

that scarlet line is the guide for us. We may win by our genial manner, charm by our grace, meet kindly with our fellows day by day, "receive the spies with peace;" but unless we too draw that scarlet line where our kin and neighbours are, no true work is done, nor can salvation be wrought. All plans for reformation, social improvement, happy homes and pure circles, must end if they do not begin with Christ and His Cross—will be stamped as failures by the dread finger of Eternity, which cannot lie. Let that be kept in mind. There is a peace of God, but it is made "through the blood of His Cross; there is communion, but it is the communion of the blood of Christ; redemption, but only by the precious blood of Christ; cleansing, but the blood of Jesus Christ is alone said to cleanse from all sin; and when the song is sung, "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night," it is recorded, "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."

The scarlet line is stretched across the New Testament refuge; without it, no assurance of things hoped for, no evidence of things not seen.

A BRIEF RESUME OF THE LIFE OF JESUS.

VI. THE THIRD YEAR'S MINISTRY—DEEPENING GLOOM.

The closing years of life wear an autumn hue. The expectancy of youth has gone; friend after friend has dropped from our side; one after another, too, of our successful rivals have fallen; the coming event casts its shadow; the quiet eve draws near when work is done. Is it the experience of life that has led many to see in this last year of the Saviour's ministry a deepening gloom as the end drew near? And yet it must be so. Rejection after rejection; Jerusalem under doom; His own receiving Him not; His very disciples misunderstanding His teachings; the hate of the leaders of His countrymen—though all were anticipated and knowingly encountered for the sake of the great love wherewith He loved us, they must, in their actual and cumulative realization, have deepened the sadness of the Man of

Sorrows, and rendered more vivid His acquaintance with grief.

The influential classes opposed Him—the Herodians and Sadducees—mainly because and in so far as He seemed to be raising factions, disturbing their political peace; the Scribes, because His influence with the people was undermining theirs; the common people, who first heard Him gladly, were led away from Him at the unprincipled voice of their leaders, because their hopes of deliverance and national greatness were not such as He was encouraging; His comparatively few disciples could not understand Him, and seemed to be bound to Him rather by personal attachment than by any true appreciation of His teachings. "He was treading the winepress alone, and of the people there was none to help Him."

The humbleness of Christ's origin might have been passed over by the aristocracy of birth. Matthew's genealogy and Micah's prophecy would have sufficed to justify the same; but Jesus *remained* the Messiah of the people, not in the demagogue sense, but companioning with them that they might learn of His ways. He never courted the favour of the rich, nor sought the patronage of the Scribes. The truth is, He was far above the apprehension of them both. As a reformer he was unique. The former things were to pass away, not to be destroyed; to fade as fades the morning star in the growing brightness of heaven. It is easy to be an iconoclast; it is more arduous to preserve what is worthy in the old, and breathe life into that which is ready to perish. Christ developed the new from the old; mark, for example, his expansion of an Old Testament utterance as He replied to the Sadducee—Matt. xxii. 32. Thus He confounded the wisdom of the past, convicting it of narrowness, as He disappointed the impatience of the present, which would leap at once into something new. His rejection, too, of ritualistic prejudices raised opposition. Especially was this true in His relation to the Sabbath, which He declared to have been made for man, not man for it. All this would have been borne had He led them with His legions of angels against the Roman legions; but He preached, "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's," and they could not forgive a Messiah who left Judea under the iron heel of Rome. Galilee had now rejected Him; He turned