

worship and Grecian life. Most nations had a contempt for the Jew, and hated his stubbornness and religious fanaticism, but Antiochus was the only ruler mad enough to attempt the extinction of his faith, and the heroic resistance which he encountered is among the most glorious episodes in Jewish history. A mere handful of people were able to defeat all the armies sent against them. That which God had established Antiochus found it impossible to overthrow. His root-and-branch measures and the ferocity of his onslaughts continually recall the words of the second Psalm: "Why do the heathen so furiously rage together, and why do the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth stand up, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his anointed. . . . He that dwelleth in the heavens shall laugh them to scorn; the Lord shall have them in derision." It had been decreed in heaven that the faith of Israel should endure till the coming of Christ, and not all the kings of the earth together could eradicate it.

As might be gathered from the description given of the Sadducees, the greatest corruption reigned in the office of the High Priest. It was commonly sold to the highest bidder. Antiochus had disposed of it to one Jason, who offered a most tempting bribe to secure the deposition of his brother. Once installed, Jason set to work to introduce Grecian customs everywhere among the people. He even set up a gymnasium in Jerusalem where Greek games were celebrated, to attend which even the priests left their daily sacrifices. But his triumph was short. His brother Menelaus, even more wicked than himself, offered the king a large bribe and supplanted Jason in his office. It will be seen, then, what ready helpers in his schemes Antiochus had among the Jewish people and in the most sacred office of high priest. But other measures were taken. Hearing of an attack made by his brother Jason at the head of 1,000 men, who thought Antiochus dead, he marched on Jerusalem, and entering it with his troops delivered the inhabitants for three days to the prey of his troops. Forty thousand were slain, and as many sold into captivity. Led by Menelaus he entered the sanctuary, seized all the sacred vessels, and carried off treasures valued at 1,800 talents of gold. Then he gave orders for a great sow to be sacrificed on the brazen altar, its flesh to be boiled, and the liquid poured over every part of the temple. But this was only his first attack on Jeru-

salem. In 168, as he was returning in disappointment from a campaign in Egypt, he sent Apollonius, one of his generals, with 22,000 men to avenge his disappointment on Jerusalem. Waiting until the first Sabbath, on which he knew there would be little or no resistance, he suddenly let loose his troops, with orders to slay and burn and plunder to their heart's content. The order was only too well obeyed. Even the temple courts ran blood. The daily sacrifices ceased, and the inhabitants fled, leaving Jerusalem desolate.

Soon after these events Antiochus issued a decree commanding all his subjects to worship only his god. A royal commissioner, Athenaeus, was sent to Jerusalem to enforce the decree. Some of the Jews fled the country, others weakened and consented to sacrifice to idols and profane the Sabbath. The temple was reconsecrated in honor of Zeus Olympius; a new altar was erected on the old brazen altar, and swine's flesh offered upon it. Every Jew was compelled to eat swine's flesh, and it was even forced into the mouths of the unwilling. Circumcision, the keeping of the Sabbath, and the reading of the law, were strictly forbidden. Every copy of the law that could be hunted out was torn to pieces or burnt. A mess of broth, prepared from swine's flesh, was sprinkled on the copies of the law. Pagan rites were substituted for Jewish, and all had to conform. The most horrible tortures were suffered by the unyielding, and many met with martyrdom. Two mothers who dared to circumcise their children were hanged on the wall with their dead babes dangling on their breasts. A scribe named Eleazar, ninety years of age, who refused to retain in his mouth the swine's flesh thrust into it, was stripped and led to the rack, where he was scourged to death. His only reply to his persecutors was, "It becometh not our age in any wise to dissemble, whereby many young men might think that Eleazar, being fourscore years and ten, was now gone to a strange religion." It was truly a dark night of persecution that Israel had to pass through, but the dawn of deliverance was near.

(To be continued.)

A MAN may be an eternal failure, although his footsteps glitter with gold and his words sparkle with knowledge. That man is most successful in the divine kingdom who sets in motion the greatest amount of spiritual power for the glory of God, whatever may be the opinion or reward of fallen mortals.—*John Reid.*

BEWARE OF COVETOUSNESS.

EVIL loves to use snares, and to clothe itself with deceit. Travellers tell us that the Eastern people used to catch monkeys by cutting in a coconut a hole just large enough to admit of the monkey's hand. When once the hand was in, it was sure to grasp enough of the contents to prevent its withdrawal. The monkey falls a victim to his greed. It is not the nut's hold upon him, but his upon the nut, and his belief in the advantage of that, which cost him his liberty. So the world holds us, indeed, by our own wills, for we are its willing slaves. But behind the will lies the illusion of a benefit we are receiving from our grasp on it—the illusion against which Christ warns us when He says: "Take heed and keep yourselves from all covetousness; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." All the hand can grasp is of less worth than the freedom of God's child, living by faith in God's fatherly care of us.—*Sunday School Times.*

OVERHELPING.

WE need the patience of Christ to keep us from overhelping others. No peril is greater than this to eager love, when brought close to those who are in need, whether of physical, mental, or spiritual aid. We would help too much or too soon. We would lift away burdens that God would have the person continue to carry. We would make the way easy that had better be left hard. We would hasten the learning of the lesson that could be far better learnt slowly. We would force the opening of the bud or the bursting of the flower before the time God has appointed, thus spoiling God's perfect work. We want to hurry the spiritual development of lives, not content to wait till the development comes naturally. There are hundreds of lives hurt by the impatience of good people to do them good. One writes, and we would do well to mark the lesson:

"Nerve his arm and cheer his heart;

Then stand aside, and say, 'Godspeed!'"

It is hard for us in our eagerness to help just to do our little, and then stand aside and let God work how and when He will. We feel we ought to be doing something ourselves; but, in truth, our doing is only hurtful intermeddling, and we had far better keep our hands off and our lips closed, save as we speak to God in love and prayer.