

# STORY OF A KING.

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Many years ago, there lived, in a country to the west, a good king, who governed his subjects with a just and even hand. At one period of his reign the crime of adultery greatly increased in his kingdom. The monarch fearing that both the land and its inhabitants would be ruined by this vice, and determining if possible to put a stop to it, made and promulgated the following law, namely; that whoever in future committed adultery should have both his eyes plucked out. For a time, his subjects, fearing the threatened penalty, strictly ob-

served the law. But afterwards one of them dared to brake it, and having been detected in his sin, was dragged into the royal presence. The moment the king looked upon the culprit, he saw that he was no other than his own son, the only heir to his throne and kingdom. Thereupon the king's mind was filled with great grief and consternation. "Alas! "Alas!" he thought within himself, "Is this not the child whom I begat, and whom I have so tenderly cherished, my loved son, the apple of my eye, the heir to my name and my kingdom? What, alas! shall I do? How can I pluck out the eyes of my own child?" Thus greatly troubled, his heart melted with inexpressible sorrow.

Soon, however, he began to reason with himself thus: "If I pardon this culprit and spare his eyes because he is my child, the whole world will reproach me as an unjust prince, and pronounce my government partial and unfair. All my subjects will be emboldened to violate the laws. Order will give place to confusion, and my kingdom will speedily be overthrown. I cannot swerve from justice. The law must have its course. I must execute the penalty, though the sufferer is my beloved child."

Thus was the king's heart torn with contending emotions. On the one side, mercy pleaded hard that his child should be pardoned; on the other, justice sternly demanded the punishment of the

offender. At last the king began to consider whether there might not be some middle course, whereby he might satisfy the requirements both of his mercy and his justice, without doing violence to either. "Oh!" thought he, "if I could only vindicate my justice, and yet pardon my child, how joyful I should be!"

Suddenly a happy expedient darted into his mind. His face beaming with smiles, he mounted the throne, and ordered the case to be tried. Witnesses were examined and the prisoner being found guilty of adultery, sentence was at the king's command pronounced. The culprit was, according to the law, condemned to have his two eyes plucked out. Thereupon the king spoke as

follows: " Listen, Oh Counsellors, Princes, and People! The law must be executed, and justice must be fulfilled. Two eyes must be plucked out. But hear what I have to say. This is my son. Bound together by the bonds of blood and of affection, he and I are as one. Therefore an eye of his, and an eye of mine shall pay the penalty of the law." So saying, the king, having caused an eye of his son to be plucked out, plucked out one of his own and laid them side by side. Then resuming his address he said, " The penalty has been executed. See, here are the two eyes plucked out. I have vindicated the majesty of the law. Justice and Mercy triumph together inviolate. I have saved my child, but without

injury to the statute. Therefore let none henceforward dare to violate it, for you now see that my justice is unbending, while my mercy is great." Then every mouth was filled with plaudits. Perceiving how signally the king had shewed mercy without prejudice to justice, his subjects lauded his wisdom, extolled his mercy, feared his equity, and yielded themselves a thousand times more submissively to his government than before.

And now, why did this king pluck out one of his own eyes? Why did he, the guiltless, thus suffer punishment for his guilty son? Was it not that he might thereby honor his law, vindicate his justice, and at the same time save his child?

We have broken the laws of God. We have sinned and are guilty. God cannot, without doing violence to His justice, pardon our sins, unless full satisfaction for them is first made. But He will never do violence to His own justice. Hence we see that God's justice is the great obstacle to His forgiving our sins. And now how is this difficulty to be overcome? Are we able, think you, to satisfy the Divine justice and thus remove the obstacle? Alas! how vain the question.

A poet says that a king, who can exercise mercy without damage to the justice he is bound to execute, is worthy to govern the world. God is the King of kings. By His very nature He is bound always and perfectly to



fulfil the demands of His justice. But is there no way by which He can forgive sin without doing violence to that justice? This is the very thing we need to know. There is such a way. Wishing to save us from hell, God has Himself devised and appointed that way. It was for this very purpose, that He sent His Son Jesus Christ into the world. Listen then while we give you a brief account of the advent and the actions of Jesus Christ. It is by Him, that God's justice has been satisfied. It is by Him, that all obstacles to pardon have been removed. It is by Him alone that salvation and heavenly bliss have been procured for us.

This Jesus Christ is the true and eternal God. Many centuries

ago, He descended to Earth and became incarnate as a man. He lived in this world thirty-three years. Declaring Himself to be the Saviour of mankind, He taught the doctrines of true knowledge, gathered a company of disciples, and went about doing good. Leading a life of spotless purity, He set it up as a model to be imitated and followed by all. Finally, He voluntarily took upon Himself and endured a fearful punishment. Would you know what it was? Fixed to the cross, with nails driven through His hands and His feet, He died, having first suffered intolerable agonies. On the third day, bursting the bonds of death, He rose alive from the grave, and trod the earth for forty days. Then after gra-

ciously communicating to His disciples the words of life, He left this earth, and, mounting through the air, returned to the world of heaven.

If you ask why Jesus Christ suffered thus; the answer is, that He bore upon earth the penalties, which we, as sinners, deserve to endure in hell. He submitted to this punishment in order that He might appease the offended justice of God. By so doing, He made satisfaction to the divine justice, and removed the obstacle, which stood in the way of God's pardoning guilty men. He opened the way of salvation to sinners. Because He thus endured the punishment due to our transgressions, God can bestow pardon, and bestow it without injury to His

justice. . And in consequence of this satisfaction made by Jesus Christ, God now speaks gracious words to the sons of men.

May you, believing on Jesus as your Saviour, through Him reach the blissful shores of heaven!

Jesus, who lived above the sky,  
Came down to be a man and die;  
And in the Bible we may see,  
How very good he used to be.

He went about, he was so kind,  
To cure poor people who were blind;  
And many who were sick and lame,  
He pitied them and did the same.

And more than that, he told them too  
The things that God would have them do;  
And was so gentle and so mild,  
He would have listened to a child.

But such a cruel death he died!  
He was hung up and crucified!  
And those kind hands that did such good,  
They nailed them to a cross of wood!

And so he died!—and this is why  
He came to be a man and die:  
The Bible says he came from heaven,  
That we might have our sins forgiven.

He knew how wicked man had been,  
And knew that God must punish sin;  
So, out of pity, Jesus said,  
He'd bear the punishment instead.

