

remedy, and that the scene of their bloody idolatry should be their burial-place, till no room for more graves could be found there. Pashur, the "chief governor in the house of the Lord," indignant at this discourse, arrested Jeremiah, and put him in the stocks, where he left him all night. Pashur found that, instead of silencing Jeremiah, he had only brought a sentence of punishment on himself.

This confinement was brief, but it was the first of a long series, and Jeremiah was almost ready to be silent for the future, and to leave off proclaiming the Divine messages. Not only was he himself called to bear increased reproach on account of the word of the Lord, but that holy word itself was made the object of mockery and derision. What use to go on speaking? Was it not wiser to resolve, "I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His name?" But silence he found not so easy. "His word," he says, "was as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay." Jeremiah resolved, therefore, to go on in the path of duty; and he found that, notwithstanding slander, and calumny, and spies all around, "the Lord was with him as a mighty terrible one;" and leaning on Him, like the apostle afterwards, he was "sorrowful, yet always rejoicing."

The outward forms of religion were not given up, and on solemn occasions the people came from all the cities of Judah to worship in the temple. In the newly-built temple gate the prophet stationed himself, and delivered another warning, that unless they repented and turned from their evil ways, the temple should become like Shiloh, where once the tabernacle stood, but which was now desolate; and the city should be "a curse to all the nations of the earth." Such language could not fail to arrest attention; the people listened to the terrible words, and a storm of indignation was drawn upon the prophet. They seized on him with the exclamation, "Thou shalt surely die!"

The tumult reached the ears of the princes of Judah, and a court of justice was soon assembled on the spot. The priests and the prophets preferred their charge: "This man is worthy to die, for he hath prophesied against this city, as ye have heard with your ears." Jeremiah's defence was simple. He repeated his message, concluding with these words. "As for me, behold, I am in your hands; do with me as seemeth good and meet to you. But know ye for certain, that if ye put me to death, ye shall surely bring innocent blood upon yourselves and upon this city, for of a truth the Lord hath sent me to speak all these words."

The princes of Judah felt the force of the prophet's defence, and pronounced their verdict: "This man is not worthy to die, for he hath spoken to us in the name of the Lord our God." The elders of the assembly called to mind how the prophet Micah had delivered similar predictions in the reign of Hezekiah; and how that king, instead of putting him to death, had given heed to the warning, and by timely repentance moved the Lord to turn from His fierce anger and delay the threatened judgment. Another prophet,

too, had come with the same message to their present king; his name was Urijah. Jehoiakim's anger was so violent that Urijah fled into Egypt; but he was pursued and overtaken there, brought back, and put to death. Warned by his fate, the princes determined to protect Jeremiah from the king and from the people. God had other work for him to do. But they obeyed not the voice of God's messenger, but were at last punished so severely as to be a warning to all who come after them against despising the message of the Lord.

THE GREAT PHYSICIAN.



WHEN the Lord, after He had mercifully given me some experimental knowledge of the Gospel for myself, was pleased to honour me with a commission to preach to others, I found myself possessed of an infallible medicine for the cure of all diseases, and I was surrounded with multitudes whom I saw were sick of a mortal disease, and, as we say, at death's door. I thought at first to do great things with my catholicon. But I soon observed the fatal disorder I wished to relieve was attended with one very discouraging symptom.

Most of the sick people, though I could read death in their countenances, thought themselves well; they insisted on it that nothing ailed them, and were angry with me because I would not believe them. Some of them could scarcely hear with patience what I said of the power and skill of the Physician who gave me the medicine. Others thought they might apply to Him when they were really ill, but at present they had no need of Him. Oh, how I laboured with some, but all in vain, to convince them of their danger! Now and then I did prevail with one, who then thankfully took the medicine, and presently recovered.

And as I and my fellow-practitioners were daily praising the virtues and efficacy of our medicine, some of our patients learned to talk after us; they did not take the medicine, but they praised it. They would allow they had been sick once; but now, to be sure, they must be well, for they could say as much in favour of the medicine as we could ourselves. I fear many died under this mistake. They would not make such a mistake in common life. Many go to see the table spread at a Lord Mayor's feast; but the sight of the delicacies, which they must not taste, will not satisfy the appetite like a plain dinner at home. But, alas! our patients were not hungry.

Some felt themselves unwell, but would not own it; they tried to look as cheerful as they could. These depended on medicines of their own contrivance; and, though they suffered many things, and grew worse and worse daily, they refused to try mine. It was judged by one too simple; like Naaman, who, for a time, though he would have done some hard thing, disdained such an easy remedy as—"only wash, and be clean." Others refused, unless I could clearly explain to them all the ingredients belonging to my