

as disturbers of the public peace, and violators of the laws. The Magistrates immediately issued warrants for the arrest of the brethren, Paul and Silas, and apparently without any form of trial, or permission to allow them to speak in their own defence, they were stripped of their outer clothing, and subjected to the cruel infliction of the lash, in the presence of the lawless, howling mob, and then hurried into the common gaol, where the keeper was strictly charged to guard them closely. Who, having received such a charge, took them to the innermost parts of the prison, where they were bound and had their feet fastened in the stocks.

But the suffering missionaries did not give up their faith and hopes, nor murmur at the Providence of God in permitting them to be thus afflicted by wicked men, but on the contrary rather rejoiced that they were accounted worthy to suffer in the same manner as their master had before them, in the cause of truth, and therefore they endeavored to beguile their sufferings and pass away the hours of darkness, and also to impart some instruction to the other prisoners, by prayer, and singing the sacred psalms of their country. While thus engaged, about the midnight hour, an earthquake suddenly shook the foundations of the prison, so that the doors of the dungeons flew open and the bonds of the prisoners were loosed.

The jailor, now roused from his sleep, feeling the shock, hearing the slamming of doors, and a commotion among the prisoners, and supposing that they were

escaping, and knowing that if they should succeed, according to the laws of Rome, his own life would be forfeited, he drew his sword and was about to commit suicide, when the voice of Paul from the inner prison called out, "Do thyself no harm, for we are all here."

Then suddenly convinced that the earthquake was caused by the Divine Being, to whom his Hebrew prisoners had prayed for deliverance, and believing also that it was a providential interference which kept his prisoners from attempting to escape, and thus saved his life, he procured a light, ran into the cell where the missionaries were confined, and after bringing them out, and perhaps hearing an exposition of their religious views, and now also convinced that he needed salvation from eternal death, he asked the important question of our text, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved," and receives the no less important reply, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved."

Now the question arises, what was the previous religious knowledge of the Phillippian jailor? He seems to have been an ex-Roman soldier, trained in the arts of war, as well as in the dark and bloody superstition of Pagan Rome, and took pleasure in the sufferings of others, and regarded self murder as a virtue. It is not likely that he paid any attention to the religion of the Jews, for these people were only few, and of no political importance at Philippi, and men of the world, who seek government offices and large salaries, generally look with scorn and contempt on the religion of the poor and lowly,