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STORY
OF
THE KING'S SON.

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STORY OF THE KING'S SON.

In a certain country, a subject, for some serious offence, had been condemned to death by the king, who had given orders for his execution. When the guilty man heard the sentence, he fell at the king's feet saying, "Great King, it is true that I deserve thy condemnation; but have compassion upon me, and give me leave to go away for ten days, that I may see my mother and other relations. My bosom friend will remain in prison as my substitute until I return." The king, turning to the friend, said, "Do you agree to this? If he should not come back within the time fixed, are you willing to be executed as his substitute?" With a cheerful countenance,

the friend replied, "Be it so, O king; put me in prison instead of my friend. Inflict upon me all the punishment due to him. In every way, I will be his surety." The king ordered the peons to take the fetters from off the culprit and to release him; but to chain and imprison his friend, as well as to keep a guard over him. This was done. The liberated man assured him that he would return at the appointed time, kissed him, and departed.

The prisoner was carefully guarded and treated with the same severity as if he had committed the offence. Whatever were his feelings, he showed no signs of grief, no distress of mind never spoke a word of reproach against his friend; but endured all his sufferings with cheerful resigna-

tion. Things continued thus until the eighth day, when the people of the town began to revile the true criminal for not returning, and to pity his friend. "Alas," said they, "that wretch who was set free is roaming about as he pleases, enjoying his liberty, whilst this innocent man, who showed his love for him, lies suffering in prison." The ninth day arrived and he did not return. "See," said the people, "another day has come, and yet there are no signs of him ; while, unless he return to night, this man, who has committed no fault, will be compelled to suffer death."

On the tenth day at sunrise he had not appeared, and great was the lamentation of the people. The king ordered the peons to take the prisoner to the place of execu-

tion, and they obeyed his commands amidst the commiseration of the bystanders. The king was present to see his sentence fulfilled. The people crowded round in vast numbers. The officers led forth the surety and prepared to behead him. Without betraying the least sign of sorrow, he said, "I stand here joyfully to give my life for my friend." As he was thus speaking, a noise was heard, and a man was seen in the distance, running in great haste. He shouted, "Stop! I am come! I am come!" He drew near, and having embraced and kissed the friend who had been so ready to be sacrificed for him, exclaimed, "I am come." Tears filled the eyes of all present. The astonished king was moved with compassion, and ordered both to be released.

All who hear this will be ready to acknowledge that no human love could go further; that even this is beyond comprehension. It is indeed a wonder; but there is a greater wonder still. There is One who has given his life for his enemies. Listen and I will tell you. Such news should rejoice us all. There is One who is King of kings and Lord of lords. Against Him we all, from the least to the greatest, have rebelled and been guilty of treason. He was justly angry with us and we deserved to die. But He had compassion on us and wished to save us. The Son, the only Son of this great King, offered to give his life a ransom for us, saying, "I will be surety; I will suffer the punishment in their stead." The King, in His great love, gave His Son to die for us. At

the time appointed the King's Son was led to a great city, and in the presence of a large multitude was beaten, reviled, and nailed to a cross of wood. Dear friends, compare this measureless love with the love of the friend before spoken of. The one agreed to die for his friend; the other for traitors who hated Him. The one expected his friend back at the appointed time, when he thought he should be released; the other engaged to be surety though he knew that death was certain. The one probably hoped the king would have compassion upon him and forgive him; but the other stood for His enemies although certain that justice must be satisfied at no less a price than His death. The one might hope that the people would plead for him; the other knew that

He should be put to death by those for whom He gave His life. How surpassing the love of the King's Son? Is there any love like it? Who are the rebels for whom He stood surety? You and I; yea, all of us, "for all have sinned." Every day we sin against God, the heavenly King, by thought, by word, and by deed; we despise His laws, and break His commandments.

Hear, then, dear friends, about a Man of love, Jesus Christ, God's own Son. He descended from heaven and took man's nature upon Him.

He, full of love, humbled Himself for us, poor sinners. He who was surrounded by angels in his home above, was born into a poor family. He who held the government of a kingdom, lay a helpless

babe in a manger. How grateful should we be to Him who became incarnate, "bone of our bone," God manifest in the flesh! When on earth, He was full of love. He gave sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf; He made the lame to walk, and cleansed the lepers. How many obtained comfort from His words, and yet how was He received? He was afflicted, reproached, and crucified.

It was from love to us that He agreed to suffer in our stead, so that we, through Him, might have life. Come, then, dear friends, to this loving Saviour; receive Him as your surety; believe, and live. There is no other way of salvation. "For there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."

