

## THE SILENCE OF JESUS;

OR,

## How to Meet False Accusations.

"But he answered him not to one word."—  
Matth. xxvii. 14. (*Old Translation.*)

How expressive is silence—"the silence of old ocean resting after storms;" when its hoary heaving bosom is lulled to sleep, its boisterous pealing anthem hushed, and placid and quiet it spreads before the eye a striking picture of quiescent omnipotence and infinite repose. The silence of night, too, is not less potent in its influence; when the many strings of nature's harp cease their vibrations, and the stars looking down quietly upon us, so soft and subdued in their lustre, seem to invite us for a time to throw aside the depressive cerecloths of mortality, and join with them in sublime and silent awe to muse His praise who made them all. And we read also that there was once "silence in heaven about the space of half an hour;"—a period when even the orchestra of glory ceased to yield its notes, and angels' fingers faltered on the strings of harps which had never ceased to praise. That silence must have been felt: it was something new; the sudden stop in the garden chorus of heaven's vast choir, its myriad harps and voices; how impressive! The angelic tongues all mute; the holy worshippers filled with expectation, waiting to learn why *they* must suspend their sweet employ; what solemn mandate from the eternal throne is this? what does it mean? How heaven's vast silence must have startled them! But not the silence of the slumbering deep beneath its myriad waves, the voiceless night, or heaven's vast temple, is so affecting or instructive as the silence of Him of whom it is written, "*But He answered not a word.*" He had listened to *many*, and such words! He was pure, but they made Him vile; He was true, but they made Him false; He was God, but they made Him man. But He answered not a word! The charges cannot affect Him perhaps? He stands impeached for His life: should His accusers accomplish their purposes, His doom will be sealed; there are cruel men standing by, eager to buffet Him; there is a crown of thorns and a purple robe; a weary

journey and a heavy cross; the rugged nails, and a fearful death! Yet He utters not a word; perhaps He cannot speak—has no skill to plead? None so eloquent as He. Perhaps He knows not how to meet the rude falsehoods of hell? He is the wisdom of God. Then why is He silent? Does He not feel the indictment? More than words can express. Does He perceive His danger? More clearly than His persecutors. But He sees also what they do not—those words of His servant which they do not understand: "He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is *dumb*, so He opened not His mouth."

It is this seals His lips; love has brought Him here to die; love will not let Him speak. In vain you taunt Him, cruel men; in vain you condemn Him, venal judge! His love will baffle all your efforts; you may threaten and reproach, hold up His name to scorn, and even rob Him of life; but you will hear no complaint, you will get no reply. He stands before you to suffer, for this he is prepared; He has counted the cost; He has come to plead through His deeds, but not for Himself; to give emphasis to His words, though not in the vindication of His fame, but in the salvation of His Church. He will speak for His people, but He has no words for Himself; He is dumb in His own cause, though so eloquent in theirs; and that His words may avail for them He will give His own blood. Hence, now, He will not speak, it is His intention to die. He knows the charges are untrue, but He has prepared no defence. He could defeat His accusers, but His Church must be saved.

Ah! this is why those lips, so eloquent to plead the sinner's cause, are silent now; the tongue of slander cannot make Him speak, for He will save His Church, and teach her how to stand unmoved amid the strife of tongues.

"*He uttered not a word.*"—Can we forget this? Yes, we can. But let us not: and when the fang of envy, anxious to wound, gives forth perpetually the poison of misrepresentation; when prejudice, intent to spy defects, pores over each act and word; when slander makes a target of