

had studied much, and long, and hard. They had searched with care, the meaning of the Old Testament for the marks of their great Messiah, the Hope of Israel, the Saviour of the chosen people. They had spoken of Him who was thus to come. They had boasted of His coming. They had waited for Him with great eagerness and much impatience. One of earth's mighty ones would He be; a man of prowess in war; of wisdom in the court; a leader of the Hosts of Israel; a gatherer of the people; a subduer of every foe; a breaker of every yoke; an expeller of every oppressor. And, in place of such an one, there came this Jesus, this mild and meek man, preaching peace, teaching humility, teaching mercy, teaching forgiveness of injuries. No ruler of embattled hosts was He; no companion, was He, of the rich and the princess of the people; no outward preparation did He make for the subjugation of the oppressor. And they were offended in Him.

If He had been a mere common man, who had claimed to be this Deliverer, they would have left Him alone to go where He would. But they felt He was no common man. His words were mighty and wonderful words. There was in His face, and tone and manner, in His words and acts and conduct, something influential, savouring of effect and power and resolution, which men must either hold to or oppose—something in Him which men must be either attracted to in admiration and affection, or be repelled from, in disgust and hate.

He came with might and power and influence, came indeed as the Messiah, and yet He was so humble, so mean, a friend of publicans and sinners, His chosen friends, not the learned and just men of the nation, but beggars and fishermen, His followers, not large armies of stalwart soldiers, but crowds of the poor, the maimed, the blind and even the lepers. And so He offended their pride deeply. They could not brook a Saviour like Him. They could not brook teaching such as His. They could not endure virtues such as He practised. And He told themselves that their teaching was wrong, and that their acts were worse. Should they not be offended in Him? Did they not well to be offended? And He taught them humility, and reproved them for being proud, and again taught them humility. Did they not well to be angry; and to say of Him "this fellow, we know not whence He is?" Offended pride, wounded pride! This stirred their hostility, this roused their passion, this nurtured their hate, this inflamed their wrath, this goaded them on to all these acts of cruelty, and this fierce savagery which they exhibited towards Him. Yes, my friends, *offended pride. That is the strong passion.* And what passion is like unto it. *Offended pride, offended dignity!* I cannot stop to describe all its workings to you; I presume you know it. I may therefore take for granted that you know what it is, what it can do; what wrath it can stir up, what cruelty, what dire revenge.

And see here what their offended pride caused them to do. And on the other hand see what the humility of Christ gave Him to