

pray that the gates of life may be opened unto thee; for these are not things to be discerned unless God and Christ grant to a man the knowledge of them." So saying, the old man went away, and Justin never saw him again; but his mission was fulfilled, and the words he had spoken sank down in the young philosopher's heart. He made inquiries respecting the religion which was thus pointed out to him; he noticed how pure were the Christians' lives, and how great was their courage under persecution; he sought Christian teaching, believed, and was baptized.

Justin now led a holy and strict life, making his learning and past studies of use to the Church, by writing different books to show the vanity of idolatry and the weakness of mere human philosophy. He also composed two apologies for the Christian religion, or what we should now call defences of it. In these he set forth Christian faith and Christian practice, and disproved the slanders of the heathen. The first apology is said to have gained the Church a respite from persecution; the second brought death upon the writer's own head.

Marcus Aurelius was now the Emperor, and Justin was living at Rome. He was apprehended and brought before Rusticus, the prefect of the city, who said to him, "Obey the gods, and comply with the edicts of the emperors." "No one," answered Justin, "can be justly blamed or condemned for obeying the commands of our Saviour Jesus Christ." The prefect asked him what school of philosophy he followed, and he replied that he had tried every kind of discipline and learning, but had finally embraced that of the Christians. "Wretch," said the prefect angrily, "are you then taken with that religion?" "Doubtless I am," was the resolute answer; "for it affords me the comfort of being in the right path." "What are the tenets of the Christian religion?" asked Rusticus. "We Christians," replied Justin, "believe one God, Creator of all things visible and invisible; and we confess one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, foretold by the prophets, the Author and Preacher of salvation, and the Judge of all mankind." After further questioning, Rusticus said, "You are a Christian, then?" and Justin answered, "Yes, I am." The same inquiry was put to five other men and a woman who were apprehended at the same time, and all replied that, by God's grace, they were Christians. The prefect turned again to Justin, whose learning distinguished him above the other prisoners, and began to argue with him, but to no purpose. He therefore commanded them all to go and sacrifice to the gods on pain of torments and death, on which they said, "Do quickly what you are about. We are Christians, and will never sacrifice to idols." They were accordingly sentenced to be scourged and then beheaded. As they were led to the place of execution, these seven disciples of Christ poured forth praises and thanksgivings to God, and then each in turn yielded his body to the tormentors, and his spirit to Him who gave it.

Justin won the crown of martyrdom A. D. 167. Long had he sought for truth, searching as did Mary Magdalene in the twilight of the resurrection morning. Like her he found the very truth, and finding, he would not let Him go. He did not shrink from peril, toil, or pain; step by step he followed in the way of the Holy Cross, and now he is at rest with Him whom his soul loved.

A MISSIONARY STORY.



PARTY of missionaries, after a long day of travel, stopped at a little African village. Instead of receiving a kind welcome, they were greeted with harsh words and gestures, and forbidden to come into the town. There was danger from lions, but the missionaries had no choice except to remain outside; indeed, they were not sure but the villagers intended harm, their looks being so fierce.

Just as twilight came, what was their surprise to see a woman approach with a pitcher of milk, some water, a bundle of wood, and a leg of mutton! She came silently, and began to make a fire and prepare a meal.

"Why do you show us this kindness?" they asked.

She looked at them a moment, the tears running down her cheeks; then she said: "You are the friends of my Saviour; shall I not do this much for his sake? My heart is full. I cannot speak the joy I feel to see you."

This speech was a great surprise to the travelers. "Here," they thought, is a woman, the only Christian in the region, proving a true and tender love to Christ; for has he not made kindness shown to his people for his sake a test of love?"

"Tell us about yourself," they said. "How is it possible for you to live a Christian life in this place?"

"Ah," she began, "look at this!"—I tell you her very words as she drew from her bosom a copy of the New Testament—"This is the fountain whence I drink; this is the oil with which I feed my lamp."

She had been to a school at a mission station far away. There she had learned to know and love Christ. When her friends compelled her to go and live with them, she had carried the New Testament with her. It was her daily help and joy and comfort.—*Selected.*

GOOD FRIDAY AND EASTER.



WE mourn for the dead on Good Friday. It is a day for sorrow on the part of all good Christians. Remember your sins on that day and mourn over them. Remember the Jews who crucified their Messiah and pray for them. But above all remember the Lord himself and solemnly bow before him. A Good Friday properly spent is the only thing which can give a full meaning, a full joy to the glad story of the resurrection which bursts upon the Christian world every Easter day.