

well letter from Pliny Fisk. And he attempted to answer it. As he reached the last page of his reply, like a flash of lightning the truth struck him. He saw that he was arguing against his own reason and conscience and opposing the higher teaching of the divine Spirit. He was intellectually honest, and, seeing himself in error, was candid enough to acknowledge it and surrender himself to his convictions. The heart makes the theology, and his heart gave up the rebellious attitude which had led him to depart from the living God. He dared to say that he saw himself in error and openly forsook it. The Patriarch tried persuasion. He wrote him patriarchal epistles, and sent him enticing, and then mandatory messages; he promised him official promotion, he sought to bribe his conscience to compromise with his convictions; then he threatened him with excommunication and all the terrors of the Church's indignation. But it was all in vain.

He sought to win and to warn him by personal interviews, but ineffectually. Then Asaad Shidiak's marriage contract was annulled, but even against the beguilements of woman's love, the convert proved heroically steadfast. Twenty of his relatives conspire against him, and by force deliver him into the patriarch's hands, and by the patriarch he is cast into prison. He is confined to a cell, loaded with chains, and tortured daily with cruel scourgings. The people are allowed to visit him, to revile and mock him, and to spit in his face as they had done with his Master before him. His own kindred joined in this cruel persecution, and not only would not interpose to secure his release, but opposed it.

Once they led Asaad Shidiak out of his dungeon and placed before him an image of the Virgin to be kissed by him in token of homage and recantation of error. The alternative was a vessel of burning coals. He chose the burning coals, pressed them to his lips, and with a scorched and blackened mouth returned to his cell. At length they built up entirely around him a wall, leaving but a small aperture through which he could get breath, and through which they could pass him enough food to keep him alive, and so prolong the sufferings of the starving man. His body wasted and became a skeleton, but his mind was invincible. His heroic spirit defied them to break the cord of love that bound him to his Lord. They killed the body, but after that had no more that they could do; and before that body gave up the ghost, Asaad Shidiak, the Maronite martyr, had proved to them that they could not subdue the spirit of one whom the Lord had led into the clear light of His own truth and the fellowship of His dear Son. Syria had once more sealed with martyr's blood the testimony of Jesus!