

**LITTLE STORIES OF  
CHRIST'S PASSION**



**BY: NITA WAGENHAUSER**



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*Cum permissu superiorum*

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"Stay with us for our evening repast."

When they were seated at the table the Stranger took the bread in His Hands, blessed it, broke it and gave it to them to eat, just as Jesus had done at the Last Supper. In that moment Luke and Cleophas knew Who the Stranger really was. They arose in wonderment and awe as they murmured, "It is the Christ." Then Jesus vanished from their sight.

The disciples set out immediately to Jerusalem to tell the others the wonderful news. Neither spoke for a long time, but their faces were transfigured with a great joy.

"Christ has truly risen," said Luke slowly, "and we have seen Him."

"Yes," Cleophas replied with solemn happiness.

"We have seen — God."

*Cum permissu superiorum*

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*“Out of the depths of the tomb walked Lazarus.*

"You must be unfamiliar with Jerusalem if you do not know what has taken place there in the last few days," replied Cleophas.

"What things?" asked the Stranger.

"Concerning Jesus of Nazareth," Cleophas answered, "a mighty Prophet, Whom we believe to be the Christ."

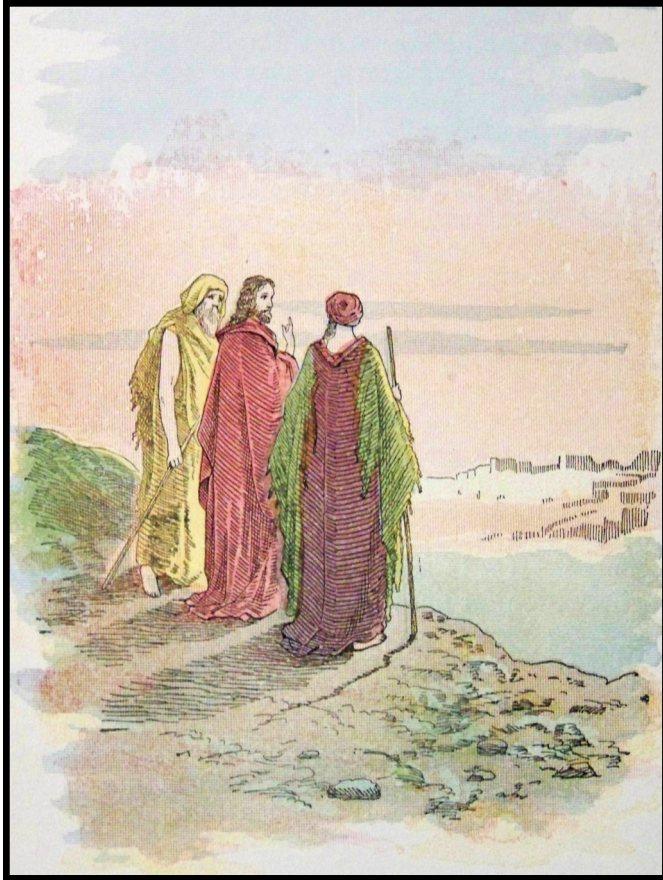
"He was seized by His enemies and after mock trials was condemned to death and was crucified," Luke explained. "Today is the third day since His Death, and strange things have happened."

"What things?" the Stranger repeated His former question.

"This morning some women went to the sepulcher and found it empty. They saw angels who told them that Jesus had arisen. At first we did not believe their tale, but Peter and John ran to the sepulcher and found it was as the women had said. But the disciples did not see the Christ." A sad look came into Luke's face as he related these things.

The Stranger and Luke and Cleophas continued their way to Emmaus. And as they walked the Stranger spoke to the two disciples about the Scriptures in a most wonderful way.

All too soon they came to Emmaus. There the disciples begged the Stranger to stay with them. "The day is already well spent," they urged, eager to hear more of such marvelous wisdom.



*On the road to Emmaus*

#### AT THE TOMB OF LAZARUS

**W**HAT are you muttering to yourself, Eliab?" asked Levi coming suddenly upon his friend in a garden.

"I was gloating a bit about yonder tomb," Eliab replied, pointing to a sepulcher covered by a great stone.

"That is the tomb of Lazarus, friend of the Nazarene, is it not?"

Eliab nodded. "Friend? Aye, but," he added with a sneer, "the wonderful Miracle-Worker would not come to save him."

Levi smiled. "And I hear the sisters of Lazarus are disconsolate. They sent for their Friend four days ago." The two Pharisees exchanged cunning glances.

"Perhaps He won't be so popular with the people now," murmured Eliab hopefully. "But look! Here come Mary and Martha to mourn at the grave of their brother."

But Mary and Martha did not go to the tomb. Instead they rushed past the Pharisees toward the garden gate.

"See," whispered Levi, "it is the Nazarene and His followers."

"But too late," said Eliab triumphantly. "Lazarus has already lain in the tomb four days."

Mary and Martha flung themselves at the feet of Jesus. "Lord, if You had been here our brother would not have died," sobbed Martha.

Our Lord spoke to her gently. "If anyone believes in Me," He said, "he will live again even though he has died. Do you believe this?"

"Yes," said Martha, " I believe it, Lord."

"Where have you buried Lazarus?" asked Jesus compassionately.

"Yonder, Lord — come and see," Mary replied, a new hope shining in her eyes.

When they arrived at the tomb Jesus commanded that the stone be removed. After this was done, He lifted up His eyes to heaven and prayed. Then He said in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth."

Mary and Martha watched the sepulcher, their faces aglow with faith and love. A large crowd had gathered, which waited expectantly.

Levi and Eliab again exchanged glances. "The fools!" Eliab muttered. "This is one trick He can't perform."

Suddenly, out of the depths of the tomb, walked Lazarus, clad in the grave clothes in which he had been buried! When the cloth that covered his face was removed, he looked about him in wonder.

## THE JOURNEY TO EMMAUS



ON THE third day after Christ's Death, two of His disciples, Luke and Cleophas, walked along the road from Jerusalem to a nearby village called Emmaus. As they walked they talked of the happenings of the past few days.

"Why are we so surprised that Jesus allowed Himself to be taken by His enemies?" Luke was saying. "Many times did He foretell His Passion and Death."

"You are right, Luke," replied Cleophas. "He only fulfilled the Scriptures, which predicted all these things. But what do you think of the women's story?"

"It was true that when they came to the sepulcher, it was empty. Did not Peter and John also see the empty grave?"

"Yes, but they did not see the Christ. Where was He?" asked Cleophas.

Their conversation was interrupted at this point by the appearance of a Stranger. "Of what are you speaking that seems to make you so sad?" asked the Stranger, joining them.

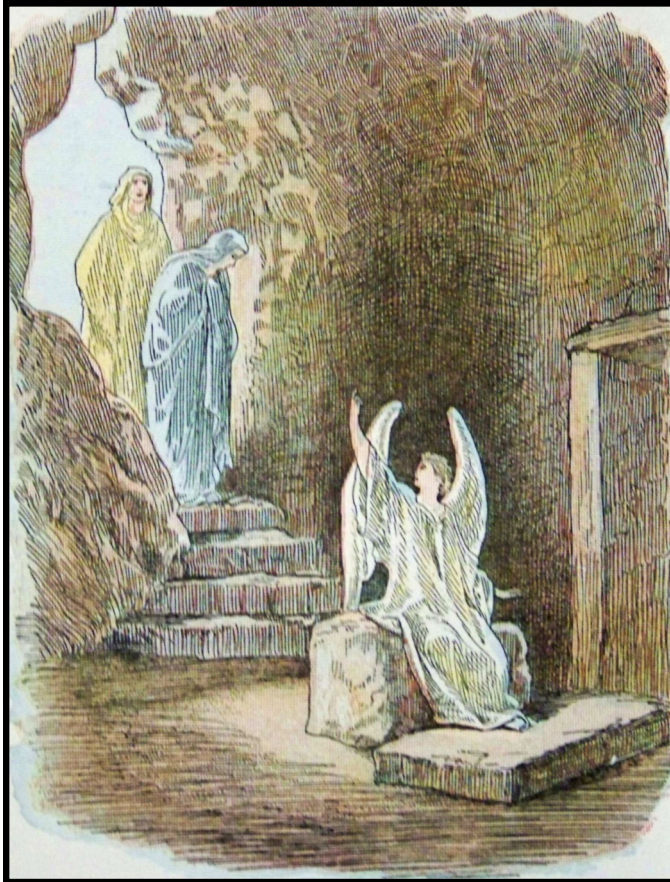


"How is it that I who knew the tomb am now alive? Mary! Martha!" Then he beheld Jesus and fell at His feet, because he knew what had happened.

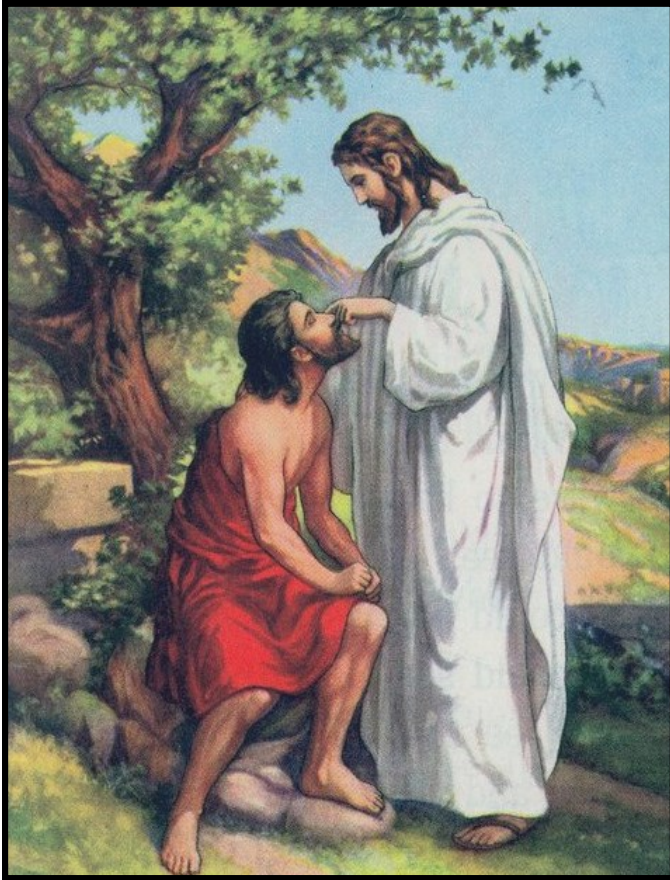
Mary and Martha were overcome with joy and gave thanks to God. Many unbelievers who had seen this miracle believed and followed Jesus. But Levi and Eliab, furious at what had happened, hastened to tell the chief priests.

"If we do not do something about Him, we will lose all our power over the people," they said.

A meeting of the Sanhedrin, the High Council of the Jews, was called. They condemned Jesus at this meeting, and from that moment, sought to put Him to death.



*The Angel at the tomb*



*"Lord, that I may see!"*



*Jesus is placed in the tomb.*

Jesus in the lap of His Blessed Mother.

"My Son, my Son," she murmured brokenly, "how You have suffered! Behold what sin has done!"

"Truly are you the Mother of Sorrows," said Joseph in an awed voice. "Let us take the crown of thorns from His head." Very carefully he removed the cruel crown from our Saviour's divine brow. "The sun is already low. Let us anoint the Body and prepare It for burial."

Joseph and Nicodemus took the Body of Jesus and wrapped It in fine linens with the spices which Nicodemus had brought. It so happened that Joseph had purchased recently a new tomb in a neighboring garden, a tomb hewn out of a rock. This he offered as a burial place for Jesus.

Mary looked gratefully at Joseph and said, "Joseph of Arimathea, you have shown my Son much love. He will bless you richly."

But Joseph answered, "Lady, I am overcome with humility and am greatly honored."

So the sorrowful procession bore the Body of Jesus to the garden, and to Joseph of Arimathea had come the wonderful blessing of having the Son of God laid in his tomb. Then Joseph rolled a great stone to the opening of the sepulcher, and all withdrew.

## THE MIRACLE OF BARTIMAEUS

**I**T happened on the first Palm Sunday. Jesus and His disciples were on the road leading to Jerusalem. A little while before, Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead, and men, women and children now thronged around Him to see Him and to hear His words. However, enemies of Jesus were also there, looking for a chance to turn the people against Him. Even some of the priests of the Temple were among them.

Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, sat by the roadside begging alms. When he heard the throng he asked someone standing near, "Who is this that is passing by?"

"It is Jesus of Nazareth, the Wonder-Worker," replied the man.

On hearing this Bartimaeus leaped up and cried, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

The people tried to silence him, and even the disciples bade him be quiet. But Bartimaeus had great faith. He only cried out more loudly, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Jesus heard him and asked, "Who is it that calls Me?"

"A blind beggar named Bartimaeus," said one of the disciples. "Bring him to Me," commanded Jesus.

James, therefore, went to Bartimaeus and said to him, "Be comforted, Bartimaeus. Jesus asks that you come to Him."

Bartimaeus arose joyfully and James led him to the Master. Jesus looked at him with pity, and inquired gently, "What is it that you would have Me do?"

Bartimaeus flung himself at Jesus' feet and begged, "Lord, that I may see!"

Jesus was much pleased with the poor blind man's faith. So He said to him, "Go your way. Your faith has made you whole."

Instantly Bartimaeus received his sight. His face lit up with joy as he exclaimed, " I can see! I can see! O Master, how can I ever thank you?"

The crowd immediately began to shout, "A miracle, a miracle!" The enemies of Jesus tried to silence them, saying, "You fools, can you not see He is an impostor? He works miracles through trickery, and the devil helps Him."

But the people paid no attention to these words. They crowded about our Lord, crying out in awe and wonder. So the priests of the Temple were more determined than ever to do away with Him.



*The Body of Jesus is taken down from the Cross.*

"I beseech you, Pilate, that I may be permitted to take away the Body of Jesus Who has been crucified, that It may be prepared for burial before the Sabbath."

Pilate marveled to himself at Joseph's courage in making this request. There was no knowing what the enraged Jews might do to him. However, the governor was eager to grant a favor that would honor the dead Nazarene.

"It shall be as you ask, Joseph of Arimathea," he said. "But I doubt whether Jesus is already dead. I shall send a messenger to find out, and report to me."

Joseph thanked Pilate and hastened back to Mount Calvary. Longinus had just pronounced Jesus dead. Pilate's messenger immediately departed to report this to the governor. Then Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, who had offered to help him, began their task of love. Very gently and reverently they took the Body of Jesus down from the Cross, while Mary, His Mother, Mary of Magdala and John, the Beloved Apostle, watched them.

When they had successfully completed their task, the Mother of Jesus stretched forth her arms, saying,

"Oh, lay my Son here, that I may once again look upon Him in my arms!"

Very sadly Joseph and Nicodemus laid the Body of

## THE FIRST MASS

**T**HE meeting of the High Council of the Jews was nearly over. Caiphas, the chief priest, and the other priests had condemned Jesus of Nazareth.

Suddenly Nicodemus, a wealthy and influential member of the Council, said to them, "Does our law judge any man before it hears him and knows what he has done?"

All eyes turned to Nicodemus, for by these words he was openly defending Jesus. "Are you also a follower of His?" they asked him. But Nicodemus did not answer them. He was remembering a time, years ago, when he was a young man. Jesus, then a Boy of twelve years, had come to the Temple and amazed the wisest priests and scholars with His questions. Then Mary and Joseph had come after Him, and He had said to them, "Why have you been looking for Me? Did you not know that I must be doing My Father's work?"

Whom did Jesus mean by His Father? He could not mean Joseph — that was clear from His words. Whom, then, did He mean? Nicodemus had been strangely moved by those words which Jesus spoke long ago.



*The Last Supper*

the displeasure of Caiphas.

A few days later when they were on the road to Jerusalem they again met the high priest.

"Hail, high priest," they greeted him.

"I was searching for you," Caiphas told them, a dangerous look on his evil face. "A serious matter is to be decided. As you know, the Nazarene has been condemned by the High Council. Now we must consider ways and means to bring about His death. This evening the High Council meets for that purpose. Are you with us or against us?"

"Henceforth I shall have nothing more to do with the High Council," Joseph said with finality as he turned away.

"I also withdraw as a member of the High Council," Nicodemus echoed, and walked away after his friend.

Later Joseph of Arimathea learned that Jesus was in the hands of His enemies and on His way to Calvary to be crucified. He grieved very deeply at this terrible news. But Joseph's faith was made even more secure by the Crucifixion. So great was his love for Jesus that he was inspired to provide for His burial before the Sabbath. Therefore he did not stop to think of his own danger in acting as the friend of the Crucified Christ. He went straight to Pilate.

"What is it you would ask me, Joseph of Arimathea?" Pilate inquired.

asked with an ugly sneer on his lips.

"Of course. Did He not raise the daughter of Jairus and the son of the widow of Naim? I have not yet seen Lazarus but I have talked with those who were present at the miracle."

"You are a fool, Joseph of Arimathea. It was mere trickery — trickery, I tell you!" Caiphas was very angry.

"But the people who saw it — they believed. They wanted to make Him their King."

Caiphas paled with rage. "If something isn't done with this Man, He soon will have all the people believing in Him. He is only a deceiver who goes about working miracles with the aid of the devil. The High Council must have a meeting at once to decide the fate of this impostor. I shall expect you both to be present." And without another word, Caiphas turned and walked away.

"I cannot and will not attend this meeting, Nicodemus," said Joseph. "I am a secret follower of Jesus, as you know. They will surely condemn Him to death if Caiphas has his way."

"Nor shall I attend the meeting unless it be to defend Jesus," Nicodemus replied. "Caiphas' hatred for Him knows no bounds."

So while Nicodemus went to the meeting of the Sanhedrin and spoke in Jesus' defense, Joseph of Arimathea absented himself. Thus did they both incur

When Jesus grew to manhood and began to teach the truths of salvation, Nicodemus often listened to Him in secret. For though Nicodemus was a learned man, he was timid. So he would come to Jesus at night, when no one could see him, to hear Jesus' wonderful words and to ask Him questions.

Now at the Council meeting Caiphas began to mock Nicodemus. "Nicodemus is lost in meditation over the Nazarene," he said with a sneer. "Soon he will be hailing Him as the Messiah." But Nicodemus still kept silent and went out of the Temple.

A few days later Caiphas called another meeting of the Council. "This meeting will be to consider ways and means by which the Nazarene may be put to death," he said.

Then said Nicodemus, turning away, "I am no longer a member of the Council." And in the same way his friend, Joseph of Arimathea, left the Council also.

The next day was the holyday called the Pasch, or Passover. This was always celebrated by a religious banquet, and the servants of Nicodemus were busy preparing the tables for it. Nicodemus himself was carrying a pitcher of water to the house when he saw Peter and John approaching.

"Greetings, friends," he called to them.

"Greetings to you, Nicodemus," they replied. Then John continued, "Our Master has sent us to you."

"And what would the Master have you say to me?" Nicodemus questioned curiously.

"He has chosen your house as the place where He will eat the Passover with His disciples," said Peter simply.

"The Master will honor my poor house like this?" Nicodemus exclaimed. "Go, tell Him He is many times welcome. My servants will prepare the Upper Room for Him at once."

He bade his servants have all things in readiness. They had barely finished the preparations when Jesus and the Apostles entered.

Nicodemus hastened to them. "Why do You honor Your servant in this way, O Master?" he asked humbly.

"Peace, Nicodemus," Jesus said to him gently. "I have chosen your house above all others in the city."

"My household and I will celebrate the feast in a room at the rear of the house, O Master, so that You and Your Apostles may keep the Pasch alone."

"That is very thoughtful of you, Nicodemus," said Jesus. "I have much desired to eat this Pasch with My Apostles before I suffer; for from this time on I will not eat it."

Nicodemus did not understand these words of Jesus then, although he understood them later. But

## THE BURIAL OF JESUS



RIMATHEA, a city of Judea, was destined to become known to all the world because of one of her noble sons. Joseph of Arimathea was a man of wealth and influence, famed throughout the land also for his justice and goodness. He was a senator, which means a member of the Sanhedrin, the Supreme Council of the Jews.

Joseph was among those who had listened to Christ's first preaching in Judea. He thereupon became an ardent disciple of our Lord's. However, he did not declare himself as such for fear of the Jews, since he belonged to the Sanhedrin. For the more miracles Jesus worked and the more followers he had, the more the high priests hated Him. They feared His power and influence over the people.

One day when Joseph was with Nicodemus, who was also a secret admirer of Christ's teachings, Caiphas, the high priest, came up to them. "Have you heard about Lazarus?" he asked abruptly.

"Yes," Joseph replied simply. "He was raised from the dead by Jesus of Nazareth."

"Do you believe that, Joseph of Arimathea?" Caiphas



exclaimed strongly. " I believe! I believe — I — " Then his voice was drowned out in the thunder and noise of falling objects.

"Grandfather, where are you?" screamed Miriam.

"Are you all right, grandfather?" cried David.

The storm ceased as suddenly as it had begun. Swiftly the darkness lifted. Instinctively Miriam and David ran to their grandfather's chair. It was empty. They looked about wildly, fearing they knew not what.

Suddenly David stopped and looked toward the balcony, wide-eyed. "Look, Miriam," he cried in a fever of excitement.

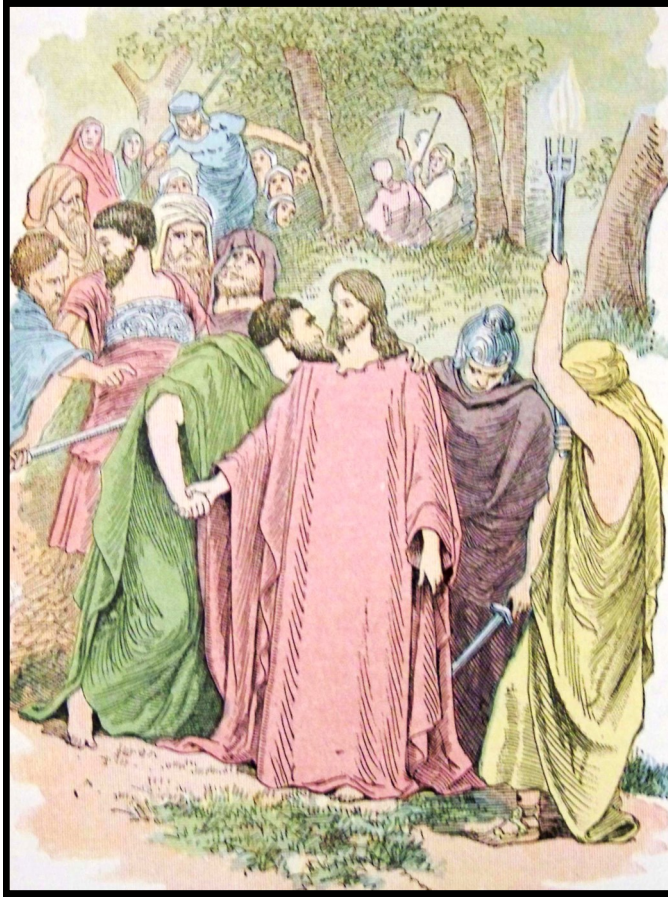
Miriam caught her breath as she saw her grandfather standing out on the balcony, his hands raised in prayer.

Miriam and David ran to him. "Grandfather, you're standing!" they exclaimed together.

The old man looked at them fondly. "Yes, my children, and I walked out here. The Crucified Christ has granted your request that I walk again. But more than that, He has given me that which He Himself told you was more important — the gift of faith."

now he and his household graciously withdrew, leaving Jesus and His Apostles alone for the Last Supper.

How dear to the Heart of Jesus Nicodemus must have been! Not only was he privileged later to help Joseph of Arimathea take Jesus' Body down from the Cross and bear It to the sepulcher prepared for it; but now, before Jesus' death, his house was chosen to be hallowed by the first Mass ever offered on this earth — and offered by Jesus Himself.



*The betrayal of Jesus by Judas*

Well — the days of His miracles are over now."

Suddenly David appeared in the hallway. He was breathless and his face was white and drawn.

"I'm glad you got home before the storm, David my boy," said the grandfather. "But you look very tired."

"Jesus is dying. He has been hanging on the Cross since the sixth hour. I couldn't stand it any longer. I — I had to come home." David burst into tears. No one spoke while he sobbed out his pent-up feelings.

Tears were streaming down Miriam's face, too, as she thought of the Jesus she loved suffering so much.

"Just before I left I asked Jesus to make you walk again, grandfather. I — I 'm sure He heard me."

"You're a good boy, David, and I 'm sorry you're so unhappy; but I will never walk again."

"Try, grandfather. Please try," they urged.

"Not now, my dears. I am very tired and wish to rest."

Suddenly it became almost totally black in the room. The lightning flashed and the thunder rolled.

"Jesus — has — died," David murmured, as if to himself.

The earth began to quake so that the very house shook.

"Indeed this was the Son of God," the old man

Miriam cried. "A few short months ago you said that He surely must be the Messiah."

"Yes. I was fooled like many others. If He were the Messiah — the Son of God — do you think He could have been taken by His enemies?"

"We do not know the plans of God " Miriam began.

"And why didn't He accept the Kingship offered to Him, and lead His people?" the old man interrupted.

"David and I were there when He entered the city. We too laid palms in His path. I remember well His words: 'My Kingdom is not of this world.' "

"Humph! The people wanted to make Him their King and He failed them. Furthermore, if He could work so many miracles, why didn't He cure me?"

"O grandfather, He will. He will. He is so good."

"I have to sit in this chair for years and years — and you say He is good? Bah!"

"But He is. He has spoken to us many times, and once He patted my head and held David on His lap. We asked Him that day to make you walk again."

"Indeed. And what did your kind Jesus say?" The old man's voice was tinged with sarcasm.

"He said that one day you would walk, but that there were things more important."

"More important to Him," the old man said bitterly. "If He cured others, why not me?"

## THE CONVERSION OF MALCHUS

**W**HEN Jesus went into the Garden of Gethsemani to pray, He took with Him Peter and James and John. And after He had prayed He said to them, "My hour is at hand."

Even while Jesus was speaking, a great multitude sent by the chief priests and the elders of the people, entered the garden. All of them carried swords or heavy sticks. At a sign from Judas, the betrayer, they seized Jesus. When Peter, the boldest of the Apostles, saw this, he drew out his own sword and impulsively struck at Malchus, a servant of the high priest, cutting off one of his ears.

Malchus cried out in pain and exclaimed, "You follower of an impostor, you will pay for this when I tell the high priest!"

But Peter was not afraid and would have fought further had not Jesus said to him, "Peter, put up your sword. If I wanted help would not my Father in Heaven send Me legions of Angels? But it cannot be, for the Scriptures must be fulfilled." So Peter put away his sword, as Jesus commanded.

Then Jesus touched Malchus' ear, and he was immediately healed.

Malchus was dumb for a moment with awe and wonder. The multitude cried out, "Another miracle wrought through the devil!" But Malchus at last laid down his sword and looked at Jesus. Then he said softly, "There is no evil in this Man. I will not do anything more against Him."

Malchus' fellow-servants jeered at him, saying, "Are you too now converted to this King Who is to be crucified?"

"You have said King rightly," replied Malchus with a new light in his eyes.

One of the servants laughed in scorn. "Wait till Caiphas hears of this!"

As they laid hold of Jesus again to drag Him away, He turned to look once more at Malchus. Their eyes met — and Malchus fell to his knees murmuring, "You are the Messiah."

When he looked up again the multitude had gone. Only Peter and James and John were there, with their eyes upon him. Malchus went to Peter and thanked him, saying, "If you had not cut off my ear, the miracle would not have happened. How wonderful are the ways of the Lord!"

And Malchus went with the Apostles and grieved with them over the fate of the Master.

## THE NINTH HOUR



ON A balcony overlooking the city of Jerusalem a little girl anxiously scanned the sky. Then she turned and walked slowly back into the large room, to where an old man sat in a chair.

"Do you see anything of your brother?" he asked as the child stopped beside him.

"No, grandfather, I do not see David anywhere," Miriam replied. "But he will come home soon, I feel sure."

"It grows so dark. What hour is it, child?"

"It is nearly the ninth hour. But why is it getting so dark? I am afraid."

"It is just a storm gathering. You were never afraid of a storm before, Miriam."

"This is more than just a storm, grandfather. The people will be punished today for crucifying the Son of God."

The old man's face darkened. "Hush! Do not utter such blasphemies in this house lest it be cursed."

"O grandfather, why can't you believe in Him now?"

"You cowards!" Longinus flung at them.

"Your hate put Him to death — the Son of God: your King." No one answered him.

Then he said to his soldiers, "Take down the bodies of the other two and break their bones as is the custom. Do not break the bones of Jesus of Nazareth, for He is already dead. But to make sure, I shall open His side." Taking his lance, therefore, Longinus pierced the Heart of Jesus. "What is it I see? Both blood and water are flowing out. How strange a thing is this!"

As he watched, a few drops of Jesus' Blood spurted from the wound and touched his eyes. At once all pain left them and they became clear and strong again.

"A miracle!" cried Longinus. "The Precious Blood of Jesus has healed my eyes — and it has also healed my soul."

Thereupon Longinus, and all his soldiers with him, knelt and vowed allegiance to the Crucified Christ. And leaving Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus to take down His Body and bury it, Longinus hastened home to tell Julia the joyful news.

## THE DENIAL OF PETER

**W**HEN Jesus and His Apostles had finished celebrating the feast of the Pasch, He said to them, "My hour is at hand when I must leave you."

"Why must You leave us, Master?" they asked. "Let us go with You."

But Jesus said to them, "Go with Me? Before this night is over, you will be ashamed even to know Me."

The Apostles were shocked to hear Him say this. Then up spoke the impulsive Peter: "Though all other men on earth be ashamed, Master, I will never be."

Jesus looked at him sadly. "Do not be too sure of your own strength, Peter," He said. "Before the cock crows this very night, you will deny Me three times."

"What?" Peter exclaimed. "I deny You? No, Master! I will die for You if need be, but I will never deny You."

Jesus looked fondly at the fiery Apostle whom He loved next to John. But then He turned sadly away,

because He knew what was to happen.

A few hours later Jesus was betrayed by Judas into the hands of His enemies. They led Him away to where the scribes and the elders were assembled with Caiphas, the high priest, to put Jesus on trial for His life. Peter followed his Master at a distance.

When they came to the palace of the high priest, he went in with the servants to await the outcome of the trial. While he was sitting there, a servant girl came along and began to talk to him.

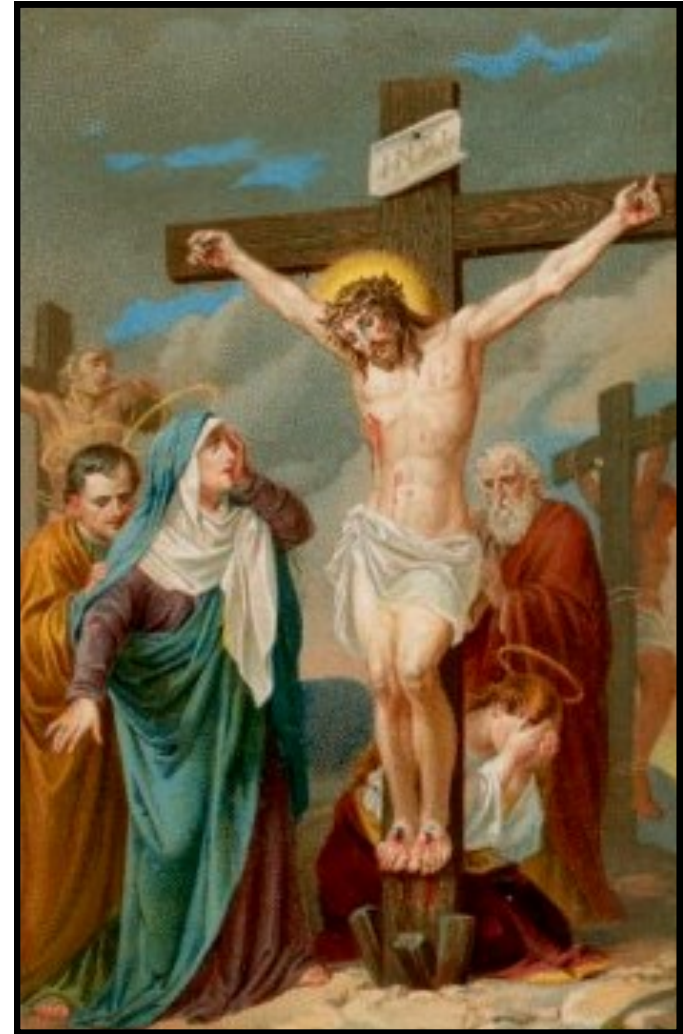
"You also were with Jesus of Nazareth, weren't you?" she asked him. Peter was afraid. "I don't know what you are talking about," he answered roughly, and arose to go out to the porch.

There, too, everyone was speaking of the Nazarene and what was to happen to Him at the hands of the high priest. Everyone thought Him guilty of blasphemy and many other crimes.

Suddenly another servant girl pointed to Peter and said, "This man also was with Jesus of Nazareth."

Peter became still more afraid. "That is not true," he replied in angry tones, "I don't even know the Man." Again he arose and this time he went into the courtyard. There, as everywhere else, they were talking about Jesus. Soon Peter began to talk with some of the groups standing about.

One of the men came up to him and said, "Surely you are one of His followers. Even your speech shows



*Jesus dies on the Cross*

was stripped of His garments by the soldiers, thrown roughly upon the Cross and fastened to it with great nails. During the agony of crucifixion He turned His head, and His eyes met those of Longinus for a brief moment.

Longinus started violently. "This is no ordinary Man," he murmured to himself.

For three hours Jesus hung on the Cross between heaven and earth, speaking only a few times. Longinus wished it were over, for his own suffering had increased.

Suddenly Jesus said, "It is finished." Immediately it became very dark and the people grew sorely afraid.

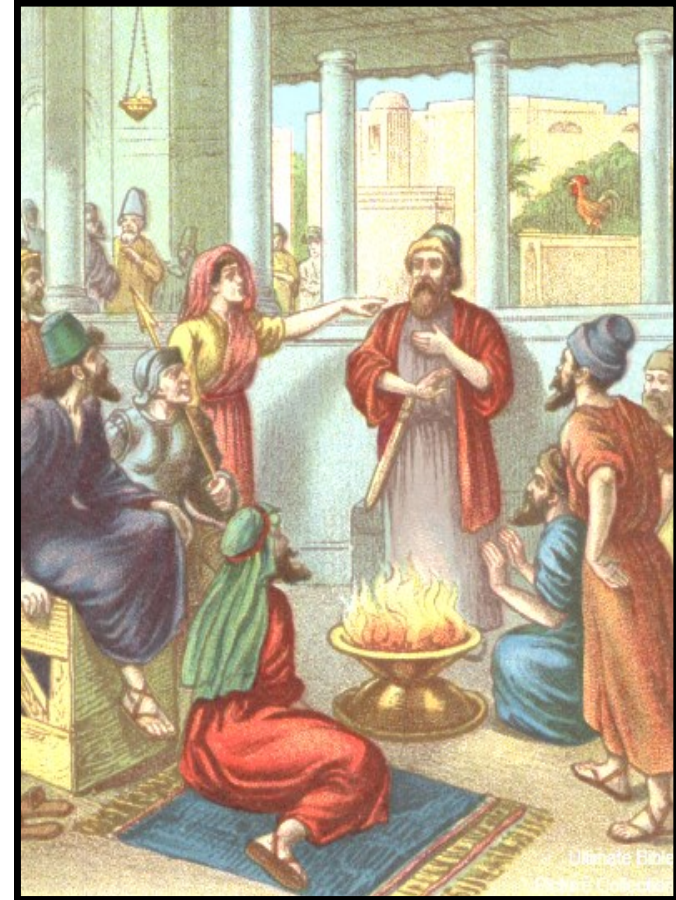
"Peace," Longinus said to them. "It will soon pass over."

Then in a loud voice Jesus said, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit"; and bowing His head, He died.

Then the earth quaked and the heavens thundered. Except for livid darts of lightning, darkness prevailed. The people fell on their knees in fear and trembling.

"Indeed this was the Son of God," Longinus exclaimed.

Soon all became quiet again and it began to grow lighter. In great relief the people rushed away from the place.



*"You also were with Jesus of Nazareth!"*

that." He meant that Peter's accent was like that of the people from Jesus' part of the country.

Peter was furious. "I tell you I don't even know Him," he shouted.

As soon as he had said these words, Peter heard a cock crow. Then he remembered the words of Jesus, "Before the cock crows this very night, you will deny Me three times." He realized what he had done, and ran from the courtyard of the palace weeping bitterly.

All through that long night, while Jesus was dragged along the streets from one court to the other, Peter wept. He was heartbroken with grief at his own weakness and sin. All through the next morning, when the cruel scourging of Jesus took place, when the heavy Cross was laid on His bruised shoulder and He began His sorrowful way to Calvary, Peter wept. Deep furrows appeared in his face from his tears, and he seemed like an old, broken man.

John tried to comfort him. "Do not grieve any more, my brother in Christ," he urged. "He has long since forgiven you."

"O John, I am so ashamed of my weakness," Peter murmured. "I denied the Master Who was so good to me. Boaster and braggart that I am! I cannot cease to weep. My sorrow is as great as my sin."

"If everyone had the great sorrow for sin that you

"Who are the miserable criminals to die today?" Julia inquired.

"One Whom they call Jesus of Nazareth a Man Whom the Jews have long tried to ensnare. Two thieves are to be crucified with Him."

"What are the charges against this Jesus of Nazareth?" Julia was vaguely concerned.

"He says that He is the Son of God," Longinus replied.

"The Son of God! This Man has said that He is the Son of God? O Longinus, I fear." Longinus looked at his wife's anxious face.

"It is true, Julia, that the time is ripe for the Messiah. But do you think He would come as a poor carpenter? Jesus is a Jew and His own people have turned against Him and are clamoring for His Blood. But enough of this talk. The sun has long since risen. I must go."

Longinus arrived at the court of the high priest just in time to give his soldiers last-minute instructions before the procession began. As they went along the way to Mount Calvary, the pain in his eyes became more intense. Several times he thought he must surely cry out. His feeling toward Jesus became bitter, since it was because of Him that Longinus must be in the sun and the wind that so irritated his eyes and made the pain so unbearable.

At last they reached the slope of Calvary. Here Jesus



## LONGINUS AND THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

**J**ULIA looked sadly at Longinus as he sat very still with his eyes closed.

"My poor husband," she murmured sympathetically. "Are your eyes hurting you again today?"

"Yes, Julia. They seem to be getting worse. I fear I shall soon be — blind." The word almost stuck in his throat.

"Do not say so, Longinus," Julia exclaimed in alarm. "But I beg you, do not go out today. Stay at home and rest your eyes."

"A Roman captain not go with his soldiers to an execution! My dear Julia, you know that is unthinkable."

"But your eyes are so very precious. You have been troubled for so long with this dreadful eye disease, and nothing seems to make you better. If we could only do something," she finished helplessly.

"Dear wife, do not worry over me so, I pray. The executions today will soon be over and I shall hasten home to your loving care."

have, Peter, Jesus' Cross would be much lighter today," said John gently. "Come, let us find the Blessed Mother of Jesus and walk with her to Calvary."

"Walk with His Mother to see Him die? Oh, do not ask me to do that. You are strong; but I must stay here and watch Him from a distance while my tears fall fast."

So John, the Beloved Disciple, walked with the Mother of Jesus to Calvary, and stood beneath the Cross with her. There Mary was given to John, in the name of all mankind, to be his Mother, and ours.

Jesus looked with love and forgiveness upon Peter, too. For after His Resurrection, it was Peter whom He chose to be the Prince of the Apostles, the rock upon which He built His Church — our first Pope.

Gestas is also cursing Him. "If you are the Son of God, save Yourself and us, too." They taunt Him, insult Him, laugh at Him.

At last Dismas can stand it no longer. "Gestas," he says to the other thief, "we deserve to die like this for we are guilty; but this Man is innocent." Then he turns his head to look at Jesus. He is filled with compassion at the sight. Slowly and painfully Jesus turns His head to look at Dismas. That look of love and mercy fills Dismas with a deep sorrow for his sins that almost breaks his heart. He cries out to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your Heavenly Kingdom."

Jesus looks at him again. He has recognized not only Dismas the penitent thief but also Dismas the baby who was washed in the water that had washed Himself as an Infant, the baby who had been touched by His own Mother. Then Jesus speaks these words of mercy and of comfort to him: "This day you shall be with Me in Paradise."



*Jesus before Pilate*

What is His name?"

"His name is Jesus," says Mary gazing with reverence on His face. Then she asks gently,

"And what is your baby's name?" "Dismas," answers the woman holding the child for Mary to see.

"He is a lovely child," says Mary, touching the tiny cheek. "May God bless him."

Then Mary bathes Jesus, and they rest — but not for long, since they do not want to travel in the heat of the day.

After they leave, the woman prepares little Dismas for a bath, in order to get full use of the water that is so hard to procure. Thus, Dismas is washed in the same water which has washed the Infant Jesus.

\* \* \* \*

Although the time is only midday, it is growing very dark on Calvary's heights. The wind blows cold. Dismas is in an agony of pain and fear. He and another thief, Gestas, have been crucified for their crimes. They are to die with a Man called Jesus, Whose Cross stands between theirs. Dismas is not tortured so much by physical pains as by mental anguish. This Man has claimed to be the Son of God and Dismas believes it.

The rabble below are tempting Jesus, saying, "If You are the Son of God, come down from the Cross. Then we will believe You."

#### CLAUDIA'S DREAM



CLAUDIA was the wife of Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor in Jerusalem. She knew that Jesus of Nazareth was going to be brought before Pilate by the Jewish high priests and elders. Every moment she grew more tense and nervous at the thought of her husband passing sentence on Him. Finally she was able to bear the suspense no longer. She threw her cloak about her and hastened to the governor's seat of judgment. There she directed one of the guards to inform Pontius Pilate that she wished to speak with him.

Pilate came to her immediately. "Claudia, what brings you here?" he asked in surprise. "This is most unusual."

"I know, but I had to come."

"You had to come?" Pilate echoed in a puzzled tone.

"Yes. I could bear it no longer. O my husband, have you passed judgment on Jesus of Nazareth?"

"Why do you ask, Claudia?" Pilate inquired in fresh alarm. "Do you have forebodings about this Man, even as I myself have?"

"Yes, and more than forebodings," Claudia answered. "I have suffered much this day in a dream because of Him. I beseech you, my husband, have nothing to do with this just Man."

"You say 'just Man,' Claudia, and you are right. I found no fault whatever in Him. He stirred me strangely. When I learned that He belonged to the jurisdiction of Herod, I was exceedingly glad that I did not have to pass sentence on Him. The Jews are bent on His death."

"Then it is Herod and not you that must pass the sentence? It relieves me greatly to hear that. I hope Herod finds Him innocent."

"That is also my desire. Now, dear Claudia, go back to the palace and worry no more, I beg you."

"I am reassured since you need not pass judgment on the Nazarene. Farewell, my husband." Claudia had just left when a messenger entered.

"I bring you a report of the happenings at the court of Herod," he said.

"Speak, then," Pilate commanded anxiously.

"In mockery the crowd dressed Jesus of Nazareth in a purple robe and crowned Him King— with a crown of thorns," the messenger related. "Then Herod and all his court made fun of Him. They are returning Him to you. Even now they are at the gates of the palace."

## TWO BABES

**I**T is early morning. A tired and footsore man trudges down the road. But despite his weariness, his face shines with happiness. He is leading a donkey on which sits a beautiful young woman with a Babe in her arms. She also is weary but forgets herself in her solicitude for her Son.

They stop before a humble cottage. "Shall I ask for hospitality here, Mary?" asks the man tenderly.

"Yes, Joseph, the Child needs to rest."

In response to Joseph's knock, a woman opens the door. She invites them to come in. As they enter the house they see that she too has a baby.

"May I have a dish of water to bathe my Baby?" asks Mary timidly. "We have traveled far and He is tired."

In those days, water was much harder to get than it is now. But the woman is very kind, and she brings Mary some clean water.

As Mary begins to prepare the Child for His bath, the woman comes closer. "What a sweet Baby!" she says kissing His chubby little hand.

would, father, if you helped Him."

The boy's face was radiant.

"Shortly before you returned," explained one of his friends, "Rufus fell to his knees and cried, 'I can see! I can see!' We do not know what to make of it. What do you think?"

Simon realized that that was the same moment in which he himself had received the gift of faith from Jesus for having helped Him carry the Cross. He clasped his son joyfully to his heart. And there, in the dust of the road leading to Mount Calvary, Simon of Cyrene knelt and gave thanks to God for his small part in the plan of Redemption.

"But did not Herod sentence Him?" Pilate asked in alarm.

"No. That you must do." Even as the messenger spoke, the high priests and rulers approached Pilate, dragging Jesus with them.

"Why do you bring this Man back to me?" Pilate asked angrily. "I have already examined Him and can find no fault in Him. Nor does of His Blood. May it be upon us and upon our children."

Then Barabbas was released from prison, and Jesus, after being scourged, was given up to the mob to be crucified.

The Jews were exceedingly happy and cried out the praises of Pilate. But he turned wearily away and went into the palace murmuring,

"The Son of God! the Christ! Could it be . . . ?"



*The Agony in the Garden*

if you help Him."

"No, my son. His days of miracles are over." But even as Simon spoke these words, Jesus turned and looked at him. Their eyes met. Simon stepped forward.

"I will help Him carry the Cross," he said simply.

Leaving Rufus with his friends and charging them to wait for him there, he took up the Cross behind Jesus. He lifted it so as to bear as much of its weight as he could.

"There is no evil in this Man," he said over and over as they went their weary way. When at last they came to Mount Calvary, Simon very gently took the Cross from the bruised shoulder of Jesus. As he did so, Jesus turned and looked at him again. Simon fell to his knees whispering in wonder and reverence,

"You are the Christ."

Then the soldiers and the Pharisees cursed Simon, and laying hold of him they threw him roughly down the slope. But physical pain could not lessen the new joy in Simon's heart. He hurried to the road where he had left Rufus and their friends. Suddenly he saw Rufus running toward him.

"Father, father, I can see! I can see!"

"How is this, my son?" Simon asked in astonishment.

"Jesus did it without even touching me. I knew He

even in Cyrene," they said.

"The Nazarene Who works miracles?" Simon's son asked eagerly. "O father, take me to Him. He will open my eyes that I may see again."

Simon looked sadly at the little boy. "No, son," he said softly, "He can't help anyone any more. It is He Who needs help now."

"But He is a good Man, father," Rufus exclaimed. "Why are they going to put Him to death?"

"I do not know," Simon answered.

Suddenly there was much shouting and confusion.

"See, He has fallen under the weight of the Cross!" one exclaimed. "Listen to what they are saying. They are afraid He will die on the way."

Suddenly one of the Pharisees came up to Simon. "We want you to help this Man carry His Cross," he said gruffly. "He has been sentenced to die on the Cross and we fear He will die before we reach Mount Calvary."

"No," said Simon. " I am a stranger here and know nothing about your laws."

Then a shout went up from the crowd. "Make the stranger help to carry the Cross!" But still Simon refused.

"O father, please help this poor Man," Rufus begged. "He has always been so kind to everyone, and now He needs help. Besides, I know He will cure my eyes

## BENITA'S BREAD

JUDITH stood in the doorway and shaded her eyes with her hands as she looked far down the road. Then she turned wearily, as if she had done it a hundred times before, and re-entered the house where Benita was making bread.

Benita glanced at Judith sadly. "The Master is not yet in sight?" she asked.

Judith shook her head. "No, not yet. They were to come this way to Calvary — and it is already near noon."

Tears welled in Benita's kind eyes as she shaped the dough into flat loaves. "Why must they do it?" she cried bitterly. "He Who was all goodness — Who brought kindness and mercy everywhere!"

"They hate Him and are afraid of His power," replied her sister. "O Benita, can you imagine how anyone could hate Jesus?"

"That I cannot, dear sister. But those that hate Him do not believe Him to be the Christ, our promised Messias." Benita's hands were trembling as she carried the loaves to the oven.

"But how can they be so blind?" Judith cried. "Has He not performed great miracles before their very eyes — even raised the dead to life?"

"Yes, He has, Judith, but they are blinded by hate and jealousy. They want Jesus out of the way. That is why they are going to — to crucify Him." Benita shuddered at the thought.

Suddenly they heard the sound of swift footsteps. Judith ran to the door. "It is Daniel. How fast he is running!"

"Perhaps he brings news of the Master. It may be that His followers have overcome His enemies." Benita's face shone with a new hope.

"O Judith, if that could be the news Daniel has for us!"

"I pray Jehovah it may be," Judith answered fervently. "Ho, Daniel!"

"I come," Daniel panted as he reached the door. "At last I come. The Master — He broke off breathlessly.

"Yes, yes — what of the Master?" Benita asked eagerly.

"They are coming this way and will pass our house very soon. That is why I ran. They are making Jesus carry His own Cross. It is very heavy and already He has fallen to the ground under its weight. He is a most pitiable sight."

Daniel covered his face with his hands and sat

#### THE REWARD OF SIMON OF CYRENE



SIMON of Cyrene and his little son Rufus were walking with a group of friends when they came to the road that led to Calvary.

"What is this noisy procession that approaches?" asked one.

"A criminal on his way to execution, no doubt," Simon made answer. "Let us go on."

But Simon's friends prevailed on him to wait until the procession had passed. Reluctantly he agreed. The tumult increased as the procession came closer. Soon they could see the prisoners carrying their crosses.

"Three murderers or thieves," commented one of Simon's friends. "But see how much more hatred is shown to that one. He must be the worst criminal and a great enemy of the people."

"Yes," Simon agreed, "His crimes must be very great. What is that the people are calling Him? Blasphemer? They say He calls Himself the Son of God!"

Simon's friends were greatly shocked.

"This must be the Nazarene we have heard about





*Simon helps Jesus to carry His Cross*

motionless for a long moment, overcome by what he had seen.

The hope in Benita's face died as suddenly as it had come, and she turned wearily to look after her bread. It was beginning to brown.

"Dear brother Daniel, tell us more of the Master," Judith begged.

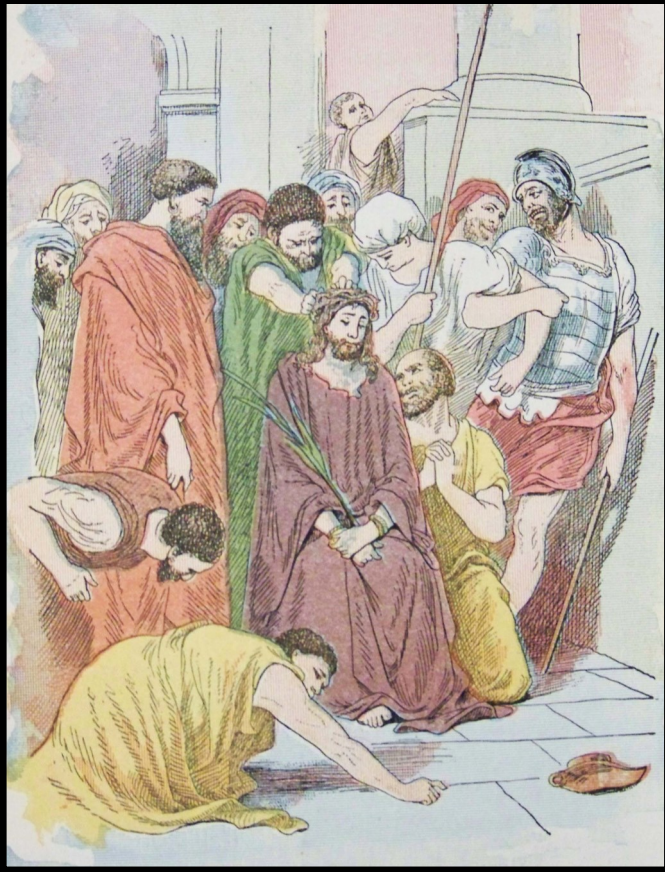
"It is a terrible story, my sisters. All last night they dragged Him from one court to another, for mock trials with false witnesses.

Pilate had Him cruelly scourged and then washed his hands of the whole affair. Now the Jews have Jesus in their power."

Judith and Benita stood speechless with horror. They remembered the times when they had listened to Jesus preach His Gospel, urging men to love one another. They remembered how often they had followed Him, in company with His Blessed Mother and other holy women. And now their Friend Whom they loved so much was to be put to an awful death.

Suddenly they heard voices, distant and indistinct. They ran out and looked down the road. All they could see was a huge cloud of dust. Slowly the voices became clearer. Slowly the dust cloud rolled nearer.

Benita, Judith and Daniel stood motionless, awaiting the procession. First came several soldiers. One



*The Crowning with Thorns*

Nevertheless, Sarah was still in deep anxiety as she followed the throng. But suddenly she saw Alema running toward her. Overcome with joy, she held out her arms to the child.

"Mother, O Mother," Alema exclaimed as she reached Sarah.

"What is this, my child? You speak? And do you hear me?" Joy and wonder mingled on Sarah's face as she spoke.

"Yes, I hear you, Mother. I can hear the mob and everything. Jesus has healed me." Alema's eyes looked like two bright stars.

"Tell us what happened," said Sarah breathlessly.

"I ran to Jesus. He was lying in the dust and I tried to help Him to get up. He raised His head and looked at me and gave me a little smile. Suddenly I could hear everything about me, and I said, 'Thank you, dear Jesus,' just as a soldier pushed me out of the way. They dragged Jesus on so I ran back to you."

"Jesus has given you one of His last miracles on earth," said the Blessed Mother. "You must be very dear to Him."

"It is wonderful to hear your voice, Mother of Jesus. Oh, if only the soldiers would put us all to death and let Him go!" Then looking after the multitude Alema said softly as if to herself, "He looked so very tired — but His smile to me was divine."

carried a parchment on which something was written. From where they stood they could not at first make it out. Then, as it was brought closer, they saw the words: "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews."

"They are going to put it on the Cross above Jesus in mockery," Daniel said in a sorrowful voice, "because He said He was a King."

"But He is a King!" Judith exclaimed. "He has said it many times."

"Yes, but they don't believe it. Look, here come the two thieves who are to be crucified with Him."

Benita and Judith looked at the thieves carrying their crosses and shuddered as they realized these hardened criminals were to be Jesus' companions in death.

The tumult grew as the procession progressed — the soldiers shouting to one another, the thieves cursing their fate, and above it all, the following mob howling and crying in dreadful anticipation.

"See, a high priest!" Benita exclaimed, as a man clad in rich garments approached. He was followed by several other priests and many servants.

"That is Caiphas, before whom Christ was unjustly tried last night," said Daniel. "He has incited the people to fury because of his hatred of the Master. Just see how the rabble follow him!"

At last they saw the sight they so dreaded:

Jesus tottering under His Cross. Benita could not but weep bitterly. Judith would have fallen had not Daniel supported her. As Daniel had told them, Jesus was indeed most pitiable to behold. The scourging had bruised His Sacred Flesh until there was no sound spot upon Him.

He was so weak that He swayed under His crushing burden.

"He wears a crown of thorns!" Benita exclaimed, almost unable to believe such cruelty possible.

"And they are beating it still further down upon His tortured head," murmured Judith between sobs.

"Here comes His Mother," said Daniel.

"Mary of Magdala, John and Veronica are with her. How infinitely sad she looks!"

"Where is she?" cried Benita and Judith together.

"There — walking as close to Jesus as the mob will permit her."

They ran to Mary at once. They did not speak. They merely clasped her hand as if to say, "We know how much you are suffering. If we could only help you and your Son!"

Suddenly Benita thought of the bread in the oven. She knew she must not let it burn, for they were too poor. Though she could hardly bear to do it, she turned and went back.



*Jesus comforts the women of Jerusalem*

Alema put her hand into the Blessed Mother's, and looked up into her face with sympathy and understanding. Mary looked at Sarah and said sadly, "She is a good, loving child. She loves Jesus dearly, and her heart is full of grief."

At this moment the crowd parted a little so they beheld the pitiable figure of Jesus carrying His Cross. At sight of Him the women wept bitterly. Jesus looked at them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me." But they wept all the more.

"What infinite love," Sarah said brokenly, "to think of us when He Himself is so sorely in need of comfort."

Jesus tottered but a few steps further when He fell beneath the weight of the Cross. The servants of the high priest brought their long whips down unmercifully on His already bruised back. They shouted at Him profanely to get up. Quickly Alema slipped away from her mother and disappeared in the crowd. She ran toward the prostrate Master.

"Alema, Alema!" Sarah called wildly. "She will be crushed under the feet of the mob."

"She is trying to help Jesus," said the Blessed Mother. "He will not let her be harmed."

"She was prompted by her intense love for the Master," Mary of Magdala added. "And He loves children very much."



*Jesus carries His Cross*

Once more at home, she carefully carried the bread from the oven to the neat white cloth prepared for it on the table. The aroma of the fresh loaves filled the little room.

"If I could only give Jesus some of this bread," she said to herself. "He is so weak."

She hurried outdoors again and saw that the soldiers and priests were far down the road. Jesus was just passing their door. Suddenly He fell. The servants of the high priest beat Him fiercely with the long whips which they carried, to force Him to His feet. Jesus stirred in the dust of the road but it seemed as if He could not rise again.

"Can't they see He is too weak to go on?" Benita cried desperately. "Oh, if I could only do something to help Him!"

Suddenly the savor of the new bread filled the air. But it was stronger and sweeter than before. It seemed to give out vigor and strength and life. No one had ever before smelled such a wonderful aroma.

Slowly Jesus lifted His head. He seemed to be breathing deeply of the miraculous scent. Then He arose painfully to His feet and began to walk onward once more. He turned to look at Benita, and His eyes were full of understanding and gratitude. He had allowed her desire that she might help Him, to be fulfilled.

## JESUS' LAST SMILE



LEMA was the youngest daughter of Sarah, a holy woman and friend of Jesus and His Blessed Mother. Everyone loved Alema, for despite the great affliction of being deaf and dumb, she was sweet and kind to all.

When Sarah had to make known to Alema that Jesus was in the hands of His enemies and was even now on His way to Calvary to be crucified, she was very sad. She knew that Alema loved Jesus intensely and that her tender heart would be deeply grieved.

As soon as Sarah had related the terrible news by sign language, Alema ran to get her mother's veil. Sarah knew that she was begging to be taken to the Mother of Jesus. So Sarah clasped her little daughter's hand and together they made their way through the crowd.

Suddenly Alema jerked her mother's hand and pointed where the crowd was the thickest. Sarah looked and saw the Mother of Jesus, Mary of Magdala, some other holy women, and John, the Beloved Disciple. They hastened to join this group.

Trust in Him, Rachel." "I welcome you to my house again."

Veronica's face shone. "Jesus has given you the gift of faith, Rachel. Guard it well, as I shall always guard this precious veil. Never from henceforth shall we forget the miracle of the Holy Face."

Benita slowly returned to the house, followed by Judith and Daniel. They were mute with awe and wonder.

Benita touched the new bread on the table reverently. Her face was radiant. "O precious bread," she murmured softly, "you have been privileged to strengthen the Christ on His way — to Calvary."



*Veronica wipes the Face of Jesus*

"Rachel" Veronica was surprised and pleased to see the girl. But Rachel only sneered:

"What do you think of your King now?"

"Speak not so to our mistress, Rachel," warned Naomi.

"My mistress no longer," said Rachel. Then turning to Veronica, she continued, "And I suppose you consider your veil sacred now?" And she laughed scornfully.

"That I do, Rachel, because it touched the Face of Christ." Veronica unfolded her veil and held it before her.

Rachel looked at it and fell to her knees crying, "Take it away. His eyes — He is looking at me!"

The others quickly followed her glance, and they too knelt in the street, with awe in their faces. Veronica turned the veil and beheld the Face of Christ imprinted on it.

"So great a compensation for so little an act," she murmured lovingly. "See, Rachel, such is the love of Jesus for His creatures."

"O mistress, I beg you to forgive me and to ask your Master to forgive me. I do believe in Him. I do," sobbed Rachel in true sorrow.

"The Master forgives," said Mary of Magdala, "for He forgave me all my terrible sins



"See, the loving Mother cannot be separated from her suffering Son," said Mary to Veronica.

Veronica looked for a long moment at the Mother of Jesus. "O Mother Mary, if we could only do something to help Him."

"We must be strong in this dark hour, my daughter," said the Blessed Mother. "He is doing the will of His Father. For this did He come to earth."

Then the crowd parted a little and they beheld Jesus. Veronica's heart bled at the sight of her Master, His Body exhausted, His Sacred Face dripping with blood and spittle. In an instant she had snatched the veil from her head, and running to Jesus, had thrown herself at His feet and presented it to Him. She had done it all so quickly that the soldiers did not have time to stop her. Jesus took the proffered veil and wiped His face with it. Then He handed it back to Veronica with a look of infinite gratitude. The soldiers and Pharisees began to shout at her, and clasping the veil once more she hastened back to her little group.

"That was an act of great kindness, Veronica," said the Mother of Jesus. "My Son will reward you for it.

"If I have done even a small thing for Him, I already have my reward," Veronica replied.

"Very noble, indeed, Lady Veronica," said a familiar voice behind her.

## THE MIRACLE OF THE HOLY FACE

**V**ERONICA paced up and down her richly furnished room.

"What is the cause of your great agitation this morning, my lady?" asked Naomi, one of her maidservants.

"I fear for the safety of our Master, Jesus of Nazareth," replied Veronica. "I slept not a moment last night thinking of it."

"Why do you fear for the Master's safety?"

Was it not only a few days ago that He entered the city in triumph with the people shouting 'Hosanna? They would have made Him King had He wished it."

"Ah, yes, Naomi, but the picture has changed now. Mary of Magdala sent a messenger to me late last evening to say that Judas had betrayed the Master into the hands of His enemies."

"What's that you say, mistress? Jesus of Nazareth in the hands of His enemies?" Rachel, the other servant, did not try to conceal the eagerness in her voice.

"It pleases you to hear that, Rachel, because you do not believe in the Master," said Naomi sadly.

"Master?" echoed Rachel scornfully. "Does He show Himself a Master when He can be taken by His enemies?"

"Only because He wishes to be taken," defended Naomi. "He is still our King."

"A fine King! He is an impostor and has betrayed the cause of the people who trusted in Him." Rachel was very angry.

"Stop, Rachel," said Veronica going to her. "You shall not speak so of the Master in my house. Naomi is right. Jesus allowed Himself to be taken. We know not His plans but we do believe that He is the Messiah — the Christ."

"I share not your credulity, Lady Veronica," Rachel answered with a sneer, "and the sooner this deceiver and pretended miracle worker is put out of the way, the better."

"You dare speak like that?" cried Veronica. "You are no longer a servant of mine. Begone from this house at once!"

"That will I do gladly. The atmosphere of this house irks me. I shall be glad to mingle with people who are sensible enough to see that this so-called Master is an imposter." So saying, Rachel turned and ran from the room.

"Poor Rachel," said Naomi, looking after her sadly. "What will become of her now, mistress?"

"Perhaps she will see the error of her ways and return to us. If she but sees the Master, she will believe, I know. The bell! Someone is coming, Naomi."

Naomi opened the door to admit Mary of Magdala. She was the picture of grief. "Is your mistress in?" she asked, and Naomi at once took her to Veronica.

"Greetings, Mary of Magdala," exclaimed Veronica, as Naomi withdrew. "Do you bring news of the Master?"

"Aye, that I do, Lady Veronica, but it is indeed sad news. Jesus is to be crucified with two thieves on Mount Calvary. The procession has already started."

"O Mary, say not so!" Veronica cried.

"Where is His Mother? How will she endure this grief?"

"His Mother is with John and a few women who have remained beside her," replied Mary. "They are not far from here. I left them but a short time ago to tell you so that you may join us."

"How can I thank you, Mary of Magdala?"

Let us hasten to join the Mother of Jesus in her hour of sorrow." And hastily picking up her veil, Veronica called to Naomi to join them as they left the house. They had not gone far when they heard the tumultuous procession approaching. Walking as close to her Son as the mob would permit her was the Blessed Mother.