had done, and they went with Him across the sea of Galilee to a quiet spot where they could rest and talk over their work.

But the people went around the sea, or lake, to join them on the other side; and when Jesus saw the crowds He was sorry for them, and taught and healed them again as He had done so many times.

In the evening His disciples urged Him to send the people away that they might buy food for themselves in the village; but Jesus said, "Give ye them to eat."

The disciples thought this would be impossible. "We have here but five loaves and two fishes,"

they told Him; and when He said, "Bring them hither to Me," they obeyed Him with wonder.

Then Jesus commanded the people to sit down in groups upon the green grass; and He took the loaves and gave thanks to God for them, and broke them into pieces, handing them to His disciples to give to the people.

He divided the fishes also in the same way, and the disciples went about among the groups giving



each person a share, and everyone had enough to eat; for although there were about five thousand men there, besides women and children, the food was sufficient for all. Even more than this, when the multitude had eaten all that they wanted, the disciples gathered up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces.

When the people saw this wonderful miracle

which Jesus had done, they wished to make Him king at once, for they thought He was the Promised One for whom they had been so long waiting, and they did not know that the kingdom of Christ was not to be an earthly kingdom.

But Jesus would not allow them to make Him king, and He left them and went up on the top of a mountain alone.

On another occasion when a great crowd had gathered to hear Him and had been for a long time without food, He called His disciples to Him and told them that He felt very sorry for the people because they had been fasting three days, and He could not send them away so weak and hungry for fear they would faint before they could reach home.

But His disciples said they did not know where they could get food for so many, as they were in the wilderness.

Jesus asked them how many loaves of bread they had, and they told Him seven, and also a few small fishes.

Then Jesus bade the people sit down on the ground around Him, and He took the seven loaves and the fishes and offered thanks to God; afterwards, He broke the loaves into pieces as He had done before and gave them, with the fishes, to His disciples, and the disciples distributed them among the people. As they gave out the food it continued to increase wonderfully, so that all the people were

fed; and even after that there was food enough left so that they took up seven baskets full, although about four thousand men, with many women and children, had eaten.

These miracles show not only the power of our Lord, but His tenderness and thoughtfulness for those around Him in the everyday affairs of life. He not only cared for the souls of His people, but for their physical comfort as well; for His heart was ever open to the cry of human need.

One of the first acts by which He manifested His power to the men who afterwards became His disciples, was an act of helpfulness.

He saw two ships by the Lake of Gennesaret with the fishermen near by washing their nets, and going aboard one of the ships, which belonged to Simon Peter, He asked him to put out a little way from land; then, when His request had been complied with, He taught the people from the ship.

After He had finished His teaching, He said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draught." Simon told Him that they had worked all night and had caught no fish, but that they would do as He bade them.

And when they had done so, the net was filled so that it broke, and they had to call to their partners in the other ship to come and help them; and both ships were filled. Then Peter and James and John left all to follow Jesus.

“LORD, HELP ME.”



Although Jesus led such a beautiful life, and was always helping others, yet there were people who found fault with everything that He did and who seemed to hate Him in spite of His goodness.

Some of the Jews,

even, who should have loved Him because they were His own people, were very unkind to Him, and tried to make Him unhappy; so that after a while Jesus went away from them and began to teach the Gentiles, who knew very little of God, although these people had heard of the wonderful things that Jesus had done, and many of them believed in Him and loved Him.

One day, a woman of the Gentiles came to our Lord and begged Him to help her daughter, who was very ill. At first He did not answer, and

His disciples begged Him to send the woman away. Then He said to them, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel," for He wanted them to understand that He had come into the world to save all who believed in Him.

When the woman heard His words, she came nearer, and worshipped Him, crying out, "Lord, help me!"

But Jesus said: "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs." He meant by this that the Gentiles did not believe in God, and so were not the children of the Master's household.

But the poor woman said: "Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their master's table." When Jesus saw what faith she had in Him, He said: "O woman, great is thy faith! Be it unto thee as thou wilt." And when she went home she found that her daughter was cured.

Is not this a beautiful example of Christ's love and mercy? He was always glad to heal the sick and comfort the sorrowing, and no matter how hard He had been laboring in His work of teaching the world and making people better and happier, when the poor, unfortunate ones were brought to Him, He was ready to give them of His strength, and restore them to health again through His divine power.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

Christ often taught the people by telling them stories which pointed out the right way to act. These stories are called parables.

At one time when He was teaching, a lawyer



asked what he should do to gain eternal life. Jesus asked him what was written in the law, meaning by this, the law which Moses had given. The lawyer answered:

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy

heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself."

Jesus told him that he had given the right answer, and that if he did all this, he should have eternal life. But the lawyer was not satisfied, and asked, "Who is my neighbor?"

Then Jesus gave the parable, or story, of the Good Samaritan. The story was about a man who went from Jerusalem to Jericho and was attacked by thieves, who wounded him and took his clothing from him, and then went away, leaving him nearly dead.

After a while, as the poor man lay there, a priest came along and looked at him. He passed by on the other side, however, without offering his help, or stopping to see whether the man would live or die.

Then a Levite, or assistant to the priest, came to the place; but he also went by without doing anything for the sufferer.

Then, at last, a Samaritan, who belonged to a class of people not very well liked by the Jews, came that way as he was journeying through the country, and when he saw the man, he was sorry for him; so he dismounted from his horse and went up to him, and when he found how badly he was hurt, he bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and

wine, as they did in those days, and tried to make him as comfortable as possible.

Then he lifted the man upon his own horse and held him there, walking on beside him, until they came to an inn. The landlord came out, and they



took the poor man in and cared for him, doing everything that could be done for him, and the next day the Good Samaritan paid the inn-keeper for what he had done, and told him to go on caring for the sufferer until he was well, and that he himself would pay for that also.

“Which, now, of these three,” Jesus asked, when He had finished the story, “was neighbor unto him that fell among thieves?”

“He that showed mercy on him,” the lawyer answered.

Then Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”

This made the lawyer understand better, perhaps, than a long sermon could have done, just what was meant by the words of the old law, which he had known all his life, but had thought very little about.



THE GOOD SHEPHERD.



Christ said:
“I am the Good
Shepherd. The
Good Shepherd
giveth His life
for the sheep.”

The mountains
of Palestine were
very wild and
lonely, and it was
hard to take care
of the sheep in
such pastures;
but the shep-
herds were usu-
ally brave and
faithful men, and often they lost their lives in car-
ing for their flocks, because they could not always
frighten away robbers and wolves.

Sometimes a little lamb strayed away from the
rest of the flock and got quite a distance from the
shepherd before it was missed; then he would have
to search for it and bring it back again.

When he started upon this search he would call
the little lamb by its name, very gently and lov-
ingly, because he did not wish to frighten it; and
he would go on and on, calling to it and looking
carefully around until he found it; and then he
would take the little frightened creature up in his

arms and carry it back, while it nestled close to him, so glad and happy to be safe again.

When little children wander out of the fold of Jesus' love, He seeks them in just such a tender and loving way, bringing them back carefully and gently, and they are as glad to get back as the little lambs were; for they are really Jesus' little lambs, and their place is close to His side.

The Bible often speaks of God's people as sheep. In one place it says, "For He is our God; and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand."

Again it says, "All we like sheep have gone astray." And when Christ asks Peter if he loves Him, and Peter replies, "Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee," Jesus says to him, "Feed My sheep." And He also says to him, "Feed My lambs."

The Bible tells us, "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom." How safe the little lambs must be with such tender care as that.

One of the most beautiful of the Psalms of David is the one beginning, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." How much those words mean! They mean that God will care for His children as a good shepherd cares for his flock, only the care will be better than that which any human shepherd could give, because the Lord is Infinite in power.

THE HOME THAT JESUS LOVED.

How sweet it must have been to have the friendship of Jesus. Of course Jesus was a friend to every one, and His life was spent in doing good, even to those who hated Him. But to feel that this great and holy Man was a friend in the human meaning of the word—to be able to sit at His feet



and talk to Him in one's own home; to wait upon Him and think that He could rest for a little while beneath one's own roof; to have Him sitting at your table, talking in His kind and gentle way, and to feel that He was a personal friend, as your earthly friends are—this must have been a most wonderful experience.

Jesus was such a friend to Mary and Martha and their brother Lazarus, and the little home in Bethany, where these three lived, was one of the dearest places in the world to Him. He went there as frequently as His duties permitted, and

had many pleasant visits with His three friends, who loved Him dearly and were always true to Him.

Martha was the chief housekeeper. She was very particular that everything should be done in just the best manner; she was, perhaps, a little over-particular in some ways, and occasionally chided her sister Mary for not thinking enough about material matters. She was, perhaps, afraid also that Jesus would think they were not doing enough in His honor; and so one day she said to Him, "Lord, dost Thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her that she help me."

But Jesus answered: "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

He did not say this because He wished Martha to have all the work to do, but because He did not care to have them do so much for His physical comfort. He knew that the important things of life were the spiritual things, and was glad that Mary had seen this.

But a great trouble came upon the little home at Bethany. Lazarus, whom his sisters loved so dearly and whom Jesus also loved like a brother, was taken ill, and Martha and Mary sent this word to Jesus: "Lord, he whom Thou lovest is sick." They knew that Jesus healed the sick and

helped the suffering, and probably they sent this word with perfect faith that their brother would be at once restored to health. But this was not the will of our Savior. He had a still greater work to do for this simple family, in whose home He had spent some of the most peaceful hours of His life, and although they waited and looked for Him anxiously, it was two days before He came to Bethany.

In the meantime Lazarus died and Martha and Mary were heart-broken. But before Jesus had heard in any way of the death of His friend, He knew that it had taken place, and told His disciples about it; and He said that they would go to Bethany.



When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet Him, and when she came up to Him she said, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." Then Jesus said to her,



THE PRODIGAL SON

“Thy brother shall rise again.” But Martha thought he meant at the final resurrection.

Mary, also, when she learned that Jesus was coming, went out to Him weeping, and said as her sister had said, “Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.”

Jesus was greatly moved when He saw her grief and that of those who were with her, for many friends had come to comfort the sisters in their sorrow, and He asked to see Lazarus. When He stood at the tomb, Jesus also wept, and the others said, “Behold how He loved him!” But they wondered that He could do so many miracles and that He could not have prevented the death of His friend. They did not understand that a greater miracle than the healing of the sick was now to take place.

Jesus commanded them to roll away the stone from the tomb, and when they had done so He cried, “Lazarus, come forth!”

The people held their breath in awe, and their hearts almost stopped beating for a moment, and then Lazarus came out of his tomb. After a moment of awe-struck silence, they crowded around him rejoicing, and there were tears of love and gratitude, while the hearts of all were filled with amazement at this marvelous thing which our Lord had done.

Many of the Jews who saw it believed on Him, even though they had doubted before; but others

tried to cause trouble, thinking that He would make all the people love Him and believe that He was the Lord; and they were afraid that this would take away their own power. Then Caiaphas, who was the high priest that year, prophesied that Jesus should suffer death for the nation and should gather the children of God together. So they began to plan His death, and Jesus went away into another country to escape them.

But just before the Feast of the Passover He returned to Bethany, and they made a supper in His honor. Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead, was there, and Martha served; while Mary took a pound of very costly ointment and put it upon the feet of Jesus, wiping them with her long hair, because she wanted so much to show her love for Him and her gratitude.

Judas, that wicked disciple who afterwards gave the Master up to His enemies, found fault with what Mary had done, because he said the ointment might have been sold and the money given to the poor. He did not care at all for the poor, but he carried the bag in which the collections were put and thought he could take the money and use it for himself. Jesus, however, would not let him blame Mary. "The poor ye have always with you," He said; "but Me ye have not always."

On the next day, when the people who had gathered for the great feast at Jerusalem, heard that Jesus was coming to the city, large numbers of

them gathered the branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, crying, "Hosanna! Blessed is the king of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord."

And Jesus rode triumphantly into Jerusalem, the people throwing some of their garments as well as the palm branches, across the way for Him to pass over, and He taught them as He had so often done; but He knew that the end of His life was very near.

How hard it must have been for Him to go on with His work, to accept the honors that were showered upon Him with the same quiet, kingly dignity which He had ever shown, realizing all the time that the suffering which was to come would be made the more bitter because of these demonstrations of love and respect and reverence and faith!

But it was a part of His mission to bear all the humiliations which evil minds could devise, and this present triumph would increase the weight of the coming burden; so He accepted it, as He accepted every incident of His experience, with the gentle, enduring patience which was one of the greatest proofs of His divinity, and He went on with a steadfast and more than mortal strength, toward the completion of His sublime destiny.

THE LOST SHEEP.

The parable, or story, of the Lost Sheep, is one which Christ told to make the people understand that God is always ready to receive back those of His children who have strayed away from Him, if only they are truly sorry and want to come back and be forgiven.

Jesus said, "What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost.'" And Jesus said that there was more joy in Heaven over one repentant sinner than over ninety-nine persons who had never done wrong, and so had never been shut out from the kingdom of Heaven.

How beautiful the thought of God's mercy is! And it shows us that we have no right to judge people, even if we know that they have sinned; and we have no right to say that they cannot be forgiven because they have been so bad, for Christ tells us in this little story that if they repent, there is rejoicing in Heaven.

THE PRODIGAL SON.

To teach the same lesson Jesus told the story of the Prodigal Son. It is about a man who had two sons, the younger of whom asked for his portion of his father's property, and then went away to another country and spent it all foolishly. Afterward the young man saw how wicked his conduct had been, and resolved to go home and ask to be received back as a servant.

But when his father saw him, he came out to meet him and took him in his arms and kissed him. Then he made a great feast for him, killing the fatted calf and doing everything he could to show his joy.

The elder brother thought this unfair; but the father said to him, "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry and be glad; for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost and is found."

These stories do not mean that God loves us better if we do wrong, or that He approves of wrong-doing, but that, if we truly repent of our sins, even the angels rejoice to see that we wish to serve God again and be His children, and they are ready to welcome us back into His service.

CHRIST BLESSING LITTLE CHILDREN.

The New Testament is full of the love of Christ for His people. It is not just the prosperous and happy that He loves, either; it is the weak and ill and poor as well, those who are treated unkindly and are not happy.

But more than all others, Christ seemed to love



the little children. Many of them were brought to Him that He might take them in His arms and bless them, and He was always glad to do this.

His disciples feared that it would annoy Him to have so many people come with their children when He was so busy with teaching and healing the sick, and they told the crowds to stay away.

But Christ said, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God."

He also said, "Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." He meant by this that every one must be pure of heart and trust in God as little children do, in order to be near God and in perfect sympathy with Him.

It is a beautiful thought that Christ watches over the little children and takes care of them, and that He knows every sorrow that comes to them and is always ready to sympathize and help. He blesses them now just as truly as when He was here on earth.



CHRIST IS RISEN.

The story of the life of Jesus is full of interest from the beginning to the end, but the closing scenes of it are rich in strength and pathos. This quiet and beautiful Soul, with the divinity of God glowing through it, is the most wonderful and in-



spiring study which any human being can take up. So great is the power of truth and purity in it that men who have been unbelievers when they commenced the study, have ended by accepting Christ as the Son of God and the Redeemer of

the World, as well as the grandest and noblest man who ever lived, and the one perfect example of the life which God intended for His children.

All along during the years of His ministry and while He was working and praying and suffering for the people whom He loved, Jesus knew what the

end was to be—He knew that He must be persecuted to the extent possible for evil minds to plan, and that He must die a disgraceful death and be buried as an imposter; but He knew also that following this shame and agony, would come the triumph of truth, and the salvation of humanity.

With this knowledge and divine strength of soul, which were His because He was the Son of God, and with the human pity and understanding that were His because of His human mother, He was capable of a life and work which no other inheritance could have made possible; and His mission was carried out to grand completion, leaving a precious heritage to the world for which He lived and died.

Christ foretold His death and resurrection more than once before His disciples had any idea of what was coming. He made His preparations for leaving them and chose seventy more of His disciples, besides the twelve already mentioned, teaching them in all things that they might go out into the cities and villages and preach the gospel, also healing the sick and comforting the sorrowful as He had done.

When the time came for the feast of the Passover, Jesus sent Peter and John into the city to prepare a place in which they might celebrate it, and in the evening He came with His Apostles and sat down to the feast with them in the chamber where it had been spread. There He taught them many things which they understood after His death, although at

the time the meaning was not so plain. Jesus also said that one who sat there with Him should betray him. The apostles were very sorrowful when they heard this, and wondered whom He could mean; but they did not know that He referred to Judas Iscariot.

After a time Judas went out and left the eleven with the Master, who told them that they would all forsake Him that night; but Peter said, "Lord, I will lay down my life for Thy sake." Probably Peter fully meant what he said; but Jesus knew how weak human nature is, and He answered, "Verily, I say unto thee, this night before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice."



Peter was grieved at this, because he loved the Master very dearly, and was really very faithful to Him, and again he declared that although he should die with Him he would not deny Him; the other disciples said the same.

It was on this night that our Lord established

what is now known as the Lord's supper, the Sacrament, the Holy Communion, or the Eucharist. He took bread and gave thanks and broke it, and He gave it to His disciples saying, "Take, eat, this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." Then He took the cup of unfermented wine and gave thanks again and gave it



to His disciples, telling them to drink of it, for He said, "This is My blood which is shed for many for the remission of sins. Drink it in remembrance of Me."

After His death the disciples faithfully observed this sacrament as all

Christians do down to the present time.

Before they left the house, Jesus spoke some comforting words of hope and promise to the men who loved Him so well, and then they went to the Mount of Olives where the Garden of Gethsemane was situated. There Jesus suffered great agony

of spirit, praying to God for strength to bear the trial that He knew was close at hand; but His disciples slept, for they did not understand what was passing.

To this garden Judas came, with a great crowd of people, some of them armed men who were to take Jesus prisoner. Judas had told them that he would kiss the one whom they were to seize, and when they had come near, he went up to Jesus and kissed Him, saying, "Hail, Master!"

Then they took Him, and when one of His disciples resisted them, Jesus reproved him, saying, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?"

So Jesus allowed Himself to be led away to Caiaphas, the high priest, and Peter followed at a distance and sat among the servants of the high priest when they had reached the palace, for he was anxious to see how it would all end.

And while the high priest and those with him were trying to prove Jesus guilty of some crime which deserved death, some of the servants accused Peter of being in His company, and he denied it, for he was afraid. After he had denied three times that he knew the Master, he heard the cock crow, and remembering the words of Jesus, he went out of the palace and wept. He still loved

the Man to whom he had proved unfaithful, but he had not been able to stand up bravely in the face of all those who were seeking the life of Jesus and say that he believed in Him. Later, however, Peter grew strong, and was ready to die for the Master's cause; and after preaching faithfully and suffering many hardships and a great deal of persecution for that cause, he did finally die for it.

Jesus had no fear of His enemies, who could not make Him say an unwise word. He was taken before Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, and afterwards before Herod, the governor of Galilee, and both of them questioned Him closely. Herod even tried to make Him perform some miracle; but Jesus remained



silent and undemonstrative, and even when they heaped indignities upon Him, He was calm and kingly, with a strength that was the surest sign of the divinity in Him.

At last He was sent back to Pilate again, and because the chief priests and many of the most

powerful men demanded that He be crucified, Pilate at last gave them permission to do as they pleased. Then they took Him into a large hall and put a crown of thorns upon His head and a kingly robe upon Him, and they cried, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and mocked Him.

At last they clothed Him in His own garments



once more and led Him away to a place called Calvary, where they crucified Him. But even in the midst of His agony upon the cross, Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

So was the mortal life of our Savior given up for the world that He loved. Before He died Jesus tenderly committed His mother to the care of John, His beloved 'disciple, and from that hour John looked upon her as his own mother, and was always like a son to her.

There were earthquakes and many fearful sights and sounds during the time that Jesus hung upon

the cross, and the wicked people were frightened, as well they might have been, for it was plain that He whom they had crucified was more than mortal.

After the death of the Savior, some of those who loved Him took His body and tenderly prepared it for burial; then they carried it to a new sepulchre where no one had ever before been buried, and there they laid it.

But when they had buried the Master and sealed the tomb, the grave could not hold Him. On the third day He rose from the dead, as He had promised, and many who loved Him saw Him and knew that He was the Savior; while others saw Him also, and admitted that He was Jesus, who had been crucified. So the Scriptures were fulfilled, and Christ's great triumph was shown to the world; while the promise of eternal life which he had brought was given new meaning by His conquest of death.

THE BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT.

After His resurrection, Christ staid upon the earth forty days, and more than five hundred of His disciples saw Him during this time, recognizing and worshipping Him. He also made known His divinity, saying, "All power is given to Me in Heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach



all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

When the forty days were ended Jesus went from

Jerusalem with His apostles and led them to the Mount of Olives. There He talked with them, bidding them remain in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit should be sent to them.

And even as He was talking, they saw Him rise from the earth, and He was taken up into Heaven



DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN

and passed out of their sight, while they stood there upon the ground, wondering and believing.

Then angels came and told them that Jesus should come again as they had seen Him pass from them. When they heard this the apostles went back to Jerusalem rejoicing, and they were often in the temple, where they gave thanks to God and praised Him for His great mercy and the revelation of His love which He had sent to the world.

The Holy Spirit came to them, as Jesus had promised, and they were able to do wonderful things in the name of the Lord. They were not afraid of any evil that might befall them, for the strength of God was in their hearts, "And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them."



THE APOSTLE PAUL.

Before his conversion to the faith of Christ, Paul was called Saul, and he persecuted the Christians, believing that they were doing wickedly and that he ought to punish them for it.

But while he was in the midst of these persecu-



tions, and as he was journeying toward Damascus one day, he saw suddenly at noon-time, a light shining in the heavens which was greater than the light of the sun, and he and all that were with him fell to the earth in wonder and awe. Then Saul heard a voice speaking to

him and saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" And Saul said, "Who art Thou, Lord?" And the voice answered, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest."

Then Saul was instructed as to what he was to do, and was told that he would become a minister of Christ. From that time Paul preached and

taught the Christian religion, and converted many people to it.

But he was persecuted in his new work as he had persecuted others, being finally taken prisoner and threatened with scourging; he declared himself a Roman citizen, however, and therefore safe from such treatment, and went on openly confessing his faith and telling of his conversion, and he appealed for protection to the Roman emperor.

He was then put on board a ship as a prisoner to be taken to Rome. While they were at sea a violent storm came up, and Paul warned the sailors that they were in great danger; but they would not listen to him. At last the ship was wrecked, all on board being cast ashore upon an island, whither they had been carried, clinging to boards and broken pieces of the ship.

The barbarous people of the island treated them kindly, building a fire that they might dry their clothing and get warm; for it was cold and they were, of course, drenched.

The men were very glad to be safe once more; but a strange thing happened after a little: Paul gathered up an armful of sticks to put upon the fire, and as he placed them upon the flames, a viper, which is a kind of poisonous snake, came out of the bundle and clung to his hand; he shook it off into the fire, however, without the slightest sign of fear.

Those who were about him thought that the

hand would swell and that Paul would die from the effects of the bite, and they watched him closely, believing that this trouble was sent to him as a punishment for his sins. But no evil results came from the wound, and then the barbarians thought he was a god and looked upon him with great respect.

Paul and the men who were with him remained



upon the island for three months. At the end of that time they went away in a ship, finally reaching Rome, where the prisoners were given up to the authorities; but Paul was allowed to live by himself, with only a soldier to guard him, and after a while he called the chief men of the Jews together and told them why he was there and

preached to them the Word of God. His preaching was received by some with faith, but others did not believe.

Paul went on preaching and teaching in Rome for two years, living in a house which he hired, and he brought many to Jesus. He was a man of excellent education and a powerful preacher. His

Epistles, given in the Bible, are full of power and the fire of conviction, and he did a wonderful work for the great cause in which he believed with all his heart.

Paul was physically small and deformed; but mentally he was a giant. He had been taught the knowledge of the



Romans, and was therefore well fitted to take up this new cause in a manner which would appeal to educated people as well as to those who had no learning.

From the time of his conversion until his death he labored faithfully in the ministry of Christ, fear-

ing no persecution or hardship when he could do the Master's bidding and teach His holy will. The work which he did was a wonderful work, and his influence in the Christian world has been a very remarkable one. Brave, untiring, devoted to the cause of Christ, he at last lost his life in that cause, adding another to the list of martyrs whose memory the world loves and reveres.

The story of Paul's experiences reads like those tales of adventure which are so full of absorbing interest that when once they have been taken up, we do not feel like laying them down again until they are finished.

This is true also of many others of the Bible stories, and great authors have taken their themes from them for the writing of books which have become famous.

The more we study the Bible, the more wonderful it becomes, and the more we learn that in that marvelous book are set forth nearly all the experiences of which human life is capable, with the teaching which each of these experiences should bring and the lesson to be learned by the reading of them. In all the world there is not another collection so wonderful as this.



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