

of life; and it accords with all Christian experience that faith grows stronger in trial, just as the oak is more firmly rooted by the tempest. Joseph's self-imposed task was fraught with no small danger. We may well suppose that, after the events of the day, Pilate would be in no kindly mood, and that nothing could be less welcome to his chafed spirit, than interference on behalf of the blameless Nazarene whom he had unjustly condemned. Besides this, the hatred of the priests toward Jesus was undiminished, and they were prepared to regard with the keenest suspicion any act which might seem to indicate the remotest acknowledgment of his claims. Joseph must have been aware of all this; but impelled by the love which "casteth out fear," he braves the danger, and asks for the body of his Lord.

Pilate is moved by an unwonted spirit of humanity, and grants the request, but first desires to be assured that Jesus is really dead. The centurion is called, (the same who had watched by the cross, who had heard the Saviour's dying cry, and had seen his side cleft by the soldier's spear), and gives his testimony. There is no more room for doubt, and Pilate gives consent that the body be removed.

Hastening away to fulfil his pious task, Joseph is joined by another member of the Sanhedrim. "There came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night." What! another *secret* disciple? Even so; but a secret disciple no longer. The feelings of mingled fear and shame which possessed his heart when, but a few months before, he stole cautiously along the streets of Jerusalem under the shadows of night, shrouding his face in his mantle lest any one should recognize him and guess his errand, have entirely passed away, and now with a tender pity and a fearless faith Nicodemus goes with Joseph, in the broad light of day, to inter the body of his Lord. At what particular time this spiritual revolution took place in the mind of Nicodemus we cannot tell. Perhaps the words that Jesus spake during the memorable midnight interview have been lying dormant in his heart, and now, in the crisis-hour, spring up suddenly with an hundred-fold increase. Perhaps in sight of Calvary he has entered into the mighty meaning of the Saviour's words: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up," and by that revelation has been lifted into an atmosphere of moral heroism that renders him insensible to fear. Be that as it may, it is manifest the mighty change has been wrought, and Nicodemus is henceforth to be numbered among the open confessors of the Lord.

Nicodemus, coming to inter the body of Jesus, comes not empty handed. His was not the cheap sympathy that walks decorously behind the solemn hearse, and expends itself in dreary platitudes of condolence: he "brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pounds weight. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury." Yes, undoubtedly such *was* "the manner of the Jews," when weeping love followed parent or child to the sepulchre, or when ostentatious wealth would give its possessor a resting-place among the "tombs of the kings;" but such was *not* "the manner of the Jews" when