THE

# PULPIT COMMENTARY,

EDITED BY THE

VERY REV. H. D. M. SPENCE, D.D.,

DEAN OF GLOUCESTER;

AND BY THE

REV. JOSEPH S. EXELL, M.A.

WITH

## INTRODUCTIONS

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# ST. MATTHEW.

Exposition

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# GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW.

## INTRODUCTION.

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## I. The Constituent Parts of the First Gospel.

The constituent parts of the First Gospel, as it lies before us, are (1) the Historical Framework; (2) the Discourses; (3) the matter peculiar to this Gospel. It will be necessary to say a few words about each of these.

§ 1. (1) *The Historical Framework.* Upon comparing the First with the other two synoptic Gospels it will be seen that there is running through them all a certain outline of common matter, beginning with the baptism of our Lord, and tracing the more important events of his public life until his death and resurrection, omitting, therefore, what preceded the baptism and what followed the resurrection. In character this Framework consists of brief narratives, the connexion between which is not always apparent, and which have for their central point some utterance of the Lord, remarkable for its importance and often also for its brevity.[1] So far as this Framework is recorded in words or parts of words common to the three synoptists, it has been called by the name of "the Triple Tradition;"[2] but it must be noticed that this title is by its originator, Dr. E. A. Abbott,[3] expressly limited to identity of language, and therefore fails to indicate fully the practical identity that often exists even when verbal identity is wanting[4] (cf. § 4).

§ 2. (2) *The Discourses.* These are (*a*) the sermon on the mount (ch. v. 3—vii. 27); (*b*) the commission to the disciples (ch. x. 5—42); (*c*) respecting John the Baptist (ch. xi. 7—19); (*d*) against the Pharisees

[1] *E.g.* ch. viii. 2; ix. 2, 5, 6, 12, 13, 17; xii. 8, 49.

[2] The following example will give a clear idea of what is intended:—

| Matt. viii. 2, 3. | Mark i. 40, 41. | Luke v. 12, 13. |
|---|---|---|
| And behold, there came to him a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And he stretched forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou made clean. And straightway his leprosy was cleansed. | And there cometh to him a leper, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And being moved with compassion, he stretched forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou made clean. And straightway the leprosy departed from him, and he was made clean. | And it came to pass, while he was in one of the cities, behold, a man full of leprosy; and when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And he stretched forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou made clean. And straightway the leprosy departed from him. |

The Triple Tradition may be studied most conveniently in Mr. Rushbrooke's 'Synopticon' (Macmillan, 1880); but those English readers who do not care about exactness of detail will perhaps find sufficient for their purpose in Abbott and Rushbrooke's 'Common Tradition of the Synoptic Gospels' (Macmillan, 1884).

[3] First in the 'Encyclopædia Britannica,' edit. ix. vol. x. (1879).

[4] Thus the Triple Tradition, in its narrowest sense, hardly takes us into the narrative of the crucifixion; but, notwithstanding some transpositions in Luke, the basis of the three narratives of the crucifixion appears to be the same (cf. Mr. F. H. Woods' paper in 'Studia Biblica,' ii., 1890).

(ch. xii. 25—45); (*e*) parables of the kingdom (ch. xiii. 1—52); (*f*) discipleship—especially humility, sympathy, and responsibility (ch. xviii.); (*g*) parables (ch. xxi. 28—xxii. 14); (*h*) woes on the Pharisees (ch. xxiii.); (*i*) the coming of the end (ch. xxiv., xxv.).

Observe: First, that five of these, viz. *a*, *b*, *e*, *f*, *i*, are followed by the formula, "And it came to pass, when Jesus ended these words." Of the remaining four, *c*, *d*, *g* are shorter and of less importance than these five, while *h* is followed so immediately by *i* (though clearly a separate discourse) that we should hardly expect to find the customary concluding formula.

Secondly, that of these only the following are found in the other Gospels in at all the form of connected discourses, viz. *a* (*vide* Luke vi.); *b* (hardly, but for the first part cf. Luke x. 2—16); *c* (*vide* Luke vii. 24, *sqq.*); *h* (partly in Luke xi.); *i* (for ch. xxiv., *vide* Mark xiii., cf. Luke xxi.; and for ch. xxv. 14—30, *vide* Luke xix. 11—28).

Thirdly, that although many parts of them are found also in Luke, and slightly in Mark, yet frequently these are recorded in quite a different context, and sometimes the connexion as recorded in Luke seems much more likely to be the original than that recorded in Matthew. Of this the Lord's Prayer (ch. vi. 9—13; parallel, Luke xi. 2—4) is a crucial instance (*vide* notes, *in loc.*), and others, almost equally certain, occur in parts of the Great Commission (see notes on ch. x. 17, 39, 40—42).

§ 3. (3) ***Matter other than Discourses peculiar to the First Gospel.*** Of this there are three kinds.[1]

(*a*) Matter of the same general character as that contained in the Framework (*e.g.* ch. xiv. 28—33; xvi. 17—19; xvii. 24—27; xix. 10—12; xxvii. 3—10, 62—66; xxviii. 9—20). In close connexion with this may be considered passages of the same character, which are not indeed peculiar to this Gospel, but are found also in *either* the second (especially ch. xiv. 6—12; xiv. 22—27 [cf. John vi. 15—21], 34—36; xv. 1—39; xvii. 11, 12, 19, 20; xix. 1—6; xx. 20—23; xxi. 18, 19; xxvi. 6—13 [cf. John xii. 1—11]; xxvii. 27—31) *or* the third (especially ch. iv. 3—11; viii. 5—13, 19—22; ix. 32—34 [cf. xii. 22—24]).

(*b*) The opening sections, viz. the genealogy (ch. i. 1—17) and the narrative of the birth and infancy (ch. i. 18—ii. 23).

(*c*) Other details of our Lord's words and actions, which cannot be classed under *a*, or remarks which bring out his relation to the Old Testament and Jewish institutions (*e.g.* ch. iv. 12—16; xxi. 4, 5, 10, 11).

## II. These represent Different Sources.

§ 4. How it came about that the First Gospel presents these constituent parts—how, that is to say, we must account for the formation of this Gospel, is a question of the greatest possible difficulty. We have so little

[1] *a*, *b*, and partly *c* may be conveniently studied in the 'Synopticon,' pp. 171—197.

external information about the *origines* of the evangelical records that we must form our impressions from internal evidence alone. Hence, not unnaturally, many answers have been given which differ greatly and often contradict each other. I shall content myself with giving that one which seems least exposed to objections.

It is that the three constituent parts represent three sources, the first two being entirely external to the author, existing, that is to say, before he composed our Gospel,[1] and the third being partly of the same kind, and partly due, as it would seem, to him alone.

(1) *The Historical Framework.* If the Triple Tradition be followed as it is marked in Rushbrooke's 'Synopticon' (where it is given in the order of St. Mark's Gospel), it will be seen to begin with the message delivered by John the Baptist in the wilderness, then to mention the baptism and the temptation, and after that to go on to the call of Simon and another,[2] and of James and John the sons of Zebedee, by Jesus as he passed along by the Sea of Galilee. Then, after speaking of the astonishment caused by the teaching of Jesus, it relates his entrance into the house and his healing the mother-in-law [of Simon]; and then it speaks of others also coming to him and being healed, Jesus afterwards preaching in the synagogues of Galilee. We need not trace the narrative further, but it is pertinent to ask[3] in whose recollection these events would stand out most prominently, and to answer that the original narrator was probably one of those four to whom the call to follow Jesus made so great a difference. But not only so; the choice is limited from another consideration, for such signs of an eye-witness as exist in the Triple Tradition (it is something we can see and mark, and therefore more tangible to us than the whole Framework) point still more definitely in the same direction. What, indeed, are signs of an eye-witness it is often not easy to decide, but among these may be placed (still following, for convenience, the order in the 'Synopticon') Mark i. 41, "stretched forth his hand;" Mark ii. 3, "bringing . . . a paralytic;" Mark ii. 14, "[Levi] arose and followed him;" Mark ii. 23, "going through the corn-fields;" Mark iv. 39, "he arose and rebuked the wind . .; and there was a calm;" Mark v. 40, "and they laughed him to scorn;" Mark v. 41, "he took the hand;" Mark ix. 7, "a cloud overshadowed them . . . a voice out of the cloud;" Mark x. 22, the grief of the young man; Mark x. 46, "a blind man sat by the wayside;" Mark x. 52, "he received his sight, and followed him;" Mark xiv. 45, 47, the kiss of Judas, and the cutting off the ear of the high priest's servant with a sword; Mark xv. 30, 31, the jeer, "Save thyself," and the high priest's mockery; Mark xv. 37, Jesus crying with a loud voice at the moment of death.

[1] I am not now concerned with the question whether the author of the First Gospel may or may not have drawn up, perhaps long before, one or more of the sources, *vide infra*, § 15.

[2] Andrew, but his name does not occur in the Triple Tradition of this place.

[3] Cf. Dr. Salmon, 'Introduction' (p. 153f, edit. 1888), whose immediate object, however, is to show the Petrine authorship of more than the Triple Tradition. I have thought it better to confine myself to this in the narrower sense of the word.

Most of these marks of an eye-witness give us no further help towards discovering the original narrator than by showing us that he must have been among the twelve, but according to two of them he must have been among those three, viz. Peter, James, and John, who were with our Lord both in Jairus' house (Mark v. 37; Luke viii. 51) and at the Transfiguration (the Triple Tradition, Mark ix. 2). But of these three apostles there is no reason for preferring St. James (though the fact of his early death is not a great difficulty), and the style and character of St. John's writing is so well known to us from the Fourth Gospel, his Epistles, and the Apocalypse, that it is impossible to attribute the Triple Tradition to him. But St. Peter suits the phenomena in every way. He was present on all the occasions, including perhaps (John i. 41) that of the testimony of the Baptist; and no one is more likely to have recorded his words at the Transfiguration, or the words addressed to him at his denial of his Master, than himself. Fully in accordance with this is the fact that that Gospel (Mark) which keeps most exclusively to the Triple Tradition, and which most often supplements it by further undoubted signs of an eye-witness, is the one which has from the time of Papias onward[1] been attributed specially to the influence of St. Peter. Although, therefore, it is not a matter that admits of absolute demonstration, yet it may be concluded with comparative certainty that the first and chief basis of the First Gospel, what I have called the Historical Framework, is derived ultimately from this apostle.[2]

(2) *The Discourses.* This second source is much more the subject of present controversy than the first, it being very hard to determine whether the existing discourses represent a distinct source used by the composer of the First Gospel, or are merely his own arrangement of certain sayings of the Lord found by him in various connexions.

§ 5. It must be frankly confessed that we get no assistance upon this subject from external evidence. It has been supposed, indeed, that Papias (circa A.D. 130) alludes to such a collection of the Lord's utterances both in the very name of his work (Λογίων Κυριακῶν Ἐξήγησις) and in his statement that "Matthew composed τὰ λόγια in the Hebrew tongue" (Eusebius, 'Ch. Hist.,' iii. 39)[3]; but Bishop Lightfoot has demonstrated ('Essays on Supernatural Religion,' p. 173, *sqq.*) that λόγια is equivalent to "Divine oracles," and that these are not to be limited to sayings only, but include just such narratives as we have in the Gospel generally. Thus the

[1] Eusebius, 'Ch. Hist.,' iii. 39.

[2] For whom the Framework was originally composed is another question. One phrase in it, "the *river* Jordan" (ch. iii. 6; Mark i. 5)—for which there seems to be no parallel in Jewish writers—suggests that in the form used as one of the sources of our Gospels (*vide infra*) it was intended for non-Palestinian, and in fact for Gentile, Christians (since all Jewish Christians would know what the Jordan was); but this is altogether too slight a point upon which to build an argument.

[3] *Vide infra*, § 14. He also (if λογίων and not λόγων be the right reading) speaks of St. Peter preaching with reference to the immediate needs of his hearers, and not intending to give a consecutive record of "the Dominical oracles" (τῶν Κυριακῶν λογίων).

word is used of the Old Testament Scriptures in Rom. iii. 2, without any hint of limitation to sayings, and again in the same way in Heb. v. 12, where such a limitation is excluded by the author of that epistle eliciting the Divine teaching quite as much from the history as from the direct precepts of the Old Testament. So again it is found in Philo and in Clement of Rome with the same wide reference, narratives being treated as part of the Divine oracles as well as sayings. When, therefore, we find Polycarp speaking of "the oracles of the Lord" (τὰ λόγια τοῦ Κυρίου), or Irenæus, immediately after having used a similar term (τὰ Κυριακὰ λόγια), referring to the healing of the daughter of Jairus, it is natural to consider that neither of them intended (as some have supposed them to have done) to limit the application of the word to our Lord's sayings in contrast to his works. From the consideration of these and other arguments brought forward by Bishop Lightfoot, it seems clear that Papias used the term in the same way as we might use the word "oracles" at the present day, viz. as equivalent to the Scriptures. His book may well have been composed with reference to our present Gospels, and the volume which he says St. Matthew wrote may have been (so far as this one word is concerned) that which we now know by the apostle's name.[1]

§ 6. Compelled, then, as we are, to reject all fictitious aid from external evidence, since this has been misunderstood, it is the more necessary to inquire into the internal evidence afforded by the First Gospel itself and into the evidence afforded by its relation to the Third Gospel.

In some respects, indeed, the evidence continues to be unfavourable to the view put forward above, that the Discourses existed as a separate work before the writing of our First Gospel. For, *first*, it might fairly be expected that, if the Discourses were already distinct, they would show traces of this original distinction in their difference of *language and style*. So no doubt they do to some extent, but not to a greater degree than can be accounted for by the fact that they are discourses, and, as such, deal with matters different from those contained in the Framework, and treat them, naturally, in a different way. Indeed, the wonder is, if they represent real speeches by the Lord—if, that is to say, they are reproductions of sustained argument by him—that they do not show more divergence from the type of

[1] Mr. A. Wright gives a wrong impression of the bishop's view when ('Composition of the Four Gospels,' 1890, p. 66) he writes, "The phrase, 'Utterances of the Lord,' by which Papias designates the book [*i.e.* 'the second cycle' of the apostolic teaching according to Mr. Wright's terminology], though it plainly indicates that discourses formed the distinctive feature, yet, as Bishop Lightfoot has shown (Essays reprinted from the *Contemporary Review*), does not preclude a considerable intermixture of historical matter." This agrees more with the view of Dr. S. Davidson ('Introd. New Test.,' i. 369, *sq.*, edit. 1882), who, while disagreeing with Bishop Lightfoot's further conclusions, yet holds that the closely succeeding words about St. Peter, quoted in the preceding note, compel us to regard the Logia as more than discourses. He says, "When Papias tells us that Matthew wrote *the Logia*, he means a work which contained the sayings and doings of Christ; and as the former predominated, the name took its origin from the principal part." But this is hardly sufficient.

the short, pointed remarks common in the Framework. Observe, also, that the quotations in the Discourses from the Old Testament generally agree with those of the Framework in being taken from the LXX. (contrast *infra*, § 12). This points to both Discourses and Framework being formed at much the same time and among congregations of similar culture and acquirements.

Secondly, a similar negative result is obtained by comparing the discourses found in the First Gospel with those that are found in the Third. It has been already pointed out (§ 2) that some are found in the latter, but not in their entirety, and that detached portions are also found sometimes in a context that gives the impression of more originality than that in which St. Matthew embeds them. Do we see that St. Luke knew of a collection of Discourses such as has been supposed above? The answer is purely negative. We see separate discourses, and these so far varying in language from those in Matthew as to make it clear that they had had a history before being recorded by either St. Luke or St. Matthew, but there is no sign of these discourses being collected together. Certainly, if they were, St. Luke did not regard their arrangement. Dr. Salmon, indeed (p. 139, edit. 1888), goes as far as to say that a comparison of St. Luke's order in narrating our Lord's sayings "gives the deathblow" to the theory of a collection of Discourses. St. Luke, however, may have had many reasons for not adopting a particular order. If, for instance, he was acquainted both with such a collection and also with narratives containing the utterances in more historical connexion, there seems no reason why he should have preferred the former to the latter. His aim was not that of the author of the First Gospel, to present clearly before his readers the Lord Jesus as a Teacher, to bring out his relation to the religion of the day, but much more to exhibit him as the Saviour of the world; and for this purpose narratives of his actions and records of his other teaching bringing out the universality of his love would be more effective. St. Luke's object, so far as we are in a position to argue on *a priori* grounds from the nature of his second treatise (and apart from the actual state of his first), was to show how fitted the gospel of Christ was to become the religion of the whole world. The idea of universality running through the Acts and the Third Gospel is a reason of no little weight why we should suppose that the author should have deliberately rejected the arrangement of the collection of Discourses, even if this lay before him. For in the form in which they are found in the First Gospel they would not have suited his purpose. It is true that St. Luke did not refuse to follow the general order of the Framework, but this was probably in the main chronological, and even if it had not been so this would not affect him, but the Discourses must have been (*ex hypothesi*) summaries of our Lord's teaching upon different subjects, made from the Judæo-Christian standpoint. St. Luke's use, therefore, of the Framework in such a way as to keep the order of it weighs little as an argument for the conclusion that he would have

observed the order of the collection of Discourses if he had known of such a collection.

§ 7. So far the examination of the theory that a collection of Discourses existed before the writing of the First Gospel has proved only negative. There are, however, two reasons in favour of such a theory.

(1) It seems much more probable that a collection would be made by one who was making it his special aim, than that a writer should take the Framework and pick out pieces that properly belonged to it and make them into discourses. In other words, it seems easier to suppose the Discourses to be the work of one who was only a collector of the Lord's sayings than of one who used, at the same time and for the same writing, the narratives of incidents, etc., to present a picture of the Lord's work.

(2) But not only so. The presence in the First Gospel of "doublets," i.e. of repetitions of the same sayings in different forms and connexions, may most easily be explained by the evangelist using different sources.[1] For it is more natural to suppose the second member of a doublet to have already existed before the author of the First Gospel wrote, and that he did not mind incorporating it (if he perceived that it was a doublet) with the rest of the material drawn from that source, than that he should deliberately give the saying once in its original context and, *himself taking it out of that context*, record it a second time. Doublets may easily come by unconscious accretion, or one member may be recorded out of its original context merely for the sake of its didactic connexion with that context, but one cannot imagine an author deliberately giving one member in its original and another (the duplicate) in its didactic context, unless he already found the latter in the second source that he was using.[2]

In spite, therefore, of the absence of all external evidence, and in spite of the purely negative evidence both of style and language, and of the order of the sayings found in the Third Gospel, it seems probable, both *a priori* and on account of the presence of doublets, that the writer of the First Gospel found ready to his hand some such collection of the Lord's sayings as are represented by the Discourses that he records.

§ 8. Of the third constituent part there is but little to be said in this connexion. The matter, which is of the same general character as that contained in the Framework, may have originally belonged to this, but the genealogy must, one would suppose, have been derived from Mary's household. From the same quarter—perhaps personally from Mary herself, or

[1] Thus the saying about divorce in ch. v. 32 recurs in ch. xix. 9; that about taking up one's cross in ch. x. 38, in ch. xvi. 24; that about the sign of Jonah in ch. xii. 39, in ch. xvi. 4; that about more being given to him that hath in ch. xiii. 12, in ch. xxv. 29.

[2] If it be argued that some doublets occur even in the same source (*e.g.* the saying about offences in ch. v. 29, 30 recurs in ch. xviii. 8, 9; "He that receiveth me," etc., in ch. x. 40, perhaps in ch. xviii. 5; the series of sayings about persecution in ch. x. 17—22, in ch. xxiv. 9—14), and that the inference drawn above is therefore unsound, the answer is that the fresh facts only show that the source in which these doublets occur is itself of composite origin.

perhaps from our Lord's brethren, who obtained it from Joseph—must have come both the account of the birth and the materials for the second chapter. But it is to be noticed that the references to the Old Testament in these two sections[1] point rather to growth in a community than representation by one person. They would appear, that is to say, to be rather the result of Church consideration and teaching than of individual insight. The other details referred to under § 3 *c* may be due partly to current teaching, partly to personal knowledge, and, where interpretation and standpoint are considered, partly to subjective impressions and aims.

§ 9. But the question must have already suggested itself whether these various sources existed in documentary or only in oral form. If we were considering the case of modern Western nations there would be no doubt whatever as to the answer. The invention of printing and the spread of elementary education have increased the culture of all arts except that of recitation. Hence with us the training of the memory does not consist so much in committing long passages to heart as in amassing details of knowledge—regardless of the exact words in which the information is conveyed—and in so co-ordinating them in our minds as to be able to grasp their relative significance and to apply them when they are required. But in the East, to a great extent even to the present day, the system is different. "Education . . . still consists largely in learning by heart the maxims of the wise. The teacher sits on a chair, the pupils arrange themselves at his feet. He dictates a lesson, they copy it on their slates and repeat it till they have mastered it. Then the task is over, the slates are cleaned and put by for future use. Substitute for the slates and pencils a writing-tablet and *stylus*, and you will have a scene which must have been common in the days of the apostles. The teacher is a catechist, the pupils catechumens, the lesson a section of the oral gospel."[2] Further, while too much stress (see Strack's 'Einleitung in den Thalmud,' p. 39, *sqq.*) has often been laid on the rabbinic principle, "Commit nothing to writing,"[3] yet the principle may probably be rightly used to show that the tendency of the Jews in apostolic times was to teach orally rather than by books, and we may accept Mr. Wright's vivid picture as accurately describing what was usually done.

But other considerations of greater importance point the same way. The hope of the speedy return of the Lord would not, indeed, prevent the taking of written notes of oral instructions, had that been the custom, but would certainly tend to prevent the formal composition of written accounts of him; and, most important of all, the relation of the different forms of the narratives preserved to us in the synoptic Gospels seems to require

[1] Compare further, § 12.

[2] A. Wright, 'The Composition of the Four Gospels,' 1890, p. 1. Observe Mr. Wright's opinion that the oral instruction was given, not by public preaching and teaching, but after the manner of school instruction.

[3] Jost, 'Geschichte des Judenthums und seiner Secten,' i. 367. For reff. see Strack, *loc. cit.*; and comp. Levy, 'Neuhebr. und Chald. Wörterbuch,' ii. 434.

oral, not documentary, transmission. The frequent minuteness and unimportance, as one would say, of the differences are often almost inexplicable on the supposition that the evangelists had written documents before them which they altered. It might be the case in one or two places, but that they should make such minute alterations throughout seems most improbable.[1] On the supposition of transmission by word of mouth, on the contrary, such differences are explained at once.[2] A sentence would be transmitted accurately to the first and almost, but probably not quite, as accurately to the second person. The latter, in his turn, would transmit all save that which was of the least importance. The result would be that, after a section had gone through many mouths, the central thought of a passage or of a sentence —the more important words, that is to say—would still be present, but there would be numberless variations of greater and less importance, the character of which would depend largely upon the position and standpoint of the individuals through whom the section had been transmitted. If it were now written down by two or three persons who had received it by different lines of transmission, it is reasonable to suppose that the results would be very like the three forms of the common part of the Framework contained in the synoptists, or the two forms of those sayings peculiar to any two of them.

Whether, indeed, this writing down had at all taken place before the synoptists wrote, so that they used the oral teaching in written forms, cannot be shown. There seems to be no case in the Greek, in which variations may so certainly be traced to "errors of sight" as to *compel* us to believe that they used a common document in Greek, and the only direct reason that exists for supposing that the sources which they used had been crystallized into writing lies in the preface to the Third Gospel. St. Luke knew of such. But whether either he or the other evangelists used them for their Gospels, we cannot say. In one case, indeed, that of the genealogies, it might be thought that such written documents must have been used. But even this is not necessary. It may be granted that genealogies were at that time usually written down, and that documents of this kind may have been employed by the evangelists, but, whatever St. Luke may have done, the form of the genealogy found in the First Gospel, by its artificial and almost inaccurate arrangement into three sections of fourteen generations each, points to oral rather than documentary transmission.[3]

[1] For reference to cases where a document written in some kind of Aramaic seems to underlie the variations in the Gospels, see § 13.

[2] Cf. the variations noticed *supra*, p. 2. It must, however, be confessed that Dr. Plummer's illustrations from Church chronicles, in the *Expositor* for July, 1889, make the theory of alteration from documents much easier to believe.

[3] For an extraordinary example of powers of memory trained to remember long passages *verbatim*, see Eusebius, 'Mart. Pal.,' § xiii. Godet (Luke ii., p. 444) says Basil the Great ('De Sp. Sanct.,' xxvii. § 66) affirms that in the fourth century the Church had no written Liturgy, but he probably misunderstands Basil's language (see Mr. St. John Tyrwhitt, in Smith's 'Dictionary of Christian Antiquities,' ii. p. 1007).

## III. The Author of the Present Gospel.

Having considered the constituent parts of the First Gospel, and the probable sources from which they were derived, it is natural to ask who it was that united them—who, that is to say, was the author of this Gospel? It will conduce to clearness if the subject be considered, first of all, without any reference to the kindred question of the original language of the Gospel. It cannot, indeed, be answered fully before the latter question also is touched upon, but it is well to keep this as distinct as possible.

§ 10. *Internal evidence.* What assistance does the Gospel itself give us towards solving the problem of its authorship? That the author was a Jew will be granted by all. A Gentile Christian never would or could have described the relation of Jesus to the Jews and to their teaching in the way that the author has described it. The fact of his Jewish standpoint is further indicated by his Old Testament quotations. This is hardly the place in which to treat of these in detail; it is sufficient to note that the author knows not only the form of the Old Testament quotations that was current among the Greek-speaking Christians,[1] but also such interpretations of the original text as would exist only among people trained in Jewish methods, for he quotes it in cases where the reference is, at the best, very remote (cf. ch. ii. 15, 18, notes). It may, then, be accepted as incontestable that the author was a Jew by birth, versed from his youth in the Hebrew Scriptures, and looking upon them from a Jewish standpoint.

Yet, if we except some very slight and doubtful indications of the place and the date of his writing (*vide infra*, §§ 18, 19), we cannot learn much about the author from the Gospel itself. It is only natural to examine it with the view of finding out whether it contains any marks of an eye-witness. But in doing so care must be taken. For it is evident that signs of an eye-witness recurring in one or two of the other synoptic Gospels belong rather to the sources used than to the author himself. So that not the whole Gospel as it stands, but only those passages and phrases which are peculiar to it, are to be considered. And when this is done the result is almost negative. The contrast to the result of examining the Second Gospel in the same way is enormous. There the innumerable undesigned touches point unmistakably to the presence of an eye-witness; here there is almost if not quite a blank.[2]

Internal evidence, then, says nothing at all personal about the author of the First Gospel, other than that he was a Jewish Christian. It gives

[1] As may be seen from the quotations found in the Framework and the Discourses.

[2] The passages that show most possibility of being due to an eye-witness are—ch. xiii. 2, "on the beach" and "was standing" (cf. notes); ch. xii. 49, "stretched forth his hand;" ch. xxiv. 1, "was going on his way" (cf. Bishop Westcott, *Expositor*, third series, v. 249). It may be observed that the objections urged by Davidson (i. 386—390), consisting either in miraculous incidents or in difficulties of chronological order, are of little weight except to those who are prejudiced by unbelief in the miraculous, or who insist on a very crude interpretation of an evangelist's duty.

no indication whatever that he stood in any close relation to the Lord, much less that he was one of the apostolic band who travelled with him, sharing his privations, seeing his miracles, and hearing his private teaching. Internal evidence does not absolutely contradict the supposition that the author is St. Matthew, but is certainly rather against it.

§ 11. *External evidence.* But when we turn to the external evidence, matters stand very differently. There never appears to have been any doubt in the early Church (cf. § 14) that the First Gospel was composed by St. Matthew, and it is hard to understand why so comparatively unknown and unimportant a member of the twelve should have been named if he were not, in fact, the author. It is with him as it is with St. Mark, and as it would have been with St. Luke if the Book of the Acts had not been written. For if St. Luke had not written the second volume of his work, no one of the synoptic narratives could have been compared with a writing attributed to the same author as itself, and the authorship of all three would have rested on a tradition which finds the chief reason for its acceptance in the difficulty of explaining how it could have arisen if it were not true. It seems hard to believe that the early Church could be wrong in its assertion that the author of the First Gospel was St. Matthew, but the belief depends on a tradition, the cause of which cannot be demonstrated, and which is only just not contradicted by the phenomena of the Gospel itself.

## IV. What was the Original Language of the Gospel?

§ 12. It has, however, been thought that the original language of the Gospel was not Greek, but "Hebrew," *i.e.* some kind of Aramaic. It will be in accordance with the lines of our previous inquiries to consider, *first*, the evidence of the Gospel itself as to its original language, without reference to any considerations derived from other quarters; *secondly*, to notice reasons that may be adduced for thinking that an Aramaic Gospel, either oral or written, was in existence during the first century; *thirdly*, to examine the direct external testimony that connects St. Matthew with such a Gospel.

(1) As regards the Gospel itself there is but little doubt. It is, indeed, saturated with Semitic, and particularly Jewish, thought and idioms, and the genealogy and also, perhaps, the remainder of the first two chapters may be directly or almost directly a translation from the Aramaic. But all the other phenomena of the Gospel contradict the supposition that it is a translation as we generally use the word. The Framework must have already existed in Greek[1] (whatever its *original* language may have been) if any satisfactory theory of it being used by all three evangelists is to be formed. The frequent minute verbal agreement necessitates this, and notwithstanding the fact that Professor Marshall shows that a few of the

[1] Not necessarily in a written form (cf. § 9).

differences in the synoptists are accounted for by a common Aramaic original (cf. § 13), the evangelists themselves can hardly have used it when they wrote their Gospels. Similarly, the Discourses, or at least large portions of them, must have been known in Greek to the two authors of the First and Third Gospels. The principal sources, that is to say,[1] must assuredly have existed in Greek before they were used by the evangelists. But should it be said that St. Matthew originally used these two sources in Aramaic, and that the corresponding Greek phrases and words and parts of words were only inserted by the translator (whoever he was) from his acquaintance with the other Gospels, then it must be answered that such a work would not only be altogether opposed to the spirit of ancient translations, but would be quite impossible from the minute and microscopic character of the process which it presupposes.

Besides, the distribution of the quotations is against the present Gospel being a translation. For how can we suppose a translator to have scrupulously observed the distinction between the quotations which are common to the synoptists, or which belong to the same kind of teaching (*vide supra*, § 6), and those which are peculiar to the evangelist, so that he nearly always took the former from the LXX. and the latter from the Hebrew?[2] Further, the paronomasia[3] are unlikely in a translation. Again, the explanations of Hebrew words[4] and customs[5] indicate that the Gospel in its present form was intended not for Jews alone,[6] since Jews of the Dispersion would surely understand the meaning of the very ordinary Hebrew words thus explained. Such explanations might, indeed, in themselves be interpolated by a translator. When, however, they are taken with the other evidence they are not unimportant.

§ 13. (2) Yet although our First Gospel shows so few traces of being a translation from an Aramaic original, it is very probable that some Aramaic Gospel existed.[7] Hence attempts have often been made to dis-

[1] Observe that this will include those quotations of the Old Testament which are taken from the LXX.

[2] Upon this subject, cf. T. K. Abbott ('Essays,' p. 157: 1891), and Roberts' 'Greek the Language,' etc., p. 316, edit. 1888.

[3] *E.g.* ch. vi. 16; xxi. 41. It is true that these are not absolutely conclusive, for paronomasia in one language may sometimes be repeated in another, and translators occasionally even make them where they do not occur in the original (Eph. ii. 9, 10; Jas. i. 6, Authorized Version; Ps. cxxxii. 4, 5, Prayer-book Version), but their presence adds weight to other arguments.

[4] Ch. xxvii. 46, and perhaps ch. i. 23.

[5] Ch. xxvii. 15; xxviii. 15.

[6] Yet cf. § 17.

[7] Delitzsch ('The Hebrew New Testament of the British and Foreign Bible Society,' p. 30: 1883) pleads hard for the original Semitic Gospel having been written, not in Aramaic proper, but in Hebrew, on the ground that this was still the holy language—the language of the temple-worship, of synagogal and domestic prayer, of all the formulas of benediction, of the discussions between the representatives of the traditional law. He also says that if a work were written in Aramaic it would be able to obtain a less wide circulation than one written in Hebrew, for Aramaic was only known in Palestine, but Hebrew more or less by all Jews. Yet he can hardly be right. Hebrew was so little known among the common

cover traces of an Aramaic Gospel underlying those that we now have, and forming the background to the thoughts of writers of other parts of the New Testament.

It is evident that if the Aramaic language will account for the variations in individual words existing in parallel narratives, then the *vera causa* of such variations lies in an Aramaic original being variously translated. By far the most satisfactory and convincing attempt is that made by Professor Marshall, in the *Expositor* for 1890 and 1891. Though several of his examples are far-fetched, or require too much change in the Aramaic words before these were translated into Greek, yet a few appear to be highly probable.[1] It may, however, be doubted whether even those results that have been obtained necessitate an Aramaic *writing*. The differences are generally, if not always, explicable by sound rather than by sight, and suggest an oral rather than a documentary origin.

§ 14. (3) That, however, St. Matthew wrote in Hebrew (Aramaic), the early Church seems to have held as certain. The testimony is so important that it must be quoted at length.

Papias (circa A.D. 130): "So then Matthew composed the oracles in the Hebrew language, and each one interpreted them as he was able."[2]

people that the lessons from the Bible were translated verse by verse into Aramaic (cf. the references in Schürer, II. ii. 81, notes 139, 140); and we have no reason to suppose, but quite the contrary, that the Jewish Christians (*i.e.* those in Palestine, for whom, if for any one, St. Matthew wrote his Aramaic Gospel) belonged for the most part to other than the lowest classes.

Dr. Roberts ('Greek the Language,' etc.) and Dr. T. K. Abbott ('Essays') have proved that Greek was much more widely known in Palestine than has been usually supposed, but Josephus' testimony ('Against Apion,' i. 9) that he had to learn Greek in Rome, and that ('Bell. Jud.,' Preface) he wrote his 'Wars of the Jews' originally in Aramaic, seems to show conclusively that Aramaic was the mother tongue of Palestinian Jews.

Besides, Delitzsch's argument that a writing in Hebrew would have had wider circulation is hardly to the point. We know too little of St. Matthew's aim in writing it (if he did write it) to be able to affirm that he intended it for those who were outside Palestine. The very fact that we have so little direct evidence of its existence tends to show that it originally had but a small circulation.

It should be observed that the Aramaic spoken in Palestine was substantially that preserved in parts of the books of Ezra and Daniel, and in the Targums and the Jerusalem Talmud. Professor Marshall (*vide infra*) thinks that the Samaritan dialect of it was that which was used for the original Semitic Gospel. On the dialects of Western Aramaic, cf. especially Kautzsch, 'Grammatik des Biblisch-Aramäischen,' § 5; the late Dr. W. Wright's 'Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages,' p. 16; and Mr. Bevan's 'Daniel,' p. 33 (1892). On the possibility that the Epistle of St. James was originally written in Aramaic, see Bishop J. Wordsworth, in 'Studia Biblica,' i. 150.

[1] Among these are ch. IX. 2, 8 (see also ch. X. 42, note). Resch ('Agrapha,' 1890) has much in the same direction, but he is hindered by trying to find an original Hebrew text, not an Aramaic, and his examples are seldom more than synonyms, and not real differences which are explicable by an original Shemitic term. The value of his work lies in his large collection of early Christian quotations of the Lord's words, canonical or otherwise.

[2] Ματθαῖος μὲν οὖν Ἑβραΐδι διαλέκτῳ τὰ λόγια συνεγράψατο, ἡρμήνευσε δὲ αὐτὰ ὡς ἦν δυνατὸς ἕκαστος (Eusebius, 'Ch. Hist.,' iii. 39, Heinichen).

Irenæus (circa A.D. 180): "Now Matthew among the Hebrews published a writing of the Gospel in their own language, while Peter and Paul were preaching the gospel in Rome and founding the Church." [1]

Origen (circa A.D. 230): "Having learned by tradition concerning the four Gospels, which are alone indisputable in the Church of God under heaven, that there was written first that which is according to Matthew, who was once a publican, but afterwards an apostle of Jesus Christ, and it was issued to those who once were Jews but had believed, and was composed in Hebrew." [2]

Eusebius himself (circa A.D. 330) is no independent witness, as is clear from two of the above quotations being found in his works, but is important for the further testimony that he adduces, and also for his own opinion. He tells us that it is reported that when Pantænus (circa A.D. 190), the first teacher of the Alexandrian school, went to India to preach the gospel, "he found that the Gospel according to Matthew had preceded his appearance, and was in the hands of some on the spot, who already knew Christ, to whom Bartholomew, one of the apostles, had preached, and had left behind him the writing of Matthew in the very character of the Hebrews, and that this was even preserved until the time referred to." [3]

Eusebius says elsewhere, "Of all the disciples of the Lord, only Matthew and John have left us written memorials, and they, tradition says, were led to write only under the pressure of necessity. For Matthew, who had at first preached to Hebrews, when he was about to go to others also, committed his Gospel to writing in his native tongue, and thus compensated those from whom he was withdrawing himself for the loss of his presence." [4]

So, too, when comparing ch. xxviii. 1 with John xx. 1, he says, "The expression, 'on the evening of the sabbath,' is due to the translator of the Scripture; for the Evangelist Matthew published his Gospel in the Hebrew tongue; but the person who rendered it into the Greek language changed it and called the hour dawning on the Lord's day ὀψὲ σαββάτων." [5]

[1] Ὁ μὲν δὴ Ματθαῖος ἐν τοῖς Ἑβραίοις τῇ ἰδίᾳ διαλέκτῳ αὐτῶν καὶ γραφὴν ἐξήνεγκεν εὐαγγελίου, τοῦ Πέτρου καὶ τοῦ Παύλου ἐν Ῥώμῃ εὐαγγελιζομένων καὶ θεμελιούντων τὴν ἐκκλησίαν ('Hær.,' iii. 1).

[2] Ὡς ἐν παραδόσει μαθὼν περὶ τῶν τεσσάρων εὐαγγελίων, ἃ καὶ μόνα ἀναντίῤῥητά ἐστιν ἐν τῇ ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανὸν ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὅτι πρῶτον μὲν γέγραπται τὸ κατὰ τόν ποτε τελώνην, ὕστερον δὲ ἀπόστολον Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ Ματθαῖον, ἐκδεδωκότα τοῖς ἀπὸ Ἰουδαϊσμοῦ πιστεύσασι, γράμμασιν Ἑβραϊκοῖς συντεταγμένον (Eusebius, 'Ch. Hist.,' vi. 25).

[3] Ὁ Πάνταινος καὶ εἰς Ἰνδοὺς ἐλθεῖν λέγεται, ἔνθα λόγος εὑρεῖν αὐτὸν προφθάσαν τὴν αὐτοῦ παρουσίαν τὸ κατὰ Ματθαῖον εὐαγγέλιον παρά τισιν αὐτόθι τὸν Χριστὸν ἐπεγνωκόσιν, οἷς Βαρθολομαῖον τῶν ἀποστόλων ἕνα κηρῦξαι, αὐτοῖς τε Ἑβραίων γράμμασι τὴν τοῦ Ματθαίου καταλεῖψαι γραφήν, ἣν καὶ σώζεσθαι εἰς τὸν δηλούμενον χρόνον (Eusebius, 'Ch. Hist.,' v. 10).

[4] Ματθαῖος μὲν γὰρ πρότερον Ἑβραίοις κηρύξας, ὡς ἤμελλε καὶ ἐφ' ἑτέρους ἰέναι, πατρίῳ γλώττῃ γραφῇ παραδοὺς τὸ κατ' αὐτὸν εὐαγγέλιον, τὸ λεῖπον τῇ αὐτοῦ παρουσίᾳ τούτοις, ἀφ' ὧν ἐστέλλετο, διὰ τῆς γραφῆς ἀπεπλήρου (Eusebius, 'Oh. Hist.,' iii. 24, Heinichen).

[5] 'Quæst. ad Marin.,' 2, iv. p. 941 (edit. Migne); see Bishop Lightfoot's 'Essays,' p. 208.

Ephraem the Syrian (circa A.D. 360) tells us, "Matthew wrote the Gospel in Hebrew, and it was afterwards translated into Greek." [1]

Cyril of Jerusalem (circa A.D. 370) says, "Matthew, who wrote the Gospel, wrote it in the Hebrew tongue." [2]

Two witnesses, however, give much more detailed accounts.

Epiphanius (circa A.D. 380), in describing the sect of the Nazarenes, says that they had the Gospel of St. Matthew complete written in Hebrew without, perhaps, the genealogy. He had, therefore, apparently not himself seen it, but he knew enough of it to compare it favourably with a Hebrew Gospel used by the Ebionites, which was corrupted and mutilated.[3]

Jerome, however (circa A.D. 390), goes much further. He not only accepts the common view that St. Matthew wrote in Hebrew,[4] but he says that a copy of it in Hebrew was still preserved in the library at Cæsarea, and even that he himself had transcribed the Hebrew Gospel with the leave of the Nazarenes who lived at Berœa in Syria (Aleppo), and who used that Gospel.[5] Yet the very details which Jerome gives show that the Hebrew Gospel which he translated could not have been the original of our Matthew. Why, indeed, translate it at all if a translation, in our sense of the word, already existed? For he gives us no hint that his aim was only to improve the ordinary translation. But his words show that the book which he translated was, in fact, very different to our Matthew, and was a complete copy of what has come down to us only in fragments, the so-called 'Gospel according to the Hebrews.'[6] What the relation of the original Hebrew work of St. Matthew (if there was one) was to this is not our immediate subject. Jerome's words are in reality, notwithstanding the first impression that they give, against the theory of a Hebrew original of our Matthew, for they suggest that the mistake made by him as to the identity of the work may have been made by others before him.

Whether or not this was the case we have no means of finally deciding. The other statements fall into two groups—the statement about Pantænus, and those of the remaining witnesses as quoted. That about Pantænus is very curious, but what basis of truth underlies it we cannot say. He seems to have found a Hebrew Gospel in some place that he visited which was inhabited by a large Jewish population—perhaps the south of Arabia, where

[1] In Moesinger's edition of the Diatessaron, p. 286; *vide* Resch, 'Agrapha,' p. 271.

[2] *Ματθαῖος ὁ γράψας τὸ εὐαγγέλιον Ἑβραΐδι γλώσσῃ τοῦτο ἔγραψεν* ('Catech.,' 14).

[3] See Dr. Salmon's 'Introduction,' p. 168, edit. 1888.

[4] "De novo nunc loquor testamento, quod Græcum esse non dubium est, excepto apostolo Matthæo, qui primus in Judæa evangelium Christi Hebræis literis edidit" ('Ep. ad Dam.,' A.D. 383: Wordsw. and White's edition of the Vulgate, p. 2).

"Primus omnium Matthæus est publicanus cognomento Levi, qui evangelium in Judæa hebreo sermone edidit, ob eorum vel maxime causam qui in Jesum crediderant ex Judæis et nequaquam legis umbra succedente evangelii veritatem servabant" ('Prol. in Comm.,' Wordsw. and White, p. 12).

[5] Salmon, p. 168, edit. 1888.

[6] Comp. Bishop Lightfoot on Ignatius, 'Smyrn.,' § 3.

was the Jewish kingdom of Yemen, or less probably the Malabar coast of India proper, where Jews have lived from time immemorial. But that this Gospel represented the original form of our present Matthew is just such an assertion as might be expected to grow out of the report of his finding some Hebrew Gospel there, when joined with the current belief in the Hebrew original of the First Gospel. The statement that St. Bartholomew brought it there may rest upon some basis of fact, but is probably due to an earlier legend which has not come down to us.

§ 15. The other statements, if they are independent, and there is no sufficient reason for supposing that they are all ultimately due to Papias, are more important, and cannot easily be disposed of. The question is—How are we to interpret their united evidence in view of the probability already expressed, that our Gospel is not a translation, and that we must attribute it in some way to St. Matthew? Three solutions of the difficulty have been put forward.

The first is that St. Matthew composed, or caused to be composed,[1] a collection of the Lord's utterances, and that this was used by the author of the First Gospel, the name Matthew being applied to this latter Gospel also, because so important a part of it had in reality proceeded from that apostle. On this theory it will be observed that the term "Logia" used by Papias receives a sense more restricted than usage warrants; also that the later testimonies to the Hebrew original of the First Gospel will be due to a facile enlargement of what are, according to the theory, the true facts of the case. They state that St. Matthew composed a whole Gospel in Hebrew, although, in fact, he only composed the Utterances.

The second solution is that St. Matthew composed a Hebrew Gospel which has entirely perished, and afterwards himself published our Greek Gospel. But the objections to this are twofold. His Hebrew Gospel could not have been represented very closely by the present Greek text (*vide supra*, § 12), and the idea of a version of it put forth by authority is quite opposed to Papias' testimony. In Papias' time our First Gospel was evidently accepted, but in earlier times, as he tells us, each translated the Hebrew as he was able—a process which would have been wholly unnecessary if this second solution of the difficulties had been the true one.[2]

The third is that the belief in a Hebrew original is nothing more than a mistake. Papias and later authors knew personally and for a fact only the First Gospel in its present form, and considered that St. Matthew was

[1] Cf. especially Mr. A. Wright's 'Composition of the Four Gospels,' p. 67. It should be observed that this is not intended to exclude the possibility of his finding existing materials current in the Church. St. Matthew may only have edited a collection of the Lord's utterances that had been growing up among Aramaic-speaking Christians.

[2] Tregelles strongly insists (Smith's 'Dictionary of the Bible,' iii. 1623, *sqq.*) that we must accept the statements of Papias and other Fathers, and believe that (1) St. Matthew wrote the present Gospel in "Hebrew;" (2) some one (not St. Matthew) translated it, and the translation received apostolic sanction. But Tregelles wrote this before the interrelation of the synoptic Gospels was as clearly perceived as it is now.

the author of it, but they knew also that there was a Hebrew Gospel in existence, and that this was, rightly or wrongly, reported to be written by St. Matthew. They assumed the accuracy of the report, and supposed that it must have been the original form of the First Gospel. But their assumption was mistaken. If so, it is natural for us to go a step further, and identify this Hebrew Gospel with the 'Gospel according to the Hebrews,'[1] so that the mistake of Papias and the others will be practically identical with that of Epiphanius and Jerome. It must be observed, however, that of the writers quoted above, Origen and Eusebius were well acquainted with the 'Gospel according to the Hebrews,' and that they did not think of identifying this with the original of Matthew. Further, it is clear that they had never seen the Hebrew original of the First Gospel, notwithstanding that they fully believed that it once existed. They may, therefore, have been only reproducing the Church's opinion of their time, without any independent reasons for their belief.

This third solution is certainly the most free from difficulties.

## V. Canonicity.

§ 16. It has been abundantly shown, even by the passages already adduced for other purposes, that this Gospel was unanimously accepted in the early Church. Probably also it is the very earliest of all the New Testament writings that is quoted as Scripture, for the 'Epistle of Barnabas' (placed by Bishop Lightfoot[2] during the reign of Vespasian, A.D. 70—79) distinctly refers to it in this way, introducing a quotation from it (ch. xxii. 14) by the phrase, "as it is written."[3]

[1] The 'Gospel according to the Hebrews' has only come down to us in fragments which have been preserved in Greek or Latin writers for the strangeness of their teaching, so that we have but a very imperfect knowledge of its general contents. The impression which the fragments give is that they are distinctly later than our sober canonical Gospels. The fragments are collected most conveniently in Bishop Westcott's 'Introduction,' Appendix D; Nicholson's 'Gospel according to the Hebrews' (1879); and Handmann's 'Das Hebräer-Evangelium' (Leipzig, 1888).

[2] Compare the Appendix published in 'Clement of Rome' (ii. 509, edit. 1890). The date at which Bishop Lightfoot wrote this fragment, for it is hardly more, was, says the editor, apparently before the publication of Gebhardt and Harnack's edition of Barnabas (1878). Perhaps it was written in view of the accomplishment of his promise made in 1875, referred to in the next note.

[3] Προσέχωμεν μήποτε ὡς γέγραπται πολλοὶ κλητοί ὀλίγοι δὲ ἐκλεκτοὶ εὑρεθῶμεν ('Barn.,' § iv.). Bishop Lightfoot ('Essays,' p. 177; cf. also his 'Clement,' i. 10, edit. 1890) writes as follows of this reference and another in § v. to Luke v. 13 (Matt. ix. 13, only in the Received Text):—

"The Gospel of St. Matthew is twice quoted in the 'Epistle of Barnabas' [§§ 4, 5], and in the first passage the quotation is introduced by the common formula of scriptural reference, 'as it is written.' To what contortions our author [the author of 'Supernatural Religion'] puts his argument, when dealing with that epistle, in the vain attempt to escape the grip of hard fact, I shall have occasion to show when the proper time comes. At present it is sufficient to say that the only ground for refusing to accept St. Matthew as the source of these two quotations, which are found there, is the assumption that St. Matthew

## VI. To whom was the Gospel first addressed?

§ 17. Evidently, from its whole tone, Jewish Christians were chiefly thought of, but the fact that Gentile Christians seem to have been included (cf. § 12) points to the communities addressed being not limited to those in Palestine. It is true that ch. xxiv. 26, "the wilderness" and "the tombs," and perhaps also ch. xxiv. 20 (for we may suppose that the Palestinian Jews observed the sabbath more strictly than those exposed to Gentile influences) suggest rather Palestinian readers (cf. also ch. x. 41, note), but, *first*, these verses are in a Discourse, and therefore probably belong to the sources rather than to the Gospel itself; and, *secondly*, with the close intercourse between the Jews of Palestine and those of the Dispersion, whatever was said specially to the former would be of the deepest interest and importance also to the latter.

## VII. The Place of Writing.

§ 18. This can be only conjectured, for the evidence is at most but negative. If the Gospel was, like the Epistle of St. James (Jas. i. 1), written for Jewish Christians of the Dispersion, there is no reason to suggest Palestine rather than any other country, save that Palestine would naturally be the home to which St. Matthew would return when opportunity offered. It should be observed that the phrase, "that land," in ch. ix. 26, 31, excludes Galilee or perhaps Northern Palestine. There seems nothing to forbid the supposition that it was written in Jerusalem.

## VIII. The Time of Writing.

§ 19. This also can only be conjectured. If the date assigned to the 'Epistle of Barnabas' (*vide supra*, § 16) be right, and if his quotation can be fully accepted as showing that this Gospel was already in existence, we have as an inferior limit the year 79 A.D. But in both particulars so much doubt exists that not much dependence can be placed upon this argument.

Such others as there are give us no great exactness, but suggest an inferior limit of about the same date. The First Gospel, as well as the Second and

could not at this early date be regarded as 'Scripture.' In other words, it is a *petitio principii*."

B. Weiss ('Introd. New Test.,' i. 36, Hodder and Stoughton, 1887) appears to think that the author of the epistle did not quote the saying as from Matthew, but as from the Old Testament, by an error of memory (cf. also Bishop Westcott, 'Canon,' p. 62, edit. 1881). For Weiss rejects the common rationalistic opinion that he took it from 4 Esdr. viii. 3 (cf. Davidson, 'Introd.,' i. 368). With this quotation by 'Barnabas' may be compared two passages in '2 Clem.,' § ii. (A.D. 130—150), where the words, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners" (Mark ii. 17, or perhaps ch. ix. 13), are introduced by the formula, ἑτέρα γραφὴ λέγει, and § xiii., where the saying found in Luke vi. 32, 35 is introduced by λέγει ὁ Θεός, marking it as one of τὰ λόγια τοῦ Θεοῦ referred to only five lines before (*vide* Bishop Lightfoot, *in loc.*).

the Third, appears clearly to belong to an earlier type of teaching than the Fourth Gospel,[1] and as modern criticism is gradually showing that this cannot be placed much, if at all, later than A.D. 100, and may, perhaps, be ten or fifteen years earlier, the synoptic Gospels cannot be put much later than A.D. 75.

The hints of a date in the First Gospel itself are only those connected with the siege of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple (ch. xxiii. 37, 38; xxiv.). It may, indeed, be urged that one reason why the Lord's prophecy was recorded lay in the event already having come to pass before the record (not before the prophecy) was made. There will always be a difference of opinion in cases of this kind, but it seems probable that, had these prophecies been only recorded after their fulfilment, they would have been modified into closer accordance with the details of the siege. It is more important to bear in mind that there must have been some lapse of time between the first formation of the sources by oral teaching and their transmission in the forms finally adopted either in the First or in one of the other synoptic Gospels. Yet twenty years would, perhaps, be all that is required, and as the sources might have been begun quite early—say A.D. 35 or 40—the year 60 would allow a fully long enough period to elapse. The limits would thus be about A.D. 60 and A.D. 75.[2]

## IX. The Life of St. Matthew.

§ 20. If we may assume that Levi the son of Alphæus (Mark ii. 14) was of about the same age as our Lord (and while we have no hint that he was younger, it is very improbable that he was much older, for our Lord would hardly have chosen as his apostles those who by reason of their age would soon become unfitted to endure the difficulties and hardships involved in such an office), we may place his birth about B.C. 4 or 5 (ch. ii. 1, note). Of the place of his birth we know nothing, but we may again assume that it was in Galilee. Perhaps it was Capernaum. In his early youth he must often have heard of Judas of Galilee, who had first gathered a number of men round him at Sepphoris (some twenty miles from Capernaum), making the whole country unsafe (Schürer, I. ii. 4), and afterwards (A.D. 6 or 7) urged the people to rebel, and gave rise to the sect of the Zealots (ch. x. 4, note).

But however much his boyish imagination may have been fired with zeal for the political and religious independence of his nation, he appears to have been in manhood content to take things as they were. For we find him engaged, not, like others of the twelve, in private business, but

[1] I have not seen Mr. Halcombe's works on the Gospels, but I cannot believe that St. John is the earliest of all.

[2] It is just possible that the words, "Herod *the king*," in ch. ii. 1 may point to a date before Agrippa II. was made *king*, i.e. before A.D. 53, when he received, in exchange for the small kingdom of Chalcis, a much larger kingdom north-east of Jordan, or perhaps to A.D. 56, when his kingdom was enlarged by parts of Galilee and Peræa (*vide* Schürer, I. ii. 193, *sqq.*).

in collecting the custom-revenues that went to maintain the tetrarchy of Antipas (ch. ix. 9, note). This was one degree better than if he had collected them in Judæa, and had thus directly supported the rule of Rome, but still Antipas was Rome's creature, and could hardly have been supported by truly religious patriots of the time. Even in Galilee the profession of a tax-gatherer was despised, as we see on every page of the Gospels, and we cannot wonder that this was the case, for such a profession ran counter to the Messianic expectations of the time, and the moral character of those who adopted it was generally far from good (ch. v. 46, note).

Yet St. Matthew became the type of the many government officials of all grades who have given up a morally doubtful, but a financially safe, position at the call of Christ. He reckoned his daily income and the opportunities that it gave of self-enrichment as nothing compared with the possibilities involved in following Christ.

Whether he had heard Jesus before the call we do not know, but we may safely assume that it was so. His time would not be so fully occupied but that he could often have left his booth by the roadside (ch. ix. 9, note), and listened to the words of him who spake as never man spake, and hear from the crowds the accounts of his miracles, even if he did not himself see some performed.

But when he is called he rises up and follows Christ, and, both to celebrate his entrance on a new life and to give his friends a chance of hearing more of the Master whose service he is now about to enter, he makes a feast for him.

"Levi," he who cleaves to the old ways, dies; "Matthew," the gift of Jehovah, henceforth lives instead.

From his call until Pentecost his history is that of the greater number of the apostles. Nothing special is recorded of him. He "attained not to the first three" who were admitted to special privileges, and were with the Lord when he raised the daughter of Jairus, and when a glimpse of the possibilities of human nature was shown in the Mount of Transfiguration. Not a word of his is recorded in the Gospels, not a word or an action in the Acts. We may, indeed, reasonably suppose that he stayed with the other apostles in Jerusalem, and left it when they left it. But of the scene of his labours we know nothing for certain.

We may imagine him during the years that he spent at Jerusalem, and perhaps during the earlier part of the succeeding time, as confining his attention almost entirely to that section of Jews and Christians which spoke Aramaic, and not Greek, and, further, as perhaps composing, or at any rate as having a share in composing, that form of instruction given in the Christian synagogues which dealt chiefly with the Lord's sayings. There was another cycle of teaching comprehending these sayings as arising out of some event—what we have called the Framework—but the aim of St. Matthew and of those associated with him was rather to collect those sayings of the Lord that bore on cognate subjects, regardless of the occasion

upon which they were spoken. Later on, however, perhaps about A.D. 65, he realized that there was a large and increasing number of Jewish believers in Jesus of Nazareth who did not speak Aramaic, but Greek alone, and with whom a good many Gentile Christians commonly associated, and that it lay in his power to draw up for them a treatise which should help them to understand more of the person and the claims of Jesus and of the relation in which he stood to the Law of their fathers, the religion which as Jews they had professed. This treatise he felt it necessary to write in Greek. He used as his bases two chief sources, both probably not fully written down, but current in men's minds by dint of oral repetition—the one traceable ultimately to St. Peter; the other that which was chiefly due to his own energy. But he now welded these two sources together, using his own judgment, and adding much that would serve his purpose, especially a genealogy hitherto preserved in oral tradition, and certain interpretations of prophecy that had been for some time in course of formation in the Church. He did not endeavour to be original, but the bent of his strong individuality could not fail to make itself felt.

## X. The Meaning of the Phrase, "the Kingdom of Heaven."

§ 21. There is one phrase which occurs so often in St Matthew's Gospel that it demands special consideration, "the kingdom of heaven" (ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν), or, as it is found elsewhere, "the kingdom of God" (ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ). I shall not discuss the relation of the two genitives, τῶν οὐρανῶν and τοῦ Θεοῦ, but assuming that the former seemed to Gentile Christians to savour of heathenism, and for this reason became restricted to Jewish circles, I shall consider them as for our purpose identical. But what does "kingdom" mean? Some say "rule" in the abstract, and appeal to certain passages in the LXX. and New Testament for corroboration (*e.g.* 2 Kings xxiv. 12; 1 Cor. xv. 24; Luke i. 33). But the general tenor of Scripture, both of the Old and of the New Testament, is strongly in favour of the concrete meaning, "realm" (*e.g.* LXX.: Esth. i. 22; 1 Sam. xxviii. 17 [probably]; 2 Sam. iii. 28; and in the Apocrypha, Wisd. vi. 4; x. 10. New Testament: Matt. iv. 8 [vi. 13, Received Text]; xii. 25, 26; xvi. 28; xxiv. 7). The word "kingdom," that is to say, does not mean the act of ruling, or the exercise of dominion, a reign, but a sphere ruled, a kingdom proper.

But what does the phrase as a whole mean? What *is* the kingdom? What *is* the sphere ruled? To answer this it is essential to notice that the earliest passage in which the thought is found, and on which the whole conception rests (Exod. xix. 6), tells us that at Mount Sinai God offered to take the children of Israel to be to him "a kingdom of priests." This position the nation accepted then and there, professing their readiness to obey God's voice.[1] Their action may be illustrated by the remarks of a

[1] "By the solemn conclusion of the covenant at Sinai (Exod. xxiv.), Israel became the people of God, and he became their King. It is from this relation, for which Josephus

far later time. The Lord proved his right, say the rabbis of circa A.D. 230, to be King over Israel by his delivering them from Egypt and working miracles for them, and they gladly accepted him as King, and "they all set one heart alike to accept the kingdom of heaven with joy."[1] Thus, when Moses, one Rabbi Berechiah says, asked God why Israel alone out of all the nations was committed to his charge, the answer was, "Because they took upon them the yoke of my kingdom on Sinai, and said 'All that the Lord hath spoken we will do, and be obedient'" (Exod. xxiv. 7).[2]

One can easily understand how the thought of the acceptance of this position as God's kingdom would lead to the desire to frequently renew the acceptance. The dates of the ritual observances of the Jews are in most cases quite unknown, but it is certain that the recital of the Sh'ma, "Hear, O Israel," etc., the summary of the teaching of the Law, is pre-Christian, and it is probable that it has come down from the very earliest times. But this recital was looked upon as the daily renewal, on the part of every individual Israelite, of his personal acceptance of the position accepted by the nation at Sinai. So that the recital of the Sh'ma became commonly called, "the taking of the yoke of the kingdom of heaven." By every recital of the Sh'ma each Israelite pledged himself to do his best to work out his own share of the duties and responsibilities which belonged to him as a member of the kingdom.

I do not wish, however, to lay too great stress either on the antiquity of the recital of the Sh'ma or on the part it played in keeping up the thought of the kingdom; for it admits of no question that the nation of Israel did not forget its position accepted at Sinai. Though its behaviour was very unlike that of the special kingdom of God, the nation never finally surrendered its ideal, but felt pledged to attain it. For the prophets always looked forward to this ideal as to be fully carried out one day under Messiah (*e.g.* Isa. ii. 2—4; Jer. xxiii. 5, 6), and indeed to be then still further enlarged by the admission of others than Jews to the privileges of the kingdom (*e.g.* Isa. xlv. 23; lxvi. 23; Zeph. ii. 11). The realm ruled over by Messiah became to the prophets a realm which was hereafter to be so completely realized that other realms, already in whole or in part existing, served only as the counterfoil to its greatness; for they were to be overcome by it (Dan. ii., vii.). It would be, observe, the realm of Messiah, the realm of a King, resembling, of course, not a Western kingdom with the constitutional rights of the representatives of the people to enforce limitations, but one of the great empires of the East, whose rulers were absolute monarchs. Nothing less than that is the biblical idea—a realm ruled by Messiah as absolute King.

('Contra Apion,' ii. 17) introduced the name *theocracy*, that the whole conception of the Kingdom of God has arisen" (Professor T. S. Candlish, 'The Kingdom of God,' p. 52: Edinburgh, 1884).

[1] Comp. Midrash, 'Mechilta,' § 5, p. 74*a*, edit. Weiss.

[2] Midrash, 'Pesikta' (p. 17*a*, edit. Buber); cf. for a somewhat similar saying, Midrash Shmoth Rabba,' § 23 (beginning).

This conception of the kingdom of God, though it might be more or less altered under different circumstances, continued to exist in Jewish circles during the period between the last of the prophets and the coming of Jesus,[1] and also afterwards. The study of the prophets could cause no less; and the ideal of the kingdom, an ideal to be realized at the coming of Messiah, has always been an integral part of Jewish belief.[2]

It is the approach of the realization of this kingdom which John the Baptist announces. The brevity of the form in which his announcement has been recorded, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand," seems to point to his purposely avoiding all mention of details. He states it in its bare simplicity, without hinting at its extension beyond the Jews (though he must have known the utterances of the prophets), yet, on the other hand, without limiting it in any way to them. The "kingdom of heaven," he simply says, is now at hand. We have been members of it, but we have realized the ideal of it most imperfectly; we have been unworthy subjects, notwithstanding our daily acceptance of our position as subjects. But now its realization is at hand. Arise to it, with preparation of heart. "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." John's expectation, that is to say, of the kingdom was doubtless much the same as that of pious souls in Israel before him, and even of many non-Christian Jews after him. It was the expectation of a kingdom which was to be merely the realization of the old idea of Israel as the kingdom of God, which was to take place in connexion with Messiah, and, in agreement with the expectation of the prophets, to include eventually many of the Gentiles. There is no hint that John the Baptist understood by the phrase any such thing as a distinct and new organization.

Did our Lord? For his first proclamation was the same as John's (ch. iv. 17), "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." He used a well-known term which had been understood in a definite meaning. No doubt he could have used it with a modified meaning so as himself to intend by it, though unknown at the time to his hearers, a separate organization. But is there any valid reason for supposing that he did so? It is undoubtedly *primâ facie* the easier supposition. The mere fact that through the coming of Christ an organization began which has proved itself a mighty power in the world makes us inclined to think that this organization is directly meant by our Lord's words; and to our practical and logical Western minds it is far easier to conceive the kingdom of God as a realm both organized and visible.

In support of this *prima facie* supposition is urged the evidence of certain

[1] Especially Psalms of Solomon, xvii., xviii. (cf. by all means Ryle and James' edition, pp. lii.—lviii.: Cambridge, 1891). See further Stanton, 'The Jewish and the Christian Messiah,' ch. iii.: Edinburgh, 1886.

[2] Cf. Maimonides, "The King Messiah will in some future time come, restore the kingdom of David to its former power, build the Temple, bring together the scattered of Israel . . . will reform all mankind, and lead them to the unanimous service of God" (quoted in Friedländer's 'Jewish Religion,' pp. 226, 227: Kegan Paul, 1891).

other sayings of our Lord's. It is, for instance, often asserted that when our Lord says that the kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed or a drag-net, he means that the outward and visible organization, the Church, is like these objects. It is a very easy interpretation, but is it the right one? It is a serious matter to suppose that Christ altered the meaning of a current phrase unless the case be fairly made out. What right have we to say that Christ in his parables compared a certain definite organization which he called the kingdom of heaven, with a mustard seed or a drag-net, when we may keep to the earlier meaning of the phrase by interpreting those parables as speaking solely of the *principles* connected with the establishment of the Divine realm, and of those principles taking effect in history? We must not allow the slowness of our Western imagination to prevent our catching the refined thoughts of Eastern pictures.

Again, in support of the belief that by the phrase, "the kingdom of heaven" Christ intended "the Church," appeal is made to ch. xvi. 18, 19. It is said that the two terms are there used synonymously. But this is hardly so. Of the Church Christ affirms that it shall be founded on St. Peter and shall not be overcome by the gates of Hades (both phrases pointing to the personal meaning of "Church"), but of the kingdom of heaven Christ says that St. Peter is to be, as it were, its steward (cf. ch. xiii. 52), withholding or granting things in it as he likes. The phrase implies a sphere that includes more than persons only. The Church forms but a part of the kingdom of heaven.[1]

Christ, then, accepted the usage that he found existing, and only enlarged it; he did not alter it. But as he looked down the ages, and saw multitudes of non-Jews accepting his message and obeying his commands, he knew that his kingdom was not intended to have a merely national limit, but that it would stretch from sea to sea till it embraced the whole earth. The old idea was that the nation was to be the kingdom; Christ meant the kingdom to embrace the world.

"The Church," whatever view we take of it, is only a collection of *persons*. The kingdom of heaven includes *persons and things*. The ancient idea was that of a nation with all that belonged to it being the special realm of God. The completed idea is that of Apoc. xi. 15 (Revised Version), "The kingdom of the world is become *the kingdom* of our Lord, and of his Christ;" *i.e.* all that the world then contains of persons and things will be not merely possessed by God, or ruled as he rules it now, but, permeated with a spirit of submission to his rule, will correspond in will and action and use to its position, the present Church visible being only "the training-school for the kingdom."[2] The "Holy Empire" expresses the idea more than the word "Church," but it will be a "Holy Empire," governed, not by a

[1] Apoc. i. 6 is more to the point ("He made us a kingdom, priests to God and his Father"); for in this case it must be confessed that St. John limits the word to the most important part of the contents of the kingdom—the persons who are in it.

[2] Oosterzee, in Candlish, 'The Kingdom of God,' p. 403.

pope for an ecclesiastical and an emperor for a civil head, but by one God-Man, who contains in himself the source of all authority, alike civil and spiritual (cf., perhaps, Zech. vi. 13 and Ps. cx.). The kingdom of God is a much grander conception, because wider, than that of the Church,[1] harder far for us to grasp because its realization is so future, but full of promise for those who believe that every part of the material world, and every power of mind and act of hand or eye, is intended to be used for God, and has its place in his realm.

Thus it is that the earliest proclamation of Christianity is *not* that of the Church. It is that of "the kingdom of God," or, in probably still earlier phraseology, "the kingdom of heaven."

## XI. A Brief Plan of the Gospel.

§ 22. Ch. i., ii. Jesus is Messiah (*a*) by human inheritance; (*b*) by the fact that the circumstances of his birth and early life fulfil prophecy.
Ch. iii.—iv. 16. His entrance on the Messianic office.
Ch. iv. 17—xvi. 20. Jesus as Teacher and as Worker. Opposition and acceptance seen in their growth. The climax (ch. xvi. 13—20) of recognition of his true nature by some.
Ch. xvi. 21—xxv. Suffering: he accepts and does not shun it.
Ch. xxvi.—xxviii. And thus enters upon his kingdom.

## XII. Concluding Remarks.

It may save misunderstanding if I state once for all that, except in rare cases, I have not thought it worth while to reinvestigate questions of textual criticism. Westcott and Hort's text has been accepted throughout as that which most nearly resembles the original Greek of the New Testament. The Received Text has been taken from Scrivener's *Novum Testamentum Græce, editio major*, 1887. I have tried to work independently, and though I have used everything that came in my way, I have not cared to reproduce what may be found in the ordinary English commentaries. Of recent commentators, Weiss (especially in his edition of Meyer, 1883), Nösgen (in the 'Kurzgefasster Kommentar,' 1886), and Kübel (1889) have been the most helpful. Bruder's 'Concordance,' Winer's 'Grammar' (Moulton's edition, 1870), Thayer's Grimm's 'Lexicon,' are too well known to require further mention. Of course, Rushbrooke's 'Synopticon' (1880) is indispensable to all serious students of the Gospels. The references to the Septuagint have been taken from Dr. Swete's edition so far as that has been published, those to the Vulgate of Matthew from Wordsworth and White's edition (1889). I cannot let these chapters go forth without

[1] Eph. i. 23, "The Church which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" only confirms this. The Church is not called the totality of all things directly, but the totality of the Lord's powers and attributes. In other words, the apostle is there speaking of the union of persons with the One Person, to whose all-pervading and all-sustaining work the end of the clause alludes.

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"I have never been able to consent with that which so often is asserted—namely, that the Gospels are in the main plain and easy, and that all the chief difficulties of the New Testament are to be found in the Epistles."

ARCHBISHOP TRENCH ('Studies in the Gospels,' Preface, March 8, 1867).

# THE

# GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER I.

**Vers. 1—17.—Jesus the Christ by Human Ancestry.** (Parallel passage: Luke iii. 23—38.)

Ver. 1.[1]—**The book of the generation.** As St. Matthew was writing only for Jews, and they, by reason of their Old Testament prophecies, looked for the Messiah to be born of a certain family, he begins his Gospel with a pedigree of Jesus. In this he mentions, by way of introduction, the two points to which his countrymen would have special regard—the descent of Jesus from David, the founder of the royal line, him in whose descendants the Ruler of Israel must necessarily (2 Sam. vii. 13—16) be looked for; and also from Abraham, who was the head of the covenant nation, and to whom the promise had been given that in his seed all the nations of the earth should bless themselves (Gen. xxii. 18; xii. 3). After this he proceeds to fill up the intervening steps in the genealogy. The spelling of the names in the Authorized Version accords with the Greek, and so varies from the Old Testament orthography; but for the sake of the English reader it is certainly advisable to do what has been done in the Revised Version, viz. to conform the spelling to that of the Old Testament, and, where the Greek varies much, to put that form in the margin. It is better to write *Rahab* than *Rachab*, and *Shealtiel* than *Salathiel*. Those who read the Greek Gospels when these were first written read also the Old Testament in Greek, and so were in no confusion. The first verse of the Gospel is doubtless intended as a preface to what is contained in vers. 2—17. It is, indeed, true that the phrase, "the book of the generation" (*βίβλος γενέσεως*, equivalent to *sepher tol'doth*, Gen. v. 1), might *in itself* point rather to events and works connected with the active life of him whose name it precedes (cf. the use of *tol'doth* in Gen. v. 1; vi. 9; x. 1; even ii. 4, *et al.*), and thus might refer to the whole of ch. i. (Kübel), or even the whole of the First Gospel (Keil); yet the addition of **the Son of David, the Son of Abraham**, by summarizing the genealogy, limits the reference of ver. 1 to this alone. Observe (1) that the same word (*γένεσις*) recurs in ver. 18; but being without *βίβλος*, has a slightly different meaning; (2) that the word translated "generation" in ver. 17 is *γενέα*, and means a single stratum of human life. The evangelist uses the name **Jesus Christ** here as a proper name, customary in later Christian circles (cf. John i. 17, and especially the traces of development from 1 Cor. xii. 3 and Rom. x. 9 to Phil. ii. 11). "Christ" is not used in its signification of "Messiah," or "Anointed," till ver. 17, where it would be better rendered "the Christ."

Ver. 2.—**Abraham begat Isaac.** From Abraham to David the genealogy in St. Matthew agrees with that in Luke iii. In the other two sections, from Solomon to Zerubbabel, and from Zerubbabel to Christ, there is some difficulty in accounting for the variations, which are considerable. The natural descent of each son from his father is emphasized by the repetition of the word "begat" at every stage (cf., however, ver. 8, note) till we come to Jesus, and then the phrase is varied, "Joseph the husband of

[1] For the exposition of vers. 1—17 I am greatly indebted to the manuscript notes of the Rev. J. Rawson Lumby, D.D., Norrisian Professor of Divinity at Cambridge.—A. L. W.

Mary, of whom was born Jesus." **Judas** (*Judah*, Revised Version) **and his brethren.** The addition of these words seems very natural here, because the twelve sons of Jacob were the fathers of the tribes of Israel, and as descended from Abraham were heirs of the promises; and although Judah was the tribe from which the Messiah was to spring, he was to be the glory of the whole of Israel. The same words, "and his brethren," are, however, found in ver. 11, where there is no such reason to account for them.

Ver. 3.—**Of Thamar** (*Tamar*, Revised Version). In this genealogy the only women mentioned beside the Virgin Mary herself, who must of necessity be introduced, are Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba, and many explanations have been suggested why these should be specially singled out for notice. The most plausible reasons put forward have been that they are introduced because of the sins with which all but one of them were stained, and because two were not of the race of Israel. Thus, it has been thought, St. Matthew would, in the outset of his Gospel, proclaim Christ as the Friend, even the Kinsman, of sinners, and the Saviour offered to Gentiles as well as to Jews. It is probably wiser not to put so deep a meaning on the appearance of these names, but to consider that they are here because in each case the circumstances were different from the ordinary steps of the genealogy. Had they been in the same position as all the other wives and mothers who are unnamed, they also would have been left unnamed.

Ver. 4.—**And Naasson** (*Nahshon*, Revised Version) **begat Salmon.** This line of descent, from Nahshon to David, is also given by St. Luke (iii. 31, 32), and is derived from Ruth iv. 18—22. But it has occasioned some difficulty, because it makes but five steps from Nahshon, who (Numb. i. 7) was one of the heads of fathers' houses at the time of the Exodus, to the days of David. According to the chronology added in the margin of the Authorized Version, this period extended from B.C. 1490 to B.C. 1056, *i.e.* more than four hundred and thirty years, thus making a generation to consist in each case of more than eighty years. And even according to the more accurate computation of the date of the Exodus (B.C. 1304) the period would be two hundred and forty-eight years, thus making each generation nearly fifty years. Even this seems very long, especially in the East; so that it is probable that the genealogy in Ruth, merely adopted by the evangelists, recorded only the more important names.

Ver. 5.—**Salmon begat Booz** (*Boaz*, Revised Version) **of Rachab** (*Rahab*, Revised Version). That this was Rahab of Jericho has been generally received, and it is clear from the narrative in Josh. ii. 11, where Rahab declares, "The Lord your God, he is God in heaven above, and on earth beneath," that, whatever this woman's previous life and character may have been, she was then not unlikely to join herself to the Israelites. Moreover, her great services rendered to the spies, and the conspicuous way in which she and her house were singled out for preservation from all the rest of the city, may have marked her as not unfit to become the wife of a chief man in Israel. The Old Testament says nothing of this marriage, but there has been no endeavour made in the Bible to preserve every detail of the genealogies, the record of the successive fathers being all that for Jewish purposes was required. But that Rahab of Jericho was received among the people of Israel, not merely as one dwelling in their midst (Josh. vi. 25), but to a place of honour among them, was an old tradition among the Jews; cf. T. B. Meg., 14 *b* (*vide* Lightfoot, 'Hor. Hebr.'), where Neriah, Baruch, Seraiah, Maaseiah, Jeremiah, Hilkiah, Hanameel, and Shallum, and also Huldah, are all said to have sprung from her. Some also say that she was made a proselyte, and was married to Joshua—a tradition followed, as it seems, in the Midrash 'Koh.,' on Eccles. viii. 10.

Ver. 6.—**David the king.** The mention of David's royal position seems made here because at this point the line of the Messiah first becomes connected with the royal house. At the time when Saul was made king the people chose to have him in opposition to the Divine will; but giving them next as king a man after his own heart, God uses the offence of his people so that it shall become a channel of blessing, and from this king Christ himself shall be born. **Of her that had been the wife of Urias.** It is not easy to see why Bathsheba is spoken of thus indirectly, as her own name was certainly better known, and is more frequently mentioned in the Old Testament than Uriah's. The phrase seems to call attention most pointedly to David's sin, and that too in a sentence where his kingly dignity has just been markedly emphasized. The way in which God dealt with David and his sin is very parallel to that in which he dealt with the Israelites after their choice of Saul. David's first child, like the Israelites' first king, finds not God's blessing; but the second child is the pledge of peace with God (Solomon)—is Jedidiah, "the beloved of the Lord," as David the second king was the man after God's own heart. She that had been the wife of Uriah, after David's repentance becomes Solomon's

mother. Up to this point the genealogies in St. Matthew and St. Luke have entirely accorded, but with the mention of Solomon we come upon a variation, which continues till the union of the two forms of the pedigree in Salathiel (*Shealtiel*, Revised Version), the father of Zerubbabel. In St. Matthew the line which is followed is the succession of the kings of Judah from Solomon to Jehoiachin (*Jechonias*). St. Luke mentions, after David, his son Nathan (of whom we find a notice in 1 Chron. iii. 5; 2 Sam. v. 14), and then passes on through a series of nineteen names, none of which is found in other parts of Scripture as belonging to the race of David. We have nothing, therefore, with which to compare them; but in number they correspond very nearly with the known descendants in the line of Solomon, so that, although we cannot verify the names, the list bears upon its face the appearance of being derived from some duly kept record of the pedigree of Nathan, the son of David.

Ver. 8.—**And Joram begat Ozias** (*Uzziah*, Revised Version). Between Joram and Uzziah the pedigree omits three names—Ahaziah immediately succeeded Joram (2 Kings viii. 24), and was followed by his son Joash (2 Kings xii. 1), and he by his son Amaziah (2 Kings xiv. 1). These were probably left out, that the number of generations might be reduced to *fourteen*. It is not likely that St. Matthew omitted them, but that they were absent from the form which he used. If we seek for a reason why these precise names are omitted, we may probably find it in the fact of their being descended from Jezebel; while the language of the second commandment would suggest that to the fourth generation the children of that race would suffer for the sins of their parents. To the Jewish compiler of this genealogy no argument more forcible for the removal of these names could have been suggested. It will be seen that the word "begat" in these verses does not signify always the direct succession of son to father.

Ver. 11.—**Josias** (*Josiah*, Revised Version) **begat Jechonias** (*Jechoniah*, Revised Version). Here we come upon another omission. Josiah was the father of Jehoiakim, and he the father of Jechoniah (called also Jehoiachin); see 2 Kings xxiii. 34; xxiv. 6. The omission is supplied in some few manuscripts; but it may be only the case of a marginal note in a previous copy having found its way into the text. There is, however, something to be said in favour of its acceptance. The similarity between the names Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin is very great, especially in some of the Greek forms, so that they might easily be confused, and thus a verse be omitted in some very early text. Then Jehoiachin (Jechonias) apparently had no brethren (but see 1 Chron. iii. 16), whereas Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, had two or three (1 Chron. iii. 15). To make the whole pedigree agree with the Old Testament records some addition in this form would appear necessary; *Josiah begat [Jehoiakim and his brethren, and Jehoiakim begat] Jechoniah about the time*, etc. But manuscript evidence for this is extremely slight (*vide* Westcott and Hort, 'App.,' i.). Yet the supposition that the name of Jehoiakim has been omitted removes what has seemed to many another difficulty. As the list now stands, to make up the fourteen in the third as well as in the second section of the genealogy it is necessary to count Jehoiachin—a king whose reign lasted only three months (2 Kings xxiv. 8)—twice over. He closes the second fourteen and begins the third. There is nothing like this found at the other division. To substitute Jehoiakim after Josiah would avoid this repetition of the name of such a very insignificant person, especially as the reign of Jehoiakim lasted eleven years (2 Kings xxiii. 36). And to mention Jehoiakim as the father of Jehoiachin "at the time of the carrying away to Babylon" would be very appropriate, whereas to say Josiah begat his children at that date is not so strictly correct. It seems, then, probable that we have here some clerical error, which may have existed already in the list which St. Matthew used. **About the time.** The preposition in the Greek means rather, "*at* the time." The Authorized Version, however, gives the sense, for the birth of Jehoiachin must have been some years before the commencement of the Babylonish conquest, which may be said to have begun with Nebuchadnezzar's invasion of the land in Jehoiakim's days (2 Kings xxiv. 1).

Ver. 12.—**Jechonias begat Salathiel** (*Shealtiel*, Revised Version). From Jer. xxii. 30 it has sometimes been thought that Jechoniah died childless, though the preceding context, which speaks of him and his seed, seems hardly to warrant the supposition; but clearly the words of the prophet there imply that none of his descendants should attain to a position such as was held by Zerubbabel, and that his family should soon come to an end. If we look at the genealogy in 1 Chron. iii. 17 we find Assir mentioned as the son of Jechoniah (cf., however, Revised Version, "Jeconiah *the captive*"), and Salathiel as his son; and in the next verse Pedaiah, a brother of Salathiel, is named as father of Zerubbabel. By St. Luke (iii. 27) Salathiel is called the son of Neri, and in Ezra iii. 2; v. 2; and Hag i. 1 Zerubbabel is called the son of Sheal-

tiel. These are all the details we have, and to decide on how they are related to each other is very difficult. We may, perhaps, be right in supposing that Pedaiah, the brother of Shealtiel, having died, his son Zerubbabel was adopted by Shealtiel. We must then suppose that, the royal line through Solomon having ended, and Jechoniah's only child, Assir (if he ever existed, *vide supra*), having left no issue, the line of David is taken up through the family of the other son, Nathan, and that from him descended Neri, the father of Shealtiel, who takes the place of Jechoniah's issue, which has altogether failed.

Ver. 13.—**And Zorobabel** (*Zerubbabel*, Revised Version) **begat Abiud.** Here the two lines of pedigree in St. Matthew and St. Luke seem to separate, and not to converge again till we come to Matthan (or Matthat), the grandfather of Joseph, which name is common to both. The Bishop of Bath and Wells has shown some reason for supposing that *Rhesa*, mentioned in St. Luke as Zerubbabel's son, is merely a title signifying "a chief," and also for identifying Hananiah, who is called a son of Zerubbabel (1 Chron. iii. 19), with Joanna, who follows Rhesa in St. Luke (iii. 27), and there being some relation between the Juda of St. Luke and the Abi-ud (*i.e.* father of Juda) given as Zerubbabel's son in St. Matthew. Except in these few particulars, the two lines show no connexion of names, and it seems likely that the family of David had fallen into low estate for several generations before the birth of Christ.

Ver. 15.—**Eleazar begat Matthan.** St. Luke makes Matthat (or Matthan; the names are from the same root, and in some texts are identical), to be the son of Levi. This is probably the actual fact. St. Luke seems to have traced the genealogy from Zerubbabel through a younger son, St. Matthew through an elder. But the elder line failing, Matthan, the son of Levi, of the younger branch, becomes heir to, and is called son of, Eleazar, of the senior line. As the promise of the Messiah was to the house of David, and this was known to every Jew, we need not be surprised to find the families descended from that king preserving most careful records of every branch of the family.

Ver. 16.—**And Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary.** St. Luke calls Joseph "the son of Heli." There are two ways in which these differing statements may be made to accord. The two sons of Matthan were Jacob the elder, and Heli the younger. It may be that Mary was the only child of Jacob, and Joseph the son of Heli. Then by marriage with his cousin, Joseph would become Jacob's son as well as Heli's. Or it may be that Jacob died without children, and Heli, marrying his widow according to the Jewish usage, became by her the father of Joseph, who hence would be called Jacob's son, that the elder brother's line might not die out. The points noticed above in respect of these varying pedigrees seem to be all those on which anything needs to be said with the view of comparing them. Their variety stands as a constant evidence of the independence of the two evangelists. Had either of them been conscious of the existence of the other's work, it is inconceivable that he would have made no effort to adjust the pedigree, for which he would possess means now lost for ever. They both design to give us the descent of Joseph from David, this being what a Jew would most regard. The descent of Mary from David is nowhere definitely mentioned in the Gospels, but that Jesus was sprung from David on the mother's side too we are warranted in concluding from the words of the angel to Mary (Luke i. 32), "his father David" (cf. also Delitzsch, 'Mess. Proph.,' § 17). But though we ought not to spend vain labour in attempting to reconcile these two genealogies of Joseph, we can see, from what we know of Jewish customs, grounds enough for understanding how these variations came to exist. The same Jew, we find, was often known under two names; of this we have several examples in the lists of the twelve apostles. It is possible, therefore, that in these two pedigrees there may have been more points of union than we are able to detect. Then the rule, before alluded to, by which a man took the childless widow of his deceased brother for his wife and raised seed unto his brother, may also have led to much confusion of names, which we have now no means of unravelling. The evangelists drew each his own list from some authentic source, accessible to others beside themselves, and the record of which could be verified when the Gospels were set forth. This should satisfy us that those we have received were held by the Jews soon after Christ's time to be truthful records, and that each established from a Jewish point of view the descent of the putative father of Jesus from King David. **Of whom was born Jesus.** This name, which, through *Jeshua*, is the Greek form of *Joshua* (for which, indeed, it stands in the Authorized Version of Acts vii. 45 and Heb. iv. 8), signifies "Jehovah is help," and was not an uncommon name among the Jews, though given with marked significance at this time (see ver. 21). We find, according to the best texts, that in Luke iii. 29 this name occurs in the pedigree of Joseph (where the Authorized Version has *Jose*), and the Revised Version has adopted that reading (Of the way in which

the name was augmented when given to the famous successor of Moses, see Numb. xiii. 16.) **Who is called Christ.** The evangelist here alludes merely to the well-known fact that Jesus was called by this name. The significance of the word, which is a translation of the Hebrew *Messiah*, is "anointed," and in the Old Testament it is given to priests (as Lev. iv. 3, 5, 16), to a king appointed by Jehovah (1 Sam. xxiv. 6, 10; 2 Sam. xix. 21), also to King Cyrus (Isa. xlv. 1), and to some unnamed representative of Jehovah (1 Sam. ii. 10). It was subsequently applied to Jesus both in the Greek form and in the Hebrew (John i. 41; iv. 25). It must, however, be noticed (*vide* Bishop Westcott, Add. Note on 1 John v. 1) that it was not a characteristic title of the promised Saviour in the Old Testament, and was not even specifically applied to him, unless, perhaps, in Dan. ix. 25, 26—a passage of which the interpretation is very doubtful.

Ver. 17.—**Fourteen generations.** To make the list more easy to remember, the names were so ordered that there should be the same number in each of the three divisions. Thus a means was afforded of checking the correctness of the enumeration, and the list became a sort of *memoria technica*. **Unto Christ**; better here, *unto the Christ*. For now begins the history which tells of this Jesus as the specially Anointed One of God, the true Messiah, of which all the previously anointed messengers had been but types and figures. The history which St. Matthew is about to give demonstrates that in Jesus were fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament which the Jews had constantly referred to the Messiah, for whose appearance the pious in Israel were ever looking.

Vers. 18—25.—JESUS THE CHRIST BY DIVINE ORIGIN. Recorded by Matthew only. The frequent similarity of language found in Luke i. 26—35 (*vide* 'Synopticon') is probably due to the fact that Joseph and Mary not unnaturally fell into the way of using the same words to express two messages of similar import.

The object of this paragraph is to show that Messiah was in origin not of man but of God. This fact was accepted even by his reputed father Joseph, who was only convinced of it after a special communication by an angel in a dream; giving him the facts of the case, and foretelling that a son would be born, and that this Son would be the expected Saviour; and also showing from prophecy that such union of God with man was no unheard-of supposition, but the fulfilment and completion of ancient thought suggested by God. Joseph at once accepts the communication and takes Mary home, avoiding, however, all cause for the supposition that the child was, after all, of human origin.

Ver. 18.—**Now the birth** (ver. 1, note). Γέννησις ("generation") of the received text refers to the causative act, the true reading (γένεσις) to the birth itself (cf. Luke i. 14). **Of Jesus Christ was on this wise.** The Revised Version margin says, "Some ancient authorities read, 'of the Christ,'" but perhaps the reading, "of Christ Jesus" (B [Origen]), is even preferable, as in no good manuscript of the New Testament is the article elsewhere prefixed to "Jesus Christ," and the easy reading, "of the Christ," would hardly provoke alteration, while it might easily arise from assimilation to the preceding "unto the Christ" of ver. 17 (cf. Dr. Hort, in Westcott and Hort, 'Appendix.' Bishop Westcott, however, seems to prefer the reading, "of the Christ," and so distinctly Irenæus, iii. 16). If the reading, "of Christ Jesus," be accepted, the evangelist purposely repeats his phrase of ver. 17, and then identifies him with the historic Person. **When as.** The Revised Version omits "as" because obsolete; cf. "what time as." **His mother Mary was espoused to Joseph**; *had been betrothed* (Revised Version), the tense clearly showing that the betrothal had already taken place. Betrothal was and is with the Semitic races a much more formal matter than with us, and as binding as marriage; cf. Deut. xxii. 23, 24; cf. also the words of the angel, "Mary thy wife" (ver. 20). **Before they came together**; including, probably, both the home-bringing (ver. 24) and the consummation (ver. 25). **She was found** (εὑρέθη). Although Cureton ('Corp. Ign.,' p. 271) shows that the Aramaic equivalent is used in the sense of "became," and wishes to see this weaker meaning in several passages of the Greek Testament (including, apparently, the present), the references that he gives (Rom. vii. 10; 2 Cor. v. 3; xi. 12) do not justify us in giving up the stronger and more usual sense. On εὑρέθη always involving more or less prominently the idea of a surprise, cf. Bishop Lightfoot on Gal. ii. 17. Observe the reverent silence with which a whole stage of the history is passed over. **With child of the Holy Ghost** (ἐκ Πνεύματος Ἁγίου; cf. ver. 20, without the article in both cases). According to the usual interpretation of these words, "the Holy Ghost" refers to the Third Person of the Trinity, and "of" (ἐκ) is used because the agent can be regarded as the immediate source (cf. 2 Cor. ii. 2). But the questions suggest

themselves: (1) whether Πνεῦμα Ἅγιον is here used in a strictly Christian or in a pre-Christian sense? and (2) if the latter, what was this pre-Christian sense? As to (1), it may be argued that the evangelist himself, writing long after Pentecost, and recording sayings taught among Christians only after Pentecost, would naturally wish his words to be understood in a Christian sense; and hence that Πνεῦμα Ἅγιον here has at least that comparatively developed doctrine of the Personality of the Holy Ghost which we find indicated in the New Testament; *e.g.* ch. xxviii. 19; 2 Cor. xiii. 13; John xiv.—xvi. It may, however, be justly replied that the words are in themselves rather a record of the feelings of Joseph and Mary about the Incarnation, and are merely a translation of the phrase *Ruah-hakodesh* (or its Aramaic equivalent, *Ruah Kudsha*), which they themselves used; and that hence its true meaning here must be rather sought in the meaning of the Semitic phrase in pre-Christian times. In other words, Πνεῦμα Ἅγιον here means neither more nor less than *Ruah-hakodesh* meant on the lips of a godly and instructed Jew before the teaching of Christ, and especially before Pentecost. (2) What was this pre-Christian sense? What did *Ruah-hakodesh* mean? To answer this fully would be to compile a treatise on one of the most difficult and disputed points of Old Testament and early Jewish theology. But a cursory comparison of passages in the Old Testament and the pre-Christian writings seems to show that, though there are many places which quite fall in with the Trinitarian view, and which are often marked by strong personification of the Spirit (*e.g.* Isa. lxiii. 10—14; cf. further App. A. in Dr. Sharpe's 'The Tree of Life,' Cambridge, 1889), religious Jews did not understand by *Ruah-hakodesh* a permanent and distinct hypostasis in the Deity, but rather the Deity itself in relation to the world as the Source and Maintenance of its life (Job xxxiii. 4; Ps. civ. 30; Job xxxiv. 14; Ps. cxxxix. 7; Isa. lxiii. 10; cf. Wisd. i. 7; xii. 1), in contrast to the Deity absolutely and as the object of worship. Pre-Christian thought, that is to say, used the term "Holy Spirit" as designating the One God in a certain relation to the world, not as designating a permanent and real distinction in the Godhead. If this be so, we must understand the phrase here to mean that Christ was conceived of God (not of any Person in the Godhead) in contrast to man. We may, perhaps, even give to ἐκ its fullest meaning of "origin" (cf. John i. 13, οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων . . . ἀλλ' ἐκ Θεοῦ). The phrase as a whole thus only insists that the Child was by origin Divine. It will be noticed that Luke i. 35 is then closely parallel, "the Holy Ghost" (Πνεῦμα Ἅγιον) there apparently connoting an outpouring of life; "the power of the Most High" (δύναμις ὑψίστου), an outpouring of strength. Dorner ('System.,' iii. 343; cf. 162, etc.) says that the expression in our text is "the less precise ancient Christian designation of the Divine Essence generally, out of which (*de quo*) Christ has come. To the Holy Spirit in the Trinitarian sense is only to be ascribed, according to the Scriptures, first, the internal preparation of humanity for the Divine Incarnation, and, secondly, after the *Unio* the animation of the humanity of Christ by the Divine power issuing from the Logos." The passage in Martensen's 'Dogmatics,' § 139, so well known for its latter part, apparently agrees with this: "He is born not of the will of a man, nor of the will of the flesh; but the holy will of the Creator took the place of the will of man and of the will of the flesh,—that is, the creating Spirit, who was in the beginning, fulfilled the function of the plastic principle. He was born of the Virgin Mary, the chosen woman in the chosen people. It was the task of Israel to provide, not, as has been often said, Christ himself, but the mother of the Lord; to develop the susceptibility for Christ to a point when it might be able to manifest itself as the profoundest unity of nature and spirit—a unity which found expression in the pure virgin. In her the pious aspirations of Israel and of mankind, their faith in the promises, are centred; she is the purest point in history and in nature, and she, therefore, becomes the appointed medium for the new creation." Observe that the Greek Creeds (σαρκωθέντα [γεννηθέντα, Marcellus] ἐκ Πνεύματος Ἁγίου καὶ Μαρίας τῆς Παρθένου), by not inserting the article (contrast afterwards καὶ εἰς τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ Ἅγιον), probably intended only to reproduce St. Matthew's language. The Latin could not fail to be ambiguous (*de Spiritu Sancto*). If, however, we divest ourselves of considerations directly derived from exegesis, and, turning to the theological side, ask which Person of the Blessed Trinity, in fact, prepared Mary for the Incarnation of the Second Person, we must undoubtedly answer that it was the Third Person. For this is his peculiar function, uniting alike the Persons in the Godhead and also the Godhead to creation (cf. Dorner, 'System.,' i. 425, 437; iv. 159, etc.).

Ver. 19.—**Then Joseph her husband; *and*** (Revised Version). The thought is slightly adversative (δέ); though this was "of the Holy Ghost," yet Joseph was about to put her away. **Being a just man; *righteous*** (Revised Version); *i.e.* who strove to conform to the Divine precepts manifested for him in the Law (cf. Luke i. 6; ii. 25). **And not willing;** *i.e.* "and yet not wishing," though

the Law, which he was striving to follow, seemed to inculcate harshness. This clause has been taken in the opposite sense equivalent to "and therefore not wishing," because the spirit of the Law, which he had learned to understand, was in reality against all unnecessary harshness. The negative used (if it can be at all insisted upon; cf. Simcox, 'Language of the New Testament,' p. 188) is in favour of the former interpretation. **To make her a public example**; rather, *to proclaim her* ("Wold not pupplische her," Wickliffe); *αὐτὴν δειγματίσαι* (cf. Col. ii. 15). The thought is of public proclamation of the fact of the divorce, not that of bringing Mary herself forward for public punishment, and so making her a public example (*παραδειγματίσαι*). **Was minded** (*ἐβουλήθη*). The tense indicates the resolution come to as the result of the conflict between duty and wish implied in the preceding clause. **To put her away secretly.** Adopting the most private form of legal divorce, and handing the letter to her privately in presence of only two witnesses, to whom he need not communicate his reasons (cf. Edersheim, 'Life,' i. 154). Observe in this verse Joseph's insistance on his personal and family purity, and yet his delicate thoughtfulness for her whom he loved.

Ver. 20.—**But while he thought on these things**; *when* (Revised Version); *ταῦτα δὲ αὐτοῦ ἐνθυμηθέντος*. The tense lays stress, not on the continuance of his meditation (contrast Acts x. 19), but on the fact that the determination to which he had already come (*vide supra*) was already in his mind at the time when the following event happened. "These things;" his determination and its causes. **Behold**; unexpectedly. Though common in St. Matthew, it never lacks the connotation of surprise. **The angel of the Lord**; *an angel of the Lord* (Revised Version). In Mary's case it was the angel Gabriel (Luke i. 26); but here not defined (so in ch. ii. 13, 19; Luke i. 11; ii. 9). (On angels, cf. especially Dorner, 'System,' ii. 96.) **Appeared unto him in a dream.** Joseph received his communications by dream (ch. ii. 13, 19, 22); to Mary, doubtless the more holy person, the vision was vouchsafed to her bodily eyes. If Joseph, as seems probable, was old, we here have a beginning of the fulfilment of the promise concerning Messianic times, "Your old men shall dream dreams" (Joel ii. 28). **Saying, Joseph, thou son of David.** In reminding Joseph of the greatness of his ancestry, the angel probably desired (1) to accept Joseph's resolution as right in so far as Joseph knew the circumstances, because with the promise of 2 Sam. vii. 12—16 there was special need to keep the line pure; (2) but, under the true circumstances, to urge him to take Mary, that so the promise might be fully carried out in his family and no other. **Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife** (ver. 18, note). **For that which is conceived in her** ("borun," Wickliffe; *quod natum est*, Vulgate); "Gr. *begotten*" (Revised Version margin), for *γεννηθέν* generally refers to the father rather than the mother (yet see ch. xi. 11), and here lays special stress on the Divine origin. **Is of the Holy Ghost.** "Of Spirit (not flesh), and that the Holy Spirit (*ἐκ Πνεύματός ἐστιν Ἁγίου*)" (ver. 18, note).

Ver. 21.—The first half is almost verbally identical with the promise to Mary in Luke i. 31. It is, perhaps, hypercritical to see anything more than a coincidence when such common terms are used, but it was not unnatural that the communications of the angels to both Mary and Joseph should be purposely clothed in language similar to that used of Sarah (Gen. xvii. 19), and in measure to that used of Hannah (1 Sam. i. 20; cf. Gretillat, 'Théologie Systématique,' p. 225; 1890). **And she shall bring forth.** Is the slight adversative force (*δέ*) to be seen in the contrast of the physical birth to the spiritual origin? **A Son.** In this, at least, thou shalt be able to test the accuracy of my statement. **And thou shalt call.** Taking the position of his father; the child being thus recognized by all as of David's line (cf. Kübel). In Luke Mary is told to give the name, but presumably the formal naming would be by Joseph. **His name JESUS** (cf. Ecclus. xlvi. 1, "Jesus the son of Nave . . . who, according to his name, was made great for the saving of the elect of God"). **For he shall save**; *for it is he that shall save* (Revised Version), equivalent to "He, and no other, is the expected Saviour." (For *αὐτός* in this sense of excluding others, cf. especially Col. i. 16—20.) It may, however, here not be exclusive, but only intensive—he being what he is. The connexion will then be—the name *Jesus* will answer to the fact, for he himself, in his own Person (1 John ii. 2), by virtue of what he is (John ii. 24, 25), shall save, etc. *Jesus*, equivalent to *Jeshū'a* (ver. 16, note); *he shall save*, equivalent to *Jōshi'a*. **His people.** Israel after the flesh (cf. John i. 11; Luke ii. 10; contrast John i. 29; iv. 42), for whom deliverance from sins must be the first step to restoration to rightful position, and yet the last stage of result from acceptance of Christ. Comparative salvation from sin, due to acceptance of Christ, must precede that restoration which Joseph then desired, and all true Jews still ardently pray for; full salvation from sin will be the final issue of that restoration. **From their sins.** With a greater salvation,

therefore, than that which Manoah's wife was told that her son should begin to accomplish (Judg. xiii. 5). Observe that this promise of Christ as Saviour is given to Joseph, who had deeper experience of sin (ver. 20, note), while to Mary, who is marked by promptness of personal devotion, is given the promise of Christ as King (Luke i. 32, 33). *Save . . . from* (σώσει . . . ἀπό), not merely "out of" (ἐκ, John xii. 27), but from all attacks of sin considered as coming from without (but see ch. vi. 13, note).

Vers. 22, 23.—*The evidence of prophecy.* ("Now all this was done. . . . God with us.") The Revised Version omits the marks of parenthesis. From a comparison of ch. xxvi. 56 (and perhaps also ch. xxi. 4), this is not the utterance of the evangelist, but of the previous speaker, yet formulated by the evangelist (cf. Weiss). The thought, that is to say, is still part of the angel's encouragement to Joseph; the exact mode of expressing the record of that thought is the evangelist's; so also Tatian's 'Diatess.' (or perhaps only Ephraem's comment upon it; cf. Zahn), *Quod si dubitas, Isaiam audi.*

Ver. 22.—**All this**; τοῦτο ὅλον (not ταῦτα πάντα). The birth of a Saviour, with the means by which it came about, by a virgin, and "of the Holy Ghost." **Was done**; *is come to pass* (Revised Version); *i.e.* in abiding effect (γέγονεν). It is considered as having already taken place (cf. "the prophetic perfect" of the Old Testament). **That it might be fulfilled.** God's past utterance is looked at as necessitating a present action. **Which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying**; *by the Lord through* (Revised Version); *i.e.* the Lord is the Agent (ὑπό), the prophet the means or instrument (διά). *The Lord*; i.e. Jehovah, not "God," because the thought is of covenant promise.

Ver. 23. — **Behold, a virgin** (*the virgin*, Revised Version) **shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son.** The difficulty of this quotation from Isa. vii. 14 is well known. (1) If the word translated "virgin" (*'almah*) properly means this, and (2) if it be also implied in the promise that the virginity was to be maintained until the birth of the son, then (3) (*a*) the fulfilment can have been only in the case of our Lord, and (*b*) the promise was no real sign to Ahaz, and (*c*) the context of the promise (according to which Rezin and Pekah were to perish in the lad's early childhood, vers. 15, 16) has no apparent reference to the promise itself. (4) If, on the other hand, *'almah* means only "young woman," the promise might easily be a sign to Ahaz; but, then, how is it that St. Matthew, or rather the angel, apparently lays so much stress on "virgin"? The answer is, as it seems, that (1) *'almah*, by derivation, means "young woman" (*vide* Cheyne), but in ordinary usage, "virgin." (2) When the promise was uttered by Isaiah, the word suggested "virgin," but not (for who would have supposed such a thing?) maintenance of the virginity. (3) The child, thus naturally born, should be called "Immanuel," in sign of God's presence with his people to deliver them from Rezin and Pekah, and, while he was still in childhood, this deliverance should come. The definite article prefixed to "virgin" (*ha-'almah*) either designated a person who was known to the prophet and perhaps also to Ahaz, or, as "the article of species" (Cheyne), pictured the person more definitely to the mind, though in herself unknown. Thus the promise meant to Ahaz and Isaiah that a woman, at that time a virgin, should bear a son, synchronous with whose childhood should be the Lord's deliverance of his people. It is possible that Isaiah further saw in this child the hoped-for Messiah, identifying it with that of ch. ix. 6, the long time that was yet to intervene being hidden from him. (4) The angel sees a further meaning in the promise than either Ahaz or Isaiah saw, and perceives that, in the providence of God, the words were so chosen as to form a promise of a virgin-birth, the son being of such origin that, in the highest sense, he could be truly called "Immanuel." "It seems not unwise to suppose that God, who designed to send his Son to be the Deliverer of mankind, so ordered the course of the world in his Divine providence that many things should tell of the coming Saviour, so that when he appeared those who had studied God's revelation should find that the scheme of salvation had been one and the same throughout all time. Thus bypast events, which had specific meaning in their own time, are found to have further contained a prefiguration of greater things in time to come; and to have been promises, ready to receive their highest accomplishment as soon as the fitness of time should appear" (Dr. Lumby). **And they shall call.** Men generally, in virtue of his true nature. **His name Emmanuel** (Revised Version, *Immanuel*, as Isa. vii. 14), **which being interpreted is, God with us.** St. Matthew emphasizes the interpretation in order to bring out the fact that this Son, now to be born to Joseph, shall not only be Jesus, Saviour, but also *God* with us; he is the manifestation of God in our midst. The thought is parallel to that of John i. 14.

Vers. 24, 25.—*Joseph's threefold obedience*

*—taking Mary, not consummating the marriage, naming the child in faith.*

Ver. 24.—**Then Joseph being raised;** *and Joseph arose* (Revised Version); for the stress of the Greek is not on "Joseph," but ἐγερθείς. Immediately on arising, Joseph obeyed. **From sleep;** *from his sleep* (Revised Version); *i.e.* which he was then enjoying. No stress is laid on sleep as such. **Did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife.** "Bidden," in modern English, too much suggests "asking;" hence the Revised Version "commanded" (προσέταξεν). Joseph's faith was seen in immediate obedience to commands received.

Ver. 25.—**And knew her not.** The tense (ἐγίνωσκεν) brings out the continuance of Joseph's obedient self-restraint. "He was dwelling in holiness with her" (Tatian's 'Diatess.'). **Till she had brought forth her firstborn Son.** Thus the angel's promise is so far fulfilled. *A son* (Revised Version); "her firstborn," though found as early as Tatian's 'Diatess.,' having been added from Luke ii. 7. Though no great stress can be laid on the word "till" (ἕως [οὗ], Basil refers to Gen. viii. 7; comp. also Ps. cxii. 8), nor even on "firstborn," which suggested to a Jew rather consecration (Luke ii. 23) than the birth of other children (comp. Bishop Lightfoot on Galatians, p. 270, edit. 1890); yet it is a reasonable inference from the passage as a whole that the οὐκ ἐγίνωσκεν was not continued after the birth of the Son. Whether, however, other children were born to Mary or not, the true text of this passage gives no hint. **And he called his name JESUS** (ver. 21, note). Observe that this name had already occurred in Joseph's family (Luke iii. 29). It is, however, now given in sign of Joseph's faith in him and his work.

## HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—17.—*The introduction.* I. THE TITLE. 1. *It is a book;* but it is not, like other books, the product of human thought. It presents to us a life not like other lives. That life stands alone in its beauty, purity, tenderness, in the glory of its unearthly holiness, in the majesty of its Divine self-sacrifice. It stands alone in its claims; it claims to be the great example, the one pattern life, the Light of the world. It claims to be a revelation of a new life; it offers a gift of power and Divine energy—a power which can lift men out of darkness into light, out of worldliness and selfishness into the life of holy love, into the clear light of the presence of God. The conception of that life is unlike any of the ideals of perfection to be found in ancient writers; there was never anything like it before. It has changed our estimate of various moral qualities; it has raised some that the world thought little of to a very high place of dignity; it has depressed others that once stood high in the thoughts of men to their proper level. That life has affected the modes of thought and feeling even of those who will not accept it as a revelation from God. It formed a mighty epoch in the history of thought; men cannot divest themselves of its influence; they cannot think now as they might have thought had that life never been lived on earth. It is impossible for us to put ourselves back into the mental attitude of those who had never heard of that life; it has exercised an influence so widespread, so deep-reaching, over the whole field of thought and feeling. But we can see that that life could never have been conceived by any human genius, least of all at the time when the Gospels were written. Compare it with any efforts of human imagination; there is not one that can even seem to endure the comparison. This history is unique. It has the stamp of genuineness, the ring of truth. Fictitious it cannot be; there never was man that could have invented it. Compare it with other religious writings of antiquity, whether Jewish or Christian; compare it with the apocryphal Gospels, or with the books of the sub-apostolic Fathers: this book stands absolutely alone; there is no other book like it; the gulf that parts it from all other books is wide, deep, immense. It is *the* book, the Bible—the book that speaks to the heart of man as no other book can, because it is God's book; it comes from him, and it speaks to the heart which is his handiwork, to the man whom he created in his own image, after his own likeness. It bears in itself the evidence of its Divine origin; we *feel*, as we read its sacred words, that it has a message for us, that it is God's voice calling us, telling us all that we need to know of himself, of his will, of his redemption of the human race from sin and death. 2. *The subject of the book.* It is "the book of the generation of Jesus Christ," the book which tells us of his birth, of his history. It opens with a table of genealogy. He is "the Son of David,

the Son of Abraham." In him was fulfilled the promise made to Abraham: "In thy Seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." In him was fulfilled the faithful oath which the Lord had sworn to David: "Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne." The book gives us the history of a Person. Christianity presents to us not simply a code of morals, a system of theology, but a Person. The book describes his character, it relates the circumstances of his life upon earth. It is a history, but it is more than a history. "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." It sheds a light upon the way that leadeth to Christ; it shows us where to find him. For this history is not like other histories, merely a record of past facts of more or less interest. It is the revelation of a present Saviour. It has not done its work for us unless it is leading us to Christ himself, to a personal knowledge of the Lord. We may know the Gospel through and through, its language, history, geography, archæology, —that knowledge is of deep, absorbing interest; but if we advance no further, we miss the very end for which the Gospel was written. Indeed, it is no Gospel to us, no glad tidings, but only an ancient book, unless by its guidance we find Christ. The deepest biblical scholar, if he fails to find Christ, knows less of the real meaning of the Gospel than the humblest Christian who is living in the faith of the Son of God. It is not the knowledge of the facts of the Lord's history, but the living, personal knowledge of himself, that is eternal life. We must learn to abide in him, to live in that fellowship which is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. Without this spiritual knowledge the Gospel is written in vain for our salvation: "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." The mere external knowledge of the Scripture can only increase the condemnation of those who have not sought by prayer and the gracious help of God the Holy Ghost to penetrate its inner meaning. That inner meaning, revealed to our hearts by the Holy Spirit of God, and brought to bear upon our inward and outward lives, giveth life, because it brings us to him who alone is the Life of men. The promise was that all the nations of the earth should be blessed in the Seed of Abraham; not in his history, not in the record of his life and teaching, but in that holy Seed himself, in his grace, in his abiding presence, in union with him.

II. THE GENEALOGY. 1. *It begins from Abraham.* St. Matthew was writing for the Jews in the first instance. He proves that the Lord Jesus was the Messiah whom the Jews expected, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham. He was descended from the father of the faithful, born in the covenant, himself admitted by the rite of circumcision into the conditions of the ancient covenant. He fulfilled all righteousness, all the requirements of the Law. He lived as a Jew, he preached to the Jews. "I am not sent," he said, "but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But even as he said those words he healed the daughter of the Syro-Phœnician woman; it was an earnest of the world-wide range of his redemption. He died, "not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." Therefore through him the blessing of Abraham hath come upon the Gentiles. As St. Paul teaches us in Gal. iii., "The Scripture preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." "There is neither Jew nor Greek; for if we be Christ's, then are we Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Thus the first verse of the First Gospel preaches faith. Christ is the Son of Abraham, who "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." They which are of faith are the children of Abraham; they share the blessing of Abraham. Christ is theirs, and they are Christ's. 2. *The genealogies in Genesis descend from Adam; this ascends to Christ.* God made man in the likeness of God. Adam begat sons in his own likeness, after his image. The sting of the serpent infected the race: "Original sin is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam." The Spirit of the Lord indeed strove with man from the beginning; he was not left to die in his sin and misery; the first promise of a Redeemer follows close upon the first sin. God was never without a witness; in Cain and Abel we have the first sight of the field in which the wheat and the tares grow together unto the harvest. But corruption soon spread widely among the descendants of Adam; all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. As man receded further from the Divine origin of the race, the deeper became the taint of sin; the traces of the image of God grew ever fainter, the poison of the serpent deadlier and more loathsome. It

repented God that he had made man upon earth; the Flood destroyed the ungodly. Then God established his covenant, first with Noah, afterwards with Abraham. The promise became clearer and more definite. The generations had descended from God; now they begin to ascend towards God again, towards the Christ, who is the Son of God, himself God incarnate. Abraham rejoiced to see the day of Christ; he saw it and was glad. Generation after generation looked for the promised Saviour; Simeon was "waiting for the consolation of Israel." The Jews inquired of John the Baptist whether he was the Christ that was to come—the Christ was to restore all things. In Adam all died, in Christ shall all be made alive; for the last Adam is a quickening Spirit, even the Lord from heaven. He came to restore the almost lost image of God. "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we must also bear the image of the heavenly." God hath predestinated his elect to be conformed to the image of his Son. As they draw nearer and nearer to Christ, imitating his blessed example, looking always unto Jesus, they are being renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created them. The generations ascend towards the Christ; so must each Christian strive in his own spiritual life to rise ever nearer to the Lord. 3. *The variations of rank in the genealogy.* The generations begin with patriarchs; they rise to kings; they descend again to private men. From Abraham to David the king; from David the king to Joseph the carpenter. Human ancestry, however illustrious, could add nothing to the dignity of the Son of God. But both his blessed mother and Joseph, his father by adoption, were descended from David. Apparently the Lord Jesus was, according to the flesh, the representative of David, the lineal heir to David's throne. But he lived in obscurity for the first thirty years of his earthly life. He was meek and humble in heart; he prided not himself on earthly rank. Indeed, what was rank to him? The difference between the greatest monarch and the humblest beggar is altogether inappreciable compared with the infinite descent from heaven to earth. When once he had emptied himself of his glory, and taken the form of a servant, it was as nothing that he chose the carpenter's shop rather than the royal palace. His earthly ancestors varied in rank. There were kings, there were private men; the reputed father of the Lord, the husband of his mother, was a carpenter. Honours, like wealth, are vanity; the one highest honour, the one loftiest title, is theirs to whom he hath given power to be called the sons of God. 4. *The variations in moral and spiritual character.* In the genealogy there are holy men like Abraham, there are wicked men like Ahaz, Manasseh, Amon. There is a Moabitish woman, pure indeed, and lovely in character, but of heathen blood. Others there are whose lives had been defiled with sin—Tamar, Rahab, Bathsheba. The Lord indeed was born by a miraculous conception, without stain of human corruption; but sinners as well as saints are reckoned in his genealogy. He was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, though he was without sin. His ancestry was not uniformly holy, any more than uniformly royal. The poorest have an interest in him as much as the noblest; the sinful have an interest in him as well as apostles and saints. 5. *The genealogy, like all genealogies, shows the transitoriness of all things human.* "Abraham begat Isaac, and Isaac begat Jacob, and Jacob begat Judah." Man comes, and man goes; a man is born into the world; man goeth to his long home. Each man represents a long line of ancestors, a line which each generation lengthens, a line stretching back into the remotest past. Most of us know very little of those who have gone before us, not so much as their names. They are gone, and we must follow; we shall soon be but names in the memory of posterity; soon our very names will be forgotten. But God hath said, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. Then the dead of ages past are living still; we speak of them as the dead, but they live unto God. Their number is incalculable; the world of the dead is infinitely more numerous than the world of the living. But they are all known, every one of them, to the all-seeing God. We shall soon be gathered to that countless multitude. It matters little now to them what their rank, their wealth, was in life. The patriarch, the king, the carpenter, are distinguished now only by their faith, their holiness. Many that once were last are first now, and the last are first. So will it be with us who are living now. "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven;" "Seek first the kingdom of God." 6. *The genealogy shows the true manhood of Christ.* According to the flesh he is descended, like ourselves, from a long line of

human ancestors. His birth was miraculous; but on his mother's side he came out of Judah, Judah from Abraham, Abraham from Adam. He represents human nature; he is bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh; he was made in all things like unto us, yet without sin. 7. *The genealogy shows his Divine birth*; for "Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ." He was born of Mary; he was not the Son of Joseph; he had no earthly father. Joseph was the husband of Mary, but not the father of Jesus; he was born of *her*. The first mention of his birth points at once to other than a human origin. He who is the Son of Abraham is also the Son of God. 8. *The numbers.* The three fourteens are probably intended to assist the memory, but they may possibly contain a mystical meaning. Seven is the signature of perfection; two, of human witness; three, of God. The history which we are approaching is the history of One who, though he appeared in the form of man, was in truth God. It is related by human witnesses; it is perfect, sufficient for all our needs. "These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his Name." The book which we are opening is "the book of the generation of Jesus Christ," the book which relates the redeeming work of "the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Reverence, awe, and adoring love are the tempers of mind meet for such a study.

LESSONS. 1. Search the Scriptures; they testify of Christ, and Christ is our Life. 2. Receive the word as the word of God; it has a message for you. 3. Believe in him; do his will. The study of the Scriptures must not end in knowledge; it must lead to faith and to obedience; it must lead to Christ. 4. Life is short; eternity is long. Set your affections on things above.

VERS. 18—25.—*The birth of Jesus Christ.* I. THE DISTRESS OF MARY. 1. *She was betrothed to Joseph.* They had loved one another with a pure and holy love; now they were betrothed. The tie of betrothal was in the eyes of the Jews as sacred as that of marriage. The bridegroom had not yet taken home his bride; she was still in her parents' house. They were looking forward to the coming nuptials. It was the time upon which, years afterwards, men look back with such tender recollections—the time when young love was budding in all its freshness and purity; the time gilded by so many bright hopes of happiness to come; a time especially blessed when both are living in the faith and love of God, and are looking forward to live together in that holy estate of matrimony, which represents the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and the Church. 2. *She was found with child.* Every rose has its thorns; that bright, happy time is often, in ordinary experience, clouded with difficulties and anxieties. Never was there a greater trial for a betrothed pair than this which befell Joseph and Mary. They loved one another, we may be sure, deeply, sincerely. Now there was a barrier between them; it seemed an impassable barrier. Mary knew the secret: did she tell her betrothed? It may be that she thought it too sacred, too awful; she could not tell even Joseph. She had received the angel's message in implicit faith. "Behold the handmaid of the Lord," she had said; "be it unto me according to thy word." Perhaps she kept the secret in her heart; it was a strange mixture of awful joy and very bitter anguish. Those who are nearest to the Lord are often called to drink of his cup and to be baptized with his baptism. It was so now with the blessed virgin. She was to have that highest grace for which Jewish matrons longed so earnestly—she was to be the mother of the Christ; but she had to undergo a trial most acutely painful, a shame most terrible to a pure maiden soul. She seemed unworthy of the love of him who loved her best, whom she loved with the deep affection of a tender virgin-heart. She bore it in patience, though her heart was breaking; it was the agony which she had anticipated when she yielded herself in faith to the holy will of God. Perhaps she bore it in silence; the mystery was too deep, too awful for words. Perhaps (for we cannot tell) she whispered it to Joseph. But it was too strange, too incredible. He loved her and he trusted her; there is no real love without mutual confidence. But there is a limit to the trustfulness of the most loving heart. And this story seemed altogether impossible. Joseph could not believe it. His suspicions were natural, excusable; but how cruelly they must have wounded the tender heart of Mary! 3. *It was of the Holy Ghost.* The evangelist relates in few and simple words

the greatest fact in the world's history; the miracle of miracles, in the train of which lesser miracles must of necessity follow. The Incarnation is a truth above words, above the reach of human thought; it calls upon us, not for rhetorical description, but for adoration and thanksgiving. "The Spirit of God had moved [brooded] upon the face of the waters" in the day when God created the heaven and the earth. And now in the beginning of the new creation the Holy Ghost had come upon the blessed virgin, the power of the Highest had overshadowed her. She was highly favoured indeed, blessed above all other women, chosen to be the mother of the Lord. Very pure and holy she must have been; it may well be, the holiest of women, as she was the most highly favoured. But she was a creature, born in sin like ourselves, needing, like ourselves, to be cleansed by the atoning blood of her own Divine Son. And now the unique grace and dignity vouchsafed unto her brought with it a season of heart-rending anguish.

II. JOSEPH. 1. *He was a just man.* He too was sorely tried. He had tenderly loved his betrothed; he loved her still. He was in a position of the greatest perplexity. Mary was conscious of her own innocence; the angel had announced to her the cause of her immaculate conception. Joseph had, at the most, only her word to trust in; appearances were against her; her statement, if she told him all, required a very high degree of unquestioning, trustful faith. But he was a just man; he would not do her wrong. He could not wholly believe; perhaps he did not wholly disbelieve. We may be sure that he was distracted with anxiety. He was a just man; he wished to do what was right; but he was in a great difficulty; it caused him long and anxious thought. 2. *His intention.* He intended to adopt a middle course; he would not expose his betrothed; he loved her still. His justice was not the strict, stern justice which considers only the letter of the Law; it was tempered with the gentler feelings, mercy and compassion. He could not bring one whom he had loved so dearly into the danger of shame and death. But under circumstances so suspicious he could not consummate the marriage. He was minded to put her away privily.

III. THE DIVINE INTERVENTION. 1. *The solution of Joseph's doubts.* He thought on these things. We may be sure that he prayed. It was misery to him to mistrust his betrothed; it was misery to be doubtful about the right path to be pursued in a case of such momentous importance to them both. A holy man like Joseph, who prayed always, would pray most earnestly, most importunately under circumstances so distressing. At last the answer came. God will not leave his servants in perplexity; he will clear up their doubts; he will teach them what they ought to do. But trust in God does not remove the duty of thoughtfulness. We must think, as Joseph thought, seriously and prayerfully, when difficult questions present themselves. If we do this, God will not suffer us to be led astray; he will guide us aright. 2. *The angel.* The word means "messenger." The blessed angels are God's messengers; they are sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation. They help us now, for they encamp round about those who fear the Lord. They bring God's messages of love to us now, as they did then to Joseph; they guide us now, as they then guided him. The angel appeared to him in a dream; so they often whisper now the intimations of God's holy will in the hour of quiet, in the silence of the night. 3. *The message.* It calmed the fears of Joseph, it removed his doubts, it enabled him to rejoice once more in the love of his betrothed. There was nothing to separate her from him. He was to take her; her words, if she had told him, strange and mysterious as they were, were strictly true; that which was conceived in her was of the Holy Ghost. She should bring forth a Son, a Son who should be the Saviour of the world, not Joseph's son, but entrusted for a time to Joseph's care. Mary was to be the mother of the Lord, the highest honour surely ever vouchsafed to child of Adam; Joseph was to have the great joy of watching over his infancy and youth. Surely no charge so high and holy had ever been entrusted even to the blessed angels. It was God's answer to prayer, the prayer of a righteous man which availeth much with God. His anxiety was over now; his doubts were dispelled; his path was clear. He was a righteous man; he had thought and he had prayed. God will answer us, he will guide us in our perplexities, and show us the path of duty, if, like Joseph, we try to live a holy life, if we think seriously, if we pray earnestly.

IV. THE PROPHECY. 1. *It must be fulfilled.* For it was spoken of the Lord. "Holy

men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Isaiah is often called the evangelical prophet; in his prophecy we have the foreshadowing of the gospel, the good tidings of salvation; his very name points to the Saviour; it is "Jesus" with the elements reversed, it means "the salvation of Jehovah." This prophecy was given through him; but he was not the author of it, it came from God. God had spoken it, and he would make it good. He had announced his will long ago, and at length the time was come. "Now all this is come to pass," the angel said (for these words are part of the message), "that it might be fulfilled." All this had come to pass that human nature might be cleansed by its union with the Divine nature in the Person of Christ. That great result was the end contemplated by the prophecy; to fulfil the prophecy, and to save the souls of men, was the same thing. It was an end worthy of a Divine intervention, worthy of an angel-messenger. All this, the annunciation, the miraculous conception, all this is come to pass that his gracious purpose, announced so long ago, might now be fulfilled. 2. *The substance of the prophecy.* The Hebrew words mean literally, "The virgin is with child, and beareth a Son." The prophet is speaking of one virgin, one illustrious and unique, as Chrysostom says. The terms of the prophecy can be satisfied only by a miraculous conception, a supernatural birth. It is the sign which the Lord himself shall give—the sign of the Messiah, the sign of deliverance from sin and death. That marvellous birth, foretold so solemnly, in such strange, startling language, was to be the beginning of the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God upon earth. For the virgin-born is the King, the King who must reign till all his enemies are put under his feet. And he is "God with us"—Immanuel. He has taken upon him the form of a servant; he is made in the likeness of men. He was from all eternity in the form of God, living in that glory which he had with the Father before the world was. Now he is Immanuel, "God with us," the Word incarnate. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." He has taken upon him our human nature, that by the mysterious union of the human and Divine in the one Person of Christ our human nature might be cleansed from the dark stain of sin, and be created anew after the image of God. God is with us—with us to redeem, to cleanse, to regenerate, to sanctify. He abideth in us if we are truly his, he in us and we in him. He is with us always even to the end of the world, ready to hear our prayer, ready to help us, ready to save us even to the uttermost; for through the wondrous miracle of the Incarnation he is ours and we are his, if we abide in his love.

V. THE HOLY NAME. 1. *Joseph's obedience.* All his doubts were dispelled, his anguish was gone, he was filled with a strange and awful joy. His betrothed was to be the mother of the Messiah. He was to care for her now, to watch over the infancy of the holy Child. He took unto him his wife; he respected her spotless purity; he lived with her in reverential awe. At last the promised Child was born. Joseph looked upon the heavenly face of the blessed Babe. There is something very sweet in the calm face of an innocent infant. What a depth of celestial beauty must there have been in the smile of the infant Jesus! what a treasure of unspeakable joy must that holy Babe have been to Mary and Joseph! He called his name Jesus, in obedience to the angel's bidding. 2. *Many had borne that name already.* It is the Greek form of the common Hebrew name *Joshua.* The first Joshua of whom we read was called originally Oshea or Hoshea; this name, which was also the name of the last King of Israel and of the first in order of the minor prophets, means "salvation." Moses added to it the sacred name, and called the son of Nun Jehoshua or Joshua, "the salvation of Jehovah." He fulfilled the prophecy contained in his name. He was steadfast in unswerving allegiance to Jehovah: "As for me and my house," he said, "we will serve the Lord." He was the Lord's instrument in saving the people of Israel out of the hands of their enemies. He led them through the river Jordan, he fought their battles for them, he gave them rest in the promised land. In all this he was an eminent type of our Lord, who is the Captain of our salvation, who fought out the fearful conflict for us against the deadly enemy, who leads his people through the river of death into the everlasting rest. The name of their great leader naturally became common among the Jews; it appears again and again under its various forms, Oshea, Hoshea, Jehoshua, Joshua, Jeshua, Jesus. 3. *But only the Son of God fulfilled its blessed meaning.* He was indeed the Salvation of Jehovah; he was Jehovah, God the Son, come in his infinite tenderness, in his Divine compassion, to save his people. "He shall save his

people from their sins," the angel said. This was the meaning, the translation of the name. "He himself shall save his people," the Greek word means—himself by his own power. The first Joshua saved the Israelites by the help of God; the second Joshua is himself God, therefore he himself is "able to save even to the uttermost all who come unto God by him." "He shall save his people." He came to "redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." He has a people, his own people, for he is a King, and his people are a kingdom of priests, a holy nation. They belong to him; they are his, bought with a price; they are not their own. All Christians are his by solemn dedication to his service in holy baptism; but in the deepest sense they only are his people in whom the promise is fulfilled, whom he is saving from their sins. Alas! there are some of whom it is written, "Call his name Lo-ammi: for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God" (Hos. i. 9). 4. *His salvation is present.* He saves his people from their sins; not only from the punishment of sin, but from the sin itself. His precious blood, once shed upon the cross, cleanses all who believe in him from the defilement of sin. His gracious presence, abiding in the heart through the indwelling of his Spirit, saves his people from the dominion of sin. "The sting of death is sin;" "but God giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." This is the plain teaching of Holy Scripture; then if we are his, sin must be losing its power over us, for his blood is cleansing from all sin those who walk in the light of his presence, and he is saving them from the power of sin. We must try to realize in our own experience this victory over sin. Most people seem to be content with a life that falls very short of anything that can be called victory. But this is what God promises to give us; the Lord Jesus came to save his people from their sins; the purpose of his coming is not fulfilled in us unless we are saved from them. And he will save us, himself will save us, if we trust his word and come to him in faith. 5. *And it is future, it is everlasting.* Joshua led the children of Israel into Canaan; Jesus leads his people into heaven. He is preparing a place for us there, and is preparing us for it. Without holiness no man shall see the Lord; but he of God is made unto us Sanctification. He makes his people holy by the gift of his Spirit. He takes away the sting of death, which is sin, and changes death into sleep. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord," for if they die in him, in spiritual union with him, he is their Jesus, their Saviour; the blessed meaning of the holy Name is realized in their experience, and refreshes their soul in death with its heavenly music.

LESSONS. 1. God's holiest saints are often very sorely tried. Be patient; trust always. 2. God heareth prayer; he will bring the afflictions of his people to a happy issue. 3. The holy Name is exceeding precious and sacred; pronounce it with reverence; treasure it in your heart; do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus. 4. He shall save his people from their sins: is he saving you from yours?

## HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 1.—*Genealogical lessons.* We are tempted to pass by the string of names with which the New Testament opens, as though it had no moral significance, as though it were only a relic of Jewish domestic annals. But even the genealogies in Genesis are eloquent in lessons on human life—its brevity, its changes, its succession, its unity in the midst of diversity; and the genealogy of our Lord has its own peculiar importance, reminding us of many facts.

I. CHRIST IS TRULY HUMAN. It will be a great mistake if we so conceive of his Divinity as in any way to diminish our idea of his humanity. He was as true a man as if he had not been more than a man. The Divinity in him overflows the humanity, fills it and surrounds it, but does not destroy it. Christ is not a demi-god—half-way between man and God. Perfectly one with his Father on the Divine side of his nature, he is equally one with us on the human.

II. CHRIST HAS CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER MEN. He does not descend out of the sky like an angel, or suddenly appear at our tent-door as the "three men" appeared to Abraham (Gen. xviii. 2). He comes in the line of a known household, and takes his place in the family tree. This family tree suggests kinship. A family is more than a collection of men, women, and children, more or less closely associated together like the grains of sand on the seashore. There is blood-relationship in it

The solidarity of the human race makes one man to be the brother of all men. But the family relationship is even closer. Our Lord extends his own closest kinship to all who do the will of God (ch. xii. 50).

III. THE PAST LEADS UP TO CHRIST. He has his roots in the ages. Those dim, sorrowful years did not come and go in vain. They were all laying the foundation on which, in the fulness of time, God would build his glorious temple. Yet the men whose names are immortalized in this list knew not of their high destiny. We live for a future that is beyond our vision.

IV. CHRIST IS NOT ACCOUNTED FOR BY HIS ANCESTRY. Some people are proud of a noble pedigree. Yet it is possible to be the worthless scion of a glorious house, for families often degenerate. On the other hand, many of the best men have emerged out of obscurity. We may believe in "blood" to a certain extent, but heredity will not explain the most striking phenomena of human life. Most assuredly it will not explain the marvellous nature and character of Christ. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" (Job xiv. 4). Christ is not the product of such lives as those of his ancestors here given. His unique glory is not of this world, as a comparison of his life with his genealogy should show us.

V. CHRIST SUMS UP THE GLORIES OF THE PAST. All that is great and good in his ancestors is contained in Christ and surpassed by him. 1. *The Jewish faith.* Christ's pedigree goes back to Abraham, the friend of God; and in Christ Abraham's faith and piety are perfected, and the promises to Abraham are fulfilled. 2. *The Jewish throne.* Christ is David's heir. He inherits David's kingship and he exceeds it, realizing in fact what David imperfectly foreshadowed in type.—W. F. A.

Ver. 21.—*The name "Jesus."* "Jesus" was the personal name of our Lord, the Greek equivalent of the old Jewish name "Joshua," and not unknown in Hebrew families. Therefore to his contemporaries it would not have the unique associations that it has for us. It would be merely the designation of an individual. But everything that Christ touches is elevated to a new value by his contact with it. Now that he has been named "Jesus," that name is to us precious "as ointment poured forth."

I. THE MAIN MISSION OF CHRIST IS TO SAVE. His work may be regarded in many lights. He is the great Teacher. His kingly throne is set up, and he has come to rule over us. In daily life he is the "Friend that sticketh closer than a brother." But before all he is the Saviour. This comes first, as the personal name "Jesus" comes before the official title "Christ." It is of his very nature to save. He cannot teach or rule or cheer us effectually until he has saved us. Now, this is the unique glory of Christ. Nature destroys the weak and cherishes the strong. Christ has pity on failure; he comes to rescue from ruin. Wherever there is distress or danger there he finds his peculiar sphere of activity.

II. THE GREAT EVIL FROM WHICH CHRIST SAVES IS SIN. Other evils are also removed. But they are of but a secondary character, and are not worthy to be named in comparison with this dark and direful curse of mankind. When once sin is mastered and cast out, it will be an easy work to expel the secondary troubles of life. For the most part they are the consequences of this monstrous evil, and will depart with it. At all events, we shall be stronger to bear those that remain when the heart-paralysis of moral evil is cured. The last thing that many people want from Christ is to be saved from their sin. They would be glad to be delivered from its pains and penalties, but the thing itself they love and have no wish to abandon. For them there is no salvation. Christ aims at the sin first of all. He treats it as man's deadly foe. For those who feel its weight, here is the very essence of the gospel—What we cannot do for ourselves by resolution and effort he can do for us, if we will open our hearts and let him in. Take this literally. He can save us from our own sins—our defects of character, evil habits, bad temper, vices.

III. THIS SALVATION IS FOR CHRIST'S PEOPLE. Here is a limitation. It must not be forgotten that the Gospel of St. Matthew was written for Jews. Christ's first mission was to "save the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Yet no one who reads the New Testament throughout can doubt that the limitation is not final. The Jew was only to have the first offer of salvation. He was to be invited in to the feast that he might afterwards go out and introduce others. Now the message is that Christ "is

able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him" (Heb. vii. 25). Yet the specification of "his people" has still an important meaning. Christ is not only the Saviour at the entrance of the Christian life, but throughout its course. The people of God are not perfect; daily they commit new sins, and Christ is their daily Saviour. Not only at the moment of regeneration, but through the long and often sadly stained Christian life, we need Christ to save from sins that still beset us.—W. F. A.

Ver. 23.—*Immanuel.* There is some obscurity as to the primary intention of these words as they appear in the narrative of Isaiah (Isa. vii. 14); but the fitness of their application to Christ, now that he has come to fill in their meaning, makes the first use of them of small moment to us. For us they are a description of the birth and nature of our Lord.

I. THE VIRGIN-BIRTH. We may be sure that it was not in order to throw any discredit on the sanctity of marriage that God so ordered it that his Son should be born from a virgin. The New Testament honours marriage as truly as the Old Testament; and St. Paul, who is sometimes regarded as unfriendly to it, describes it as like the union of Christ with his Church. What, then, is the significance of the virgin-birth? 1. *A mystery.* It is right and reasonable that he who comes from the bosom of the Father should enter this world under circumstances that we cannot understand. Nevertheless, we may see to some extent what this means. 2. *A miracle.* Men of science have pointed out that this miracle is not so difficult to believe in as many others, because parthenogenesis is known in nature, though it is not found among men. Here, then, is something beyond the range of what happens in human experience, yet according to the known working of God in other spheres. 3. *A holy birth.* This is not the case because virginity is in any way more holy than marriage. Nevertheless, it has occurred to many that possibly the transmission of seeds of evil may have been avoided by this miracle. At all events, we know the fact that Christ was perfectly pure and stainless from his birth.

II. THE DIVINE NATURE. The human name of our Lord is "Jesus"—a name that describes his work on earth. His prophetic name is "Immanuel," one that reveals the deeper mystery of his mission. 1. *The fact.* In Jesus Christ we see the union of God and man. God is no longer a distant Being seated on his throne above the heavens. He has descended to this earth. It is difficult to think of God as the Infinite One who inhabits eternity; the very idea is so vast that it seems to melt away into vagueness. It is intangible; we cannot lay hold of it. But Christ we can see and understand. In Christ God looks at us with human eyes, speaks to us in an earthly tongue, touches us with a brother's hand. That this is so we can believe, not because we are informed of the doctrine of the Incarnation on authority, but just because, when we come to know Christ for ourselves, we can see God in him. 2. *The grace.* This great truth lies at the foundation of the gospel. All Christianity is built on the Incarnation. Although men may deliver one another from minor ills, only God can save from sin. Therefore, if Jesus is a Saviour in the deepest sense of the word, he must be God as well as man. But this is only one side of the subject. He must be also "God with us"—as the Fathers represented it, the hand of God outstretched. He saves us by bringing God into us.—W. F. A.

Ver. 19.—*Suggestions of just ways of covering sin.* The contents of this verse and the following are, so far as they go, corroborating evidence of the supernatural origin and superhuman incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. For if these things be not the truth respecting him, then will these verses also have to rank among the supposed cunningly devised fables; whereas in very truth their aspect is of the most opposite character. The aspect of these verses and their connection are strikingly of the real and the matter-of-fact. They present themselves and they speak so naturally. In those days of the Church's history which saw casuistry at its most flourishing, it may easily be imagined that the point would have been considered a most legitimately profitable one for argument, whether Joseph were more entitled or less entitled to the epithet of "a just man," in that he had it in his mind to "put away *privily*" his espoused wife rather than at once make a public example of what would too probably

soon become a public scandal. And again, whether his intention to do this "*privily*" savoured most of regard for public advantage, or of self-regard, or of regard for the supposed erring woman. From our point of view, any approach to the casuistical may be safely dispensed with. But in place thereof, we may fitly make this verse the occasion for inquiring what are some of the determining or guiding considerations which may be held to justify the disposition to *shield* human fault, sin, fall, rather than to expose it. We are on the safe side—

I. WHEN WE SEEK TO SHIELD A PERSON, THE SINNER, FROM PUBLIC EXPOSURE RATHER THAN SAY A WORD, EITHER TO HIMSELF OR TO THE PUBLIC, IN THE NATURE OF EXTENUATING THE SIN.

II. WHEN WE SEEK TO SHIELD ANOTHER RATHER THAN ONE'S SELF.

III. WHEN WE SEEK TO SHIELD THE PERSON WHO, EITHER BY NATURE OR BY INDIVIDUAL TEMPERAMENT, WOULD TAKE DISPROPORTIONATE SUFFERING; as, *e.g.*: 1. A woman, in anything that especially concerns the nature of woman. 2. Or any one whose known sensitiveness would render him liable to abnormal suffering.

IV. WHEN WE SEEK TO SHIELD FROM EXPOSURE CERTAIN KINDS OF SIN, VIZ. THOSE WHICH UNIVERSAL OBSERVATION TELLS US DO IN THE VERY ANNOUNCEMENT OF THEM SERVE TO EXCITE UNHEALTHY INTEREST, PRURIENT CURIOSITY. In not a few cases, notoriety undoubtedly attracts instead of deterring. It attracts also not in mere morbid and exceptional cases, but in virtue of a fascination not indeed otherwise explainable, but very easily explained when some of the radical vice of human nature is confessed. In the present instance, it is to be understood by the reverent reader of the history that Joseph, as "a just man," felt he had no choice but (1) to put away the woman who seemed to have erred; (2) to put her away privily, in order to avoid both public scandal as far as possible and unadvisable aggravation of her and his own feelings. The justifiableness of qualifications of this kind is amply illustrated by the conduct of Christ himself, alike in the instance of the woman "taken in adultery," and in that of Mary Magdalene.—B.

Ver. 21.—*The "Name which is above every name."* In introduction dwell briefly on the thought of the Divine care, shown, *first*, in foreguarding Israel and, so to say, the world so early from *mistake* as to the character of their coming Saviour, Hope, King; and, *secondly*, in guiding Israel from the very first to understand that whatever breadth, height, scope, might belong to the salvation of the Saviour who was to be, it could in the first instance only be attained through men becoming extricated from sin. The key-note of the mission and of the very character of the Christ was ordained to be sounded in his Name. It *is* sounded in this name *Jesus*. It was announced before his appearance. It was wonderfully illustrated during some years preceding his *dis*appearance from earth. And from that to this, the most significant of the world's history has been a constantly accumulating testimony to the truthfulness of the Name. Notice now this Name under the following simple aspects.

I. FOR THE LARGE PROFESSION THAT LIES IN IT IN CHALLENGING THE TEST OF WHAT IT WOULD PRACTICALLY DO. The Name challenges universal observation, but also universal *judgment*. And the facilities for exercising and pronouncing that judgment are great. They are ready to hand. The Name says that he who owns it wills to be judged by what he shall *do*.

II. FOR THE LARGE PROFESSION THAT LIES IN IT IN RESPECT OF THE UNLIMITED ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE SAVING. The saving in question, whatever it be, does not *save itself* by any qualification of the *direction*, the *extent*, the *length of time*, in which its efficacy should be found good. "Thou shalt call his Name *Jesus*." Although it is added, "for he shall save his people from their *sins*," we know that statement to be as broad, comprehensive, unlimited as the Name itself—Saviour.

III. FOR THE LARGE PROFESSION THAT LIES IN IT OF UNSELFISHNESS. To save is to do something for others, at all events, as the word applies here. And to "spend and be spent" thus, unasking anything for self, is the essence of unselfishness.

IV. FOR THE NOVELTY AND UNIQUENESS OF IT, THE ABOVE THREE THINGS BEING GRANTED. Nothing had approached it before in the world's whole history.

V. FOR THE CONSISTENT, UNDEVIATING, AND UNCEASING ILLUSTRATION GIVEN TO IT BY THE WHOLE EARTHLY LIFE OF CHRIST. All of it spoke the Saviour, and not

least so certainly when it spoke the destroyer of destruction, the forerunning of the destruction of the destroyer.

VI. FOR THE YET MORE WONDERFUL ILLUSTRATION GIVEN TO IT IN THE LONG, THE CALM, THE STILL-LASTING, THE EVERLASTING LEGACY OF THAT LIFE. That legacy is ever speaking: 1. Pre-eminently the Saviour, as compared with everything else either great or good, such as the *Teacher*, or the *Example*. 2. The Saviour, as distinguished from one who does, yet does but little. 3. The Saviour, as one all of whose workings are those of light, of advance, and of enduring good.—B.

Ver. 23.—*The Name, the burden of prophecy.* Introduction. Though in the order of the historic narrative this name of prophecy, "Immanuel," comes second on this page, yet had it already found its place on the page of ages ago. It is the Name by which the prophet had long ago declared forcibly the dignity of the Christ—the real Being, the Christ. Whereas the other Name of our vers. 21, 24 was that given now in the "fulness of time," which dared boldly to challenge the proof in the *immediate* future of both itself and of the other predicted Name—their main truth, their minute accuracy. The reminiscence of prophecy, and the quotation of prophetic language now before us, are the appropriate, the natural sequel of the historic announcement of the incarnation and superhuman origin of Christ; and they are the appropriate anticipation of the illustrious career of the Saviour-Christ. Notice—

I. THE CONNECTION PRECLUDES THE EXPLANATION OF A MERE METAPHORIC OR A MERE SPIRITUAL MEANING AS THAT WHICH SHOULD JUSTLY ATTACH TO THIS DESCRIPTION OF CHRIST. The Name is given clearly in closest connection with the statement that one who was still a virgin should conceive and bring forth a son. Truly enough, there are a hundred things in which God shall be said to be "with man." But it is no one of those hundred ways *now*. It is one that takes precedence of them all.

II. THAT THE FACT ONCE GRANTED OF THE MIRACULOUS CONCEPTION OF CHRIST OFFERS FOR OUR THOUGHT THE DEEP NECESSITY OF SUCH KIND OF UNION, SUCH REALITY OF UNION OF "GOD WITH MAN" FOR THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE REDEMPTION OF MAN. There must be a certain *kind* of presence of God with man. The nature of that presence is all-important. All that is most distinctive in what we may call the revelation and the genius of the New Testament really hinges hereupon. Though probably all figures ought to be ruled incompetent to this great, this astounding *fact*, yet perhaps we shall not stray if we put it thus—that the Incarnation was a literal and a veritable *graft* of the Divine upon the human nature. Its object was at least *twofold*. 1. To bring a literal Presence into this world, and partly *of* this world, which otherwise would certainly in no course of things *be* here; One which should be a certain incomparable *Sight*, a certain incomparable Sound, a certain paramount Example among men. From that Presence would come, and come in streams, forces of new impression, of light, of conviction, of surprise, otherwise unattainable; no comet of heavenly bodies in the sky a millionth part so fruitful of impression and so intrinsically attracting, as this unsurpassed comet of real Divine nature within earth's humble range. 2. To bring that Presence into this world to *execute* one supreme, incomparable task. The motto, nay, the very key-note of the new song of this whole world is heard in the word "atonement." And though this be not the place to go beyond the statement of the fact, that fact is that "God with man" alone found "the proper Man" (Luther's hymn) able, willing, to meet the crisis, to suffer the suffering, to master the problem, and to *atone*.—B.

Vers. 1—17.—*Genealogy of our Lord.* Homiletical uses—

I. Matthew's purpose is to show that Jesus, after the flesh, WAS THE HEIR OF DAVID AND OF ABRAHAM, the true Inheritor of the promises and of the liabilities of Israel. At his birth instructed Israelites might exclaim, "Unto us a Son is born!"—one who entered into a family of broken fortune, but was able to redeem its fortunes; who came not to build up a competence for himself, but to accept the obligations of the family, and work out for it a full emancipation. It was also requisite that Jesus should be recognized as the Heir of David, as the promised ideal King of Israel.

II. THE THREE TIMES FOURTEEN GENERATIONS, though artificial, did yet appeal to the Jewish mind as *a symbol of the fulness of times*. Of signs that the time was

ripe for the birth of Christ there was no lack. The world had done as much as it was ever likely to do without the new influences Christ brought into it. No government had ever more at command for the regeneration of the world than Rome had. If enlightened policy, bold statesmanship, extensive dominion, could have abolished the world's woes, no more was required than Rome had given to the world. In Greece, culture had done its best; in the further East, Buddha, Confucius, Zoroaster, had done all that human wisdom and purity could do to regulate the life and elevate the thoughts of men. The Jewish Law, Mosaism in all its departments, was also played out. It had yielded the utmost of benefit, and was now running to seed. A general feeling was stealing through many lands that the world needed help from above. Note, too, the preparation for the gospel in the spread of the Jews throughout the commercial world, the general prevalence of the Greek language, and the facility for intercourse afforded by the Roman government.

III. THE REASON OF THE LONG DELAY. At first sight one might suppose many good ends would have been served by Christ's appearing much earlier in the world's history. What prevented Christ from coming two thousand years before he did, and giving the world the advantage of two thousand years' more enjoyment of the best form of religion? Had Christ come as soon as the promise was given, the world would have been found unprepared for the gift, and unable to give it even that moderate welcome it afterwards found. The Law must first do its work, deepening the sense of duty, stirring conscience to an almost morbid activity, revealing the holiness of God, and showing men their lostness. The great gift of the Holy Spirit, *the* promise by pre-eminence, would not have been welcomed. God had to educate the world, as parents educate children, by alluring them onwards and by inconsiderable gifts teaching them gradually to long for the highest. He taught them to think of, to know, and to trust him by giving them what suited their condition and tastes; and so they learned by degrees to prize what he most highly esteemed—inward, spiritual prosperity.

IV. In our Lord's genealogy there is THE ORDINARY PROPORTION OF GOOD AND BAD PARENTAGE. Individuals are mentioned who would do no honour to any pedigree. The pride of birth which many of us feel would be abated were the whole ancestry from which we are sprung set down with biographies attached. We have only to go back far enough to find stain. Worse still, who can say what his own children shall be, and to what extent their disgrace is due to their inherited tendencies? Our Lord did not shun the contamination to which he was necessarily exposed by his true entrance into the human family.

APPLICATION. 1. *Grace not hereditary.* Fuller says, "Lord, I find the genealogy of my Saviour strangely chequered with four remarkable changes in four immediate generations. (1) Roboam begat Abia: that is, a bad father begat a bad son. (2) Abia begat Asa: that is, a bad father a good son. (3) Asa begat Josaphat: that is, a good father a bad son. (4) Josaphat begat Joram: that is, a good father a good son. I see, Lord, from hence that my father's piety cannot be entailed: that is bad news for me. But I see also that actual impiety is not always hereditary: that is good news for my son." 2. *Relationship to Christ.* The honour of being connected with Christ after the flesh. Yet even after he was born and seen among men this honour was not felt as we might expect; and at all events no special saving influence was exerted on the individuals composing his line of descent. Closer than every earthly tie is the spiritual relationship he announces in ch. xii. 50.—D.

Vers. 18—25.—*Nativity of our Lord.* I. SUPERNATURAL ORIGIN OF THE HUMAN NATURE OF OUR LORD. He who came to be a new Head and Source of life to humanity could scarcely be the product of the old stock. All other men have sprung from Adam; all that has appeared in humanity is the evolution of what was in the first man. No new blood has been infused into the race. But in Christ a new beginning is made. As a matter of fact, he has never been accounted for by natural causes. His distinctive character among men requires an unusual, exceptional origin. "If by close historical scrutiny or critical questioning we fail to resolve the miraculous character of Jesus—the ultimate fact of Christianity—into the common, known elements of our human nature; if the laws of heredity prove insufficient to explain his generation; then the further question will at once arise whether there may not be other than

natural elements present in human history which come to their perfect flower in Jesus of Nazareth? whether we may not find in the laws and forces of a supernatural evolution the sufficient explanation of his miraculous Person?" Expand by showing how neither Hebrew nor Gentile influences account for Jesus, and by showing the originality of the character and plan of Jesus, his sinlessness, his authority, his self-assertion.

II. THE TRUE HUMANITY OF JESUS. The Son of God did not come and assume for a year or two the appearance of a man in his prime. He was born a human Child, as truly human as any of us, with all human appetites, necessary emotions, and liabilities. Human birth ushers human beings into an existence out of which they cannot retire. So it was with our Lord. He lived under the limitations and restrictions which necessarily attend human nature. His was a real humanity. "He that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one." We think of him as for the most part a spectator marking the conduct of others and caring for them, but having no righteousness of his own to maintain and continue. We are very conscious of the difficulties of the sanctified, but are apt to forget that he who sanctifies had the same temptations and the same difficulties. He as well as they had to watch and pray, to cry for aid and for relief, to put from him the views of the world which tempted him to abandon his high purpose. Miraculous birth is not necessarily an incarnation of God. But no miraculous birth recorded in the Bible was produced similarly to this. And the preparation thus made for the Incarnation is obvious. The mode of the Incarnation, as well as much else regarding it, is obscure; but it may be right to point here to one or two of its chief lessons or results. 1. Jesus is a Divine Person. That self which has ever been the same in all its acts is Divine. He may act now through his human nature—eating, sleeping, dying—or he may act through his Divine nature; but he who does so is not *a* man, but God the Son. What we find in Christ is God furnishing himself with a human body, mind, and soul, through and in which he as truly lives and works as through and in his Divine nature. Being the same Person after his incarnation as before, he took our nature "that he might taste death for every man;" that *he* might, that is, he who was already existing before he became Man. His Divine nature could not die, but he means to taste death, and therefore takes a nature which can suffer death. In that death on the cross no *person* died but the Son of God. 2. Another lesson of the Incarnation, if not of the Nativity, is too important to overlook. If we would learn how to benefit our fellow-men, we must study our Lord's method. Looking upon us who were infinitely beneath him, and desiring to bring us up more nearly to his level, he saw that the way to do so was to become one of us; to come among us and share with us in all but sin. There is probably more in this example than we are always willing to admit. We speak of raising the masses. One would take Christ's way of doing so who should himself become a sharer in their condition; who should give up his own pleasant, healthy residence and live among those he desires to benefit; who should give up his own lucrative profession and engage in the same kind of labour they are engaged in; who should put himself, with his education, his right views of what life should and might be, at their disposal; and should thus be among them a continual example and help. He would thus make their wrongs his own wrongs, and as he raised himself raise his class.—D.

Vers. 1—17.—*The pedigree.* "The book of the genealogy," etc. This is not the general title of the First Gospel, but rather the particular title of these sixteen or seventeen verses. The scroll, or writing of divorcement, which the Talmudists say consisted exactly of "twelve lines," is called a *biblion*, or "book" (ch. xix. 7). So the "book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ" may be understood to describe the single skin on which the words immediately before us were originally written. Vitringa remarks that the expression concerning the "names" in the "book of life," in Rev. iii. 5, alludes to the *genealogical tables* of the Jewish priests (see Ezra ii. 62; Neh. vii. 64), as the "white raiment" mentioned there does to the priestly dress.

I. THIS IS THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS AS THE CHRIST. 1. *This is implied in his description.* "The Son of David, the Son of Abraham." (1) David had many sons. So had he very many descendants. Abraham had a still more numerous posterity. But amidst all the sons of David and of Abraham Jesus is "*the* Son" (see Bishop Middleton, 'Gr. Art.,' p. 163). So likewise is he "*the* Son *of man*." Here is a mark

of surpassing excellence. In the whole human family there is no one to compare with him, personally, officially, relatively. (2) These titles indicate him to be the "Seed" promised in the covenant, and the Seed to whom also the blessings of the covenant are promised. God made his covenant "unto Abraham and his Seed." Mark, "not *seeds*, as of many; but as of *one*, which is *Christ*" (Gal. iii. 16). In him all the families of the earth are blessed. 2. *To assert this is obviously the evangelist's intention.* So we understand his words, "genealogy of Jesus *the Christ*." (1) Jesus is the Antitype of all sacredly *anointed* persons—prophets, priests, kings. He alone united in himself all these offices. (2) His anointing and Christship were of the Holy Ghost. The oil of anointing typified the Spirit of God. (*a*) In its *lustre*. Hence the "unction of the Holy One" is said to convey spiritual *teaching* and heavenly *knowledge* (1 John ii. 20, 27). (*b*) In its softening, mollifying, lubricating influences. So the oil of anointing is put for the graces of the Holy Spirit. (*c*) Jesus was "anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows," viz. not only in the *kind*, but also in the *degree*. He received the Spirit "not by measure." (3) How favoured are the sons of Jesus! They are through him the seed of the covenant (see Gal. iii. 29). They are *Christians*, anointed ones, viz. in a spiritual and very noble sense (2 Cor. i. 21).

II. THE PEDIGREE IS GIVEN FOR OUR BENEFIT. 1. *Jesus had no personal glory from it.* (1) Some of the ancestors were princes of the aristocracy of virtue—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, Josiah, Zerubbabel. But Jesus himself was immeasurably superior to the best of them. (2) Some were persons of sullied fame—Rehoboam, Abijah, Uzziah, Ahaz, Manasseh, Amon, Jechoniah. Note: (*a*) Virtue does not run in the blood. (*b*) Jesus appeared "in the likeness of sinful flesh." (*c*) None are too vile to be saved by him. 2. *To us it certifies his Messiahship.* (1) The patriarchs from David upwards were common ancestors of Joseph and Mary. The later patriarchs in this list were ancestors of "Joseph the husband of Mary," therefore here, of Jesus *putatively*, who was "*supposed* to be the Son of Joseph." Yet as the reputed or adopted Son of Joseph his title to the throne of David was valid. (2) But that Jesus was also the Son of David in *blood* as well as in *law* is evident from the genealogy in Luke, which carries his line up through Mary. Joseph, whose father was *Jacob* according to Matthew, is in Luke called "the son of *Heli*" (viz. *jure matrimonii*), in compliance with the Jewish custom of tracing all genealogies through *males*. Every way, then, whether by law or by blood, Jesus is proved to be the Son of "David the king" (ver. 6), and entitled to the throne. (3) In these genealogies there are difficulties which we are now in no position to solve. These, however, were no difficulties to the contemporaries of the evangelists, familiar with Hebrew customs and having access to the national records. It is too late, now the records are lost, for sceptics to make capital out of these difficulties. (4) But, on the other hand, the records being lost, no pretender to Messiahship can now establish descent from David. Surely the Jews, who require this mark, should be convinced that Jesus, in whom alone it is found, is very Christ (cf. ch. xii. 23; xxi. 9; xxii. 44). (5) He is the "Son of David" in the grandest sense, viz. that of being also David's Lord. Attributes of Divinity are ascribed by King David to the "King's Son" (see *e.g.* Ps. lxxii.), which by no pretence of "Oriental hyperbole" can be limited to Solomon. These superhuman claims, in which lie the source and secret of all the blessings of salvation, Jesus asserted for himself and fully vindicated. 3. *It encourages the hope of the Gentiles.* (1) Significant of this gracious end, we notice that the seed of the covenant was conveyed through younger sons. Abraham himself was a younger son of Terah; so was Isaac of Abraham; so was Jacob of Isaac; so was Judah of Jacob. Phares and Zara are *both* mentioned in the genealogy, evidently to emphasize this principle; for here Phares, the younger of the twins, was chosen. David likewise was a younger son of Jesse. And in the family of David, Solomon the ancestor of Joseph, and Nathan the ancestor of Mary, were both younger sons (cf. Luke xv. 11—32; also Rom. ix. 12, 30). (2) Note, further, that of the four women, beside the virgin, whose names are introduced, two were Gentiles, viz. Rahab and Ruth. (3) "The children of the promise," whether Jew or Gentile, ever have been "counted for the seed." It was so in the family of Abraham. It is so in the family of Jesus (Gal. iii. 29). Election is "through faith." The Old Testament begins with "the generation of the heavens and the earth;" the New, with the generation of him by whom they were created. The glory of the gospel exceeds

not only that of the Law, but that also of the material world. Jesus, in his incarnation, became "the Beginning of the [new] creation of God." He is "the Firstborn of every creature," viz. the Head and Archetype of that new creation which is to consist of those who are "born again" of him.—J. A. M.

Vers. 18—25.—*Joseph's testimony.* After giving the genealogy of Jesus, the evangelist proceeds to furnish important particulars of the history of his generation and birth. In these he brings out prominently the notable testimony of Joseph in proof of the Christship of Jesus. We note—

I. THAT JOSEPH IS A CREDIBLE WITNESS. 1. *He was a righteous man.* (1) This is the character claimed for him by Matthew at a time when, if it were not a fact, it might have been challenged; for Joseph was well known (see ch. xiii. 55; Luke iv. 22; John vi. 42). According to Eusebius, this Gospel was written in the third year of Caligula, *i.e.* A.D. 41, when many of Joseph's contemporaries were still living. (2) Everything recorded of Joseph is consistent with this character. It is in particular well sustained by his conduct towards Mary, under the trying circumstances detailed in the text. He might have prosecuted her for adultery (see Deut. xxii. 23, 24). But he had an option of mercy, which he preferred. He resolved accordingly "to put her away privily," viz. by giving her, in presence of two witnesses, a bill of divorcement, *without* assigning any cause (see Deut. xxiv. 1). Thus her life would be spared. Note: (*a*) True righteousness is merciful. Of this the gospel of our salvation furnishes glorious illustration. (*b*) Leniency devoid of justice is not true mercy. The "terrors of the Lord," as well as those of the Law, are necessary to the public good of the universe. (3) As a righteous man Joseph could not be guilty of falsehood. This must hold under ordinary conditions, but especially in this case, where the subject of testimony is momentous, involving everlasting issues. 2. *He was a sensible man.* (1) He certainly was not over-credulous, else he might have listened without demurrer to Mary's story. There is no mention here of Gabriel's message to Mary (see Luke i. 26—38). The omission suggests that Matthew's design was to bring out prominently the evidence of Joseph. Yet that Mary had communicated these things to Joseph may be reasonably presumed. She made no secret of them (see Luke i. 46—55). (2) There were not wanting good reasons by which he might have been inclined to listen to this wonderful story. (*a*) He had sufficient knowledge of Mary's previous piety to have disposed him to credit her testimony; but the circumstances are unprecedented, and he is not satisfied. (*b*) He had the testimony of Elisabeth (see Luke i. 39—56), which was weighty when taken in connection with the vision of Zacharias, the remarkable event of the Baptist's birth, and Zacharias's prophecy (see Luke i. 67—79). Still, he was not satisfied. Note: Never was mother so honoured and so tried as Mary. Let not those who aspire to honours think to escape trials. As Mary suffered with Christ and for his sake, so shall we if Christ be formed in us (cf. Acts v. 41; ix. 16; Rom. viii. 17; Phil. i. 29). 3. *He had the best opportunities of knowledge.* (1) As espoused to Mary he was in the best position to be acquainted with the matter of her testimony. (2) He was therefore in the best position to be convinced by the complementary evidence furnished in the vision vouchsafed to himself. (3) Of this vision he was, of course, a first-rate witness, for he was himself the subject of it.

II. THAT HIS TESTIMONY IS VERY VALUABLE. 1. *Because of the importance of the subject.* (1) The subject is stupendous. The incarnation of Deity in human nature. "Immanuel." (2) Such an event must be of the utmost moment to *humanity*. It presages the beatification of humanity. In this all "partakers of flesh and blood" must have the deepest interest. (3) This is wonderful news for *sinners*. And such are we all. Note: Not only was the incarnation of Jehovah necessary for redemption, but faith in Jesus as Jehovah is necessary for salvation. The very name of *Jesus* associates *Jehovah* and *salvation* (cf. Acts iii. 16; iv. 10; ix. 14; Rom. x. 13). 2. *Because of the nature of its authentication.* (1) An *angel* appeared to Joseph. Superhuman intelligence alone could reveal the subject. (2) He appeared to him in a *dream*. Not an ordinary, but a Divine, dream. Such dreams carried with them convincing evidence. Else they could not serve their purpose (cf. Numb. xii. 6; Deut. xiii. 1—3; 1 Sam. xxviii. 6, 15; Joel ii. 28). The evidence was convincing to Joseph. It reassured him of the innocence of Mary, and certified the truth of her wonderful story. It let in also the

evidence of Elisabeth in its full force. The whole was confirmed by the correspondence of prophetic times, which had now awakened a general expectation. (3) The sequel proved that Joseph was not misled. (*a*) He had the "sign" that Mary should "bring forth a *Son*." God alone could certainly forecast this. (*b*) That Son was to support the character of a Divine Saviour of sinners. Who but God could have foreseen that this Child would ever claim to be such a Saviour, much less that he should behave miraculously consistently with that most difficult and lofty claim? 3. *Because of its consistency with Scripture.* (1) The miracle of the virgin-mother was a prominent subject of ancient prophecy. (*a*) It dawned in the first promise (Gen. iii. 15), that the "Seed of the woman," viz. without the man—the issue therefore of a *virgin*—should "bruise the serpent's head." (*b*) It is explicitly set forth by Isaiah (vii. 14) in the passage cited in the text. Here we note the definite article—not "*a* virgin," but "*the* virgin (הָעַלְמָה)." One only such occurrence was ever to take place. (2) Another notable circumstance is that, according to Isaiah, the house of David was not to fail until this wonder should be accomplished. The sign was given expressly to reassure that house, now fearing extinction, when, after the slaughter perpetrated by Pekah, Judah was again invaded by Rezin. But, excepting in Jesus, the family of David is now difficult to trace. Surely this ought to convince the Jews that Jesus is the Christ. The certainty of our faith is established by many infallible proofs. Unreasonableness is with unbelief.

III. THE HAND OF GOD IS EVIDENT IN THE HISTORY. 1. *Wisely ordered was the espousal of Mary to Joseph*, not only to give value to his testimony, but also to shield the reputation of the virgin, and to afford her and her infant a needful earthly guardianship. Note: A providence that is equal to all emergencies may well be trusted by Christians. 2. *It is also a significant circumstance that Jesus received his name at the time of his circumcision.* To give the name at such a time was the common custom (Luke i. 59, 60). But in this case the name of *Jesus* was most appropriately given when that blood was first shed without which there is no remission of sins. The sign of circumcision had its perfect accomplishment in the shedding of the blood of the covenant upon the cross. 3. *This Name, with its reason, are a blessed revelation.* There is no salvation but from sin. Sin carries its own punishment. The removal of sin is the remission of punishment. Infinite mercy can only save sinners from punishment by saving them from sin. 4. *Jesus becomes incarnate again in every regenerate spirit.* The reconciliation of the human to the Divine was first effected in the Person of Christ. As Christ is formed in us we become reconciled to God. Christ grows up in us as we grow up into him. The life of faith is a life of miracle.—J. A. M.

Ver. 1.—*The mission of genealogies.* The Gospels contain two genealogies of Jesus the Messiah. Both relate to Joseph the reputed father of Jesus, and to Mary by virtue of her relation as wife, or her family relation, to him. Matthew's is the transcript of the public record, and traces the family line in a descending scale from Abraham; Luke's is the private family genealogy, and it traces the family line in an ascending scale up to Adam. Matthew takes the point of view of a Jew; Luke sees in Messiah a Saviour for humanity. It has been suggested that the Jew bore two names—what may be called a religious name, which would be used in the sacred records; and what may be called a secular name, which would be used in the civil lists. This may account for diversity in the forms of the names in these two genealogies.

I. THE COMMON MISSION OF GENEALOGIES. Everybody does not jealously guard the family records. But some do. They are felt to be important: 1. When there is family property. This is illustrated in the case of the Israelites. The land of Canaan was divinely allotted to the families, and it was inalienable (see the year of jubilee, and Naboth's refusal to give up his garden). Any one claiming land in Canaan was bound to show the family register. 2. When there were class privileges. Illustrate by the inability of some, in the time of the restoration, to prove their priestly or Levitical connections. See the jealousy with which membership in Indian *castes* is preserved. 3. When any one becomes famous. At once we want to know who he is; what are his belongings; who are his "forbears." An idea that no man is a distinct and separate individual. We are all products. We all belong to the past. Those who have been live over again in their sons. So in a biography we always want to know a man's

ancestry. Show that there is this common interest in Jesus, and it is fully met, and met in such a way as to secure a supreme interest in him.

II. THE SACRED MISSION OF GENEALOGIES. They become proofs of the Messiahship of Jesus. Prophecy fixed one condition. Messiah would belong to the royal house of David. Now, observe that during Christ's life this was never once disputed. The Sanhedrin kept the public archives; and though Herod the Great sought out and burnt all the family registers he could, the enemies of Christ never attempted to disprove his claim to belong to the royal race. Evidently the public genealogies confronted them and served this sacred purpose. Ulla, a rabbi of the third century, says, "Jesus was treated in an exceptional way, because he was of the *royal* race."—R. T.

Ver. 1.—*Messiah's Sonships.* The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in a most significant and emphatic way, points out the distinct feature of the last Divine revelation: "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son (*ἐν υἱῷ*)." Sonship declaring Fatherhood in God is the very essence of the revelation in Christ. That point is illustrated in the genealogies in a very striking way. Jesus is set forth as the *Son* of David; he is more, he is the *Son* of Abraham; he is more, he is the *Son* of Adam; he is more, he is even the *Son of God.* If this seems to be less prominent in Matthew's descending genealogy, it is very prominent in Luke's ascending one. Putting all these Sonships together, we get the following impressions concerning the claims of Jesus.

I. HE WAS TRUE KING. "Son of David;" lineal descendant of King David. With actual, natural, legitimate right to the sovereignty of David's land. In our Lord's time there was no other claimant to David's throne. Herod would have made short work in dealing with any such claimant. He tried to destroy the Child-King Jesus. Jesus was David's legitimate and only Heir.

II. HE WAS TRUE JEW. "Son of Abraham." This was indeed involved in his being "Son of David," since David was a son of Abraham; but for the satisfaction of the Jews the Abrahamic descent is assured. "Salvation is of the Jews." Messiah must come in the Abrahamic line. He must be the "Seed of Abraham," in whom all nations of the earth are to be blessed.

III. HE WAS TRUE MAN. "Son of Adam." Luke, writing for Gentiles, goes beyond all Jewish limitations, and sets forth the true, proper, common humanity of Christ, and the interest of all humanity in him. For if "salvation is *of* the Jew," it is salvation *for* the whole world. "God so loved the world." Jesus belongs to the Jewish race, and that is important. He is the Crown and Flowering of that race. But Jesus belongs to humanity, and that is more important. He is the Hope of the human race; the "Life and Light of men."

IV. HE WAS DIVINE MAN. "Son of God." There is a sense in which this may be said of every man; there is a special sense in which it is said of Christ. He brings a new force of Divine life to start a new *spiritual* race, even as Adam had a special Divine life to start a *human* race. "In him was life."—R. T.

Vers. 3, 5.—*Strange links in genealogical chains.* It must strike every reader as singular, that the women introduced in the genealogies are of doubtful character or of foreign relations. "The mention of the four women, Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba, in such a pedigree is very significant. Tamar, the forgotten one, twice left a childless widow; Rahab, not only of the accursed seed of the Canaanites, but moreover a harlot; Ruth, also a long-childless widow, and a stranger, and born of the stock of Moab, that nation of incestuous origin, forbidden to enter the house of the Lord unto the tenth generation; and lastly, the wife of Uriah, the very mention of whom, under this designation, only draws attention to her sin;—all these are seen incorporated into the line of the children of Abraham, nay, more, into the holy genealogy of Christ." What can it be intended that these strange links should teach us?

I. MAN'S WILFULNESS IS NOT ALLOWED TO HINDER GOD'S PURPOSES. Marriage of Jews beyond the limits of the nation was strictly forbidden; and such marriages were a fruitful source of evil, as is illustrated in the times of Balaam and of Nehemiah. We can clearly see man's wilfulness in the marriages of Rahab and Ruth, who were

both foreigners, and worse than wilfulness in David's marrying Bathsheba. Such wilfulness we might expect would thwart the Divine purpose for the race; but instead, it was overruled. God's thought cannot be frustrated. If man resists, he will simply be borne along on the current of God's outworking purpose.

II. GOD LETS CHARACTER TRIUMPH OVER MERE RACE-DISABILITIES. This is illustrated in the cases of Rahab and Ruth, the fine illustrations of faith in God and of the loyalty of sincere love. That faith ennobled a Canaanite in the sight of God. That loyalty of love beautified a Moabite in the sight of God. And so our Lord taught that the humbled, penitent, believing "publicans and harlots" entered his kingdom rather than Abraham-born Jews, who had nothing to boast of but a pedigree.

III. GENTILES HAVE A CLEAR CLAIM TO THE BENEFITS OF MESSIAH'S WORK. They have an actual part in him. The blood of two Gentile mothers is in the Saviour of the world. The Gentiles need rest in no mere permission to share Jewish privilege; they can claim their rights in Jesus. He is "a Light to lighten the Gentiles."—R. T.

Ver. 18.—*The mystery of the Incarnation.* Christianity starts with a miracle. It is a miracle altogether so stupendous and so unique that its reception settles the whole question of the possibility of the miraculous. He who can believe that God shadowed himself to our apprehension in the likeness of a man, he who can recognize in the Babe of Bethlehem, both the Son of God and the Son of Mary, will find that no equal demand is ever afterwards made upon his faculty of faith. Both Testaments begin with a miracle. A world of order and beauty arising out of chaos is a miracle as truly as is the birth of a divinely human Saviour by the Divine overshadowing of Mary. We ask *how* these things were done, but the mystery eludes all human explanations. In the whole circle of causes yet searched out by man, there are none which help us to trace the mystery. We ask *why*, and then for us the mystery of wisdom and grace is allowed to unfold a little. Two influences affected the truth of the Incarnation in the time of the apostles—Judaism tended to overpress the mere humanity of Christ; Gnosticism tended to dissipate the humanity into a mere appearance.

I. ON WHAT PRINCIPLE IS THE INCARNATION FOUNDED? It is essentially a *revelation*, and it rests upon the principle that man can only be taught the truth concerning God, and saved from his sins, by a revelation. Man is made a moral being by receiving a revelation of the will of God. Man is redeemed by receiving a revelation of the mercy of God. What man precisely needs is a revelation of God's character; it must be shown to him in human spheres. That is the Incarnation, "God manifest in the flesh."

II. WHAT FORM DID THE INCARNATION TAKE? We may gain the best ideas by noticing what it was *not*. 1. God did not put on the mere *appearance* of humanity. This was the error of the Docetæ. To correct this the evangelists give details of our Lord's birth into veritable humanity. 2. God did not assume to himself a human body. That is, he did not find a human body, and come into it, as the hermit-crab will find, and enter into, an empty shell. Scripture says he was *made man*. 3. God did not take any particular class or kind of humanity. He was just the world's Babe, the world's Man.—R. T.

Ver. 18.—*The Holy Ghost before Pentecost.* We are so accustomed to associate the term "Holy Ghost" with the descent of the Spirit on the disciples at Pentecost, that it seems strange to us to find it used by the evangelists even in the early portions of their Gospels. But there is no proper authority for connecting the term exclusively with Pentecost. Properly speaking, there is nothing peculiar or distinctive in the term. "Spirit" and "Ghost" are synonyms. "Holy Spirit" may properly be put wherever "Holy Ghost" is found. Nothing is added to our knowledge by using the term "Ghost." Whenever God is spoken of in the Scripture as working *within* things, out of sight, in the spheres of thought and feeling, he is spoken of as God *the Spirit*, or God *the Ghostly*. The Old Testament is full of statements concerning the working of God's Spirit in creation; in the antediluvians; in the kings; in the prophets. God works in the created spheres in two ways. 1. In external spheres, and in modes apprehensible by human senses. 2. In internal spheres, and in modes apprehensible by the feeling, the mind, and the will. God's secret workings are to be regarded as

the operations of his Spirit. So the mysterious putting forth of Divine power in the case of Mary is properly presented as the working of the Holy Ghost.

I. GOD WORKING IN THE MINDS OF MEN IS THE UNIVERSAL TRUTH OF THE HOLY GHOST. This belongs exclusively to no one age, to no one dispensation, to no one race. To the heathen God is the "great Spirit." "Moved by thee, the prophets wrote and spoke." There is this "inspiration of the Almighty which giveth understanding," as the common heritage of the race; and special forms it takes, within Jewish lines, only illustrate the universal forms it takes for all humanity.

II. GOD USING, AS HIS AGENCY, THE LIFE AND WORDS AND WORKS OF JESUS, IS THE SPECIAL CHRISTIAN TRUTH OF THE HOLY GHOST. So Jesus said, "He shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you;" "He shall . . . bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." The Holy Ghost of the early Church is the Holy Spirit of the Church of all the ages, only his instruments are precise; his agency is limited. He works through the outer revelation which has been brought to men *by* Christ, and is given to men *in* Christ.—R. T.

Ver. 19.—*Justice is considerateness.* Very little is known concerning Joseph the husband of Mary; and yet enough is known to reveal a character. And what more especially shows him up to our view is his determination to do what was right, but to do it kindly. According to Jewish ideas, betrothal was as sacred as marriage, and infidelities before marriage were treated as infidelities after marriage, and death by stoning was the punishment for such sins. It was customary for persons to be engaged, or espoused, for twelve months, and during that time the persons did not see each other. Mary had to tell Joseph, and Joseph had to act under the circumstances in the way that seemed best. He was a just man, but he was a kind man. No doubt what Mary told him made a great demand on his faith. He does not seem to have been able to receive her mysterious story until his mind was divinely guided; then he married Mary, and at the time that Jesus was born Joseph was her recognized husband.

I. THE JUST MAN WANTS TO DO THE RIGHT. But it is always difficult to decide what is right when other people are affected by our decision. When we have to judge the conduct of others we easily make mistakes. We judge as if persons acted from the motives which decide our action. It was easy for Joseph to explain Mary's conduct, and see quite sufficient ground for refusing any further relations with her. And in forming judgment on such grounds, he would have been altogether wrong, and he would have unworthily dealt with Mary. She was no wilful sinner; she had only come into the sovereign power and grace of God. In trying to be just there is grave danger of our becoming most unjust. See Eli's suspicion of Hannah.

II. THE JUST MAN WANTS TO DO THE KIND. Noble-minded men let mercy tone judgment. Ignoble-minded men love to persecute, and call it punishment. Charity hideth sin; is jealous concerning imperilled reputation; and suffers most deeply when punishment must be inflicted. So God's mercy loves to rejoice over judgment.—R. T.

Ver. 20.—*Dreams as revelations.* It has been said that dreams represent the usual mode of Divine communication with persons who are outside the covenant. But this view is not fully maintained by a study of all the incidents narrated. It is true of Abimelech (Gen. xx. 3—7), of Laban (Gen. xxxi. 24), of Pharaoh's butler and baker (Gen. xl. 5—19), of Pharaoh (Gen. xli. 1—7), of the Midianite (Judg. vii. 13—15), of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. ii. 1, 31; iv. 5, 8), of the Wise Men (ch. ii. 11, 12), of Pilate's wife (ch. xxvii. 19). But it is not true of Jacob (Gen. xxviii. 12; xxxi. 10), of Joseph (Gen. xxxvii. 5—9), of Solomon (1 Kings iii. 5—15), of Daniel (Dan. vii.), or of Joseph (ch. i. 20, 21; ii. 13, 19, 20). It is said that communication by dreams is the lowest form of revelation, because it deals with man when the senses and the will are asleep, and the panorama of the contents of the mind keeps passing, and there is no intelligent selection and arrangement of them. Dreams are much regarded in heathen religions. They are very sparingly used in the Jehovah-religion; and all Divine directions, whether by dreams or otherwise, are dependent upon the inward earnestness and sincerity of the heart. Perhaps it may be said that God used dreams in revealing his will to those who were not specially sensitive to spiritual things. Poets, prophets,

mystics, *see visions*. Common men, or men in ordinary moods and conditions of mind, *dream dreams*, which God fills with meaning. See how far this is illustrated in the several cases mentioned above. Note that Joseph takes no place as a prophet or specially gifted or spiritual man; and therefore what may be called the commonplace mode of Divine communication was employed in his case.

I. DREAMS ARE USUALLY WITHOUT SIGNIFICANCE. They represent the workings of the mind apart from the control of the will. They may or may not be connected. They may or may not be remembered. They bear no relation to character or culture. They can only nourish superstition if unduly regarded.

II. DREAMS ARE SOMETIMES FULL OF DIVINE SIGNIFICANCE. No sphere of man's life can be thought of as beyond God's control and use. He can be the *will* that guides, shapes, arranges, our dreams, so that they shall convey to us some message from him. He has done this. He still does this. Though his working in us, by the movings and guidings of the Holy Ghost, makes special and external forms of revelation seldom, if ever, necessary.—R. T.

Ver. 21.—*A mission revealed in a twofold Name.* The fact confronts us, and sets us upon earnest inquiry, that one name was prophesied for Messiah, and another name was given to him when he came. He was to be called "Immanuel," and he was called "Jesus." Now, are we to understand that these are two names, and that Messiah is to be known as "Immanuel-Jesus"? or are we to see in the name Jesus a full and sufficient embodiment of the idea contained in the name "Immanuel"? Jewish names, and especially prophetic names, carry definite and precise meanings; they embody facts or suggest missions.

I. THE MESSIANIC NAMES TREATED AS TWO. 1. Take the prophetic name "Immanuel," or "Emmanuel." The secondary reference of the prophecy in Isaiah is to the Messiah; the first reference is to some one who should deliver the nation from its immediate troubles (see Commentary on Isa. vii. 14). The name carried the assurance "God is with us." But that assurance involved more than the fact of Divine presence. If God is near, he is near to help. If God manifests himself, he manifests himself to *deliver* and to *save*. Christ, then, is "God with us," sensibly present, manifest in the flesh. With us he is active to help and save. 2. Take the angel-given name "Jesus." This is a common Jewish name. It is the Greek form of the familiar "Joshua;" but it has a significance and a history. It is really *Hoshea*, or *Hoshua*, "the Helper," with the name of God added as a prefix, *Je-hoshua*, shortened to *Joshua*. So it means in full, "*God our Helper*." But, in the dream, a very full translation of the name was given. It was said to declare Messiah's mission to be "saving the people from their sins," and "from their sins" is designedly set in contrast with "from their troubles," so that the *moral* and *spiritual* character of the mission should be made quite plain.

II. THE MESSIANIC NAMES TREATED AS ONE. Take the simple meaning of "Jesus," *Je-hoshua*; it is "God with us helping." But that is precisely the thought embodied in "Emmanuel," which is "God with us," and the connection declares that God is thought of as with us to help us. Then the same mission is declared in both names. It is the fact that our supreme need arises out of our *sins* that decides the sphere of the Divine helping.—R. T.

Ver. 22.—*Scripture fulfilments.* It is plain that the Jews used their Old Testament Scriptures in ways that do not commend themselves to us. To-day rabbis can find references and proofs in passages which, to our more orderly and logical minds, seem to have no bearing on the subject. They have always been readily carried away by similarity in the sound of passages. Strict criticism cannot approve of their quotations or recognize their intelligent connections. We are to remember that one supreme idea possessed the mind of the Jew. He looked for Messiah; everything was full of Messiah; everything pointed to Messiah. The Jews were ready to find references to Messiah everywhere. So when they believed Messiah had come, they naturally turned to the old Scripture, and matched the facts of his life with all the Messianic references. We are more critical than they; we have a keener historical sense; and so we have learned to regard the Messianic allusions as secondary references, the prophecies bear-

ing a first relation to the times in which they were uttered. St. Matthew is presenting Jesus as the Messiah promised to the Jews; and he brings into special prominence, through the whole of his narrative, that harmony between the events and the prophecies by which Jesus is marked out as the "Christ." The formula "that it might be fulfilled" is like a refrain repeated in every page of the book. In the two first chapters we find five detached incidents of the childhood of Jesus connected with five prophetic sayings. "This Gospel is the demonstration of the rights of sovereignty of Jesus over Israel as their Messiah." The importance of Scripture fulfilments may be shown by illustrating the two following points.

I. AN INDEPENDENT REVELATION IS INCONCEIVABLE. If God is pleased to work by revelations, we may be quite sure that those revelations are related; and we expect them to be given in an ascending scale; the roots of all later revelations are sure to be found in the earlier ones. An independent revelation is at once stamped with suspicion. If its *connections* cannot be shown, its trustworthiness may be denied. True revelations had been given to the Jews. New revelations must confirm their truth, and be their unfolding. Conceive what would have been said if Jesus had appeared making independent claim as Messiah, heedless of all connection between his revelation and preceding ones. Without hesitation we say that, in such a case, his claim could not have been justified. "The Scripture must be fulfilled."

II. AN ANTAGONISTIC REVELATION MUST BE REJECTED. It would have been the all-sufficing answer for the Pharisees, if only they could have given it—Scripture is opposed to the claims of this Jesus of Nazareth. But they never dared attempt to prove antagonism between his revelation and the previous one. Disciples and apostles, and even our Lord himself in his teachings, fully combat the idea of antagonism. He came "not to destroy the Law and the prophets, but to fulfil." He was able, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets," to expound "in all the Scripture the things concerning himself." "To him give all the prophets witness."—R. T.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER II.

JESUS THE CHRIST BY HIS EARLY HISTORY answering to the word of God by the prophets. This is shown by four particulars, for each of which a corresponding prophecy is adduced.

(1) The place of his birth; where, further, he receives homage of Gentiles, though neglected by his own people (vers. 1—12).

(2) His stay in Egypt (vers. 13—15).

(3) The slaughter of the innocents (vers. 16—18).

(4) His dwelling at Nazareth, and consequent appellation (vers. 19—23).

Of these naturally the first is the most important, and it may indeed be that the chief object of the evangelist was to show that Jesus satisfied the conditions of prophecy with respect to his birth. He was only driven from Bethlehem to Egypt and subsequently to Nazareth by the jealousy of the ruler of the Jews.

While, however, the fulfilment of prophecy by Jesus the Christ was doubtless the most prominent thought in the evangelist's mind, the typical character of the treatment received cannot but have forced itself upon him, writing as he did at a time when the contrast between the Lord's rejection by Jews and his reception by Gentiles was becoming daily more marked. It is, further, not impossible that the spread of the gospel to other lands may in itself have proved a stumbling-block to the Jews, who made so much of the superior sanctity of Palestine, and that there may be in this chapter something of the same thought that moved St. Stephen to insist on the fact that God's presence is not tied to one spot or country (Acts vii.).

Vers. 1—12.—*Born at Bethlehem, according to prophecy, he receives there the homage of representatives of the heathen world.*

Ver. 1.—**Now when Jesus**; who has just been identified with Christ. But in this chapter the narrative employs only those terms ("Jesus," "young Child") which bystanders might have used. They are purely annalistic, not interpretative. Contrast ch. i. 18 and Herod's statement of a theological problem (ver. 4). **Was born in Bethlehem.** The First Gospel, if taken alone

would give the impression that Joseph had had no previous connexion with Nazareth. But about the place where Joseph and Mary lived before the birth of Jesus the evangelist did not concern himself (cf. ver. 23, note). **Of Judæa.** For the evangelist's purpose it was most important so to define it as to exclude Bethlehem of Zebulun (Josh. xix. 15). The inhabitants of Bethlehem of Judæa, a market town of a fruitful (Ephratah) district, live chiefly by agriculture, but also for several centuries have manufactured images of saints, rosaries, and fancy articles. Since 1834 it has been almost exclusively occupied by Christians (Socin's 'Bædeker,' p. 243, *seq.*). From "the House of Bread" came forth "the true Bread." **In the days of Herod the king.** Herod the Great and Herod Agrippa II. (Acts xxv. 13) alone held the legal title of "king" for any time (but cf. ch. xiv. 1, note)—the former as King of the Jews (Josephus, 'Bell. Jud.,' i. 14. 4), or King "of the Idumæans and Samaritans" (Appian, 'Civ., v. 75; *vide* Schürer, i. 1. 340), by a decree of an express meeting of the Roman senate, B.C. 40; the latter by Claudius's appointment, as king first of Chalcis (A.D. 48—53) and afterwards (A.D. 53—100) of the tetrarchies of Philip and Lysanias (Josephus, 'Bell. Jud.,' ii. 12. 8; 13. 2), although Herod Antipas was so spoken of by courtesy (*infra*, ch. xiv. 9). As the date of Agrippa II. is quite out of the question, we are almost compelled by this phrase alone to recognize the date of Christ's birth as falling in the lifetime of Herod the Great. Herod the Great died in the spring of A.U.C. 750, our B.C. 4 (Schürer, i. 1. 466), and as our Lord was born at least forty days earlier, for the purification in the temple must have taken place before Herod's massacre of the innocents, he cannot have been born later than the very beginning of B.C. 4, or the end of B.C. 5. Indeed, upon the most natural deduction from ver. 16, he must have been born some months earlier. The Church, from the days of Justin Martyr ('Ap.,' i. 32), has loved to see in the abolition by Rome of the kingdom of the Jews at the death of Herod, or of its native dynasty by Herod's usurpation (Origen, 'Gen. Hom.,' xvii. 6), the fulfilment of Jacob's prophecy (Gen. xlix. 10). **Behold, there came Wise Men from the East.** The true order, as given in the Revised Version, lays the emphasis on the office, and in a subordinate degree on the home of the strangers—*Wise Men from the East came.* This translation also hints at the full meaning of the verb (*παρεγένοντο*), of which the connotation is not of the place *a quo*, but of the publicity of their appearance at the place *in quo* (cf. ch. iii. 1). *Wise Men* (Μάγοι); "astromyens" (Wickliffe); "sages" (Rheims). On this word see especially Schrader ('Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Testament') on Jer. xxxix. 3. He considers it to be in origin not Iranian (Medo-Persian), but Babylonian, and to have primarily meant either "one who is deep whether in power and reputation or in insight," or one who has fulness of power. It was, perhaps, at first used with special reference to astrologers and interpreters of dreams, and, passing from Babylonia to Media, it became the name of the Median priestly order. In the latter sense it is probably used here. In Acts xiii. 6—8 it, apparently by reversion, is used in its wider meaning. Of the number and rank of those who now came absolutely nothing is known. Of greater importance is Cicero's statement ('De Div.,' i. 41), "Nec quisquam rex Persarum potest esse, qui non ante magorum disciplinam scientiamque perceperit." These Magi spontaneously submit to the Babe. *From the East.* The proper home of the Magi would thus be Media, and, from the length of time employed on their journey (ver. 16), it is probable that by "the East" we must here understand Media or some other part of the kingdom of Parthia, into which Media had been mostly absorbed, and in which, in fact, the Magi were now greatly honoured. Many, however (*e.g.* Lightfoot, 'Hor. Hebr.'; and Edersheim, 'Life,' etc., i. 203, who points out that a Jewish kingdom of Yemen then existed), think that these Magi came from Arabia; and with this the tradition, evidently received by Justin Martyr and frequently referred to by him (*οἱ ἀπὸ Ἀραβίας Μάγοι*, 'Trypho,' §§ 77, 78, 88, 102; cf. Resch, 'Agrapha,' p. 471), perhaps agrees. But Justin's own opinion was that they came from Damascus, which "was and is a part of the land of Arabia" (§ 78). It is noticeable that Justin's tradition is confirmed by the Jerusalem Talmud ('Ber.,' ii. 4), which makes an "Arabian" tell a Jew that Messiah is born. The whole passage is worth quoting for its illustration of several details in this chapter. "After this the children of Israel shall be converted, and shall inquire after the Lord their God, and David their king (Hos. iii. 5). Our rabbins say, 'That is King Messias, if he be among the living, his name is David, or if dead, David is his name.' Rabbi Tanchum said, 'Thus I prove it: He sheweth mercy to David his Messiah' (Ps. xviii. 50). Rabbi Josua ben Levi saith, 'His name is צמח, a Branch (Zech. iii. 8).' Rabbi Judan bar Aibu saith, 'His name is Menahem (that is, Παράκλητος, the Comforter).' And that which happened to a certain Jew, as he was ploughing, agreeth with this business. A certain Arabian travelling, and hearing the ox bellow, said to the Jew at plough,

'O Jew, loose thy oxen, and loose thy ploughs, for, behold, the temple is laid waste!' The ox bellowed the second time; the Arabian saith to him, 'O Jew, Jew, yoke thy oxen, and fit thy ploughs: for, behold, King Messiah is born!' But saith the Jew, 'What is his name?' 'Menahem,' saith he. 'And what is the name of his father?' 'Hezekiah,' saith the Arabian. To whom the Jew, 'But whence is he?' The other answered, 'From the palace of the King of Bethlehem-Judah.' Away he went, and sold his oxen, and his ploughs, and became a seller of infants' swaddling-clothes, going about from town to town. When he came to that city (Bethlehem) all the women bought of him, but the mother of Menahem bought nothing. He heard the voice of the women saying, 'O thou mother of Menahem, thou mother of Menahem, carry thy son the things that are here sold.' But she replied, 'May the enemies of Israel be strangled, because on the day that he was born the temple was laid waste.' To whom he said, 'But we hoped, that as it was laid waste at his feet, so at his feet it would be built again.' She saith, 'I have no money.' To whom he replied, 'But why should this be prejudicial to him? Carry him what you buy here, and if you have no money to-day, after some days I will come back and receive it.' After some days he returns to that city, and saith to her, 'How does the little infant?' And she said, 'From the time you saw me last, spirits [winds] and tempests came, and snatched him away out of my hands.' Rabbi Bon saith, 'What need have we to learn from an Arabian? Is it not plainly written, "And Lebanon shall fall before the Powerful One?" (Esa. x. 34). And what follows after? "A Branch shall come out of the root of Jesse" (Esa. xi. 1)'" ('Hor. Hebr.,' *in loc.*). **To Jerusalem.** The capital, where this King would reign, and where information about his birth would most naturally be obtained.

Ver. 2.—**Saying.** The inquiry was on their lips at the moment of their appearance. **Where is?** Not "whether there is." The Magi show no signs of doubt. **He that is born King of the Jews**; *i.e.* he that is born to be King of the Jews. Whether he *is* king from the very moment of his birth is not stated. The rendering of the Revised Version margin, "Where is the King of the Jews that is born?" would imply this. With either form the bystanders could hardly help contrasting him with their then ruler, who had acquired the kingship after years of conflict, and who was of foreign extraction. *King of the Jews* Notice: (1) This was, perhaps, Herod's exact title (ver. 1, note). (2) They do not say king of the world. They accept the facts that the Jews alone expected this king, and that according to the more literal interpretation of the Jewish prophecies the homage of the world would be rendered to him as the Head of the Jewish nation. (3) The title is not used of our Lord again until the Passion, where it is only used by heathen (Pilate and the soldiers, ch. xxvii. 11, 29, 37, and parallel passages, Mark, Luke, John, and especially John xix. 21). The Magi and the Roman, learning and administration, East and West, acknowledge, at least in form, the King of the Jews. (4) The Jews themselves preferred the term, "King of Israel" (ch. xxvii. 42; Mark xv. 32, to which passages Luke xxiii. 37, placing the gibe in the soldiers' mouth, forms a significant contrast). The term "Jews" made them only one of the nations of the earth; "Israel" reminded them of their theocratic privileges. **For.** They state the reason of their certainty. **We have seen** (*we saw*, Revised Version); at home. **His star.** In the way of their ordinary pursuits they learned of Christ. The observation of nature led them to nature's Bond (Col. i. 17). What this star really was has been the subject of much consideration without any very satisfactory result. The principal theories are: (1) It was the conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter, which took place in May to July and again in September, B.C. 7. (2) It was the rising of Sirius on the same day in the fifth, fourth, third, and second years B.C. (3) It was some strange evanescent star such as Kepler saw in 1603-4. (4) Astronomy can suggest nothing which satisfies all the conditions, and the appearance must have been strictly miraculous. Since Professor Pritchard's article in the 'Dictionary of the Bible,' this last has been generally accepted in England. A further question is—How came they to identify the star as "his"? *i.e.* What made the Magi connect the coming of the King of the Jews with a star? and what made them consider that this particular appearance was the one they expected? The latter part of the question can hardly be answered, except on the supposition that the star that they saw was in itself so extraordinary as to convince them that no greater star could be looked for. To the former part various answers have been given. (1) Balaam's prophecy (Numb. xxiv. 17) was understood literally, and the knowledge of it, with its misinterpretation, had spread to the Magi. For this literal interpretation, cf. the 'Pesikta Zutarta' ('Lekah Tob') on Numb. xxiv. 17 (p. 58, Venice edit.), where it says that in the fifth year of the heptad before Messiah "the star" shall shine forth from the east, and this is the star of the Messiah (cf. also Edersheim, 'Life,' etc., i. 212). Similarly we find

the false Messiah of the second century applying the term to himself—"Barcochab." (2) They had learned, by intercourse with Jews (cf. the influence of the Jewish Sibylline oracles on the fourth eclogue), that these latter expected a great King, and they had applied to his coming, as to all events, the science that they themselves practised. They believed fully in astrology, and the Divine ordering that a star should appear to them was a condescension to the then state of human knowledge. **In the East** (*ἐν τῇ ἀνατολῇ*). Ellicott points out ('Hist. Lects.,' p. 73) that to translate this "at its rising" seems to be at needless variance with the use of the same words in ver. 9, where they seem to stand in a kind of *local* antithesis to "where the young Child was." For the phrase as referring to the Eastern part of the earth, cf. Clem. Rom., § 5. It is more definite than the plural of ver. 1. **And are come.** "We saw . . . and came" (*εἴδομεν . . . ἤλθομεν*) without delay. **To worship him.** Not as God, but as Lord and King (ch. iv. 9, note). The prostration of themselves bodily before him (*προσκυνῆσαι*; cf. also ver. 11) was not a Greek or Roman, but an Eastern, and it is said especially a Persian, form of homage.

Ver. 3.—**When**; *and when*, Revised Version. There is a contrast (*δέ*) between the eager question of the Magi and the feelings of Herod. **Herod the king.** In the true text the emphasis is not on the person (as in ver. 1, where the date was all-important), but on the office as then exercised. The king visibly regnant is contrasted with him who was born to be King. **Heard.** Through some of his many sources of information, for "there were spies set everywhere" (Josephus, 'Ant.,' xv. 10. 4). **These things**; *it*, Revised Version. Nothing is expressed in the original. **He was troubled**; perplexed, agitated (*ἐταράχθη*). Fully in accordance with his jealous and suspicious character. For he had already slain, as actual or possible candidates for the throne, five of the Maccabean princes and princesses, including his favourite wife Mariamne (thus extirpating the direct line) and also his two sons by Mariamne. Josephus ('Ant.,' xvii. 2. 4; cf. Holtzmann) mentions a prediction of the Pharisees towards the end of Herod's life, that "God had decreed that Herod's government should cease, and his posterity should be deprived of it." This seems to have a Messianic reference, though used at the time for an intrigue in favour of Pheroras, Herod's brother. **And all Jerusalem.** The feminine (here only, *πᾶσα Ἱεροσόλυμα*) points to a Hebrew source. The reason for the inhabitants of Jerusalem feeling troubled is generally explained, by their fear, which was in fact only too well justified by experience, that the news would excite Herod to fresh crimes. It is also possible that many would shrink from the changes which the coming of Messiah could not but bring. Present ease, though only comparative, is with the unbelieving preferable to possibilities of the highest blessedness. Ch. xxi. 10 affords both a parallel and a contrast. **With him.** In this respect Jerusalem was one with Herod (John i. 11).

Ver. 4.—**And when he had gathered . . . together** (*καὶ συναγαγών*). The Revised Version, *and gathering together*, suggests that there was no delay. **All the chief priests and scribes of the people** (*πάντας τοὺς ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ γραμματεῖς τοῦ λαοῦ*). In the absence of the article before *γραμματεῖς* we must take the words, "of the people," as belonging to both terms. The addition helped to bring out the evangelist's thought that the representatives of the chosen people (1 Pet. ii. 10) were fully informed of the coming of Christ. The chief priests (cf. also ch. xvi. 21, note) represented the ecclesiastical and Sadducean part, the scribes the more literary and probably the Pharisaic part, of the nation. The width of the term "all," and the double classification, seem to point to this not being a meeting of the Sanhedrin as such. Herod called an informal and perhaps the more comprehensive meeting of those who could assist him. **He demanded of them**; Revised Version, *inquired*, for "demand" is, in modern English, too strong for *ἐπυνθάνετο*. The tyrant could be courteous when it served his purpose. Does the imperfect mark his putting the question to one after another (cf. Acts i. 6; and contrast John iv. 52)? **Where Christ** (*the Christ*, Revised Version) **should be born** (*γεννᾶται*). In ver. 2 (*ὁ τεχθείς*) the stress lay on his birth as an accomplished fact. Here on his birth as connected with his origin. The present is chosen, not the future, because Herod is stating a theological question without reference to time. Observe, in Herod's inquiry and subsequent action, the combination of superstition and irreligion. He was willing to accept the witness of stars and of prophecies, but not willing to allow himself to be morally influenced by it. His attempt to kill this Child was the expression of a desire to destroy the Jewish nationality so far as this was severed from himself, and perhaps with it to uproot at the same time a fundamental part of the Jewish religion.

Ver. 5.—**And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judæa: for thus it is written by the prophet.** For "by" the Revised Version margin has "through" (ch. i. 22, note).

Ver. 6.—**And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes**

**of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel;** *and thou Bethlehem, land of Judah, art in no wise least among the princes of Judah: For out of thee shall come forth a governor, which shall be shepherd of my people Israel* (Revised Version). In this quotation from Micah v. 2 notice the following variations from the Hebrew, and practically from the LXX.: (1) "Land of Judah" for "Ephratah"; an unimportant change in the terms of definition. (2) "Art in no wise least" for "which art little to be"; a verbal contradiction probably, but also unimportant, as the thought of the context in Micah is of Bethlehem's greatness. (3) "Princes" for "thousands." This may be due (*a*) to a different pointing of the Hebrew, בְּאַלְפֵי for בְּאֶלֶף (cf. the rabbinic commentary, 'Metzud. Zion.'), or (*b*) to understanding בְּאַלְפֵי as "families" (Judg. vi. 15; cf. Revised Version margin), and then concentrating the family in its head. (4) "For out of thee shall come forth a governor, which shall be shepherd of my people Israel" for "out of thee shall one come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel." This is a paraphrase, with a paraphrastic addition from 2 Sam. v. 2 (vii. 7), in order to distinctly identify the ruler with Messiah. Nothing is commoner in Jewish authors than the silent conjunction of quotations from separate contexts. In this case the thought of the shepherd in Micah v. 4 made the addition from Samuel the more easy. It must also be noticed that the reference of the passage in Micah to Christ is fully borne out by Jewish writers. Though they generally explain the rest of the verse as referring to the long lapse of time from David himself, they understand the ruler to be Messiah. But it is not usual with Jewish interpreters to understand the reference to Bethlehem as implying the place of Messiah's own birth. They generally take it as referring to the home of David, Messiah's ancestor. And this is the more natural meaning of the prophecy. The quotation, however, from the Jerusalem Talmud already given on ver. 1, and the Targum of Jonathan on Gen. xxxv. 21 ("the tower of Edar—the place whence King Messiah is about to be revealed in the end of the days"), endorse the thoroughly Jewish character of the reply given to Herod (cf. also John vii. 42). If it be asked why St. Matthew does not give an exact and verbal rendering of the Hebrew, the answer may be made that he probably gives the current form of its exposition. The high priests and scribes would have doubtless quoted it accurately *in the process* of weighing Micah's statement, but when, as here, they were only reproducing the result that they had arrived at, they would care for only the substance of the prophet's teaching (cf. the paraphrastic rendering of the Targum). *In the land of Judah;* Revised Version omits *in* (Βηθλεὲμ γῆ Ἰούδα). "Bethlehem-Judah" would have presented no difficulty, for a town was often distinguished by the apposition of the name of the district in which it was situated; *e.g.* Ramoth-Gilead, Kedesh-Naphtali. It seems best to explain the *γῆ* as a mere expansion of "Judah" (cf. 1 Macc. v. 68, *ἄζωτον γῆν ἀλλοφυλῶν*, where probably the thought was Ashdod-Philistia). It is, however, possible that *γῆ* is here used in the sense of "the town and its surrounding district, over which district, it is to be observed, Herod extended his massacre (verse 16)" (Humphrey, *in loc.*).

Ver. 7.—**Then Herod, when he had privily called the Wise Men.** Secrecy was doubly necessary. He would not publicly commit himself to acknowledging the rights of the new King, and he would give no opportunity for others to warn the Child's parents of the dangerous interest that Herod was taking in him. Duplicity was very characteristic of Herod; cf. his assassination of Aristobulus the high priest (Josephus, 'Ant.,' xv. 3. 3), and his alluring his son Antipater home to death (ibid., xvii. 5. 1). **Inquired of them diligently;** *learned of them carefully* (Revised Version); "lerned of hem bisili" (Wickliffe); *ἠκρίβωσεν παρ' αὐτῶν*. The stress is not upon Herod's careful questioning, but on the exact information that he obtained. **What time the star appeared.** Although this is not the literal translation, it may, perhaps, represent the sense of the original (*τὸν χρόνον τοῦ φαινομένου ἀστέρος*), the participle characterizing the star in its most important relation—its appearance, and the words being treated as a compound expression (cf. John xii. 9, 12). Herod supposed that the birth of the Babe was synchronous with the first appearance of the star. The translation, however, of the Revised Version margin, "the time of the star that appeared," better suits the exact wording (*χρόνον*, not *καιρόν*; *φαινομένου*, not *φανέντος*), the phrase thus including both the first appearance and also the period of continuance (cf. Grotius, "non initium, sed continuitas"). But it is difficult to see what Herod would have learned from this latter particular. Some even think that the star was still visible (Plumptre; Weiss, 'Matthew'), but in this case the joy of the Magi in ver. 10 is not satisfactorily explained.

Ver. 8.—**And he sent them to Bethlehem.** Thus answering their question (ver. 2). **And said, Go and search diligently for the young Child;** *and search out carefully concerning*

Revised Version; ἐξετάσατε ἀκριβῶς περί. Herod bade them make precise inquiry as to all particulars about the Child. The more details he could obtain, the more easily he could make away with him. **And when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also**; the Revised Version rightly joins, *I also*—I as well as you; I the king. It might well be at a secret conference with the Magi that Herod said this, for no Jew would have believed him. *Worship;* ver. 2, note.

Ver. 9.—**When they had heard the king.** There is a slight contrast in the Greek, *but they [for their part] having heard the king.* **They departed**; *went their way* (Revised Version). Took their journey (ἐπορεύθησαν). **And lo, the star, which they saw in the East.** They would, in accordance with Eastern custom, probably travel by night. Observe that the joy they felt at seeing the star (ver. 10) implies that it had not continued visible (ver. 7, note). They had fully used all means; now they receive fresh Divine guidance. *In the East* (ver. 2, note). **Went before them.** Continuously (προῆγεν); "taking them by the hand and drawing them on" (Chrysostom). Not to show them the way to Bethlehem, for the road was easy, but to assure them of guidance to the Babe, over whose temporary home it stayed. The road to Bethlehem is, and from the nature of the valley must always have been, so nearly straight (until the last half-mile, when there is a sudden turn up the hill) that the star need have moved but slightly. Bethlehem itself is seen soon after passing Mar Elias, a monastery rather more than half-way from Jerusalem (Socin's 'Bædeker,' p. 242). **Till it came and stood over where the young Child was.** Does the true reading (ἐστάθη) suggest the unseen hand by which this star was itself guided and stationed (ch. xxvii. 11)? or is it used with a kind of reflexive force, indicating that it was by no chance that it stood still there—"took its stand" (cf. σταθείς, Luke xviii. 11, 40; xix. 8; Acts ii. 14, *et al.*; cf. also Rev. viii. 3; xii. 18)?

Ver. 10.—**When** (*and when*, Revised Version) **they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy**; "they were marvelously glad" (Tyndale). Its reappearance was the pledge of the full answer to their search, the full reward of their toilsome journey. Contrast the indifference of the chosen people.

Ver. 11.—**And when they were come into the house.** For after the enrolment the caravanserai would not be so crowded (Luke ii. 7). But whether it was now the caravanserai or a private house, we have no evidence to show. **They saw** (εἶδον, with the uncials and most of the versions). The translators in this case followed the text of the Complutensian (1514) and of Colinæus' edition (1534), rejecting the false εὗρον of the Vulgate and the Received Text. **The young Child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him** (ver. 2, note). In this latter clause Mary is not mentioned. **And when they had opened.** Neither the Authorized Version nor the Revised Version brings out the exact correlation of the six aorists in this verse. **Their treasures** (so the Revised Version); perhaps, more strictly, *treasuries, coffers.* There is the same ambiguity about "treasure" in old English (cf. Jer. x. 13; li. 16; Ecclus. xliii. 14) as in the Greek. **They presented unto him gifts.** Thus fulfilling in germ the predictions of offerings being made to Messiah and Messiah's people by the Gentile nations (Isa. lx.; Hag. ii. 7; Ps. lxxii. 10). *Presented; offered* (Revised Version). The verb used (προσφέρω) seems to lay stress on the persons to whom and by whom the offering is made, the personal relation in which they stand to each other; ἀναφέρω (cf. Bishop Westcott, on Heb. vii. 27) and παρίστημι on the destination and use of the offering (Jas. ii. 21; Rom. vi. 13). Observe the three stages in this verse—vision, submission, consecration. *Gifts;* without which one does not approach an Eastern monarch (cf. 1 Kings x. 2). **Gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.** Wealth and delights, the material and the æsthetic.

Ver. 12.—**And being warned of God** (καὶ χρηματισθέντες; cf. Bishop Westcott, on Heb. viii. 5). *And*, not "but;" this is joined to the threefold "and" of ver. 11, and is the final example of God's mercy and grace towards them, preserving them from probable death at Herod's hands. **In a dream** (ch. i. 20, note). **That they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.** Perhaps eastwards by Bêt Sahur and Mar Sâba and Jericho.

Vers. 13—15.—*The deliverance of Jesus by flight into Egypt.*

Ver. 13.—**And** (Revised Version, *now*) **when they were departed.** The flight was not by their advice, and they were not even entrusted with the secret. **Behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream** (ch. i. 20, notes). The present tense (φαίνεται) is here more vivid. **Saying, Arise** (ver. 14, note), **and take the young Child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word**; Revised Version, *I tell thee* (ἕως ἂν εἴπω σοι). The rendering of the Authorized Version seems to be due to a desire to express the dependence of the messenger on him who sent him. **For Herod**; though he spoke so fair to the Magi. **Will seek.** The full form (μέλλει

. . . (ζητεῖν) hints that Herod's action will be the result of no momentary emotion, but of premeditation. **The young Child to destroy him.** The final motive (τοῦ ἀπολέσαι) of seeking him.

Ver. 14.—**When he arose, he took**; Revised Version, *and he arose and took.* The ἐγερθείς here, as in ver. 13, precludes delay. **The young Child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt.** As St. Paul in after years was able to connect himself with fellow-craftsmen, and thus maintain himself (Acts xviii. 3), so might Joseph reasonably expect to be able to do in Egypt, and the more so since the connexion there between those who worked at the same trade seems to have been even closer than elsewhere, for in the great synagogue at Alexandria they sat together, "so that if a stranger came he could join himself to his fellow-craftsmen and, through their means, obtain his livelihood" (Talm. Jer., 'Succah,' v. 1, p. 55, *d*). Jewish reference to our Lord's stay in Egypt are to be found in the blasphemous fables of his having brought thence his knowledge of magic (cf. Laible, in 'Nathanael,' 1890, p. 79).

Ver. 15.—**And was there until the death of Herod.** The Revised Version rightly joins this with the preceding, not with the following, clause. **That it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying** (ch. i. 22, notes), **Out of Egypt have I called** (Revised Version, *did I call*) **my Son** (Hos. xi. 1, "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt"). Observe here: (1) The quotation is not from the LXX. ("Out of Egypt I summoned his children"), but from the Hebrew, which Aquila also follows. (2) The expression in Hosea is based on Exod. iv. 22, "Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, my firstborn;" cf. also Wisd. xviii. 13, "They acknowledged this people to be the son of God (ὡμολόγησαν Θεοῦ υἱὸν λαὸν εἶναι)." (3) The quotation is, by the context, evidently adduced, not to prove the sonship of Jesus, but to enlarge upon the treatment that he received. The fundamental thought is that the experience of Messiah was parallel to the experience of the nation. (4) The application of the term "my Son" to Messiah is justified by Jewish thought. In Exod. iv. 22 the nation was so called; in Ps. ii. 7 the head of the nation, the theocratic king, received the same title; much more could the great theocratic King, the Messiah, be so spoken of. That, indeed, the name, "the Son of God," was used as a title of Messiahship by the Jews lacks direct evidence (cf. Stanton, 'The Jewish and the Christian Messiah,' 1886, p. 288), but is surely to be deduced from ch. xxvi. 63 (xvi. 16); cf. also the application of Ps. ii. 7 to Messiah in Talm. Bab., 'Succah,' 52 *a*, in the late Midrash 'Tillim,' *in loc.*, which traces "the decree" there spoken of through the Law (Exod. iv. 22), the prophets (*e.g.* Isa. lii. 13), and the Hagiographa (*e.g.* Ps. ii. 7; cx. 1; for a paraphrase, cf. Edersheim, 'Life,' etc., App. ix.). It is hardly too much to say that no Jew could consistently, either in the early days of the Church or now, find any difficulty in St. Matthew's reference of the term "my Son" to Christ. (5) Seeing that St. Matthew's reference of the term "my Son" is justified by Jewish thought, and that the passage in Hosea is adduced to show that the experience of Messiah was parallel to that of the nation, there seems no real need to look for further reasons for the application. St. Matthew may have held that Messiah was the Flower of Israel, so that what was predicated of Israel could be essentially explained of Messiah; he may have considered that Messiah was so organically connected with Israel that even when the nation was in Egypt Messiah was there also (cf. Heb. vii. 10; xi. 26); he may have thought that the pre-incarnate Son of God was always with his Church, and therefore with it even in Egypt; but of none of these theories have we any hint. The application of Hos. xi. 1 to the early life of Christ belongs, we do not doubt, to the very earliest stage of Jewish Christian thought, and to defend it by modern subtleties of interpretation (sound though they may be in other connexions) seems quite out of place. Messiah was in some sense, as all Jews granted, the Son of God; Messiah, like the nation, went down into Egypt; what was predicated of the one was, clearly in this case, true of the other, and the prophet's words received a "fulfilment." The fulfilment was, indeed, what we should call a coincidence (cf. ver. 23, note), but to the pious mind, and especially to the pious mind of a Jew, coincidences are not chances, they are signs of the Divine Governor (cf. Bishop Westcott, 'Hebr.,' p. 481: 1889).

Vers. 16—18.—*The slaughter of the innocents.*

Ver. 16.—**Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked** (ὅτι ἐνεπαίχθη). The verb which in the New Testament occurs only in the synoptists, and always in the strict sense of "mock" (*e.g.* ch. xx. 19; xxvii. 29, 31, 41), represents Herod's feelings, and perhaps his language, at his treatment by the Magi. It was more than deception; they had trifled with him. **Of the Wise Men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children**; Revised Version, *male children* (τοὺς παῖδας, not τὰ τέκνα). **That were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts** (Revised Version, *borders*) **thereof.** Not merely the

districts legally belonging to the city, but the neighbourhood generally. **From two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired** (ver. 7, note) **of the Wise Men.** Had he made further inquiries, he might have aroused suspicion, so he made sure of his prey by allowing a wide margin both in time and space. "'On Augustus being informed,' says Macrobius ['Saturn.,' ii. 4], 'that among the boys under two years of age whom Herod ordered to be slain in Syria, his own son also had been slain, "It is better," said he, "to be Herod's pig (ὗν) than his son (υἱὸν)."' Although Macrobius is a late writer [circ. 400], and made the mistake of supposing that Herod's son Antipater, who was put to death about the same time as the massacre of the innocents, had actually perished *in* that massacre, it is clear that the form in which he narrates the *bon mot* of Augustus points to some dim reminiscence of this cruel slaughter" (Farrar, 'Life,' etc., p. 34, illust. edit.; cf. also Ellicott, 'Lectures,' p. 78). Farrar (and Edersheim accepts his calculation) reckons that not more than twenty children were killed. Thus failed the first attempt to destroy Christ, Rev. xii. 4 (Nösgen).

Vers. 17, 18.—**Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by** (διά) **Jeremy the prophet, saying, In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not** (Jer. xxxi. 15, from the Hebrew). Notice: (1) As to details. (*a*) The order in the Revised Version. *A voice was heard in Ramah* is more literal; the stress is on the cry rather than on the place. (*b*) *Lamentation and* must be omitted, with the Revised Version, as a mere addition from the LXX. (*c*) *And would not.* The Revised Version, *and she would not*, seems to be an attempt to express the full term, καὶ οὐκ ἤθελεν κ.τ.λ. (cf. Gen. xxxvii. 35). (2) As to the quotation generally. St. Matthew applies Jeremiah's picture of Rachel, the mother of Joseph, *i.e.* of Ephraim (and also Manasseh), which was the typical part of the northern kingdom, weeping over the destruction of her children by the Assyrians, to the weeping of the mothers in Bethlehem. This application was the more easy because, as Rachel's tomb was near Bethlehem (Gen. xxxv. 19; xlviii. 7), she might be considered the figurative ancestress of the Bethlehemites as well as the physical ancestress of the Ephraimites. The fulfilment spoken of is thus not to be understood as implying that Jeremiah predicted the massacre at Bethlehem, but that in it his words received a new and deeper significance. It must, however, be added that, although Rachel's tomb is placed at Bethlehem, both by the direct statement of the present text of Genesis and by tradition, which may be traced at least as far back as A.D. 333, and is accepted by Jews, Christians, and Mohammedans, there are serious doubts whether 1 Sam. x. 2 does not definitely place it in the north of Benjamin, and whether Jeremiah xxxi. 15 does not accept this latter view (cf. for this question Delitzsch, on Gen., *loc. cit.*). In any case, St. Matthew adopts the statement of Genesis.

Vers. 19—23.—*The return from Egypt and settlement in Nazareth.*

Ver. 19.—**But when Herod was dead.** Does the repetition of the tenor of ver. 15 point to a different source? **Behold, an angel** (rightly; contrast ch. i. 20, note) **of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph** (φαίνεται κατ' ὄναρ, as in ver. 13). In both cases the stress is on the fact of the appearance, not on its mode. **In Egypt.** The evangelist will leave no room for doubt as to where Joseph then was (cf. note at head of chapter).

Ver. 20.—**Saying, Arise, and take the young Child and his mother** (so far verbally equivalent to ver. 13). **And go into the land of Israel;** any part of the holy and promised land (1 Sam. xiii. 19; Ezek. xi. 17). **For they are dead which sought the young Child's life.** The plural is difficult, and is perhaps best explained as an adaptation of the historic parallel of Exod. iv. 19.

Ver. 21.—**And he arose, and took the young Child and his mother** (so far verbally equivalent to ver. 14), **and came into the land of Israel.** Implicit and immediate obedience marking all he did.

Ver. 22.—**But when he heard that Archelaus.** Until his murder five days before Herod's own death in the spring of A.U.C. 750, Antipater, Herod's eldest son, might naturally have been regarded as the successor, though in fact Antipas had been named as such in the will. But after Antipater's death Herod altered his will; and appointing Antipas Tetrarch of Galilee and Perræa, and Philip Tetrarch of Gaulonitis, Trachonitis, and Paneas, he granted the kingdom to Archelaus. Further, even after Herod's death, the succession was far from certain until the consent of Augustus had been obtained, and this, in fact, was jeopardized by Archelaus's massacre of three thousand of those who, on his accession, called for justice on the agents of the barbarities of the late reign. Eventually, however, Herod's last arrangement was practically confirmed by Augustus, save that he expressly gave Archelaus, who had hastened to Rome, but half of his father's dominion, and appointed him only ethnarch, promising to make him king "if he governed that part virtuously" (Josephus, 'Ant.,' xvii. 8. 1; 11. 4; cf. 'Bell. Jud.,' i.

33. 8; ii. 7. 3). Joseph's fear of Archelaus quite corresponds to the character given of him by the Jewish ambassadors before Augustus. "He seemed to be afraid lest he should not be deemed Herod's own son; and so, without any delay, he immediately let the nation understand his meaning," *i.e.* by the slaughter of the three thousand malcontents above referred to (Josephus, 'Ant.,' xvii. 11. 2). He was in A.D. 6 deposed for his cruelty, and banished to Vienne, in Gaul. **Did reign**; Revised Version, *was reigning*; an attempt to express the vivid present of the original, which recalls the very words he heard. After Augustus's decision, Archelaus could not legally have called himself *βασιλεύς*, but the title, especially as implied in the verb, would have been customary in popular speech (cf. ch. xiv. 9). But it is possible that the expression was used before Archelaus went to Rome, and at the time of his first grasp of power under Herod's will. **In Judæa.** The Revised Version (*over Judæa, βασιλεύει τῆς Ἰουδαίας*) rightly implies not only that he lived in Judæa, but that, unlike his father, was not king of the whole of Palestine, but emphatically of Judæa. To this Idumæa and Samaria were appendages. **In the room of his father Herod.** Had St. Matthew the same thought as the Jewish ambassadors above? **He was afraid to go thither**; and presumably he told God his fears. **Notwithstanding** (only *δέ*); Revised Version, *and*. **Being warned of God** (ver. 12, note). For he does not leave his people in perplexity. **In a dream.** No angel is mentioned this time. **He turned aside**; Revised Version, *he withdrew* (*ἀνεχώρησεν*). **Into the parts of Galilee**; where Antipas was tetrarch. The form (cf. ch. xv. 21; xvi. 13) seems to imply removal from one spot to another before finally settling at Nazareth, and also the subordinate importance of the places visited, compared with the more populous towns.

Ver. 23.—**And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth.** *En-Nâṣira*, now of from five thousand to six thousand souls, in the hills on the northern edge of the Plain of Esdraelon, not mentioned in the Old Testament or by Josephus. "Nazareth is a rose, and, like a rose, has the same rounded form, enclosed by mountains as the flower by its leaves" (Quaresimus, in Stanley, 'Sinai and Palestine,' p. 365). Observe the (:) in the Revised Version, showing that the following "fulfilment" is not to be considered as part of Joseph's intention. *Dwelt*; settled down after the exile life (cf. Acts vii. 4). **That** (*ὅπως*). The purpose lay in the Divine overruling of Joseph's action, *ὅπως* with *πληρωθῇ*, ch. viii. 17 and xiii. 35 only. In each case it is used with reference to general statements, *i.e.* it marks a less close connection than that implied by *ἵνα*. **It might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called** (Revised Version, *that he should be called*; *ὅτι κληθήσεται*; cf. also the Geneva) **a Nazarene.** The Revised Version expresses the fact that the quotation is not of words, but of substance, for although the recitative *ὅτι* is found in St. Matthew (vii. 23; ix. 18; xiv. 26; xxvii. 43, 47) and even before verbal citations from Scripture after *γέγραπται* (ch. iv. 6) and *ἀνέγνωτε* (ch. xxi. 16, contrast 42), yet it does not occur after the formula *τὸ ῥηθέν κ.τ.λ.* *By the prophets.* Not "in the prophets" (Acts xiii. 40), which might have preferred (yet cf. Heb. i. 1) only to the book containing their writings, and then would not in itself have implied more than one passage there. The present phrase (*διὰ τῶν προφητῶν*) suggests personality rather than writing, and implies either that two or more prophets were the agents by whom the words were spoken, or, better, that in some way the whole company of the prophets (cf. Acts iii. 25; Heb. i. 1) spoke the message now summarized. In this way the phrase will indicate that even if the following words are found in the utterances of only one prophet, they also represent a phase of teaching common to all. *A Nazarene.* Those interpretations which connect this with נזר (*nzr*), (1) in the sense of "separated" (Lightfoot, 'Hor. Hebr.'), (*a*) generally (cf. Ps. lxix. 7); (*b*) specifically as "Nazarite" (נזיר, *Ναζηραῖος*, so Tyndale to Rheims); or (2) in the sense of "diadem" (נֵזֶר, "Zu Cronberg [נזרת] hat der Gekrönte gewohnet," Bengel); are inadmissible in the light of the fact that, in Jewish writings, both "Nazareth" (נָצְרַת, Neub., 'Geogr.,' p. 190) and "Nazarene" (נוצרי) are from נצר (*ntsr*). Thus the reference to the prophets requires that they speak of Messiah by some term belonging to this root, and not to נזר (*nzr*). What this term is may be gathered from the true text of Talm. Bab., 'Sanh.,' 43*a* (cf. 'Levy,' *s.v.* נצר, and for the passage in full, Rabbinowicz, 'Var. Lect.'), where, after enumerating five disciples of Jesus the Nazarene (ישו הנוצרי), among them Netzer, a summary is given of their trial and condemnation. Of Netzer it is said, "They brought Netzer up for trial. He said to the judges, Shall Netzer be slain? It is written, 'A branch (*netzer*, נצר) out of his roots shall bear fruit (Isa. xi. 1).' They answered him, Yea, Netzer shall be slain. For it is written, 'But thou art cast forth away from thy sepulchre like an abominable branch'" (*netzer*, Isa. xiv. 19). It does not now concern us to inquire which, if any, of the twelve disciples is here spoken of by the name of Netzer. But it is evident that

the Jews (1) connected this name closely with Jesus the Nazarene just before mentioned, and (2) saw a connexion between it and "the Branch" of Isa. xi. 1. True that they rejected the disciple's application of the passage, but they did not reject the identity of the expressions. The application which was made, even according to the Talmud, is fully expressed by the evangelist here. There, as we may see if we read between the lines, the disciple claimed for his Christianity that it corresponded to the promise of Isaiah; here the evangelist more definitely claims a correspondence between that promise and Jesus. He is not concerned with deeper points of similarity, though they could not fail to suggest themselves both to him and to his readers, but merely notices that the very dwelling-place of Jesus answers to the promise of Messiah. *Netzer* he was to be; the Divine working brought it about that this, though in adjectival form, was his common appellation. Observe that (1) to *netzer* in Isa. xi. 1 the word *tsemah* corresponds in Jer. xxiii. 5 and Zech. iii. 8; (2) the fulfilment consists, not in carrying out a definite statement to its logical issue in history, but in the existence of a strange correspondence which implies Divine foresight and arrangement. Why Joseph settled at Nazareth rather than at any other spot in Galilee, St. Matthew gives no hint. The reason is found in the fact recorded by St. Luke that Mary (i. 26) and Joseph (ii. 4) had lived there before the Birth. It is true that St. Matthew's account taken alone gives the impression that this was not the case, but the impression is not so strong as to warrant even the assertion that St. Matthew was ignorant of the earlier residence, much less that his account in fact contradicts St. Luke's. The mutual independence and the general trustworthiness of the two accounts of the Birth and Infancy is is shewn by the fact that in their less important details they cannot always be reconciled. (On our present difficulties in arranging the events recorded in Matt. i. ii. and Luke i. ii., cf. Ellicott, 'Lects.,' p. 70; Godet, 'Luke,' transl., i. pp. 153—156.)

## HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—12.—*The Wise Men from the East.* I. THEIR CIRCUMSTANCES. 1. *They were Gentiles.* The first chapter represents the Lord Jesus as a Jew, the Son of David, the long-expected Messiah. The second chapter tells us that the Gentiles also have an interest in the new-born Saviour. He came to bear the sins of the world, to be the Saviour of the world; to be not only "the Glory of his people Israel," but also "a Light to lighten the Gentiles." Ancient prophecy had foretold that "the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." They were coming now, the firstfruits of the Gentile world—coming a long journey from the far East to seek the infant Saviour who had come from highest heaven to save their souls. They were the leaders of the long procession of Gentiles who, drawn by grace, have sought the Lord. What countless millions have followed them, not from the East only, but in mightier multitudes from the West, from the North, and from the South! Their coming, thus early, to the cradle of the Lord prefigured the gradual ingathering of that great host, that multitude which no man could number. 2. *They were Magians.* Like Daniel and his companions, they belonged to the learned, the sacerdotal, caste; they had been instructed in the wisdom of the East. Especially they had been engaged in the study of astronomy. Their learning had not degenerated into the magic, the pretensions to supernatural power, so common in their time. It was sanctified by a longing after God; it had elevated and refined their character. They were not like the Simon of Acts viii., or the Elymas of Acts xiii. The name, Μάγοι, was common to them all; but Simon and Elymas were impostors, seeking their own selfish ends; their learning, such as it was, was degraded by falsehood and charlatanry; the Magians of St. Matthew were sincere seekers after God. They may possibly have heard something of ancient prophecy; the prophecies of Balaam, and more especially those of Daniel, may have been known in their country; they must have been familiar with the expectations of a coming King, a Deliverer, a Messiah, so generally diffused throughout the East. They were diligent observers of the stars; in the clear atmosphere of Mesopotamia or Persia they had watched the glorious march, the marvellous order, of the heavenly bodies. Astronomy, their favourite science, was blessed to their souls' salvation—it pointed the way to the Saviour. Science is the handmaid of religion, if it is pursued in the humble, teachable spirit which becomes seekers after truth. Philosophy, it has well been said, begins in wonder, and it ends in wonder. The wonders of this

vast universe awaken thought and stimulate research, but every truth, pursued as far as man can reach, results in mystery. The wider, the more accurate, our knowledge, the deeper will be our consciousness of our own ignorance. That sense of ignorance, those insoluble mysteries, should lift up the heart to God. Reverence, humility, are the tempers which true learning should produce. They who in such a spirit "follow Truth along her star-paved way" will find that that way leads to God. The learned need a Saviour as much as the ignorant; the Magians must come to Christ as well as the shepherds. The best and holiest need him as much as the most sinful, the blessed virgin as much as the publican and the sinner. 3. *They were rich.* They brought rich gifts—gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The rich must come as well as the poor. They must bring their free-will offerings, giving largely, gladly, with a willing mind. Almsgiving is an important part of Christian duty, an element in Christian worship. The true disciple will learn of the Lord "who, though he was rich, yet for our sake became poor," the deep and holy lesson that "it is more blessed to give than to receive." We must give, not the mere shreds and parings of our worldly substance, but in due proportion to our means. "Of all that thou shalt give me," Jacob said, when he had seen the vision of God in Bethel, the house of God, "I will surely give the tenth unto thee." 4. *They came a long journey.* From the far East, from Chaldæa or from Persia. They shrank not from the toil, the danger, of the way. They believed the heavenly warning, they sought the Saviour. We must seek Christ in faith. God has called us; we must obey the calling. The way that leads to eternal life seems often long; it is always strait, narrow, steep. There is need of perseverance and self-denial; we must forget those things which are behind, pressing ever onwards to those things which are before. 5. *Their question.* "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" They had not the Scriptures, the Word of God, which is "a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path." But they had seen the wondrous star; the voice of God speaking in their hearts told them its meaning. Then they arose, and went their way, seeking the King. We shall find the Christ if, like them, we are earnest seekers. Scripture, study, the promptings of our own heart, will lead us to him. For he is seeking us. He called the Wise Men from the East by the leading of a star; he calls us now by his Word, by his works, by his Spirit. We could not find him were it not that he first loved us, and sought us in his love. He was hidden from the eyes of sinful men in the unapproachable light which no man hath seen or can see. But he loved us; he draws us to himself by the attractive power of his constraining love. Yet we must seek him. It is he who seeketh that findeth; we must not sit still in spiritual idleness and take it for granted that all will be well. We must seek him as the Wise Men sought him, coming a long journey, offering our gifts, our hearts, ourselves, our earthly goods. We must come asking, "Where is he?" Every one that seeketh findeth. "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" It is a great question—a question of deep meaning and very solemn interest. He is born King of the Jews—King by birth, by Divine right; King not only of Israel after the flesh, but of the Israel of God, the Church of the Firstborn. We all owe him our allegiance, for he is our King, the King of the nations, King of kings and Lord of lords. Where is he? We *must* find him; for he is our Life, the Life of our souls. To know him is eternal life; we must seek until we find, seeking earnestly, like the Wise Men from the East, grudging no pains, no cost. 6. *What led them to the Christ?* The mysterious star. The brightest light that shone in the Gentile firmament was but as a star compared with the Sun of Righteousness. There were good men among the heathen—men who in the darkness felt after the truth, if haply they might find it; who showed the work of the law written in their hearts; men like Socrates, Plato, Epictetus, earnest seekers after God. Their knowledge was as a star, beautiful, but pale; very limited in range and power, glimmering in the darkness. Still, it was enough, we cannot doubt, for their salvation. Their conscience bore witness; if they followed its guidance it would bring them safe to their journey's end. That guiding star, conscience, the candle of the Lord within us, tells us of sin, of judgment, of salvation. It is set in our hearts to lead us to the Saviour. God grant that we may find him! 7. *The object of their coming.* To worship him. The great blessedness promised to God's saints is the beatific vision, the unveiled vision of God. "I will," the Saviour said, "that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me." That vision implies worship. Worship is the

homage of the heart, the reverential submission of the whole being, adoration full of wondering awe, full of grateful love. It is the occupation of heaven: "They rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." We must learn to worship here; it is the training for the heavenly life. Worship is not merely prayer; it includes prayer, but it is more. It does not consist simply in asking for what we need to supply our own wants. It is unselfish; its end is the glory of God. They who are learning here the true and heavenly worship are learning to approach God, to seek the presence of God, not only for their own deep necessities—they must indeed seek him for that, but not for that only—they seek his face for himself, because he is so great, so glorious, so holy, so gracious. He himself is the exceeding great Reward of his chosen. These Gentiles teach us Christians what so many of us forget, the duty of unselfish worship—simple, heartfelt adoration.

II. THEIR RECEPTION AT JERUSALEM. 1. *By Herod.* They came to Jerusalem, the city of the great King, but they found not there the King whom they sought. Another king was reigning in Jerusalem, a stranger, an Edomite; a king in name, but a very slave of the evil one, now drawing near to the close of his wicked life, in that miserable old age which is the necessary result of a youth spent in the unbridled indulgence of sinful appetites. (1) Herod was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. The announcement of the King's birth was not good news to Herod. He felt that that King must be the expected Messiah, the Christ; but he thought only of his own selfish aims, he feared for his crown. Strange that even in the immediate prospect of death, men should so cling to earthly things, which must pass away so very soon, and neglect the one thing needful. But it is commonly so; as a man lives, so, as a rule, he will die. The selfish and avaricious in life are selfish and avaricious still, even in the presence of death. He was troubled, and all Jerusalem. A strange awe came over people. The expectation of a Messiah was almost universal. Now, they heard, he was coming; and it may be their thoughts shaped themselves into the words of the prophet, "Who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth?" That awe soon passed away; the visit of the Magians was soon forgotten; the warning was lost. Jerusalem knew not the time of her visitation. The Lord came unto his own, and his own received him not. Men are troubled in spirit when death seems near, when the thought of the judgment is brought home to their souls. Alas! how often those solemn feelings bear no real fruit! Selfish fear is very different from conversion; fear passes away with the sense of danger; conversion is an abiding change. (2) He consults the priests and scribes. We see another strange inconsistency—strange, but very common—belief in the letter of Holy Scripture joined with practical unbelief. Herod's religion is simply superstition; he has the Scriptures, he has the priests; he uses them as if they were heathen oracles, and priests of Jupiter or Apollo. Mere bibliolatry is little better than unbelief: "the letter killeth." The Bible is precious exceedingly to the faithful: "the Spirit giveth life;" but to men like Herod, who make use of religion merely for political or selfish purposes, it is a savour of death unto death. (3) He sends the Wise Men to Bethlehem. He goes not there himself; he will come, he says. He bids others search diligently; he remains at home. So men put off the great work of life; they do not seek Christ now; they say they will do so; but the future recedes further and further; the end comes, they have not sought, and so they have not found. He will worship him, he says. He believes in a way, he half believes; it is, at least it may be, the expected King. But he is a traitor; in his intense wickedness he talks of worship while in his heart he is plotting death; he is ready to slay the King, the Messiah, if he can, rather than endanger the crown which he can wear so short a time. There is an awful warning in Herod's selfish hypocrisy. Be true, it says to us, be true to your convictions. While you have the light, believe in the light, and walk in the light. Be true in yourselves, true in your relations with God, true in your dealings with men. God is true; he seeth in secret. Hypocrisy is hateful in his sight; it is the death of the soul. 2. *The chief priests and scribes.* They knew the Scriptures; they could answer Herod's question at once; they told him where the Christ should be born. But they were blind guides; they knew and did not. Their religion was a lifeless theology, a dead orthodoxy. They showed others the way to Christ; they sought him not themselves. They taught the Gentile Magians; the disciples profited, the teachers were callous and unmoved. It is a sad thing when

the preacher does not feel the saving power of the words which, by the grace of God, bring life to the listener. The deepest, the most accurate knowledge of the letter of Scripture is a very poor thing compared with that inner knowledge of the heart, which may be granted to the ignorant as well as to the learned; which leads learned and ignorant alike to him who is the only Saviour of the world, the Lord Jesus Christ. He was to be found in Bethlehem, in seclusion and poverty. Jerusalem was grand and rich; Bethlehem was small and poor. The priests showed the way, but went not; the Gentile Magians believed. The King was not to be found in Jerusalem, in its palaces, in its glorious temple. They sought him in simple faith in the little Bethlehem, and there they found the Governor, who should be the Shepherd of the Israel of God.

III. THEIR JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM. 1. *They believed the Scriptures.* They had not known the Scriptures; they were Gentiles. Now they heard them, and they doubted not. They had expected to find the King at Jerusalem; the Scriptures bade them seek him at Bethlehem; they at once obeyed. There is a lesson for us here. We should search the Scriptures, not, as many seem to do, to find our own opinions there, but in the humble, teachable spirit of the true disciple, who desires only to learn the truth of God, and, when he has learned it, strives with all his heart to do the will of God. 2. *The reward of their faith.* The star appeared again; it went before them; it stood over where the young Child was. God will not leave us to grope our way in the darkness, when we are seeking him in faith. The kindly light of his gracious love will lead us through the encircling gloom. We may be far from home, like the Magians; but if, like them, we do not seek to choose our own path, but submit to be guided by his Word, the light will lead us on till, like them, we see a more than angel-face, the loving face of the most holy Saviour. Earnest search is the condition of the heavenly guidance; the heavenly guidance is the reward of earnest search. They rejoiced to see the star; they recognized it as the star which had first raised their hopes when they saw it in the East. It came nearer now; its guidance was more distinct, more certain; it stood over where the young Child was. The leading of God's Holy Spirit, the intimations of his will, become clearer and more definite as the faithful Christian draws nearer to the end of his journey; the more readily they are obeyed, the plainer they become. The sons of God are led by his Spirit, led ever nearer to Christ. The fruit of the Spirit is joy; they rejoice with exceeding great joy who feel the workings of that good Spirit within them; they recognize his gentle whispers as the voice of God calling them to his great salvation. That joy is of all joys the holiest and the best, the most abiding; it is joy unspeakable and full of glory; it is the foretaste of the joy of heaven. 3. *Their thankfulness.* They saw the young Child with Mary his mother. It was not as they had, perhaps, expected; there were no outward signs of royalty, no pomp, no guards, no courtiers; only a manger, or now, perhaps, some poor cottage; very different from the stately palace where they had left the proud, wicked Herod. But their faith was not shaken by these mean surroundings; they recognized the little Child as the King Messiah; they paid him the worship which they had come to render; they fell down and worshipped him—him, we mark, not the virgin-mother. Worship was the end, the object, of their long journey. It is the end of ours; the heavenly worship before the throne is the high hope that brightens the Christian life. They made their offerings to the infant Christ. True worship involves offerings; they will give of their means who first have given their hearts; they freely give who have freely received; they who have found Christ count all earthly wealth as dross in comparison with the heavenly riches. They offered costly gifts—gifts of mystic meaning. The frankincense was significant; it was offered to God in the services of the temple; offered to the holy Babe, it confessed his Divinity. Gold is offered to a king; the star had announced the approaching birth of the King of the Jews; the Magians recognized the infant Jesus as the promised King. Myrrh was used in preparing bodies for the grave. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes (John xix. 39), and laid therein the sacred body of the Lord. It may be that the gift of myrrh prefigured the blessed death which was to close the earthly life of the holy Babe. 4. *Their departure.* They were warned of God. Perhaps they had consulted him, as the Greek word seems to imply. They could not trust Herod; the contrast between his dark character and the beautiful simplicity of the holy family

at Bethlehem struck them, and awakened their suspicions. They feared the design of Herod. They sought counsel of God; he provided for the safety of the holy Child; he warned them; they departed to their own country. We know no more of them certainly; we cannot doubt that they were saints of God. Their pilgrimage was not in vain; they carried back the lessons they had learned, and died at the last in the faith of him whom they had worshipped. We may be sure of this—sure that he who had begun the good work within their hearts would complete it. Their character is strikingly beautiful; simple faith, undoubting obedience, deep loving reverence, love that showed itself in costly offerings,—these were the graces that shone forth in the first Gentiles to whom the Saviour of the world was manifested.

LESSONS. 1. Some read the Bible like Herod and the priests; they know all about Christ, they know not himself. Such knowledge saveth not. 2. Come to Christ yourselves, like the Wise Men; seek him, and you shall find; God guideth those who seek. 3. They travelled far; you must persevere. They gave costly gifts; you must offer freely of your substance for the work of God.

Vers. 13—23.—*The Lord's infancy.* I. THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT. 1. *The dream of Joseph.* The visit of the Wise Men, with their adoring worship and their costly gifts, is followed by persecution and distress. The opening life of the Lord exhibits those vicissitudes which were to occur again and again in the history of his Church and in the lives of individual Christians. The bright sunshine of success and popularity is soon clouded by seeming failure, by perplexity and persecution. It is what we are to expect. The disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord. But God cares for his own; his providence prepares them for the coming trials; in his hands we are safe. "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his Anointed." But "he that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision." The humblest of his servants sometimes defeat the designs of the mightiest of his foes, for he is with them. Joseph saves the infant Jesus from the cruel hands of Herod. But it was under the Divine guidance. The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream; God spoke to him by his messenger in the visions of the night; God guided him in his difficulties, as he will guide us in ours, if we trust in him with the humble submission, with the undoubting obedience, of the holy Joseph. 2. *His journey.* He obeyed at once; he took the young Child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt. In Egypt, long ago, another Joseph had nourished his father and his brethren, the patriarchs, when the famine was sore in the land of Canaan; in Egypt, now, the little Babe was cherished who was to be the Bread of life, the Bread which came down from heaven and giveth life to the world. In Egypt the children of the patriarchs, Israel, the people of God, had lived long in exile and in bondage; in Egypt the heavenly Babe sojourned for a while, an outcast and a fugitive. God had called his son out of Egypt; he had said to Pharaoh, by the mouth of Moses, "Israel is my son, even my firstborn: and I say unto thee, Let my son go" (Exod. iv. 22, 23). "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt." But those words of Hosea were pregnant with a deeper meaning—a meaning possibly not present to the mind of the prophet, but now unfolded by the Holy Ghost. God called his only begotten Son out of Egypt. God had a mighty work for him to do, and the scene of that work was to be, not Egypt, but the Holy Land. God sometimes seems to separate us from our work, to banish us from what seems to us our proper field of labour. We must trust him, as Joseph did; he will bring to pass in his own good time the purposes of his love and wisdom. 3. *The slaughter of the innocents.* (1) The murderer. Herod reverences ancient prophecy, and seeks to slay the Lord's Christ, of whom the prophets spake. He receives Holy Scripture as the Word of God, and tries to frustrate the counsels of the Most High. Strange and miserable inconsistency! His mind accepts the Divine authority of the Bible; his heart revolts in direct rebellion from the will of God. Like Balaam, he thinks that he, poor worm of the earth, can check the development of the purpose of God. Like Balaam, he puts his own selfish ends into conflict with the love of God. The infant King of the Jews may endanger his earthly throne; he will slay him if he can, though he believes him, or half believes him, to be appointed by God to be the

Ruler of his people Israel. Very awful wickedness; but yet differing only in degree from the guilt of those who, professing to believe in Christ, oppress his poor, or for their own selfish ends oppose the work and progress of his Church. The Bible is a very precious talent entrusted to us by God; but the knowledge of his will must increase our condemnation a hundredfold if we set ourselves against it in our lives. Knowledge with obedience is very blessed; knowledge with disobedience incurs a fearful doom. (2) The victims. They were martyrs in deed, though not in will. They died for Christ, unconsciously indeed, but yet for him, to ensure his safety, that he might live to die for them, to save them, with all his people, through his most precious blood. We may be sure that their death was blessed; they died for Christ. They were taken from the evil to come; they died before their infant souls were stained by actual sin. The death of little children is a mystery. It looks like a waste of life; it seems as if there is an immense waste in the creation of God; such multitudes die before they come to maturity. But we live in an atmosphere of mystery; we can see only a very little way into the surrounding darkness. We walk by faith, not by sight. We must believe that he doeth all things well, and trust our babes to him who loved the little children, who took them up into his arms and blessed them. (3) The prophecy. The words of Jeremiah related to the wailings of the captives collected at Ramah on their way to Babylon. Rachel, their ancestress, buried near Bethlehem, hears their cries; she issues from her grave; her lamentations are heard in Ramah. Now the prophecy receives a second fulfilment; the bitter sorrow of the bereaved mothers moves the heart of the dead Rachel; again her voice is heard weeping with the weeping mothers. It is a touching illustration of the exceeding great anguish of those Bethlehem matrons. Rachel is represented as listening and joining in their mourning. The Lord Christ listens to us in our distress; he feels for us with all the depth of human tenderness, with all the strength of Divine love.

II. THE RETURN. 1. *Herod was dead.* The wicked king, on whose conscience lay the death of so many sufferers, had now to meet death himself. His last days were passed in the extremest misery, sometimes in planning acts of cruelty, sometimes in fits of the deepest despair. His wealth and power could not save him from a frightful death. "There is no peace, saith my God, unto the wicked." His death teaches the solemn lesson, "Envy thou not the oppressor." Wickedness, however gilded by rank and riches, must end in misery, probably in this world, certainly in the world to come. Herod was dead; the Lord Jesus was yet an Infant. The two, so utterly unlike, are mentioned here together. For a moment they almost crossed each other's path—the old man and the little Babe; the Idumæan and the Son of David; the despot in all his barbaric splendour, and the Child who had been cradled in the manger; the mighty tyrant with his soldiers, and the helpless Infant with one only earthly protector; the one intensely wicked, guilty beyond the ordinary range of human guilt, the other Holiest of holies, gentle, loving, self-sacrificing beyond all that human heart can conceive. For a moment their paths almost met, and then they parted—the one to die in torture, in misery of soul and body, thirsting for blood to the last moments of his evil life; the other to live a life most holy and most blessed, and at the last to lay down his life, a spotless Sacrifice, for the sins of the whole world. Herod was dead: who would envy the pomp and luxury of a life doomed to issue in such a death? They carried him to his tomb in royal majesty; the corpse lay on a bier of gold adorned with the costliest jewels. It seemed a ghastly mockery; that pomp could not follow him beyond the grave, it could not help the poor soul that was gone. 2. *The call.* Again the angel's voice aroused the sleeping Joseph; again he recognized the word of God, and obeyed, as was his wont, at once. He took the young Child and his mother. Mary had suffered much; she was highly favoured; but those who are nearest to God are often called to pass through great affliction. She was in exile, far from home and country; she must have been in great distress and anxiety for the safety of the precious Child. She had trusted herself to God before: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord." Doubtless she trusted him always. He cared for her; he guided her. It is a comforting thought for anxious mothers. 3. *Nazareth.* (1) Joseph's fears. God had bidden him to go into the land of Israel; he went in faith and obedience. But he had our human weakness, our doubts and fears. God's grace does not remove the infirmities of our human nature; it helps us to resist them. Joseph heard that Archelaus had

succeeded his father in Judæa. His character was well known; he was like his father, cruel and suspicious. Joseph feared for the holy Child. (2) His dream. Again (so the Greek word seems to suggest) he sought counsel of God; again, for the fourth time now, God answered him in a dream. We mark Joseph's untiring watchfulness, his constant prayers, God's gracious answers. God's people must do their part; they must work and watch and pray. In all their difficulties they must come to God in prayer; he will guide and direct them, they may not doubt. But they must be, like Joseph, vigilant and careful; they must learn of One greater than Joseph to "watch and pray." They must try to live, as Joseph lived, in habitual intercourse with God. (3) His obedience. He might have wished to live at Bethlehem, where he and Mary were not known, where the holy Child was born; the city of David seemed the fit home for the Son of David. But there was reason to fear the tyranny of Archelaus. God guided him to Galilee; he returned to his old home at Nazareth. There the holy Child grew up to manhood. The first years of that wonderful life were spent in that little town, away from great cities; among the busy scenes of active life, in daily labour, in deep mysterious thought and constant prayer; in wanderings, perhaps, full of holy meditation, among those scenes of rare natural beauty, on those wooded hills with their wealth of bright flowers, with their fair, wide-reaching prospects. There he lived, a still, humble life, unknown to the great world; but, we may be sure, a life most beautiful and holy, a life which the angels of God watched with the intensest interest, with the deepest reverence. We may well be content to live quiet, common-place lives, unknown and unregarded; such was the early life of Jesus Christ our Lord. But in those early years, we cannot doubt, much of his great work was wrought. "By the obedience of One shall many be made righteous." During those long years of perfect purity and holy submission of will he obeyed the Law of God in our nature, as our Representative. He is our Wisdom and Righteousness and Sanctification; he is "the Lord our Righteousness;" his obedience is ours, if we abide in him. Out of those thirty years of silent obedience grew the three years of active work. Quiet persevering obedience in the ordinary duties of daily life is the best preparation for active work for God, and for the great emergencies which may from time to time occur in our lives. (4) The Nazarene. The prophets had spoken of the Messiah as the Branch (*Netser*) which should grow out of the roots of Jesse (Isa. xi. 1). The name of Nazareth itself was Netser, "the Branch." The prophets had also spoken of him as despised and rejected of men. He was the lowly Branch or Shrub, not the stately tree; he dwelt in Nazareth, which bore the same humble name, an unknown place, from which it was not thought that any good thing could come. The prophetic description was fulfilled; he was called "the Nazarene;" the same name has been given in contempt to his disciples. He was lowly in heart; let us learn of him the precious grace of lowliness.

LESSONS. 1. God will bring to pass the purposes of his love; wicked men cannot overthrow them. "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength." 2. Trust the little ones to God; he cares for them. 3. Be humble and gentle, like the holy Child.

## HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 1.—"*The days of Herod the king.*" This is more than a note of time. It cannot but strike us as a remarkable fact that Christ should have been born during the reign of the gloomy Idumæan ruler.

I. CHRIST COMES WHEN HE IS MOST NEEDED. Those were dark days when Herod made his Saturnine temper the spirit of a nation's government. His reign had been carried on with an external splendour and a vigorous attempt to please the Jews. But a heathen by nature, Herod was always suspected by the Jews in the midst of his pious Hebrew professions. Now, however, at the end of his life, his crimes had consumed what little good repute he had contrived to manufacture for himself. The nation was sick at heart, and the only solid hope left it was that cherished in the breast of the devout Jews, who, like Anna and Simeon, were "waiting for the consolation of Israel." It was the chill and darkness that precede the dawn. Then Christ came. No earthly events could shape a Christ; for the earthly circumstances were most adverse. He did not come to reward merit; for merit was rare in those days. But

the need was great, and it was simply the need of man that brought Christ into the world.

II. THERE IS ROOM FOR ANOTHER KING BESIDES THE EARTHLY RULER. Herod was still reigning, and yet the Christ came to set up his kingdom. The sovereign at Jerusalem naturally suspected the new-born King to be a rival to his throne. Most of the Jews would have shared his opinion if they had believed in Jesus, though they would have regarded the situation with very different feelings. But Christ did not come to sit on the throne of Herod, and we cannot think of him simply as the rightful Heir who will expel the insolent usurper. His kingdom is not of this world. Earthly monarchs rise and fall, and still he reigns. His is the kingdom of heaven set up on earth. There is a reign of life which they that hold the sword of external government cannot hinder. They cannot restrain its glorious liberty, nor can they reform its evils. The world wants a King who can rule in the realm of ideas, who can sway hearts, who can conquer sin. Therefore the apostles were commissioned to make known "another King, one Jesus" (Acts xvii. 7).

III. THE RULE OF CHRIST IS IN STRONG CONTRAST TO ITS EXTERNAL SURROUNDINGS. Christ and Herod—what a contrast the two names suggest! Yet they are the names of the two kings of the Jews of the same day. Force, selfishness, cruelty, characterize the degenerate visible rule. Truth, gentleness, love, mark the invisible spiritual rule. So it is always, though not necessarily in the same dramatic form. When we come to Christ and his kingdom we reach a higher level, we breathe purer air, we walk in the light. Then, though the days may be adverse and altogether unpropitious, we have reached what is above daily vexations, we have attained some of the peace of the eternity in which Christ lives.—W. F. A.

Vers. 1—12.—*The pilgrimage of the Magi.* The way in which these men acted throws a flood of light on their characters; at the same time, it opens up to us lessons of general application. The Magi are examples to us in their effort to find Christ, and in their conduct when they had found him.

I. THE SEARCH FOR CHRIST. 1. *Its origin.* The Magi had seen "his star in the East." This appearance was in accordance with the character of their own study and observation. God can use a variety of methods to bring us to Christ—the science of the naturalist, the literature of the book-student, the work of the business man. He even used the astrology of the Magi. 2. *Its method.* (1) The pursuit of knowledge already attained. These men knew their star, and to this they clung. We can best reach new truth by following the revelation already possessed by us. (2) A trust in heavenly guidance. The star in the physical heavens was regarded as a beacon from the spiritual heavens. In this case God permitted it to serve as such a beacon. Thus the guidance was from God. We must lift up our eyes to the heavens if we would see the way to Christ. (3) A use of earthly means. At Jerusalem the Magi consulted Herod, and he took counsel of the rabbis. The fresh star in the heavens did not eclipse the light of ancient Hebrew prophecy. This still had its sphere in discovering Bethlehem. Divine revelation does not dispense with human study. New lights do not extinguish old truths. 3. *Its character.* (1) An energetic search. The Magi set off on a long journey to find Christ. They did not wait for him to find them; they made it their business to discover him. Such a search deserves the reward of finding. Many do not know Christ because they will not take the trouble to seek him. (2) A persevering search. The Magi travelled far and pressed their suit, not resting till they had attained their end. The truly wise man will not abandon his search because of any amount of discouragements.

II. THE DISCOVERY OF CHRIST. At length the Babe was found. Every true seeker after Christ will be rewarded by seeing him. Such a discovery is full of fruitful issues. 1. *Its blessedness.* The Magi seem to have lost sight of the star during their anxious interviews with Herod at Jerusalem. When they were out in the country again the star reappeared; for the heavens are larger and brighter in the solitudes of nature than where they bend over the crowds of city life. It was a happy sight when the star reappeared, but only because this was the promise of the nearing sight of the infant Saviour. To reach him is to come to the heart's greatest joy. 2. *Its result.* The Magi opened their rich stores and presented them to the Child. They set out with the

object of worshipping him; this is the way in which they performed their intention. Their liturgy was an act of sacrifice. It is unworthy only to seek Christ for the sake of the good we hope to obtain for ourselves. He is worthy of adoration, and we can best express our adoration by service and sacrifice. Some will not measure the gift. He whose heart is on fire with devotion to Christ will not ask with what minimum will his Lord be satisfied; he will love to give his best. The Christian can now give to the babe Jesus in giving to one of his little ones (ch. x. 42).—W. F. A.

Ver. 1.—*The Wise Men from the East.* These Magi come to give their homage to Christ. Their own personal characters and circumstances enhance the value of their gifts.

I. HOMAGE FROM THE GENTILES. It is singular that St. Matthew, and not St. Luke the evangelist of the Gentiles, gives us this narrative of Gentile faith and adoration. Thus we see that all parties among Christ's true disciples recognized the great fact that the gospel was for the whole world. At the very commencement of Christ's life this was seen. Yet still the greater part of the world is quite ignorant of his very Name. Here is a reason for greater missionary activity.

II. HOMAGE FROM A DISTANCE. These men had come from a far country. They had made a long and tedious pilgrimage to Christ. None are so remote but that they may find Christ if they will truly seek him. Yet some who dwell in a Christian land are really further from Christ than some who are commonly reckoned as heathen. Surely Socrates was nearer to Christ than Cæsar Borgia.

III. HOMAGE FROM ANTIQUITY. These Magi represented the ancient Persian priesthood. But the old order of the Magi had been broken up, and many now took the name who were not in any recognized rank or office. Yet in the very degeneracy of the name it reminds us of its mysterious antiquity. The past looks forward to the future. Nothing in the past will satisfy the hearts of men. We may ransack antiquity, but we shall find there no substitute for Christ.

IV. THE HOMAGE OF SCIENCE. Evidently the Magi were astrologers. In old times all that was known of astronomy was mixed up with astrology, and all that was known of chemistry was liable to be confused by ideas of alchemy and magic. Nevertheless, this does not mean that nothing was known of the true sciences. Here we see the science of the day bowing before Christ. Science cannot be contrary to Christ if he is the Truth, for it is but accurate and systematized truth, and all truth must be harmonious. But neither science nor learning can ever be a substitute for Christ. The student cannot find the Bread of life in his books; and the man of science will not discover it in his laboratory. After all earthly attainments have been reached, the soul still needs Christ.

V. THE HOMAGE OF WEALTH. Tradition has called the Wise Men "kings." Certainly they were men of substance, as they brought with them costly gifts. We think of Christ as the Friend of the poor, but we have no right to narrow our conception of his sympathy to any one class of society. He is equally the friend of the rich, when the rich accept his friendship—*e.g.* Zacchæus. Moreover, the rich need Christ as much as the poor. The rich, too, have the privilege of giving to him from their wealth.—W. F. A.

Vers. 16—18.—*The Innocents.* This is one of the most heartrending scenes in all history. The questions which it suggests are mysterious, and some of them quite unanswerable.

I. HEROD'S CRIME. People have said, "This is impossible!" But Herod's character, as painted by the secular historian, shows him to be gloomy and morose in his later days and capable of almost any cruelty. We execrate the enemies of Christ as monsters of wickedness. Herod and Judas are names that make us shudder, and we think of their owners as half-demons. Yet the wickedness of their crimes is not unapproached in our own day. The slow murder of young children by starvation and ill treatment, simply to escape the cost and trouble of keeping them, or because their death will be a source of gain to their guardians, is worse than Herod's crime, because it is committed in cold blood and without the provocation of terror at the appearance of a dangerous rival which excited the jealous passions of the Idumæan prince. Then there is a slaughter

of the souls of young children, which in the sight of God is more cruel and deadly than the killing of their bodies. When fair young lives are blighted and innocent characters stained by vicious examples, a fate worse than death has overtaken them, and those who exercised the baleful influence have a very heavy account to answer for.

II. THE CHILDREN'S FATE. The death of young children is always a mystery. We cannot understand why innocent infants should be permitted to suffer great pain. It is a piteous sight to observe a baby-face drawn and pinched with agony. This is a very acute phase of the great mystery of suffering. It may be that greater evil in the future is thereby avoided. But even in that case the method of saving the children is terribly perplexing. Two points of light, however, emerge in the midst of the darkness of this mystery. 1. *The suffering of the innocent is vicarious.* These babes of Bethlehem have been regarded by a fond fancy as early martyrs for Christ. It was in his cause that they were slain. They died for Christ, as Christ afterwards died for men. 2. *The suffering of Christ's children is but the door to blessedness.* The hope of a future life lights much of the gloom of this scene. Holman Hunt's wonderful picture represents the murdered children just awakening to a new life as they are drawn after the infant Jesus with Mary and Joseph on their flight to Egypt—like a trail of rosy clouds.

III. THE DIVINE DESTINY. The murder of the children at Bethlehem was foreseen by God. It accomplished an ancient prophecy. This does not mean that God ordered it, but it shows that it could not frustrate God's purposes—purposes which were laid down in full knowledge of Herod's attempt to nullify them. Therefore Herod was doomed to failure. His guilt was not the less because his crime was useless, but his power as an enemy of Christ is thus shown to be quite futile. Nothing can ultimately frustrate God's great designs. Christ has come to conquer, and he will win the victory in spite of his foes. The first Herod was not allowed to touch him when it was essential to God's plan that he should live. The second Herod was permitted to have a hand in his death, but only when his time had come, and when the Divine destiny was fulfilled by means of the crime of slaying Christ.—W. F. A.

Ver. 23.—*The Nazarene.* We need not be troubled if we cannot find exact verbal precedents for the words here recorded. The idea that is suggested by the title "Nazarene" is apparent in more than one ancient prophecy; *e.g.* Isa. liii.

I. CHRIST SHOWED HIS CONDESCENSION IN APPEARING AMONG HUMBLE AND EVEN CONTEMPTIBLE SCENES. Nazareth was an obscure provincial town. Nathanael seems to have considered it to be a place with a bad reputation (John i. 46). Yet here our Lord spent the greater part of his life—more than nine-tenths of it. Here he was brought up as a Boy, no doubt attending the elementary synagogue school, and later working at Joseph's bench. Over the neighbouring hills he had roamed, and there he had learnt to love the flowers which abound in this highland retreat; there, too, he had been able to love his brother-men as he saw them in their daily work and in the homely society of the little town. He was not kept, like Sakya Muni, from all sights of misery until his adult age forced them on his notice. Sorrow, suffering, sin, and death must often have come before his eyes. He never shrank into selfish isolation, but took his place with his suffering brethren, quite naturally, with lowliness and perfect simplicity, not a spark of pretentiousness ever leading them to expect that he would subsequently put forth the highest claims.

II. CHRIST WAS NOT THE CREATURE OF HIS CIRCUMSTANCES. His genealogy showed that he was not a mere product of his ancestry; now his local surroundings make it apparent that he was not formed by the world about him. Had he been brought up at Jerusalem, or Athens, or Alexandria, or Rome, some might have tried to explain him as an expression of some great movement in the city of his early days. But no one can say that Nazareth could produce Christianity.

III. CHRIST WAS SEEN IN EXTERNAL LOWLINESS BEFORE HIS DIVINE GREATNESS COULD BE PERCEIVED. He was known as the Nazarene before he was recognized as the Son of God. Many heard his local name who never saw his true greatness. This local name was even a hindrance to some; they could not believe in the Nazarene. Thus it was no great advantage to have known Christ after the flesh. His own people were slow to believe in him. Nazareth treated him badly, tried even to murder him by throwing him from a precipice of the rock-built town. It is possible now to blind our-

selves to the true greatness and grace of Christ by looking too exclusively at his external life. We need to know Christ spiritually to enjoy the real blessedness of fellowship with him.

IV. CHRIST REDEEMED THE LOWEST THINGS THAT HE TOUCHED. He has made the title "Nazarene" one of honour, as he has converted the shameful cross into a token regarded with adoring gratitude. Now we take pilgrimages to the once obscure Nazareth as to one of the most sacred spots on earth. If Christ enters a lonely life he uplifts it and sheds over it a new and unexpected beauty. To him nothing is common or unclean. As the Friend of publicans and sinners, he does not only condescend to associate with degraded and neglected people; he lifts these people up to a new life.—W. F. A.

Vers. 1—12.—*The happy misnomer of the Wise Men of the East.* Once on a time our Saviour warned persons of far inferior privilege to our own that men would come from the east, and west, and north, and south, who should rise up in the judgment against them. The present passage of sacred history tells us most emphatically how men from the East did arrive very early, to upbraid, not in word, but with all the force of deed, though without any direct intention of doing so, those among whom, unexpected, unwelcomed visitors as they were, they arrived. The passage is crowded with suggestions of practical use; and, far from being novelties, they rather waken the echoes of our deepest heart and long-past experience and observation. From lesson and suggestion and reminders of our own experiences, to suggestion and lesson and reminders of our own experiences again, do the contents of this history lead us, some lying on the very surface and others deeper down. Let us observe, then, a notable instance of how—

I. THOSE WHO LIVE FURTHEST OFF FROM ZION ARE OFTEN THE EARLIEST AND MOST PUNCTUAL TO ARRIVE THERE. No city, town, or village church or school but has witnessed this phenomenon times without number. The very type of all these lesser instances, yet instances so deeply significant of spiritual fact and history, is here. Very little can be said to be known about these Wise Men of the East, of whom the passage speaks. It is not difficult to make more than one account of them, which might hold together very well and seem sufficiently consistent to pass for truth. We are reading well-attested inspired history, or we might imagine we had come across the path of the fable and entered the region, not of Eastern wisdom, but of Eastern myth. But it is not so. There *were* these men *called* wise indeed, likelier to have been *really* good, who ventured on the long fanatic pilgrimage, and who are the first to knock at Jerusalem's gates for the Messiah, at the temple doors—yes, and at the weaker, the trembling doors of King Herod's and many another heart of Jerusalem's regular inhabitants.

II. THE SPIRIT BLOWETH WHERE HE LISTETH. The impulse for these pilgrims from the East cannot be set down to anything less than the Divine. There are some things that are certainly known and that help to throw light on the substance, if not on the form, of what is here recorded. It is true that there was a rumour prevalent over the whole of the East, and not concentrated even as much as it should have been in Judæa, that the time was approaching for the appearance of a great King, a King of a small people—the Jews. He was to be One of whom great things should come to pass. There is nothing for a moment to hinder our supposing that the Wise Men had got hold of this vague rumour at least, and were working upon it. But were there not thousands of others into the hearing of whose ears the same things entered, yet to be powerless over their heart? By whom was this "thing secretly brought" to the Wise Men, and their "ear received a little thereof"? Perhaps "in thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men." It was brought by the Author of all good counsel.

III. THERE IS A CERTAIN HARMONY IN THE WORK OF THAT SPIRIT WHERE HIS PRESENCE REALLY IS, AND WHICH IS OFTEN VERY TRACEABLE. Perhaps we cannot say why the Spirit moved so remarkably those Wise Men of the East. It helps sustain our persuasion that he *was* the prime Mover when we observe the special guidance given to them. They were almost for certain Chaldeans, or Persians, or Arabians. Their very natural way of allusion to the star as "his star" receives accordingly all the easier explanation. They studied astrology, and thought divinely of their study. They

were accustomed, in the course of the stars, to inquire for and investigate, as they thought, the course of human events. It was an ancient opinion, and one very widely spread, that great events on earth were portended often by corresponding appearances in the heavens. This need not be called a merely heathen fiction. It *has* been so, incontestably, at times and on occasions most solemn. Was it not so, above all, at the Crucifixion? and again on occasion of the destruction of Jerusalem? And if we were to ask whether it were altogether likely that as such things have nevertheless very often been turned to the purposes of superstition, God would have used a star by which to guide these men, and have so seemed to encourage an *unreal science*, however real at times the fact might be, we may venture to reply that it *is* very conceivable, very possible. Because what God looks at is not knowledge, but honesty. What he abhors is not human ignorance, but human dishonesty. There is to-day plenty of honest superstition in Chaldea, Persia, Arabia, India, China; while, alas! it is perhaps equally true that the pure eye of God surveys a far larger total of dishonest superstition of the worst character in every country of enlightened Europe, in every county of noonday England. God's Spirit may often condescend to graft the sweetest, kindest of his light on very blear-eyed *intellectual* vision, so that the moral vision be to its possibilities single. And as true, at all events, as whatever else in this wonderful narration, is *this*—that from afar to Jerusalem, and from Jerusalem to "over where the young Child was," a star was the divinely given guide to the pilgrims. The Spirit that gave the impulse to good hearts used the method that very imperfect minds would follow and be able to appreciate while they followed it. Nor did the kind, the faithful Spirit desert "the work which he had begun."

IV. THE EARNESTNESS AND SINCERITY OF THE EARNEST AND SINCERE WILL OFTEN IN AN UNPREMEDITATED AND WONDERFUL WAY, CUTTING ACROSS THE PATHS AND VERY HIGH WAYS OF THE WORLD, SERVE TO STARTLE THAT WORLD AND INSPIRE IN IT THE DEEPEST ALARM. It was certainly so now (vers. 3—8). The simple journey and simple inquiries of these "men of love," whose steps were worship, lips peace, and hands adoring gifts, excite unparalleled commotion in the heart of the chiefest man of Jerusalem, and throughout the whole city. This is partly the very nature of truth, of whatever sort. It carries about with it a holy subtlety. And it is partly the gift of God's providence. And it is partly just one chosen method, in and of itself, of God's carrying on his work and reaching his ends, not by the power of might, but by that of goodness and simplicity. This excitement and commotion show at fewest *six* results here. *First*, in the fear wrought in King Herod and many others in Jerusalem. *Secondly*, in the ensuing summoning of the council. *Thirdly*, in the necessity entailed of searching the Scriptures. *Fourthly*, in the king's consulting of those Eastern pilgrims and forwarding them on their journey. *Fifthly*, in his committing himself to be beholden to *them* for what he considered vital information. And, *sixthly*, in clenching all by a profession of lying hypocrisy, the firstborn of his heart's stricken cowardice, when Herod lets out of his lips the words, "that I also may come and worship him." The one inquiry of the Wise Men was like a *six*-edged blade, or a *six*-bladed knife, for the work it did.

V. THE FINEST QUALITY OF FAITH, THE MOST PERSISTENT HOPE, AND ENERGY THE MOST ACTIVE AND ENTHUSIASTIC, HAVE BEEN FOUND TO COME OF THE KEENEST LONGING. It is astounding to observe the testimony which history bears to the amount of force of mind and force of achievement and triumph of every degree that follow strong longing, keenness of desire, impassioned wish. When these are, therefore, noble in sort and spiritual in their ends, earth has no grander heroisms to admire. So Jacob won the morning victory after the night-long wrestling against all the grandeur of *the Man* who would not tell his name, but who showed his own prerogative when "he blessed" Jacob (Gen. xxxii. 24—30). So the Syro-phœnician woman won the victory in argument and in fact against the condescending, the merciful Jesus himself. And what have we here? Amid men's even superstitious inquirings of the heavens, upon such as do so inquire with *honesty*, with good motive, with intense anxiety, and for want of better opportunities of knowledge, a star of veritable meaning and calm brilliance may rise. It is in God's sight a better thing to see men inquiring in some mistaken manner than not at all. These were men longing, inquiring, and, at great pains and outlay, seeking for the true King of men, the one Saviour of the world. The notion which they had

of that King and Saviour must needs have been very inadequate. It stood ticklish too, resting on the thin soil of dim tradition, standing on the slender footing of vague rumour. But because the footing of such knowledge, faith, and hope as they had was so slender, a little scanty soil on the side of the rocks the only apparent nutriment (as you may so often see in Alpine heights to wonder's own perfection, with the splendid pines of the precipice), therefore did this good plant shoot down its roots with keener appetite, and clave to the rock itself. Granted that these men were heathen, and superstitious heathen; that with minds in large measure darkened, and with hearts undelivered into the freedom of the newest truth, "they worshipped the host of heaven," the sun and moon and stars, and "beholding the sun when it shined and the moon" walking in its chaste brightness, "their heart was secretly onticed," as Job describes the scene, "and their mouth kissed their hand;" that they belonged to the very company of "star-gazers, astrologers, and monthly prognosticators," whose weakness to save God had himself challenged, and of whose ways, as so utterly heathenish, God had at least warned his own people by the mouth of Jeremiah, saying, "Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of the heavens; for it is the heathen who are dismayed at them . . . the customs of the people are vain . . . be not afraid of them, for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good;"—let all this be granted, yet nevertheless let us not despise what, manifestly, God did not despise—the gropings of those in darkness, who longed for light, and inquired for it and travelled far to seek and to find it. Let us not despise the infant often falling and spreading trouble and consternation all around, but who is most sincerely striving to walk uprightly. We have but to centre attention on this—that through intense longing, with little to inform or to encourage it, they were inquiring and seeking, though they inquired not with the right instruments nor sought in the most chosen fashion. What symptoms these of better things to come! of highest life not expired, and of a tremendous advance for the better, for that life beyond the grave! The conduct of these Wise Men of the East was counted worthy to find a place, long as time should last, on the page of the New Testament. Persist in seeking, and the Lord will rise on you. He will send enlargement of heart, growth of intelligent earnestness, and the persuasion that, guided by him first, you shall find yourself at last guided safely *to* him.

VI. A TRUE FAITH IS A SIMPLE DEVOTION. When the Wise Men had found the young Child and his mother, they fell down and worshipped him; they opened their treasures, and presented their gifts to the Child—gold and frankincense and myrrh. And with this they are content. They do *not*, emphatically *not*, worship the mother, nor present to her gifts. They have longed, have sought, have found, what kings and prophets of ages and centuries had desired, and in vain—and they have found. A Divine contentment takes possession of them, and, still under the gracious guidance which had led them hitherto, "they depart into their own country another way," who can doubt, not merely gladder men, but gladder with good reason, holier men? They have found the right worship, and their hearts have worshipped. Misnomer for them in a hundred aspects is their title of Wise Men, yet in one aspect so true as to counterbalance all the rest; for no wisdom equals the wisdom of simple, fervent, seeking goodness.—B.

Vers. 13, 19, 22.—*The providence that befriended the earliest life of Jesus.* Three times in this chapter, as well as once in the preceding (ch. i. 20), do we thus read of the intervention of particular Divine directions given to Joseph in the interest of the infant Jesus. The grand head under which events of this kind must seek and find their classification is that of *providence*. The next greatest fact to creation is providence, without which creation itself would soon have proved a still-born thing, or some monstrosity. The objections that have been sometimes felt, sometimes urged, against particular providences, do but betoken a feeble hold upon the real nature of providence. They incontestably lie *in pari materiâ*, and must be granted to be in somewhat closer relationship, at all events, than the interpositions called miracles and the general course of the so-called laws of nature. The very same hand that ministers the one ministers and rules the other in both instances. As surely as "a thousand fall at our side, and ten thousand at our right hand," *seen*, more than those numbers fall *unseen* also. As surely as we owe it to God's goodness that we are saved from the comparatively few

dangers we see and are cognizant of, we owe it to that goodness that we are saved from an immensely larger number unseen, undreamt of. What appears to us as the extraordinary interventions of Divine goodness and mercy are in no wise so extraordinary as respects the quality of the goodness and mercy, as in the fact that the whole matter of them lies, for some reason or other, disclosed and patent before our eyes. Notice, therefore, that—

I. THE NECESSITIES OF HUMAN LIFE, IN VIEW OF ITS WEAKNESS AND ITS NO FORESIGHT, ARE SUCH AS TO REQUIRE THE CONTINUAL MINISTRY OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

II. THE ADVANTAGE OF HUMAN LIFE IS INFINITELY CONSULTED IN THE INTERVENTION OF THAT PROVIDENCE IN SUCH SHAPE AND MANNER AS SHALL MAKE IT STRIKINGLY APPARENT.

III. THOUGH SOME DIVINITY UNMISTAKABLY HEDGED IN THIS WONDERFUL, IMPERILLED, GLORIOUS LIFE OF JESUS, YET, AT PRESENT AT ALL EVENTS, NO SPECIAL DIVINITY HEDGED IT IN. No "*mark*" was placed on Jesus to designate him as the Favourite of God and of angels. Neither his Person nor his head only were really enveloped in a halo. He is befriended by providence, and faithfully befriended, but (1) only to the extent of his need, and (2) only in the same kind of way as innumerable others. His earthly parents must take all care, all precautions, all toilsome journeys, all vexatious home-leaving and country-leaving, if he is to be *safe*.

IV. DEEP INDICATIONS LIE IN ALL THIS OF THE MOST REAL HUMANITY OF JESUS, AND OF HIS UNFEIGNED, OBEDIENT TAKING OF HUMAN NATURE AND HUMAN LOT.—B.

Vers. 16—18.—*A notable instance of the vicarious in the human lot and in suffering.* The great desirableness of reading Scripture and nature *alike*, observant of the facts of each, refusing to disguise the facts of either, attentively following them as far as may be possible, and, if this be not far enough to conduct to the vindication of *the facts* themselves, reverently storing them, as the things that await explanation. Therefore—

I. TIE ATTENTION TO THE FACT THAT THE PRESENT SAVING FROM DANGER OF THIS ONE LIFE, THE LIFE OF JESUS, WAS, IN LITERAL TRUTH, THE INVOLVING IN DESTRUCTION A LARGE NUMBER OF OTHER LIVES INNOCENT AS THE LIGHT, AND THE CAUSING OF INFINITE GRIEF AND WAILING TO MANY, MANY MOTHERS.

II. ALLOW FULLY THE FACT THAT GOD KNEW THIS, FOREKNEW IT, AND PERMITTED IT.

III. RECALL THE FACT THAT THE ACT OF GOD IN THIS MATTER CAME FIRST; THAT IT WAS IN ITSELF A RIGHT ACT, NAY, WAS THE RIGHT THING TO DO UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES PRESENT; WHILE HEROD'S PASSION AND MOST CRIMINAL DEED CAME AFTERWARD, SECOND IN THE SERIES, AND WERE INTRINSICALLY AND IN EVERY WAY UNJUSTIFIABLE.

IV. SHOW THAT ALL WHICH IS HERE RECORDED AS TAKING PLACE AMOUNTS TO A VERY VIVID DEED-PAINTING OF VERY, VERY MUCH WITH WHICH WE ALL ARE BUT TOO FAMILIAR IN HUMAN LIFE. BY THOSE WHO CANNOT FORESEE, FOREKNOW, THE RIGHT AND THE GOOD ARE TO BE DONE, MUST AND SHALL BE DONE; AND THE RESPONSIBILITY OF CONSEQUENCES RESTS ELSEWHERE, WHEREVER THAT ELSEWHERE MAY BE.

V. POINT OUT THE SLIGHT CLUE THAT THIS PASSAGE AFFORDS TO THE PROBABILITY OF A COMING VINDICATION OF THE BITTEREST VICARIOUS SUFFERING, THAT SHOULD SATISFY ALL, AND BE ACQUIESCED IN NOT LEAST BY THE SUFFERERS THEMSELVES.—B.

Vers. 1—23.—*Childhood of Jesus.* I. HEROD AND JESUS. The king and the Babe; earthly might and spiritual power. This contrast comes continually in view throughout the life of Christ, but never more strikingly than here. Depict the apparent helplessness of the young Child when confronted with the relentless and crafty hostility of Herod. The restless, suspicious jealousy of the old king, and the guileless, unconscious innocence of the Child. The selfish cruelty of the despot, and his ever-increasing misery, contrast with the self-sacrificing love and the calm peace of the spiritual King. The results of Herod's reign, and the results of Christ's reign. And yet how difficult to see the harvest in the seed! how difficult to discern between apparent and real glory! and how hard, even when we have some understanding of the difference, to choose for ourselves the glory which is attained by self-sacrifice and which makes no appeal to worldly ambition!

II. HEROD AND THE MAGI. 1. Two classes of inquirers after Christ—the well-

intentioned, who seek him that they may do him homage; the evilly disposed, who strive to acquaint themselves sufficiently with his history to direct their assaults upon him. Two classes of critics of the Gospels—the malevolent and the divinely led; the jealous and the frankly admiring; the destructive and the reverent. Christ excites curiosity and inquiry in all. His life stirs ceaseless controversy. Two currents—of hope and of hatred—set towards him without intermission. He is the great Test of men, "set for the fall and rising again of many." By their thoughts of him, their judgments passed upon him, their bearing towards him, men reveal their own nature. By their conduct towards Christ, their acceptance or refusal of him, men show whether their tastes are spiritual or earthly. 2. Means by which inquirers are led. The astrology of these Magi was probably not sound from the point of view of science; indeed, it is almost impossible for us even to understand their calculations regarding the star. But God used their ideas, fanciful, mistaken, or partly well grounded, to lead them to the truth. "Instead of making tirades against the imperfect, he speaks to us in the language we understand, even if it express his meaning very imperfectly, and guides us thereby to the perfect truth. Just as he used astrology to lead the world to astronomy, and alchemy to conduct it to chemistry, and as the revival of learning preceded the Reformation, so he used the knowledge of these men, which was half falsehood and superstition, to lead them to the Light of the world" (Stalker's 'Life of Christ,' p. 16). Where a true heart is earnestly longing for light, it is dealt with according to its capacity, and led by that which it will attend to. Notice might here be directed to the appearance of this law in the method of revelation—the law of accommodation, which requires that regard should be had to the condition of those to whom a revelation is to be made. An American writer alludes to it in the following terms: "The faults of the Old Testament are, as Herder says, the faults of the pupil, not of the teacher. They are the necessary incidents of a course of moral education; they are the unavoidable limitations of a partial and progressive revelation. If God chooses to enter upon an historic course of revelation, then that revelation must be accommodated to the necessities, and limited by the capacities, mental and moral, of each successive age. Otherwise revelation would be a wild, destructive power; a flood, sweeping everything away, and not the river of life. We cannot suppose that the Almighty can pour the Mississippi river into the banks of a mountain brook. He can begin, however, with the springs and the brooks, and make in time the broad Mississippi river."

III. HOMAGE OF THE MAGI. They are Gentiles and sages; they are aliens, and belong to a school of experts in science; but they use their knowledge to glorify Jesus. They offer gifts symbolic of his royalty, and they themselves represent the attraction felt by all races towards the Christ. This King has blessings for all; and from the first he is claimed by those afar off.

IV. RETIREMENT IN EGYPT. "The flight into Egypt was no mere expedient of rescue, but is, on the contrary, a moulding factor of continuous influence in Christ's life, giving to the subsequent stream of his fortunes a quite novel character and direction" (W. G. Elmslie, in the *Expositor*, vi. 401). It formed the necessary break between the miraculous birth, with its accompaniment of homage, and the quiet boyhood and youth, in which Jesus could grow up as other boys and youths did. After this flight we hear no more of angelic announcements, prophetic songs, signs in the heavens, or the homage of mysterious strangers; but the life of the Boy falls into the ordinary course, and runs on unnoticed and unknown. Had it not been so, he could not have shared the ordinary human lot. Had he still and throughout been recognized as superhuman, the object of his life would, so far, have been rendered impracticable. But the danger to which he was exposed by Herod's jealousy, the warning which his parents thus received, and the obscurity in which they consequently kept their great Charge, secured the conditions necessary for our Lord becoming in all points like his brethren.—D.

Vers. 1—10.—*The star.* Luke mentions the occurrence of a grand celestial illumination celebrating the nativity of Jesus, which was witnessed by Jewish shepherds; Matthew here records another heavenly sign, discerned by Gentile scientists. Such phenomena—severally seen by Jew and Gentile, by peasants and by scholars, by persons in humble station and by those of wealth and standing—authenticated this,

viz. that the great event so celebrated concerns all sorts and conditions of men. We have here especially to consider the star which denoted Christ (see Rev. xxii. 16), whether viewed as a portent, a disturber, or a guide.

I. AS A PORTENT. 1. *A star is the emblem of a prince.* (1) So the sign was interpreted by the Magi. "Where is he that is born *King* of the Jews? for we have seen his *star*"—his emblem. Herod could not be credited with refined spiritual discernment, yet even he accepted at once the justness of their inference. (2) The "*Star* out of Jacob" is, in Balaam's parable, explained to be a "Sceptre," or King, destined to "rise out of Israel" (Numb. xxiv. 17). The ambitious monarch of Babylon would "exalt his *throne* above the *stars* of God," or reigning kings; so would he be "*Lucifer*, son of the morning," brightest among the stars or kings (Isa. xiv. 4, 12, 13). And the overthrow of monarchies is described as the falling of stars from the (political) heavens (Isa. xxxiv. 4; Joel iii. 15, 16; Matt. xxiv. 29; Rev. vi. 12—17). (3) The propriety of the symbol may be seen in the elements of (*a*) elevation; (*b*) conspicuousness; (*c*) splendour; (*d*) rule, or influence over the earth (see Gen. i. 14—19). 2. *This star indicated an extraordinary Prince.* (1) It was not an object seen only in description in a treatise on symbols. It was not a commonplace phenomenon. (2) It was an *unusual* apparition. It was not a "fixed star;" for it moved. Not a recognized planet; it was too near the earth. Not an ordinary electrical meteor; it blazed too steadily. Then, as a supernatural star, it betokened a supernatural Prince. 3. *It denoted the Christ of God.* (1) The time was ripe for the advent of Messiah. (*a*) The sceptre, tribe rod, or tribal magistracy, was visibly departing from Judah (Gen. xlix. 10). (*b*) The family of David was reduced to a humble condition, and all but extinct (cf. Isa. vii. 15 with ch. iii. 4; see also Isa. liii. 2). (*c*) Daniel's weeks were fast running out (Dan. ix. 24). (2) Hence the prevalent expectation: (*a*) In Israel (see ch. xxiv. 5; Luke iii. 15; xix. 11). (*b*) Amongst the nations. This is testified by Suetonius, Tacitus, Cicero; also in sundry Oriental traditions. (3) The Magi seem to have shared in this expectation. They were generally familiar with Hebrew traditions. They appear to have been particularly acquainted with Balaam's prophecy. Possibly the son of Beor had been one of their predecessors—one of the ancient Magi of their own country. (4) "His star;" the star peculiar to him. Evidently so, for no other prince sustains a miraculous character. The false Christ in the time of Adrian took the name of *Barchochab*, "the son of a star." Note: The Wise Men profited by discerning the signs of their times. The neglect of prophetic study is the reverse of creditable to Christians (see ch. xvi. 3; 2 Pet. i. 19—21; Rev. i. 3).

II. AS A DISTURBER. 1. *It troubled Herod.* (1) By showing the advent of One whom he thought to be his political rival, who might deprive him of his throne. Jesus was "born King of the Jews;" Herod was an Idumæan usurper. He was too carnal to discern that the heavenly star betokened a heavenly kingdom. Jesus had no design upon his paltry seat. Note: Christ retributively rebukes the wicked through their own disordered imaginations. "The most general enmities and oppositions to good arise from mistakes" (Bishop Hall). (2) Herod's trouble stirred up the devil in his nature. He instantly took the resolution to rid himself of his rival. Note: Sin would murder any virtue that opposed its ambition. Virtues are representatives of Christ, who is the Impersonation of all virtues in their perfection. (3) Herod carried out his resolution with exquisite hypocrisy. Note: The most frightful wickedness is that concealed under the mask of piety. Sharpers join Churches and seek Church office to use the influence so acquired to fleece the simple and confiding. A Herod may even deceive wise men; he cannot cheat God. 2. *Jerusalem was troubled.* (1) Herod's courtiers were concerned for their places as their master was for his throne. Only the unscrupulous could aid the tyranny of such a ruler. In the kingdom of Messiah persons of that type could have no place. Note: What trouble will be amongst those who have the spirit of the courtier when the great King comes to the judgment! (2) But why should the citizens be troubled? They were troubled "with" Herod, aware of the moods of the tyrant, and dreading some tragedy. He had murdered the brother and grandfather of his wife; he had murdered Mariamne, his wife, and her mother Alexandra; he had despatched two of his own sons, etc. The slaughter of the innocents which followed justified such an apprehension. The tyrant was shown up when he had collected the principal Jews, and had them shut up in the circus at

Jericho, intending them all to be slain at his death, that a general mourning might be secured. We should bless God for our civil and religious liberties. (3) In Jerusalem there were those who "waited for the Consolation of Israel" (Luke ii. 25, 38). To these the news of the advent of Messiah would bring joy. He is not the trouble but the peace of the righteous. But how few were they? How few now, even in the Church, are "looking for" the (second) appearing of Christ? (4) The majority of the citizens would be troubled because of their moral unfitness for the kingdom. The wicked ever have been, and still are, troubled at the thought of the fulfilment of Scripture. How many Christian professors would be fearfully troubled did those signs now appear in the heavens which are to presage the great day of judgment (ch. xxiv. 29, 30)!

III. AS A GUIDE. 1. *By it the Magi came to Jerusalem.* (1) We do not affirm that it moved before them in the heavens to point their way to Jerusalem. This does not appear to have been the case. But the appearance of the star in the East set them upon trains of thought which determined them to go to Jerusalem as the place most likely in which to get information concerning the King of the Jews. God does not work miracles to supersede the uses of reason. (2) The Magi were apprized as to the *event* of the Nativity; now they desired to know its *place*. The more we know of Christ the more we want to know. The Magi supremely desired to find *him*. With knowledge *concerning* Christ we should never be satisfied until it leads us to *himself*. Has the Day-star arisen in your *hearts*? (3) In Jerusalem they got instruction from the Scriptures. The Sanhedrin (see Bloomfield, *in loc.*), convened at the instance of Herod, turn up the Prophet Micah, who makes Bethlehem of Judah the favoured place (Micah v. 2). Thus, by the highest authority amongst the Jews was this most important public testimony borne, viz. That Jesus is the Christ. And this, too, through the instrumentality of a tyrant who had no such design. So God makes the wrath of man to praise him. So does he make the selfishness of the wicked subserve his own benign purposes. 2. *By it they were guided to Christ.* (1) Now the Magi are on their way to Bethlehem. What for? To find in a somewhat populous city the right Babe. They journeyed in faith, trusting that he who had hitherto prospered their way would guide them to the end. Note: Those who follow up the leadings of providence will never lack a providence to lead them. (2) Behold the relief to their perplexity! The familiar star is again in sight. Lo, it moves! They follow. It stands over a dwelling. Those brightening scintillations proclaim that the heavenly Royalty is *there*. Note: It was not reason that guided the Magi to Christ. Reason had its province, and will ever have it. But the effectual guidance, first and last, was supernatural. "No man can come to Christ except the Father draw him" (see John vi. 44, 45, 65). (3) "Exceeding great" was the "joy" of the Magi when they saw the star. It certified the Christ. Certitude to the truth-seeker is bliss. The bliss is intense as the truth is noble. Here the certainty had respect to Truth itself, essential Truth, all truth. Wise, indeed, were the men, and wise are those still, who find this philosopher's stone that transmutes all things into good. Good is better than gold.—J. A. M.

Vers. 11, 12.—*Gentile worshippers.* Guided by the providence of God, the devout scientists from the East, who inquired in Jerusalem for the King of the Jews, are arrived at Bethlehem. Now they enter the house of the carpenter. Let us also enter, that we may see and worship with them.

I. WHAT DO THEY SEE? 1. *They behold the King of the Jews.* (1) He is denoted by the *star*. Some think it entered the dwelling and formed as a nimbus round the Infant's head. This notion was ancient, and has suggested to painters their practice of depicting a glory surrounding the head of Jesus. The evidence in favour of this opinion is not very clear. The star sufficiently indicated the Prince of Israel as it stood blazing in the atmosphere directly over his dwelling. No palace was ever so honoured as this humble residence. The "*morning* star" indicates the place and rising of the sun. (2) He is denoted by the *prophet*. The passage cited from Micah by the Sanhedrin, together with the star, declared the *Babe* of Bethlehem to be the "*Ruler* whose goings forth have been from the days of *eternity*." The greatness of Christ is conspicuous in his gentleness. (3) He is denoted by the *angel*. For the Magi were warned of God in a dream—presumably by the angel of the Lord who afterwards in a dream appeared to Joseph. Note: The testimony concerning the Messiahship of Jesus

is ample (cf. Deut. xix. 15; ch. xviii. 16). Unbelief is as perilous as it is defenceless (see Deut. xvii. 6). 2. *They see him veiled in humanity.* (1) His humanity was real. "The young Child." Born as other children, though very differently conceived. "With his mother." Nourished as an ordinary infant. (2) Note in the truth of the humanity of Jesus: (*a*) The reality of our interest in his mission and work. (*b*) The reality and perfection of his sympathy with us. (3) So let us be encouraged (*a*) to open all our anxieties to him; (*b*) to trust him with a perfect confidence. 3. *They see Immanuel in humiliation.* (1) He is the "King of the Jews;" but, in this humble dwelling, in what contrast to the magnificence of Solomon! Note: True grandeur is *spiritual.* Mind is above matter. (2) How much greater still is the contrast! The "King of the Jews," in the carpenter's house, attended only by his poor mother; and the King of glory, in the heights of heaven, attended by his myriad retinue of angels! (3) Let us read in this (*a*) how humanity is dignified in Christ; (*b*) how in him the Divine royalty of man is and may be asserted amidst circumstances of reverse. 4. *They see a heavenly vision.* (1) Whether God warned them by his Shechinah or by his angel, when in their dream or trance, in that revelation their faith was richly rewarded. (2) Their obedience to the heavenly vision also became a means to the important end of preserving Christ from the fury of Herod. So are faithful defenders of Christ and his cause still the honoured instruments of preserving his life in his Church. (3) Their obedience secured also their own safety. For had they rather obeyed Herod and returned to him, they might have fallen victims to his tyranny under a construction of treason in acknowledging a rival King of the Jews. The way of duty is safety as well as honour.

II. How do they worship? 1. *They worship Jesus as the King of the Jews.* (1) "They fell down," etc., put themselves into that attitude which Orientals are accustomed to assume in presence of royalty. (2) "Opening their treasures," etc. It was also customary in the East to bring gifts to kings. Note: (*a*) "The powers that be are ordained of God," and should therefore be religiously respected. (*b*) Kings exist for the order and happiness of states, and should therefore be religiously sustained in the due exercise of their functions. 2. *They worship Jesus as the Christ of God.* (1) They did not journey from the distant East to pay respect to an ordinary prince. The star had marked this prince as extraordinary and supernatural. Prophecy also had declared him to be Divine. (2) These Gentiles, in coming to the King of the Jews, claimed an interest in his kingdom. They did not honour Herod as they honoured Jesus. Neither did they pay religious worship to Mary. (3) The humble circumstances in which they found the Christ did not discourage their faith. Now, since nations have come to acknowledge him, faith has become fashionable. 3. *They worshipped him with gifts.* (1) They presented *themselves.* This, in the first place, is most important. The *living* sacrifice. The *reasonable* service. (2) They consecrated their *substance.* "Gold," etc. (see Ps. lxxii. 10). Some will give to Christ personal service, but withhold property. Others will give property, but withhold personal service. The Magi gave both. Christ is worthy of all homage. 4. *Their worship was typical.* (1) The mention of "gold and frankincense" refers us back to Isa. lx. 6, where the gathering of the Gentiles is foretold (see also Hag. ii. 8). "The respect paid to Christ by these Gentiles was a happy presage and specimen of what would follow when those who were afar off should be made nigh by Christ" (Henry). (2) The shepherds of Bethlehem found Christ before the Magi found him. The gospel came "to the Jew first." But, though Bethlehem was but half a dozen miles from Jerusalem, the Magi do not appear to have been accompanied by any of the Sanhedrin or citizens. The Gentiles received the gospel when it was rejected by the Jews. Heathendom is accepting it as Christendom is rejecting it. "Those nearest to the means are often furthest from the end" (cf. ch. viii. 11, 12). 5. *Their gifts were symbolical.* (1) Some think the "gold" was given as tribute to the "King;" the "frankincense" in recognition of his *Divinity,* because God is honoured with incense; and the "myrrh" in recognition of his *humanity,* and that as man he should *die,* because myrrh was used in embalming (see John xix. 39). (2) Perhaps their purpose was to confess Christ as *universal* King. They presented *themselves* as representing the "kingdom of men," and the whole animated creation at whose head man stands. The "frankincense and myrrh" would represent the *vegetable* kingdom. "Gold" in like manner would represent the *mineral.*

Christ, who carried his miracle-working into every kingdom of nature, is destined to receive universal homage (see Eph. i. 10, 20—23; Phil. ii. 9—11; Col. i. 16; Rev. iv. 11). (3) Or perhaps they may have designed to express simply their faith in Jesus as the Christ. Thus they came seeking the "King of the Jews," and now they give him "gold," or pay tribute to him as such. But then the King of the Jews is the King Messiah. Their faith in Jesus as such would be expressed in the "myrrh," which was a leading ingredient in the composition of the holy anointing oil (see Exod. xxx. 23). The ointment in composition they could not present, for it would have been unlawful for them to compound it. But further, since all excellences in perfection existed in Christ, they would express this in their donation of "frankincense;" for this was a principal ingredient in the holy perfume, viz. that which common persons must neither compound nor use (Exod. xxx. 34). The Bridegroom, in the Canticles, is described as "coming out of the wilderness, like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant" (Song of Sol. iii. 6). The cloud of the Shechinah, the holy oil, and the holy perfume are here together associated to describe the qualities of Christ.—J. A. M.

Vers. 13—15.—*System in providence.* It were a truism to say that there is wisdom in providence; for otherwise providence could not be *Divine.* In that wisdom there is what Paul describes as a manifoldness (Eph. iii. 10). And this appears in a system of developments and correspondences, evincing at the same time unity of plan. The text furnishes striking illustrations. It suggests—

I. THAT THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL WERE CHRIST TYPICAL. 1. *For Hosea's allusion is historical.* His words are these: "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt" (Hos. xi. 1). The reference plainly is to the bringing forth of the people of Israel from Egypt by the hand of Moses and Aaron. Moreover, it is a paraphrase upon the words of God's message to Pharaoh (Exod. iv. 22, 23). From the history we learn: (1) That the suffering of God's people is no certain proof of his displeasure. (2) That it may evince his love as that of a Father to a child who needs discipline and education. (3) That when love's ends are served the discipline will end. 2. *Hosea's words are still prophetic.* (1) That they contain a mystery is clear from the manner in which they speak of the nation as a person. This is the converse of the manner in which the same prophet makes the real Jacob or Israel stand for the nation descended from him (cf. Hos. xii. 3—6). (2) The evangelist explains the mystery as containing a prophecy of Christ. In doing this he is countenanced by prophetic analogies. Thus Jehovah, speaking evidently of Messiah, says, "Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified" (Isa. xlix. 3). Again, "Behold my Servant, whom I uphold; mine Elect, in whom my soul delighteth" (Isa. xlii. 1). This the LXX. construes thus: "Jacob my servant, and Israel mine elect;" while in the Chaldee it is, "My servant the Messiah." This paraphrase is clearly justified by the context. 3. *So the history in the Law likewise is prophetic.* (1) Dr. Alix remarks that the author of 'Midrash Tehillim,' on Ps. ii. 7, says, "The mysteries of the King Messiah are declared in the Law, the Prophets, and the Hagiographa. In the Law it is written (Exod. iv. 22), 'Israel is my son, even my firstborn.' Rabbi Nathan, in 'Schemath Rabba,' on those words speaks thus: 'As I made Jacob my firstborn' (Exod. iv. 22), so have I made Messiah my firstborn; as it is said (Ps. lxxxix. 27), 'I will make him my Firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth.'" (2) The perils, then, in which Israel typified Christ, viz. as they are presented in the passages before us, are: (*a*) His Sonship. (*b*) His election. (*c*) His sojourn in Egypt. (*d*) His return and advancement to dignity and glory.

II. THAT GOD BROUGHT CHRIST TYPICAL OUT OF EGYPT. 1. *The system of providence is seen in presages.* (1) The sojourn of Israel in Egypt was presaged in the personal history of Abraham their father. For early in that history "there was a famine in the land [of Canaan]: and Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there." In that land he found not only asylum, but generous treatment, and acquired property. Afterwards "the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai Abram's wife;" and these plagues induced Pharaoh to send him away (Gen. xii. 14—20). (2) That in all this there was an allegory Abram might have learnt from his subsequent experience (see Gen. xv. 11—16). The horror of darkness was evidently a

premonition of the sufferings his seed were destined to pass through in the dark land of Egypt (see Gesenius, under מן). 2. *So it was seen in their accomplishment.* (1) Joseph's dreams were prophetic sketches of what afterwards became history. (2) The fulfilment of the dreams of Joseph was also the accomplishment of the presages of Abram. The famine in Syria. The provision of plenty in Egypt in connection with which Joseph, by the good hand of God upon him, came into power. The settlement of Israel in Egypt. His sufferings there when the services of Joseph were forgotten. The plaguing of Pharaoh. The Exodus.

III. THAT GOD BROUGHT CHRIST LITERAL OUT OF EGYPT. 1. *Correspondences are seen in the agents.* (1) We note a correspondence of *names.* In each case we have a "Joseph," and moreover a "Joseph the son of Jacob." (2) We have also a correspondence of *character.* The son of Rachel was eminently a righteous man, and so likewise was the husband of Mary. Both were alike distinguished for their unswerving loyalty and obedience to God. (3) There is, moreover, a correspondence of *dreams.* God honours those who honour him. (*a*) As the latter Joseph by his alliance with Christ came to converse with angels, so have all who are spiritually related to Christ intercourse with Heaven (cf. Heb. i. 14; xii. 22). (*b*) If the reason of God's communicating with men in dreams be that in sleep men's minds are disengaged from the world, the lesson is that if we would come under special heavenly influences we must call off our affections from earthly things. 2. *Correspondences are seen in the accidents.* (1) "Flee into Egypt." God can make the worst places serve the best purposes (cf. Rev. xii. 16). (2) Jesus, like Israel of old, was in Egypt for asylum. "For Herod will seek the young Child to destroy him." God knows the purposes of his enemies (cf. Isa. xxxvii. 28). (3) Jesus was nourished there evidently by the hand of God, as Israel was in the days of the earlier Joseph. The carpenter was so poor that Mary had to offer doves instead of a lamb (cf. Lev. xii. 8 with Luke ii. 24). He had no difficulty in gathering up his effects to set off for Egypt the same night in which he had his orders. "If rich people have the advantage of the poor while they possess what they have, the poor have the advantage of the rich when they are called to part with it" (Henry). But how, then, could this Joseph subsist his sacred Charge in a strange land? He who gave the years of plenty to the ancient Joseph for the nourishment of his typical son, placed the gold of the Magi in the hand of his namesake for the preservation of the Son of his love. (4) There was in the days of Israel's sojourn in Egypt a slaughter of the male children of that people by order of Pharaoh, from which Moses, the future redeemer of the nation, was wonderfully spared. Who does not see in this a prophecy of the deliverance of Jesus from Herod's slaughter of the innocents? (5) The retribution for this came upon Pharaoh in the death of his firstborn when the firstborn of Israel was spared, and eventually upon himself also in the destruction at the Red Sea. So Herod's death followed quickly upon his massacre of the innocents. And as the overthrow of Pharaoh was coincident with the escape of Israel, for on the other shore of the Red Sea he was out of Egypt; so the death of Herod was the signal for the calling out of Egypt of the true Son of God. The end of the wicked is death. They have everything to fear from time. The good have everything to hope from it.

IV. THAT GOD WILL BRING CHRIST MYSTICAL OUT OF EGYPT. 1. *The Church of true believers is the mystical Christ.* (1) So Paul describes the Church as the body of which Christ is the Head (Rom. xii. 4, 5; 1 Cor. x. 16, 17; Eph. i. 22, 23; iv. 15, 16; v. 23, 30; Col. i. 18, 24). The head and the body make up one Christ. (2) Hence the Church is called Christ (1 Cor. viii. 12; Gal. iii. 16 with ver. 29). (3) Agreeably to this "Israel after the flesh," which we have seen to have been a type of Christ, is often made a type also of the "Israel of God," or true Christian Church. 2. *What is predicated of Christ is mystically predicable of his Church.* (1) The mystical Egypt is that state of moral darkness and bondage in which we are by nature and former practice. (2) The mystical Pharaoh, or Herod, is Satan, who is the tyrant of the moral house of bondage. So the persecuting powers of the world, which have ever been instinct with the spirit of the old serpent, are described under the figure of a dragon—a monster whose zoological type is the crocodile of the Nile (Rev. xii.); fittingly so, since the Egyptian was the first really formidable political incarnation of Satan. (3) Deliverance through Christ from the bondage of sin and tyranny of Satan is compared to that of Israel from Egypt. It is also compared to the coming up of

Christ from that land, as in the text. (4) The early and brief sojourn of Jesus in Egypt was a presage of the early but too transient Christianizing of the land of the Pharaohs. As there was a very flourishing Church in Egypt in the early Christian ages, so may there be again in the generations of the future (cf. Deut. xxiii. 7; Isa. xix. 24, 25). Providence and grace are interwoven in wisdom. Never let us murmur against, evermore let us trust, that wisdom which is manifold and profound.—J. A. M.

Vers. 16—18.—*Providence in evil.* Josephus does not mention this massacre. The event occurred ninety-four years before he wrote; it was but one of the many frightful atrocities of Herod, and, not being apparently connected with any political event, was easily passed over by him. Lardner, however, cites Macrobius, a heathen author of the fourth century, who refers to it thus: "When he [Augustus Cæsar] heard that among those male infants above two years old which Herod, the King of the Jews, ordered to be slain in Syria, one of his sons was also murdered, he said, 'It is better to be Herod's hog than his son.'" The event is also thus noticed in a rabbinical work called 'Toldath Jesu:' "And the king gave orders for putting to death every infant to be found in Bethlehem." The history cannot be doubted, but we are now concerned with its lessons. It teaches—

I. THAT MORAL EVIL IS PERMITTED THOUGH NOT ORDAINED OF GOD. 1. *It cannot be ordained of God.* (1) That would be to approve what his goodness must abhor. Given his infinity, he must be infinitely good. Infinitely evil he cannot be, for ample proofs of his goodness surround us. Partially good he cannot be, for then where would be his infinity? (2) His abhorrence of the atrocity of Herod is graphically set forth in the prophetic description of Rachel's wailing (Jer. xxxi. 15—17). Ramah was one of the "borders" of Bethlehem—perhaps marked the limit or radius of the tragedy. It belonged to Benjamin (Josh. xviii. 25). Rachel, the mother of Benjamin, and ancestress of many of these bereaved mothers, was buried in the hill overlooking the area of the slaughter (Gen. xxxv. 19, 20; xlviii. 7), yet within the "border of Benjamin" (1 Sam. x. 2). She is here finely represented as moved with horror in her very tomb, and rising thence, coming forth and wailing in the wailing of her daughters. Her "voice," in theirs, is also "heard," viz. by the God of judgment (cf. Jas. v. 4). Note: The connection of the spiritual world with this is intimate. If there be joy in the presence of the angels of God over a sinner repenting, may there not be grief amongst departed spirits over the evil deeds of men (cf. Heb. xii. 1)? 2. *Moral evil is the work of evil moral agents.* (1) Moral agency the actors must possess to constitute their actions evil in the moral sense. Physical evil is quite another thing, essentially different. (2) Such a moral agent was Herod. "Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the Wise Men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth and slew," etc. Note: (*a*) Wicked men are never so gratified as when they can make wisdom subservient to their ends. Absalom, in his unnatural rebellion, sent for Ahithophel (2 Sam. xv. 12). (*b*) They are "exceeding wroth" when the wise elude their grasp or disappoint them of their prey. (c) They do not see that they are "mocked" of *God* (cf. Ps. ii. 4; xxxvii. 13). (3) Such agents were the murderers Herod employed. He was moved by bloodthirst and jealousy; they were moved by love of gain and fear of the tyrant's resentment. (4) Such an agent is Satan. He is "the evil one," viz. whose spirit is wholly evil. He was here especially active in his uncivil "enmity" against the "Seed of the woman" (Gen. iii. 15). 3. *God is not necessarily chargeable with what he permits.* (1) That God permits the existence of moral evil is indisputable. The fact of its existence proves this. Omnipotence could instantly annihilate every evil being. For the permitting of evil God is therefore responsible, viz. to himself. (2) But whether the permitting be good or evil must be determined by the reasons for it. If the reasons be good, then the permitting, even of moral evil, must be good. (3) Of the quality of these reasons God is himself the best judge. Some of his reasons he has disclosed. Thus without such permission there could be no scope for moral freedom. Other reasons he reserves to be revealed in due time. (4) Since God is responsible only to himself, and since his ways to us are past finding out, it is alike foolish and impious in us to attempt to judge him or cherish hard thoughts of him.

II. THAT THE PHYSICAL EVIL IS BOTH PERMITTED AND ORDAINED OF GOD. 1. *It is permitted to afflict the morally innocent.* (1) The babes murdered by Herod suffered

without any provocation on their part given. God never ordained or commanded that they should thus suffer. But he permitted it; for he could have hindered it. He that interposed to save Christ might also have saved the lives of the infants that perished for his sake. He might have cut short Herod's life by two years, for he died within two years of this massacre. God is not wanting in resources. (2) "Then was fulfilled." This is the note of permission. In cases where God actively interfered, or gave effect to an ordination, the phrase is, "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord," etc. (ch. i. 22; ii. 23). 2. *It is ordained for the punishment of sin.* (1) God has constituted the physical and moral in the universe to act and react each on the other. Thus the body and soul stand mutually related for action and reaction. And through the body the soul acts upon the outer world and suffers its reactions. (2) The reactions of moral goodness are physically beneficial, while those of moral evil are correspondingly injurious. So by natural sequence sin is physically punished. 3. *It is ordained as a warning against sin.* To this end physical evil is made emblematical of the moral. (1) Injuries and privations of the body represent corresponding injuries and privations of the soul—mutilations, lameness, blindness, deafness, etc. (2) Diseases of the body represent corresponding diseases of the soul—leprosy, palsy, fever, etc. (3) Diseases of the mind represent maladies of the heart—demoniacal possession, insanity, idiocy.

III. THAT GOOD IS ORDAINED AND EVIL MADE SUBSERVIENT TO IT. 1. *Good was ordained in the creation of moral beings.* (1) Angels had a "first estate," which was good; for it is contrasted with the evil estate into which some of them fell. (2) So man was made "upright." God himself pronounced this work of his creation "very good." (3) These as moral beings had freedom. This also was good. For without this moral freedom what would they have been? Machines, vegetables, animals, imbeciles. (4) This freedom did not necessitate the moral evil which it rendered possible. Angels might all have kept their first estate, as some did. Our first parents might have resisted their tempter. (5) The sinner, therefore, is responsible for his sin. 2. *Good was ordained in the redemption of sinners.* (1) To this good end Jesus was born, was preserved from the fury of Herod, offered himself as a sin Sacrifice. Sinners are justified through faith in his blood. So evil is made subservient to good. (2) To this end the Holy Spirit is given, by whose gracious working believers are sealed and sanctified. So further good comes out of evil. (3) To this end also Jesus is enthroned in heaven. Having triumphed over all forces of evil, powers of darkness, in his cross, and over death in his grave, he is able to destroy Satan in us and deliver us from the last enemy, that we may rise and reign with him in glory. 3. *The subserviency of evil to good will appear in the issues of the judgment.* (1) Innocent sufferers will then be compensated. We have heard the wailing of Rachel; let us now listen to the words of her consolation: "Thus saith the Lord; Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy [the land of death]. And there is hope in thine end [the *Ahareth*, or last period of the nation], that thy children shall come again to their own border" (Jer. xxxi. 16, 17). In the resurrection they shall receive the martyr's compensation, the inheritance and the crown. (2) Incorrigible sinners will come forth to their doom. Herod and his myrmidons will be confronted by the innocents. In their punishment God will vindicate his justice, and it will be a moral to the universe. Note: There is no hope for the sinner out of Christ.—J. A. M.

Vers. 19—23.—*Providence in prophecy and history.* Matthew, perhaps more constantly than any other New Testament writer, notes fulfilment of prophecy in events of history. His Gospel, which was the first written, was primarily intended for the Jews, who were familiar with this class of evidence, and would naturally look for it. The evidence is intrinsically very important, amongst other things evincing a Providence all-wise and all-powerful.

I. THAT CANNOT BE A CHANCE WHICH IS CIRCUMSTANTIALLY ACCURATELY FORETOLD. 1. *Vague utterances are outside this argument.* Such are those which may be interpreted either way. Such were those of the heathen oracles. Such are not those of Scripture prophecy. 2. *Guesses also are out of the question.* (1) These may occasionally come true, viz. when they concern things of usual occurrence. (2) That they

should constantly come true is incredible. The ratio of probabilities is mathematically determinable. (3) That guesses should constantly come true when hazarded in relation to things extraordinary and supernatural is next thing to impossible. But the subjects of Scripture prophecy are these very things.

II. THE PROPHECIES OF SCRIPTURE, WHILE THEY CONCERN THINGS UNIQUE, ARE MINUTELY CIRCUMSTANTIAL. 1. *Those concerning Messiah answer this description.* (1) Never before his appearance was there any person to compare with him. Never since. He was unique in all points. (2) Yet was he very fully described in prophecy. As the stream of time flowed on since the first utterance (Gen. iii. 15), feature became added to feature by successive seers, until the collective testimony presents a proto-biography wonderfully complete. 2. *Witness the sample respecting his infancy here given.* (1) His incarnation by a virgin mother of the family of David (cf. ch. i. 22—24 with Isa. vii. 13, 14). (2) The occurrence of this stupendous event in the town of Bethlehem of Judah (cf. vers. 5, 6 with Micah v. 2). (3) The appearance of a star by which the Magi were guided in accordance with Balaam's parable (see Numb. xxiv. 15—19). (4) The slaughter of the innocents (cf. vers. 16—18 with Jer. xxxi. 15—17). (5) The deliverance of Jesus from that slaughter, which prophecy required, as he had to fulfil many predictions there written (see Luke xxiv. 44—48). (6) The flight into Egypt (cf. vers. 13—15, 19—21, with Exod. iv. 22, 23; Hos. xi. 1). (7) The residence in Nazareth of Galilee, in connection with which he came to be called a Nazarene. Wonderful is the credulity of that unbelief which can see nothing in such a tissue of evidence. 3. *But where in prophecy is he described as a Nazarene?* (1) We may find this in the law of the Nazarite taken as a prophecy. (2) Therefore also in those Nazarites, such as Samson, who must be viewed as typical persons (see Judg. xiii. 5—7; xvi. 17). Note: Jesus was in spirit, not in the letter, a Nazarite (see ch. xi. 18, 19). (3) We may also find it in those prophecies which set forth the humiliation and odium to which Messiah was to be subjected. For the name "Nazarene" became a term of reproach (cf. John i. 14; see also Ps. xxii. 6; lxix. 6—10; Isa. liii. 3, 12). (4) If "Nazarene" be derived from נזר, this word signifies not only "to *separate*," but also "to *crown*." When Pilate in scorn set over Jesus the inscription, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews," Jesus was then in derision also *crowned*, viz. with *thorns*. God makes the very derision of his enemies to praise him.

III. THINGS NOT FORETOLD ARE YET FOREKNOWN. 1. *The knowledge of things foretold implies a foreknowledge also of things to be historically interwoven with them.* (1) Thus a foreknowledge of the slaughter of the innocents implies a foreknowledge also of Herod, his character, and resources. (2) The time of Herod's death also must have been foreknown, since the return of Jesus from Egypt, a thing foretold, was historically made contingent upon it. (3) The succession of Archelaus to the throne of Herod must likewise have been foreknown, for the retirement of Jesus into Nazareth of Galilee, a thing foretold, was historically made contingent upon this. Archelaus, as Ethnarch (by courtesy called King) of Judæa, would be likely to inherit his father's jealousy and caution, as he was well known to have inherited his cruelty and tyranny (see Josephus, 'Ant.,' xvii. c. 10). 2. *Thus the foreknowledge of things interwoven with things foretold implies a corresponding foreknowledge of things interwoven with these.* (1) This follows by the same rule. So in turn of things interwoven with these. Thus a perfect knowledge of anything must involve a perfect knowledge of everything. (2) Such, therefore, is the intelligence of Divine providence as witnessed in the evidence of prophecy. Such intelligence may be implicitly trusted for guidance. Such guidance should be earnestly sought.

IV. THERE IS A PROVIDENCE OF HISTORY AS WELL AS OF PROPHECY. 1. *God is not simply an Omniscient Spectator.* (1) He was more than a Spectator when he inspired his prophets. (2) He is also a Worker in history. 2. *Instances of his direct interference with the factors of history are here recorded.* He interfered: (1) To prevent the Magi from returning to Herod. (2) To prompt Joseph to fly into Egypt. (3) To direct the return of the holy family from Egypt. (4) To instruct their retirement into Galilee. (5) To provide, viz. in the gifts of the Magi, for their subsistence. 3. *This intervention was necessary to the fulfilment of prophecy.* (1) The same Being who inspired the predictions wrought in their accomplishment. He let none of the words of his prophets fall to the ground (cf. 1 Sam. iii. 19; ix. 6). (2) If prophecy

reveals the providence of *knowledge*, history no less truly reveals the providence of *power*.

V. THE PROVIDENCE OF HISTORY, LIKE THAT OF PROPHECY, IS ALL-COMPRISING. 1. *Since God works in events necessary to the fulfilment of prophecy, he must work in all events.* (1) For what events are there that are not tending to the fulfilment of prophecy? The subjects of prophecy are race-wide in their range, and extend along the whole course of time. (2) The central line of events, more prominently delineated in prophecy, are historically interwoven with other events, these with others, and so forth. So if the interference of a providential Worker is required in respect to the central line, his working will be required from the centre outwards to the very bounds of action. Hence: 2. *There is a supernatural energy in the commonest events.* The case may be stated thus: (1) The universe is *dual*, consisting of matter and spirit. (2) These complements act and react upon each other. (3) The whole is under one supreme control, infinitely intelligent, possessing illimitable resources of wisdom and efficiency. As Omniscience surveys all things, Omnipotence works in all things. (4) In some things it pleases God to *show* his knowledge, as in prophecy; in some, his power, as in converting prophecy into history. Where he does this we call the event supernatural and miraculous. (5) But in truth there is as much of the supernatural, *i.e.* as much of the presence and working of God, where he does not show it in deviations from the usual, as where he does so deviate. Therefore we may: (1) Rejoice evermore. (2) Pray without ceasing. (3) In everything give thanks.—J. A. M.

Ver. 2.—*Born a King; died a King; lives a King.* The term "king" suggests the three forms in which the Kingship of Christ may be presented: (1) the King he was to be; (2) the King he seemed to be; (3) the King he proves to be. For introduction show what associations of kingship could have been in the minds of the Eastern Magi. The idea of the uprising of world-conquerors had been made familiar by the stories of Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander, and Cæsar; and we have the authority of the pagan writer, Suetonius, for the fact that "an ancient and constant opinion had become prevalent all over the East, that it was contained in the fates that at that time certain ones arising from Judæa should gain universal dominion." No doubt it is largely true that prophecy tends to fulfil itself, but in this case the fulfilment took such shape as most clearly indicated Divine control and direction. With this idea in the minds of the Magi, they would easily be guided by their astrological observations. What they looked for was, in some sense, a universal King; and that, in the fullest sense, Jesus was.

I. THE KING HE WAS TO BE. There was nothing evidently kingly about the circumstances and surroundings of this Babe. Yet the Magi expected him to turn out a King. But what sort of a King was it expected that he would be? Here follow three lines: 1. The line of Scripture prophecy, noticing all figures of Messiah as King. 2. The line of Scripture, and after-Scripture, history. Especially dealing with Daniel's presentations, and showing how the success of the Maccabees fixed the form of the Messianic hope. 3. The line of world-conquering kings outside Scripture history. It is well to fix very clearly that the King universally expected was a delivering, conquering, redeeming King; and such Jesus was, in high, holy, spiritual senses.

II. THE KING HE SEEMED TO BE. Hanging on a cross, an inscription over his head, "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." His Kingship seemed a miserable, hopeless failure; a claim which men scorned with a cross. For that inscription was Pilate's scorn of the pretensions of his spiritless prisoner, and Pilate's insult of those who had made him act as if the claim were of importance. What would you say of Christ's Kingship, judging by the appearances?

III. THE KING HE PROVES TO BE. "Exalted a Prince and a Saviour." 1. The first of men in every department is king in that department. 2. From our Lord's answer to Pilate, we learn that the truth-bearer is a king. 3. Our Lord dealt with sin and its physical result, disease, in truly kingly fashion. 4. Because his work is accepted, he is entrusted with mediatorial sovereignty, is King of the spiritual world, King of souls, dispensing pardon to sinners and grace to saints.—R. T.

Ver. 2.—*The individuality of Divine leadings.* "We have seen his star in the East."

God leads each one in his own way, but the way he chooses is the precisely appropriate way for each one. Simple shepherds, with Scripture associations, are led by angel-testimony and angel-song from the night-skies. Wise Magi, with the astrological associations, are led by the varying appearances of planets and stars in the clear Eastern heavens. Angels, or stars, they do but fit to the differing needs of men. And so is suggested to us the important truth that, while God's saving dealings with men are always *one*, their forms are variously adapted to the condition and disposition and ability of each. And the exceeding grace of God is seen in that adaptation.

I. DIVINE LEADINGS. Two things: 1. They are direct Divine operations. Whether we see the hand in them or not, the hand is there. 2. They employ instrumentalities; but, in the very simplicity and naturalness of them, we often miss the Divine working that is at the heart of them. It is easy to see nature-forces making conjunctions of stars to guide Magi, and miss seeing the Divine overrulings that make nature-forces work the Divine will. Whether it be shepherds, Magi, or pious Simeons, the Divine leading of men is *to Christ their Saviour*. What God is doing with men is bringing them to Jesus.

II. THE INDIVIDUALITY OF DIVINE LEADINGS. No one else was led just as the shepherds were, and none just as the Magi were. God knows each one, reckons for each one, and deals with each one. There is no being lost in a crowd. There is no fear of unskilful dealing because our case is not precisely understood. We come into the world one by one; we go out one by one; and all the while we are in the world we are simple *units* before God. Illustrate this individuality of Divine dealings from Bible cases of conversion, such as (1) Jacob; (2) Manasseh the king; (3) Nicodemus; (4) the Woman of Samaria; (5) Paul; (6) Eunuch of Queen Candace; (7) Lydia; (8) Jailor at Philippi. Each a typical, perhaps, but certainly an individual, case.

III. THE GRACE OF THE INDIVIDUALITY OF DIVINE LEADINGS. It secures fittings and fitness. In each of the above cases show how precise the adaptation was. Show the grace which is always displayed in having things to fit. Show that the grace is proved by the tender consideration for the individual which such adaptation involves. Appeal to our experience of grace adapted to *us*.—R. T.

Vers. 5, 6.—*The honour of a city.* "Out of thee shall come a Governor." It is not its architecture, or its situation, or its history, or its polity, or its wealth. It is its men. A city is ennobled by the heroes, the poets, the race-leaders, who are born in it. This leads some seven distinct cities to lay claim to be the birthplace of Homer. One of the later psalmists gives expression to this truth, when he says, "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. . . . Of Zion it shall be said, This man and that man was born in her; and the Highest himself shall establish her" (Ps. lxxxvii. 3—5). Bethlehem was but a little and insignificant town, scarcely more than what we should call a village; not even important for its situation, since it was not on any of the main caravan-routes. And yet it stands out most prominently of all cities in Palestine, save Jerusalem, the capital. Everybody knows Bethlehem. Every traveller must go and see Bethlehem. We should smile at the woeful ignorance of a traveller who did not know enough to compel him to go to Bethlehem. Both the Old Testament and the New give prominence to it, and we may properly call it the *twice-honoured city*. Descriptions of it, as it was in our Lord's time and now, are at very easy command in modern 'Lives of Christ' and books of travel.

I. HONOURED AS THE BIRTHPLACE OF DAVID. David is the hero of Old Testament history. He is the proper founder of the Jewish monarchy; and is specially commended because he founded it on strictly theocratical lines. He is worthy of honour (1) for his personal character on the whole; (2) for his kingly rule, with some marked exceptions; (3) and he is specially interesting because his reign was distinctly typical of the Messianic reign. Jerusalem gained honour as the "city of David," Bethlehem as his birthplace. Showing interest in a birthplace is a common sign of our interest in him who was born there. And we even expect to find relations between the genius of the man and the genius of the place.

II. HONOURED AS THE BIRTHPLACE OF DAVID'S GREATER SON. Trace the orderings of Divine providence which brought Mary to Bethlehem. Martin Luther was born unexpectedly at an inn, when his parents were journeying from home. Talk, how

you may, the praises of cities, call them "beautiful for situation," record the struggles for liberty of which they may have been the centres, still you must leave the supreme honours for "little Bethlehem." The "Lamb of God," the "Saviour of the world," was *born there*.—R. T.

Ver. 8.—*Man's guile and God's omniscience.* Herod's fears we can well understand. He was a usurper, a foreigner, and, indeed, belonged to the Idumæan race, which was specially hated. The one thing he had to fear was the birth of a native prince, round whom the hopes of the nation might gather. He was so continually full of fears that his life was a misery to himself and every one who had to do with him. He had learned to be prompt, vigorous, and unscrupulous whenever he felt in the least alarmed, and he had often gained his end by low cunning. In connection with the visit of the Magi, he was set upon scheming to avert disaster. He had no precise knowledge about the expected Messiah; but that must be obtained, and it could best be obtained by subtlety and deception. Explain his scheme.

I. MAN'S GUILE MAY ATTEMPT TO MASTER GOD'S OMNISCIENCE. See how far man's guile may succeed. It may master his fellow-men. Herod outwitted the Magi, and outwitted the "chief priests and scribes." The Magi proposed to do his bidding; the "chief priests and scribes" answered him correctly, treating him as if he were as sincere as he seemed. And all this meant Herod trying his guilefulness upon God. He was going to manage things otherwise than as God proposed. Men did not read his wicked heart; he would act as if God did not read it either. He meant by his skilfulness to frustrate the Divine purposes. Men may try to push their plans against God. They may be clever, guileful, persistent; but the strong figure of the psalm may be used, "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision." Abundant are the illustrations of conduct like Herod's; at first, seemingly effective and successful; but it does not really succeed. It never is possible for the wicked to do more than *make their attempt*. "Man proposes, God disposes."

II. GOD'S OMNISCIENCE MASTERING MAN'S GUILE. God's omniscience is (1) fact-reading, (2) heart-reading. God knew what Herod *said;* but, going beyond Magi and scribes, God knew what Herod *meant*. So Divine action was guided by complete knowledge, and guileful Herod had no chance. God told the Magi what Herod had in his heart, so they never brought him any word. God bore away the young King into a place of safety, and all Herod's guile proved in vain. We can work *with* God, and reach good success. He who works *against* God must feel God's overmastering.—R. T.

Ver. 11.—*Worshipping a Babe.* The word "worship" is a confusing word. It is applied to human beings, and it is applied to God. It means, "offer homage as to a king;" it means, "reverently acknowledge as Divine." Really the word seems only to mean, "acknowledge the *worth* of." We speak of magistrates as "your worship." We speak of the service of the Churches as "worship." But when we use the word carefully, we limit it to "paying Divine honours," "venerating with religious rites." We cannot, however, assume that these Eastern Magi worshipped the Babe in the higher, spiritual sense, recognizing in him the manifested God. We have simply that anticipative homage which was due to one who would prove to be a great King. Their attitude implies the Eastern homage offered to a King.

I. WORSHIPPING THE BABE WAS AN ACT OF FAITH. They could not worship on the ground of what the Babe actually was. He was only an ordinary world's Babe, with commonplace cottage surroundings. There was nothing whatever to suggest kingly claims. The Magi could only have worshipped on the ground of their belief in his royalty and future kingship; and that belief must have been founded on evidence that was kin to them, and satisfactory to them. It is not necessary that what satisfied them should also satisfy *us*. If they were convinced, their conduct in worshipping the Babe was fully justified. Show that faith must be founded on evidence, but the evidence must be relative to the capacity and associations of each individual. We are responsible for our beliefs. And, whatever they are, we are bound to *act* upon them. If we believe that Christ is a born King, then our place is with the Magi, worshipping him. What, then, do you believe concerning Christ?

II. WORSHIPPING THE BABE WAS AN ACT OF LOYALTY. That is, it meant acknow-

lodging this King as their King, and declaring themselves ready to enrol themselves in his kingdom whenever that kingdom should be established. And this certainly is the true and full significance of the worship of Jesus, as now the exalted and spiritual King. It is the declaration and reaffirmation of our loyalty. Every act of worship should be an act of consecration and devotion, a reassertion of our full readiness to serve the King.—R. T.

Ver. 11.—*Representing ourselves by our gifts.* Traditions have gathered round this story. The Magi are said to have been three. Their names are given—Melchior, Caspar, and Balthazar. Their gifts were threefold; each had a symbolic meaning, and each was the representative gift of the individual who presented it. The details of the tradition are given in Farrar's 'Life of Christ.' No great value can attach to it, but it does emphasize the facts on which we now dwell, that the gifts of the Magi were *their own*; were *representative*; were representative strictly *of themselves*. These gifts may be shown to have been (1) from their own country; (2) of their own property; (3) by their own selection; (4) expressing their own meaning; and (5) therefore they strictly represented and carried *themselves*.

I. FROM THEIR OWN COUNTRY. And so representative of their particular associations and interests. See the precision of the gifts selected by Jacob for Pharaoh's vizier (Gen. xliii. 11): "Carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices, and myrrh, nuts, and almonds." These were the products of the district. Arabia and the East are the spice-countries, and from them caravans bore myrrh and frankincense for trading in other lands. So the Magi seemed to bear the homage of their country.

II. FROM THEIR OWN PROPERTY. Illustrate by the noble spirit of David, who would not give, for the service of the Lord, what cost him nothing, and who generously devoted of his own private property—of his "own proper good." People are ready enough to give away common property, on committees; but the same people are mean enough when claim is made on their own property. Yet there never can be any real nobility in the gift unless we can say, "It is *mine*, and I give it to you."

III. BY THEIR OWN SELECTION. No doubt the question was anxiously discussed, "What shall we take?" They would be anxious to find something suitable, but each would have his idea of suitability. They were going to offer homage to a King: so all might agree that a present of gold would be wise. But, then, it was a Babe: so it seems they agreed at last on carrying the scents and spices which would be useful in tending the Babe. Whether those imaginative Easterns attached symbolical ideas to their gifts does not appear. Such ideas have been attached for them. Myrrh was for the human nature, gold for the King, and incense for the Divinity. Gifts ought to carry thought.

IV. EXPRESSING THEIR OWN MEANING. Though all meant one thing, each gave a special individuality and tone to the meaning. Let several join in a gift, and the gift will really be manifold, and not just one.

V. CARRYING THEMSELVES. A gift is nothing save as it represents the giver. Give what we may to God, the gift, to be acceptable, must give ourselves.—R. T.

Ver. 12.—*The blending of the ordinary and the special in Divine dealings.* These men *had been* led, by the ordinary exercise of their minds, on certain natural, if unusual, phenomena which they had observed in the heavens. But now they were led by special Divine intervention and direct Divine communications. This is the fact that seems to be suggestive. That very remarkable blending of the ordinary and the special, the natural and the miraculous, we find reappearing everywhere in the Divine dealings with men. A most interesting book might be made of illustrations of the strange limitations of the miracles. God will be found to work miracles when *we* can hardly see a pressing need for them, and to refrain from working miracles just where *we* think they would be most effective. Illustrate: Jacob takes every precaution against the anger of Esau, and God gives him supernatural strength. Israel knocks down the quails that fly low because of their weary flight over the sea; and gathers miraculous bread from heaven and water from smitten rocks. St. Paul raises the stunned, perhaps dead, Eutychus, but leaves Trophimus sick at Ephesus, to the chance

of healing remedies. With these hints the Bible story will yield abundant instances, and we shall come to see that there is a method of Divine wisdom in this strange form of Divine dealings.

I. GOD NEVER SUPERSEDES MAN. In the sense of doing for man what man can do for himself. An idea may prevail that God may desire to make a show of his power, and so he may put man aside and seem to say, "Let me do it." But we need not think thus of God. Man's powers, in relation to man's sphere, are the Divine arrangement, and may be left to their free working. Let man think, observe, plan, and carry out as he can; in all the ten thousand things of life he will be left alone of God. No man need look for miracle. Its intervention can be in no human ordering; it depends on Divine omniscience and sovereignty. When the supernatural can wisely supersede the natural God alone can decide, and his decisions may well seem to us strange.

II. GOD EVER SUPPLEMENTS MAN. That is the place of miracle. In the Divine idea something is good for man, but either man is not ready enough, or skilful enough, or prompt enough to attain it, and therefore God graciously intervenes and supplements man's weakness. In connection with the text, Divine action came in because *prompt action* was necessary; there was no *time* for the ordinary human forces to work the right result in.—R. T.

Ver. 18.—*Vicarious sorrow.* "Rachel weeping for her children." It seems to be a most strange Divine permission that the innocent babes of Bethlehem should be slaughtered. One asks, but the question cannot be answered, "Why did not some miraculous hand preserve those innocents from Herod's shameless device?" We can only say that God's interventions are always held in the strictest limitations. They just effect their end, but interfere as little as possible with the ordinary course of human affairs, with the consequences of the passions and the sins of men. God's working is as a thread running through all the piece of human life, but it does not interfere with the making of the piece. But this hardly meets the difficulty we feel here. This calamity for the Bethlehem children comes out of the Divine providence that led to Jesus being born in Bethlehem; and so we feel as if a kind of responsibility rested on God for the safety of the Bethlehem children. To answer this we are thrown back upon the principle of *vicariousness* which runs through all life-associations. Everywhere men are bearing burdens for others, and it is only when the calamity is very terrible, or imperils life, that we feel or express any great surprise.

I. THE VICARIOUS SORROW OF THE ACTUAL MOTHERS. As the inhabitants of Bethlehem could not have been more than two thousand, there were not more than twenty babes slain; but that was sorrow in twenty homes and woe in twenty hearts. Vicarious parent-sorrow is effectively revealed in David's wail over the slain Absalom, "Would God I had died for thee!" This opens up a full consideration of the way in which mothers vicariously bear every pain, disability, or trouble of their children. And mothers are but the highest types of the relations which knit man to man all the world over, so that no one man can ever suffer, but all others within reach vicariously suffer with him. From this, rise to conceive of the vicarious sorrow of the heavenly *Father*.

II. THE VICARIOUS SYMPATHY OF THE RACE-MOTHER. Such Rachel is conceived to be. Poetically—but poetry is the deepest truth—Rachel is conceived as disturbed in her tomb near Bethlehem, by her sympathy with the stricken mothers and her sorrow for the slaughtered children. The race-mother is finely conceived as actually blending sympathetic tears with the bereaved mothers of Bethlehem, who are vicariously bereaved for Messiah's sake.—R. T.

Ver. 22.—*Fears qualifying faith.* Joseph was a good, God-fearing, obedient man. He had clear intimations of the will of God concerning him and his. And yet the directions were not so explicit as to interfere with the exercise of his own judgment. He was to return, with the Child and his mother, into the "land of Israel;" but *where* in the land of Israel, he was not told. It might seem as if he was expected to return to Bethlehem, and this appears to have been taken into consideration. He had faith in that Divine direction he had received. He proceeded to obey. He started out on his journey. But he received news, as he approached the land of Judah, that Archelaus was Governor of Judæa in place of the dead Herod; and the character of Archelaus was

well known. He would scheme to kill any one whom he heard of as claiming to be a native-born prince. So Joseph feared, and let his fears decide his faith, or rather the obedience to which his faith inspired him.

I. OUR FEARS MAY INTERFERE WITH OUR FAITH. Then we may refuse to do, or neglect to do, what we believe to be our duty, and our fears may create practical unbelief. Where a man's way is clearly and precisely defined by God for him, his fears should have no influence on him. After-considerations must never be permitted to interfere with the declaration of the Divine will. If Joseph had been precisely told to return to *Bethlehem*, he would just have had to go there, even though the reports about Archelaus had frightened him out of his senses. This truth is illustrated in the story of the prophet from Judah given in 1 Kings xiii.

II. OUR FEARS MAY GUIDE THE OBEDIENCE OF OUR FAITH. This we have in the text. Joseph's fears about Archelaus are the things used by the Divine providence for guiding him to the particular part of the "land of Israel" where he was to settle. So we learn the Divine control and use of all the forces and faculties, as well as of all the circumstances, of a man's life. Divine direction does not undertake for a man; it leaves him still to take counsel with his own judgment and his own fears. God's gracious working of his providences, through man's mental movements and character-movements and subjective influences, has never yet been systematically thought out.—R. T.

Ver. 23.—*Nazareth as our Lord's training-school.* Ancient biographies take no account whatever of child-life. Manhood was not seen to be a product of child-influences. Probably the small esteem in which woman was usually held led to a small esteem of her influence on children. More probably the philosophizing which loves to *trace causes and developments* is a modern mental practice. We sometimes wonder that no records remain of the Child-life of Jesus, but it is to be remembered that no records of the child-life of any ancient hero have been preserved. It is especially a modern notion that the *place* where a child is brought up may have an important influence on the moulding of his character; all the more if he be a sensitive, poetical, child. This idea gained embodiment in Hugh Miller's 'Schools and Schoolmasters.' And in all recent biographies this element of training is taken into full account. All our Lord's Childhood and Boyhood were spent at Nazareth; and we may trace the influence of such things as the following, using our own associations, but carefully qualifying them by due regard for the Eastern and the Palestinian associations.

I. THE INFLUENCE OF SMALL-TOWN LIFE. Familiarity with everybody. Local prejudices. Impressions unvaried, and persistently renewed.

II. THE INFLUENCE OF ISOLATED-TOWN LIFE. Peculiarity of Nazareth was that it was out of the way; apart from the great currents of life; secluded. This may tend to nourish a *meditative* mood, when there is active-mindedness. Life is slow. Time is plentiful. Men can dream, think, pray.

III. THE INFLUENCE OF JEWISH-TOWN LIFE. At this time patriotism took one special feature. It spent itself in anticipations of the near coming of the delivering and conquering Messiah. This filled men's thoughts and talk. It would be supremely fascinating to a thoughtful, sensitive boy. Think with what things the heart of the Child Jesus must have been filled.

IV. THE INFLUENCE OF A WELL-SITUATED TOWN. One among the hills; with extensive outlook; beautiful surrounding landscapes; and in full view of scenes rich with Bible associations (see descriptions of Nazareth). For such as Jesus a great voice speaks "out of Nature's heart."—R. T.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER III.

Vers. 1—12.—THE HERALD. (Parallel passages: Mark i. 1—8; Luke iii. 1—18.) His public appearance and proclamation (vers. 1, 2), as foretold by Scripture (ver. 3). His Elijah-like dress (ver. 4). He is listened to by multitudes (vers. 5, 6). His faithful warning to typical Jews, and his pointing not to himself, but to the Coming One (vers. 7—12). The date at which he appeared is stated, in Luke iii. 1, to have been "in the

fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar; *i.e.* between August, A.D. 28, and August, A.D. 29" (Schürer, I. ii., p. 31).

Ver. 1.—**In those days**; *and in those days* (Revised Version). Probably merely contrasting those past days of the beginning of the gospel with the present, when the evangelist wrote (cf. ch. xxiv. 19, 22, where the days yet future are contrasted with those present). In Mark i. 9 the expression is used directly of the Lord's baptism. *And* (Revised Version); δέ; Hebrew usage taking up the narrative (cf. Josh. i. 1; Judg. i. 1; Ruth i. 1; Esth. i. 1). **Came**; *cometh* (Revised Version); historic present (cf. ch. ii. 19); παραγίνεται, here equivalent to "come forward publicly," make one's public appearance (cf. especially Luke xii. 51; Heb. ix. 11; also especially 1 Macc. iv. 46; also *infra*, ver. 13 and ch. ii. 1). **John**; Johanan. The name occurs first as that of a high priest in, apparently, the days of Rehoboam (1 Chron. vi. 9, 10, Authorized Version). "The Lord is gracious" was a fitting title for one born by the special grace of God, and sent to be the herald of his grace to all men (Titus ii. 11). **The Baptist.** (1) The Jews were far from having attained the simplicity of our present system, by which each person has both a family and a Christian name, and is thus designated with sufficient exactness for all the ordinary purposes of life. Their custom of name-giving was, and still largely is, as follows: (*a*) A Hebrew name is given to the child at circumcision. This is the holy name, and is used at all strictly religious ceremonies; *e.g.* when called to read the Law in the synagogue. (*b*) Each person has a name whereby he is known among the Gentiles. This is, at the present time, the name used for business and social purposes, and may be either Hebrew or of some other language. It is usually connected, either in sound or meaning, with the holy name. So Paul and Saul, Didymus and Thomas (for numerous examples, cf. Hamburger, 'Real-Encycl.,' vol. ii. pp. 831—836. Lowe, 'Memorbook of Nürnberg,' pp. 18—28: 1881). (*c*) He may have, either as well as or instead of the last, a name which designates him more exactly (*α*) by mentioning his father or some other relation; *e.g.* Bartimæus, Barsabbas (probably); (*β*) by mentioning some physical, mental, moral, or other peculiarity; *e.g.* James the Little, Simon the Zealot, Barnabas (the son of exhortation), and, from non-biblical authors, James the Just, Rabbi Judah the Holy, Samuel the Astronomer, John the Shoemaker. The title "the Baptist" belongs, of course, to this last class, and must have been given him partly because of the number of persons whom he baptized, and still more because baptism was the visible and external aim and result of his preaching. (2) What was there new in John's baptism? In considering this it must be remembered that (*a*) dipping in water had been commanded in the Law as a religious rite to priests (Exod. xxx. 20; xl. 12; cf. Lev. viii. 6) on their first consecration to their office, and on each occasion that they fulfilled the holiest parts of their duties (cf. the sprinklings of the Levites on their consecration, Numb. viii. 5—22); and to all Israelites in cases of ceremonial uncleanness (Lev. xiv. 8; Numb. xix. 13). (*b*) It was very frequent among the Essenes (cf. especially the quotations from Josephus in Bishop Lightfoot, 'Colossians,' p. 171, edit. 1875). (*c*) It was, we can hardly doubt, already customary at the admission of proselytes. There are, indeed, no certain allusions in Josephus, Philo, and the older Targumists (cf. Leyrer, in Cremer, *s.v.* βαπτίζω) to the baptism of proselytes properly so called; but (*a*) it is distinctly mentioned in the Mishna, and in such a way as to imply that it was an ancient custom, for the schools of both Shammai and Hillel assume it as a matter of course ('Pes.,' viii. 8); (*β*) as with books, so with customs, acceptance in two bodies originally one, as the Jewish and Christian Churches were, throws back the book or custom before the date of the separation. In other words, it is most improbable that Jews would only have begun to practise baptism at the admission of proselytes after it had been practised by a body which had separated from them. Jews would not be likely to adopt the distinguishing rite of Christians. (*d*) Thus already, before John's time, baptism was largely practised as a symbol of purification from sin and of entrance on a new and holier life. Wherein, then, lay the distinguishing feature of John's baptism? Apparently in its being extended to all Israelites, without their having any personal ceremonial hindrance, and more particularly in the special aim and purpose to which it now referred. *It signified the entrance upon a new life of expectation of Messiah.* As of old, the nation had accepted the offer of God's kingdom, and, having washed their garments (Exod. xix. 10, 14), had been sprinkled with blood (Exod. xxiv. 8), so now, when this kingdom was about to be more fully manifested, not the nation, indeed, considered as a whole, but (in harmony with the individualization of the gospel) those persons who responded to the invitation, came forward and publicly renounced their sins and professed their expectation of the kingdom (Edersheim, 'Life,' etc., i. 274). It is thus easy to account for the deep and widespread impression made by John the Baptist (cf.

Acts xviii. 25; xix. 3), and for the important position that he holds in summaries of the origins of Christianity. John's baptism was treated by our Lord himself as the first stage in his earthly ministry, which culminated in the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts i. 5), and naturally by the apostles as the historical introduction to the teaching and work of Messiah. Josephus's account of John the Baptist is well known, but too interesting to be omitted. "Now, some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod's army [by Aretas] came from God, and that very justly, as a punishment of what he did against John that was called the Baptist. For Herod had had him put to death, though he was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue both as to righteousness towards one another and piety towards God, and so to come to baptism; for baptism would be acceptable to God, if they made use of it, not in order to expiate some sins, but for the purification of the body, provided that the soul was thoroughly purified beforehand by righteousness. Now, as many flocked to him, for they were greatly moved by hearing his words, Herod, fearing that the great influence John had over the people might lead to some rebellion (for the people seemed ready to do anything he should advise), thought it far best, by putting him to death, to prevent any mischief he might cause, and not bring himself into difficulties by sparing a man who might make him repent of his leniency when it should be too late. Accordingly, he was sent a prisoner, in consequence of Herod's suspicious temper, to Machærus, the castle I before mentioned, and was there put to death. So the Jews had an opinion that the destruction of this army was sent as a punishment upon Herod, and was a mark of God's displeasure against him" ('Ant,' xviii. 5. 2, Shilleto's Whiston). Observe that (1) Josephus confirms the Gospel account of the extent of John's influence over his countrymen; but (2) attributes his imprisonment and death to a political, not a moral, cause. It is quite possible, on the one hand, that political reasons were not altogether wanting; and, on the other, that Josephus was ignorant of the more personal and stronger motive of Herod's action. **Preaching** (*κηρύσσων*). Unlike *εὐαγγελίζομαι* this word refers, not to the matter, but to the manner, the openness, of the proclamation. In contrast to the esoteric methods alike of heathen philosophers and of Jewish teachers, whether Pharisees, Sadducees, or Essenes. The herald proclaims as a herald; cf. Isa. xl. 9 (the original context of our ver. 3); Gen. xli. 43 (LXX.). **In the wilderness.** By this term is not necessarily meant absolute desert, but "des lieux peu habités ou non cultivés" (Neubauer, 'Géogr. du Talm.,' p. 52: 1868). The very place in which John preached was part of the symbolism of his whole life. The expectation of Messiah must lead to separation, but separation deepor than that of those who called themselves the "separated" (Pharisees). **Of Judæa.** The exact expression comes elsewhere only in the title of Ps. lxiii. and in Judg. i. 16, where it is defined as "in the south of Arad." It seems that, while different parts of the rugged district from Jericho southwards (Josh. xvi. 1), immediately on the west and north of the Dead Sea, had their distinctive titles—the wilderness of Siph (1 Sam. xxiii. 14, 15), of Maon (1 Sam. xxiii. 24), of Engedi (1 Sam. xxiv. 1), of Jeruel (2 Chron. xx. 16), of Tekoa (2 Chron. xx. 20)—the whole district was, as belonging to the tribe and even more certainly to the kingdom and province of Judah, known by the name of "the wilderness of Judæa." According to tradition, John was now preaching near Jericho. We find him soon after this at Bethany beyond Jordan (John i. 28), and later still at Ænon, near Salim, in, or on the borders of, Samaria (John iii. 23).

Ver. 2.—**And** (omitted by the Revised Version) **saying.** The parallel passages give the substance of John's preaching—the baptism of repentance. St. Matthew takes, as it seems, a sentence that actually fell from his lips, and presents it as the kernel of his message ("preaching . . . saying"). This is the more interesting as nowhere else are we told any words uttered by him in this the first stage of his ministry before crowds flocked to hear him. **Repent ye . . . at hand**; said word for word by our Lord (ch. iv. 17, note). *Repent ye* (*μετανοεῖτε*). The word expresses the central thought of true repentance, in speaking, as it does, of a change of mind. Contrast *μεταμέλεσθαι* (ch. xxvii. 3; 2 Cor. vii. 8—10). As such it goes deeper than the Old Testament summons "Turn ye" (שובו), or the rabbinic תשובה, for it points out in what part of man the alteration must be. (On *νοῦς* meaning more than the mere thinking power, and including also the willing faculty, cf. especially Delitzsch, 'Psych.,' p. 211, etc., Eng. trans., 1875.) It is noticeable that the LXX. never, as it seems, translate שוב by *μετανοεῖν*, but often נחם (of man only in Jer. viii. 6; xxxi. 19; and *possibly* Joel ii. 14; cf. 1 Sam. xv. 29), which refers to repentance as a matter of feeling. As Messiah was coming, it was only natural that John should urge repentance. Similarly, we find late Jewish writers expounding Gen. i. 2, "'And the Spirit of God was moving [on the face of the waters].' This is the Spirit of King Messiah, like that which is said in Isa. xi. 2, 'And the Spirit

of the Lord shall rest upon him.' By what kind of merit does it draw near and come? It says, 'upon the face of the waters.' By the merit of repentance, which is compared to water, as it is written (Lam. ii. 19), 'Pour out thy heart like water'" ('Bresh. R.,' § 2). But, unfortunately, they assign far too legal a meaning to the word, and their phrase, "do repentance" (עשה תשובה), becomes almost identical with the "do penance" (*pœnitentiam agite*, Vulgate) of the Roman Catholics (cf. Talm. Bab., 'Sanh.,' 97 *b*). **For the kingdom of heaven** (see Introduction, p. xxii.).

Ver. 3.—**For.** The reason for John's appearance and proclamation lies in prophecy. **This is he that was spoken of** (*οὗτος γάρ ἐστιν ὁ ῥηθείς*). In John i. 23 the following quotation is uttered by the Baptist himself, and some commentators have supposed this to be the case also here. But (1) this is against the parallel passages in Mark and Luke. (2) The form of the expression in John arises directly from the context. (3) In the Baptist's mouth the neuter (*τοῦτο . . . τὸ ῥηθέν*) rather than the masculine would have been more natural. The expression is doubtless that of the evangelist, suggested to him by John's own utterance, the "is" (*ἐστιν*) expressing John's permanent character. Contrast *εἶχεν, ἦν* (ver. 4) of his clothing and food. [*He that was*] *spoken of.* The expression means, not a mere reference found in Isaiah, but the absolute content of the prophet's words. The utterance of God by means of the prophet is—John the Baptist. **The Prophet Esaias;** *Isaiah the prophet* (Revised Version); the commoner Greek order (but cf. Luke iv. 17). **The voice,** etc. (except "his" for "our God," from the LXX. of Isa. xl. 3). The Hebrew probably joins "in the wilderness" with "prepare ye," but St. Matthew with "crying" (cf. ver. 1, "preaching in the wilderness," as probably the LXX.) In Isaiah the original meaning of the passage was probably, "prepare for the return to Jerusalem." The figure is that of the common and necessary process in semi-civilized countries of repairing roads before a great personage comes along them. Zechariah had, years before, applied the similar expression in Mal. iii. 1 to his son (Luke i. 76; cf. Mark i. 2). (For a metaphor like in kind, but with contrasted meaning, cf. Gal. v. 7, *ἐγκόπτειν*, breaking up a road to render it impassable.) **Paths** (*τρίβους*). According to Philo, the word is equivalent to "a carriage-road" (*ἁπτήλατος καὶ ἀμαξήλατος ὁδός, vide* in Wetstein). It is thus equivalent to the Hebrew (*m'sillah*, "a highway," "a made road"). Possibly the plural was employed by the LXX. rather than the singular of the original, from their interpreting the passage, not of the return of the Lord to Palestine, but his coming into many hearts.

Ver. 4.—With this verse we begin to meet with matter peculiar to Matthew and Mark. **And the same John** (*αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ Ἰωάννης*). (For the phrase, cf. Mark vi. 17, Luke iii. 23.) (1) If the Revised Version "Now John himself," holds good, the phrase seems to mean that not only did Isaiah speak of him in terms that implied that he was the forerunner of Messiah, the true Elijah (Mark i. 2), but also he himself had his very food and dress consistent with his office. (2) But it is safer, with Thayer's 'Grimm' (I. 2, *a*), to take *αὐτός* as merely recalling the person before mentioned. "Now he, whom I spoke of, John" (cf. 2 Chron. xxxii. 30). **Had;** during all that time (*εἶχεν*). **His** habitual dress, etc., was as follows. **Of** (*ἀπό*) **camel's hair.** Not, as D$^{gr}$ Old Lat. *a* in the parallel passage in Mark, *δέρρην, pellem*, "a camel's hide," but coarse cloth made from the hair. So probably, "hairy man" (2 Kings i. 8; cf. Zech xiii. 4). **And a leathern girdle.** Probably of sheep or goatskin, worn over the garment. Mentioned because (1) it formed another point of similarity to Elijah (2 Kings i. 8); (2) girdles were frequently very costly (cf. Smith's 'Dict. of Bible,' i. 701). Every part of John the Baptist's dress was for use, not ornament. **And his meat;** *food* (Revised Version); *τροφή*, not *βρῶμα*. He cared not what he ate, but what nourished and supported him. **Was.** The right order of the words (*ἡ δὲ τροφὴ ἦν αὐτοῦ*) lays slightly more stress on the continuance of this mode of life. **Locusts.** Used for food in the East from the remotest times until now. Four kinds are permitted in Lev. xi. 22. "The wings and legs are torn off, and the remainder is sprinkled with salt, and either boiled or eaten roasted" (Meyer). They are mentioned in Talm. Bab., 'Ab. Zar.,' 40 *b*, as being sold after preservation in wine. The word *ἀκρίδες* forbids the identification of these locusts with the pods of the carob, or locust tree, such as the prodigal son would fain have eaten. It seems that Jewish Christians of Essene and therefore vegetarian tendencies read *ἐγκρίδες* (cakes) here. Such at least is the most natural meaning, accepted by Epiphanius, of a quotation which he gives from the Ebionite Gospel according to the Hebrews (*vide* Tischendorf, *in loc.*). (On the theory that John the Baptist was an Essene, cf. Bishop Lightfoot, 'Colossians,' p, 161, edit. 1875.) **And wild honey.** This apparently simple phrase is, notwithstanding, of doubtful interpretation. (1) Probably the honey of wild bees. This is still to be found in trees and rocks, and

must have been much more common before the greater part of the timber was cut down (cf. Judg. xiv. 8; 1 Sam. xiv. 25; Ps. lxxxi. 16). Bee-keeping was a favourite pursuit of the Essenes (Philo, ii. p. 633), and the Talmud has frequent notices of hives and the methods of taking bees, etc. (*vide* Hamburger, 'Real-Encyc.,' i. *s.v.* "Biene"). Hence the need for the addition of some such epithet as "wild," although there seems to be no independent parallel instance of the exact word used (ἄγριον); cf. Pliny's "mel silvestre." (2) Possibly "tree-honey" (so Weiss, 'Marc.,' p. 44; 'Life,' i. 308), a sweet vegetable juice obtained from dates (*vide* Josephus, *infra*) and grapes (as probably in Gen. xliii. 11; Ezek. xxvii. 17), and perhaps directly from wild trees, such as the manna ash and the tamarisk. So distinctly Suidas (A.D. 1100). "The forerunner ate locusts and wild honey, which is gathered together from the trees, and is commonly called manna." Diodorus Siculus (B.C. 8) seems to use the epithet "wild" (ἄγριον) to distinguish this vegetable honey from that commonly in use (cf. Nicholson, 'Gosp. Heb.,' p. 35). Josephus ('Bell. Jud.,' iv. 8. 3) states that in the plain watered by the fountain of Jericho, "there are many sorts of palm trees watered by it, different from each other in taste and name; the better sort of them, when they are pressed, yield an excellent kind of honey (μέλι δαψιλὲς ἀνιᾶσιν), not much inferior to other honey. This country withal produces honey from bees (καὶ μελιττοτρόφος δὲ ἡ χώρα)." But the former interpretation seems the more probable.

Ver. 5.—**Then.** Not merely temporal, as probably in ver. 13, but almost consequential, "thereupon"; so also ver. 15; ch. ii. 7, 16. John's preaching and manner of life were not without effect. **Went out**; ἐξεπορεύετο (similar in the parallels). Our Lord, when referring to this (ch. xi. 7, 8, 9), uses the commoner ἐξήλθατε, merely indicating the crowds leaving for a while their present surroundings. The synoptists here point rather to the trouble involved and the distance traversed (cf. Mark vi. 11 with 12). The singular is used (as often in the Hebrew) because the writer's first thought was of Jerusalem; the other parts were added as an afterthought. **All** (cf. ch. viii. 34); *i.e.* from all parts and in large numbers. **Judæa.** Strictly speaking, this would, of course, include part of the next expression, but the reference here is especially to the hill-country. **And all the region round about Jordan**; *i.e.* the inhabitants of the Ghôr, the Jordan valley. They presumably came from either side of the river. "*Strabo*, concerning the plain bordering on *Jordan*, hath these words: *It is a plain of an hundred furlongs, all well watered, and full of dwellings*" (John Lightfoot, 'Hor. Heb.').

Ver. 6.—**And** (*they*, Revised Version) **were baptized.** The Revised Version probably desires to call attention to the change in the verb from singular to plural. **In Jordan**; *in the river Jordan* (Revised Version, with manuscripts). So also parallel passage in Mark (cf. Introduction, p. v.). **By him**; *i.e.* their baptism was not self-imposed, but an act of submission to his teaching, and of acceptance of his message. The forerunner saw results, not merely in crowds of listeners, but in external actions. *By him* (contrast John iv. 2). **Confessing their sins**; *i.e.* in at least some detail; cf. Josephus, 'Ant.,' viii. 4. 6, "confessing their sins and their transgressions of the laws of their country (ἐξομολογουμένων τὰς ἁμαρτίας αὐτῶν, καὶ τὰς τῶν πατρίων νομίμων παραβάσεις);" also Acts xix. 18, "confessing and declaring their deeds" (cf. Jas. v. 16).

Vers. 7—12.—*The faithful warning.* (Parallel passage: Luke iii. 7—9, 16, 17.) Observe that this is before the baptism of our Lord, while the witness in John i. 19—27 is after.

Ver. 7.—**But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees.** The typical Jews, considered as one class (τῶν Φαρισαίων καὶ Σαδδουκαίων), in contrast to the multitudes. *Pharisees.* Their characteristic is shown in their name, "Separatists;" *i.e.* from anything that would hinder exact obedience to the Mosaic Law. Hence they are the strict adherents of tradition. They ultimately gained the ascendancy, and, in consequence, the standard Jewish books represent the result of their teaching. They belonged almost entirely to the middle classes. *Sadducees.* They were chiefly of the noblest, especially the high-priestly, families. Hence their first thought was political quiet, and with this they not unnaturally combined the love of Greek culture. They set the plain meaning of the Law far above all tradition, even that of the Prophets and the Hagiographa. **Come** (*coming*, Revised Version) **to his baptism**; ἐρχομένους ἐπὶ τὸ βάπτισμα (omit αὐτοῦ). They were apparently not merely coming to see what took place, but with the purpose of receiving his baptism (cf. Thayer, ἐπί c. i. 2, *g.* γ. *aa.*); cf. ch. xxvi. 50 (ἐφ' ὅ); Luke xxiii. 48. The marginal reading, however, proposed by the American Revisers "for baptism," does not do justice to the article. The Gospel according to the Hebrews (Resch, 'Agrapha,' p. 343) says that they were in fact baptized, but we can hardly suppose this to have been the case after John's words to them. Observe that the Pharisees, with their self-con-

scious sanctity, were hardly likely to come to confess their sins, or the Sadducees to even listen to so ascetic a teacher. **He said unto them**; *i.e.* to the Pharisees and Sadducees; Luke, less exactly, "to the multitudes that went out to be baptized of him." There is, indeed, nothing, save the opening sentence, which refers solely to the Pharisees and Sadducees; but this fact does not show (Bleek) that the words were really spoken to all, and that Matthew's expression is wrong. John doubtless addressed the Pharisees and Sadducees primarily; but as, after all, they only formed the apex of ordinary Jewish thought, what he said to them fitted also the majority of his listeners. **O generation** (*ye offspring*, Revised Version) **of vipers!** The simile not only expresses the thought that, behind their smooth exterior, the outward legal strictness of the Pharisees, and the worldly decorum of the Sadducees, lay hidden malice and venom, but also that this is due to their very nature. It may have directly implied that they belonged in a true sense to the seed of the serpent (Gen. iii. 15); cf. our Lord's words (ch. xii. 34; xxiii. 33). **Who hath** (omitted by the Revised Version) **warned you?** The verb (*ὑπέδειξεν*) has elsewhere in the New Testament (St. Luke's writings only) no thought of warning, nor of secrecy, but of teaching, of placing the matter under the eyes of others (cf. especially Acts ix. 16; xx. 35; Luke vi. 47). John is making no inquiry for information, but only utters surprise at seeing them (cf. ch. xxiii. 33, *πῶς φύγητε*). Whoever can have told you of your danger? He might have saved himself the trouble, you being what you are! Yet the very violence of his expression was such as to call their attention to the depth of their sinfulness, and after all to lead them perhaps to repentance. For this reason he adds, "Bring forth therefore." **To flee**; aorist, not exactly indicating "the activity as momentary, setting forth the point of time when the wrath breaks forth, in which the flight also is realized" (Meyer), but the flight as one single action, without any reference to the time of the breaking forth of the wrath. **From.** The wrath is pictured as coming on them from without. In 1 Thess. i. 10 St. Paul says that Jesus delivers out of (*ἐκ*) it, implying that he himself and all men are naturally in and under it (but see ch. vi. 13, note). **The wrath to come.** Perhaps connected in John's mind with the wrath of the Messianic age (Isa. lxiii. 3—6). If so, it would find its primary fulfilment in the destruction of Jerusalem, but its complete fulfilment only in the manifestation of the wrath at the last judgment (Acts xxiv. 25; cf. Rom. ii. 5; v. 9; Rev. vi. 16, 17; xi. 18). *Wrath.* Not merely punishment. The thought is of the feeling of anger against sin in him who punishes it (cf. ch. xviii. 34; xxii. 7; Mark iii. 5).

Ver. 8.—**Bring forth therefore** (*vide supra*) **fruits**; *fruit* (Revised Version). The plural is due to a false reading taken from the parallel passage of Luke—it regards the various graces of a good life as so many different fruits (ch. xxi. 43); the singular, as one product from one source (Gal. v. 22). The term used here (*ποιεῖν καρπόν*), and frequently, lays more stress on the effort involved than *διδόναι καρπόν*, simple "yielding" (ch. xiii. 8), or *φέρειν*, "bearing" in the course of nature (ch. vii. 18; Mark iv. 8; John xv. 4, 5, 8, 16). The preacher requires a repentance which produces results. **Meet for** (cf. Acts xxvi. 20). Though strictly meaning "suitable to" ("answering to," Authorized Version margin; cf. Tyndale, "belongyng to"), the phrase might to-day be understood as "suitable to produce." John really means that true repentance has fruit which belongs to its proper nature, and which is alone "worthy of" it (Revised Version). **Repentance** (*τῆς μετανοίας*). The article is either generic (Authorized Version and Revised Version; cf. Acts xi. 18 and probably xxvi. 20); or equivalent to "your" (Revised Version margin). If the latter, the following sentence shows that it is still said in good faith. (For repentance, cf. ver. 1, note.)

Ver. 9.—**And.** An additional warning against any false feeling of security based on natural privileges. As this feeling was common to all Jews, the reference to the larger audience (ver. 7, note) was probably begun here. **Think not to say.** *Not* do not think, consider, with a view to saying; *but* do not think it right to say, do not be of opinion you may say (Luke iii. 8, "Begin not to say"). St. Luke deprecates the commencement of such an utterance in their heart; St. Matthew denies its justice. **Within yourselves**; cf. Esth. iv. 13 (Hebrew). **We have Abraham to our father.** As it was recognized on all hands that the promise of blessing was made to Abraham and his seed, it is no wonder that many Jews presumed upon their descent from him, "supposing," as Justin Martyr says ('Trypho,' § cxl.), "that the everlasting kingdom will assuredly be given to those who are of the seed of Abraham according to the flesh, although they be sinners and unbelieving and disobedient towards God." In later times, when the doctrine of merit was more fully established, God could be represented as saying to Abraham, "If thy children were like dead bodies without sinews or bones, thy merit would avail for them" ('Ber. Rabb.,' on Gen. xv. 11. § 44,

middle). In John's words, on the contrary, we have the germ of the doctrine afterwards brought out by St. Paul (*e.g.* Gal. iii. 9, 29), that not natural descent, but spiritual relationship by faith, leads to inheriting the promises. The argument in John viii. 39, etc., is closely akin to that presented here. In both passages the Jews lay stress on their origin from Abraham; in both the answer is that morally they are sprung from a very different source (*supra*, ver. 7, note). But in John viii. the Jews are thinking chiefly of their present state, of not being as sinful as Jesus makes them out to be, while here they are thinking more of the future, that they have no need to take trouble, because promises for the future belong to them. Hence, perhaps, the exact expression (contrast John viii. 33), "We have Abraham as father," which brings out the protecting influence of Abraham as still available. **For I say unto you** (λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν). The solemnity of the phrase (ch. vi. 25, 29; viii. 11; xi. 9) lies in the self-consciousness which it implies. The absence of the ἐγώ shows that the speaker has no desire to bring out his own personality (contrast ch. v. 22, etc.), but the message only. **That God.** Not "the LORD," because (1) the thought is of power rather than of covenant relationship; (2) he is about to speak of others than members of the covenant nation. **Is able of these stones.** *These;* apodeictic (ch. iv. 3). Some have thought that by *these stones* John directly means certain Gentiles who were standing near; but it is much more likely that he points to the literal stones at his feet, and with strong hyperbole says that he who once raised up offspring as the stars for multitude from persons as good as dead (Rom. iv. 19), and who had originally made man of the dust of the earth, can (δύναται), with both physical power and moral right, raise out of the very rawest material a new Israel (cf. Rom. iv. 17; I Cor. i. 28, "the things that are not"). **Raise up.** The verb employed (ἐγείρω) is, as it seems, not used in the LXX. with reference to natural generation, but ἀνίστημι (cf. Gen. xxxviii. 8, ἐξανίστημι; Gen. iv. 25; xix. 32; cf. also ch. xxii. 24). It is, however, very suitable here, for while ἀνίστημι regards future worth, ἐγείρω specially contrasts a later with an earlier state (*e.g.* sleep)—in this case the nature of children with the insensibility of stones. **Children.** The new Israel would possess, not merely Abraham's privileges, but his nature and character (τέκνα), in which you to whom I now speak are so deficient.

Ver. 10.—**And now also**; Revised Version, *and even now.* "And" (δὲ), slightly adversative. In contrast to the delay supposed in ver. 9*a*, preparations have already been made for your destruction. **The axe is laid**; Revised Version, *is the axe laid;* bringing out more emphatically its present position. The American Revisers propose, "the axe lieth at," avoiding the suggestion of an agent; but κεῖμαι often implies one, being used of vessels *set* ready for use; *e.g.* John ii. 6; xix. 29 (cf. Rev. iv. 2). **Unto** (πρὸς); brought near to (Thayer, *s.v.*, i. 2, *a*). **Therefore.** The axe is lying there, therefore every useless tree is sure to be cut down (cf. Winer, xl. 2, *a*). **Every tree, etc.**; even the noblest (Weiss). However good the tree ought to be, from the character of its original stock (you claim to be Abraham's children, ver. 9), yet, if it does not bear good fruit, it is cut down (ch. vii. 19, note). **Into the fire** (εἰς πῦρ). Not into a fire prepared with a definite purpose, nor into any one fire pictured as burning (ch. xvii. 15; cf. τὸ πῦρ, John xv. 6), but into fire generally, which may be in many different places. Worthless trees are only for burning. (For *thought*, cf. Heb. vi. 8.)

Ver. 11.—(Cf. especially John i. 27; Acts xiii. 25; also xix. 4.) After our ver. 10 St. Luke inserts details of the various kinds of fruit that repentance ought to produce, suggested by the questions of different portions of the Baptist's audience; and then, with an explanatory note that John's words were due to a misconception having arisen that he was himself the Messiah, he adds what we have in vers. 11, 12. But even if vers. 10—12 were, in fact, not said consecutively, yet their juxtaposition here may be defended by the real connexion between the statements. In ver. 10 John has spoken of the present danger of his audience; he therefore now urges repentance, and that in view of the coming of One who will sift them to the uttermost. **With water**; *in*, Revised Version margin (ἐν), and so in the second part of the verse. The thought is not of the instrument by which the baptism is effected, but of the element in which it takes place. "In" suggests more complete submergence of the personality. **But he that cometh after me.** The expression would recall the thought of "the Coming One"—a common designation of Messiah (ch. xi. 3; xxi. 9). **Is mightier than I.** Not in authority (the next clause), nor in honour (John i. 30), but in inherent strength and power. **Whose shoes.** Though shoes or boots were usual in the winter, at all events later, and probably also now (cf. Edersheim, 'Life,' i. 621), yet sandals are doubtless meant. "In the LXX. and Josephus σανδάλιον (Mark vi. 9; Acts xii. 8) and ὑπόδημα [here] are used indiscriminately" (Thayer). **Worthy.** In moral sufficiency (ἱκανός), and so in the parallels, but (ἄξιος) in moral desert in John i. 27. **To bear**; complementary to "loosen" in the parallel

passages. The duty of slaves of the lowest rank. The distance of superiority here attributed by John to "him that cometh after me," must be reckoned even greater than it usually is; for most of the slaves then held by Jewish masters would not be Jews, but Gentiles. The thought is, "I am further removed from my successor than the meanest Gentile slave is from his Jewish master." Some have seen in this expression a reference to the practice of disciples carrying the shoes of their teachers (Edersheim, 'Life,' i. 272), but this can hardly have been general so early. **He.** The emphasis is made the more evident by the absence of any connecting particle. **Shall baptize you.** "The transference of the image of baptism to the impartment of the Holy Spirit was prepared by such passages as Joel ii. 28 (Acts ii. 17)" (Bishop Westcott, on John i. 33); comp. also Ezek. xxxvi. 25–27, where the symbol of cleansing by water and the gift of the Holy Spirit are closely connected. **With the Holy Ghost, and with fire** (*ἐν Πνεύματι Ἁγίῳ καὶ πυρί*). To the visible John contrasts the invisible, to the symbol of water the reality of the Spirit; adding (here and in the parallel passage in Luke) to this, which forms the main point of the contrast (cf. Mark i. 8; John i. 33), the thought of Mal. iii. 2, purification as by fire; and, by not placing it under the government of another preposition (which would have necessitated the conception of it as a distinct element) implying that it is only another aspect of one and the same baptism. It has been questioned, indeed, whether "fire" here refers to the purification of the godly who truly accept the baptism of the Spirit, or to the destruction of the wicked, as in vers. 10, 12. But the thought is one. The Divine presence will in fact, as is recognized by Isaiah (xxxiii. 14; xxxi. 9), be twofold in its working, according as it is yielded to or the reverse. It burns away sin out of the godly, and it consumes the ungodly if they cleave to their sin.

Ver. 12.—**Whose fan.** The pronged winnowing-fork (see Pal. Expl. Fund Statem; Ap. 1891) which throws up the grain against the wind. The Coming One is to put an end to the present mixture of chaff and corn. He will thoroughly purge the threshing-floor of this world, gathering the good into one safe place, and destroying the evil. The figure of winnowing comes not unseldom in the Old Testament (*e.g.* Jer. xv. 7; li. 2), but generally with the sole idea of destruction of the ungodly, *not* with that of separating so as to also preserve the godly (yet cf. Ps. cxxxix. 3, margin; Amos ix. 9). **Is in his hand.** The figure is stronger than that in ver. 10, where the instrument was only lying ready to be taken up. But that was an instrument of destruction alone. **And he will throughly purge**; *cleanse* (Revised Version); *permundo* (Vulgate); *διακαθαριεῖ*, the preposition is intensive, not local. **His.** Observe the threefold *αὐτοῦ*, referring to hand, floor, corn—personal agency, sphere, ownership. In the Vatican and some other manuscripts it is found also after "garner;" but this is, perhaps, introduced from the parallel in Luke. **Floor**; *threshing-floor* (Revised Version). Not the barn that Englishmen think of, but an open and level space (for the figure, cf. especially Micah iv. 12). Here the threshing-floor is equivalent to the scene of the Lord's operations, *i.e.* the world, or rather the universe (cf. Ephraem (? Tatian) in Resch, 'Agrapha,' p. 295). The present mixture of good and evil shall be brought to an end. **And gather** together, from different parts of the threshing-floor, or from intimate association with the chaff, into one heap. All true believers shall finally be brought to perfect unity (cf. ch. xiii. 30). **His wheat.** The term is adopted by Ignatius ('Rom.,' § 4): "I am the wheat of God, and I am ground by the teeth of wild beasts, that I may be found pure bread [of Christ]." **Into the garner.** The final home of the saints, hidden away and safe from all marauders. Garners in the East are generally subterranean vaults or caves (but cf. Luke xii. 18). **But will burn up.** Utterly consuming it (contrast Exod. iii. 2), as the tares (ch. xiii. 30, 40) and the books of magic (Acts xix. 19). **The chaff.** For, as Jeremiah says (xxiii. 28) when comparing a mere dream with a message from the Lord, "What is the chaff to the wheat?" The Targum even interprets Jeremiah's words of the wicked and the righteous. The *chaff* in Jeremiah includes the straw, for in the East everything except the actual grain is generally burnt, and is sometimes used for heating fireplaces (Mishna, 'Sabb.,' iii. 1; 'Parah,' iv. 3). **With unquenchable fire.** "Unquenchable" shows that John is here thinking not of the figure of *chaff* but of the persons figured by it. But what does the word mean? In itself it might mean that the fire cannot be overcome by the greatness or the nature of the mass that it has to consume; *i.e.*, to drop the figure, by either the number or the character of the wicked. But from its usage it seems rather to be equivalent to not being overcome by the lapse of time. It is used, *e.g.*, of the perpetual fire of Vesta, of the fire of the Magi, of the fire upon the Jewish altar (*vide* references in Thayer). The whole expression in itself says nothing about the everlasting duration of the punishment; *i.e.* it does not decide for "overlasting punishment" or for "annihilation," but seems rather to exclude the possibility of amelioration under it (cf. Isa. i. 31).

Vers. 13—17.—THE BAPTISM OF JESUS. (Parallel passages: Mark i. 9—11; Luke iii. 21, 22.)

Ver. 13.—**Then**; temporal (ver. 5, note). When John was preaching and baptizing. **Cometh** (ver. 1, note). **From Galilee.** Mark adds, "from Nazareth of Galilee" (for this is his first historical mention of our Lord), thereby implying that our Lord had lived in Nazareth since our ch. ii. 22, etc. In contrast to the representative teachers from Jerusalem, and the crowds both from there and from the Jordan valley (ver. 5), this Stranger came from Galilee. **To Jordan.** It is hard to see why the Revised Version inserts "the" here and leaves the Authorized Version unaltered in ver. 5. **To be baptized** (*τοῦ βαπτισθῆναι*); ch. ii. 13, note. **By him**; and no other. Not mere baptism, but baptism at the hands of John, was our Lord's motive for coming. He would link his own work on to that of John (*vide infra*).

Ver. 14.—Vers. 14 and 15 are peculiar to St. Matthew. **But John.** In John i. 31, 33 the Baptist says that he knew him not till the descent of the Holy Spirit; *i.e.* knew him not in his full Messianic character. Here, *either* by an involuntary and miraculous impression, psychologically due to the previous revelation he had received (cf. Meyer); *or*, as is on the whole more probable, from his previous knowledge, direct or indirect, of Jesus, he recognizes his superior sanctity. John's inmost thoughts must therefore have been somewhat as follows. "I have come to announce the advent of Messiah; here is One who is much holier than I; it may be that he is Messiah, but I have no certainty till the sign promised has been vouchsafed." **Forbade**; *would have hindered* (Revised Version), for *διεκώλυεν* does not in itself imply speech. (For a similar imperfect of that which was not fully carried out, cf. Luke i. 59.) It is noticeable, though doubtless merely as a coincidence, that the strong compound word *διακωλύω* and *βαπτίζομαι* also occur together in Judith xii. 7. **I have need to be baptized of thee.** Many see here a reference to the baptism of the Spirit and fire, mentioned in ver. 11. But the following clause, "and dost thou come to me?" implies that the baptisms are identical, viz. baptism by water. The sentence is equivalent to "I John, who myself administer the baptism of repentance, need to profess repentance myself, and ought rather, therefore, to receive such a baptism at thy hands, who art so far holier than I" (cf. further Weiss, 'Life,' i. 320).

Ver. 15.—**Suffer it to be so now**; *suffer it now* (Revised Version); "suffer me now" (Revised Version margin); *ἄφες ἄρτι*, only here (apparently) in the New Testament quite absolutely, but ch. vii. 4 slightly favours the Revised Version margin. *Now*, at this special season (*ἄρτι*); in contrast to the more permanent relation which shall be recognized later. Our Lord thus slightly removes the trial to John's faith, which a mere refusal might have aggravated. Observe the implied consciousness of his Messiahship, even before the baptism. Several of the Fathers (*vide* Meyer) infer from these words that John was afterwards baptized by Jesus; but this is to completely miss the point of the expression. **For thus.** Not exactly "by this baptism," but "by the spirit of submission in us both, which in this case will issue in my baptism." **It becometh** (*πρέπον ἐστὶν*). Not a matter of absolute necessity (*δεῖ*, ch. xvi. 21; xxvi. 54), nor of absolute duty (*ὀφείλω*, John xiii. 14), but of moral fitness (Heb. ii. 10). It befits us, in our respective characters, to perform this symbolical act. Compare Melchizedek and Abraham; the representative of the older blesses the representative of the coming age (Luke xvi. 16). **Us**; thee and me. **To fulfil**; here only with "righteousness" (cf. ch. v. 17). **All righteousness** (*πᾶσαν δικαιοσύνην*). Not the whole circle of righteousness (*πᾶσαν τὴν δικαιοσύνην*), but every part of righteousness, as each is presented to us (similarly, Acts xiii. 10; cf. also *δικαιοσύναι* in Ecclus. xliv. 10; Tobit ii. 14, where, although Neubauer and Fuller explain it as "alms," this is improbable after the preceding *ἐλεημοσύναι*), and that not merely every part of the righteousness included under the Mosaic Law (cf. Alford, "requirements of the Law" and especially Lowe, 'Pesach. Fragm.,' p. 100: 1879), but of that wider righteousness of which that was itself only a part and a type. "Let me be baptized by thee now," our Lord says to John, "for it is fitting for us, in this spirit of submission, to fill up every part of righteousness." Our Lord thus pleads for the absolute submission of John and himself to every portion of righteousness as it may be proposed to them by God to perform; his words thus somewhat resembling those to St. Peter, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me" (John xiii. 8). Thy duty is to baptize, mine to be baptized. It has generally been thought that in this verse our Lord implies that his baptism was to constitute his own formal recognition and acceptance of his distinctly Messianic duties—an act which involved the complete leaving of his past life and the giving himself up to a new and public life (cf. Weiss, 'Life,' i. 322). But have we any evidence that our Lord came to the baptism with this self-consciousness? May he not very well have known that he was to be the Messiah, and yet not have known that his official life was to begin now? **May**

he not have come to the baptism merely as an individual, feeling the deepest interest in this consecration to the cause of the kingdom, notwithstanding the unique position in which he knew himself to stand with regard to that kingdom? But his voluntary consecration of himself for whatever he might be guided to, was the opportunity taken by the Father for the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, which had as its immediate consequence the retirement into the wilderness and the decision there come to. May not, in other words, our Lord's descent into Jordan have been, not the first act of his public life, but the last act of his private life—the former then being the withdrawal into the wilderness, in order there to have uninterrupted communion with his Father, and to meet in his official character his great adversary (cf. especially Edersheim, 'Life,' i. 279, etc.)?

Ver. 16.—**And Jesus, when he was baptized.** Combining the statements of the synoptists, we may conclude that Jesus went up from the water at once, praying as he went, and that, while he was going up and praying, the heavens opened. **Out of**; *from* (Revised Version); *ἀπό*; for, as it seems, he had not gone fully out of the water. **The heavens were opened unto him.** So also the Revised Version, but the Revised Version margin, with Westcott and Hort, rightly omits "unto him." The words were inserted because it was thought that Jesus alone saw the manifestation, as indeed we should have supposed if we had had only the account of St. Mark, who reads, "he saw" before "the heavens being rent asunder" (but cf. John i. 32—34). To our Lord and to the Baptist the appearance was as though the sky really opened (cf. Ezek. i. 1; Acts vii. 56). **The Spirit of God**; recalling Gen. i. 2. "Messiah now enters on his public office, and for that receives, as true Man, the appropriate gifts. The Spirit by whom men are subjectively united to God descends upon the Word made Flesh, by whom objectively God is revealed to men" (Bishop Westcott, on John i. 32). **Like**; *as* (Revised Version). The comparison is hardly to the gentleness of the descent of a dove, but to a visible appearance "in bodily form, as a dove" (see parallel passage in Luke). Not, of course, that the Holy Spirit was thus at all incarnate, but that either the appearance of a dove was seen by John's eyes only (cf. especially Theodore of Mopsuestia, in Meyer), or, as is not unlikely (even though the suggestion belongs ultimately to Paulus), a dove really flew down and lighted on the Lord (Luke), and that this, to outsiders merely a curious incident (cf. John xii. 29), was to our Lord and the Baptist a sign of spiritual blessing. **A dove** (*περιστερά*); any member of the pigeon tribe; chosen because a symbol of deliverance (Gen. viii. 8), of purity (Lev. v. 7), of harmlessness (Matt. x. 16), and of endearment (Cant. vi. 9). There is no evidence (cf. Edersheim, 'Life,' i. 287) that the dove was *at this period* interpreted by Jews as a symbol of the Holy Spirit. The Targum on Cant. ii. 12 paraphrasing "the voice of the turtle-dove" by "the voice of the Holy Spirit," dates in its present form from the eighth to the tenth century. The dove mentioned (though probably by interpolation) in the account of Polycarp's death, appears to be a symbol of the soul (cf. Bishop Lightfoot). Wichelhaus (as quoted by Kübel) says suggestively, "lamb and dove —no kingdom in the world has these emblems on its escutcheon." **And**; omit, with manuscripts. **Lighting**; *coming* (Revised Version), because it is needless to translate a common Greek (*ἐρχόμενον*) by a rare English word. Observe that it refers to the Holy Spirit, not to the dove as such. **Upon him** (so Luke and John i. 32, 33; Mark more vaguely, "unto him").

Ver. 17.—**Lo**; peculiar to St. Matthew—a reminiscence of Aramaic diction. **A voice.** Similarly in ch. xvii. 5 (Transfiguration, cf. 2 Pet. i. 17, 18); John xii. 28 (like thunder); [possibly Acts ii. 6, Pentecost]; Acts ix. 4 (Paul's conversion); x. 13, 15 (Peter). Talmudic and rabbinic writings often mention the Bath-Qol as speaking from heaven. The character of the occasions on which the voice is heard in the New Testament on the one hand, and in the Jewish writings on the other, shows the complete difference in the moral aspect of the two voices. The latter is at best little more than a parody of the former. (For the meaning of the expression Bath-Qol *vide* especially Weber, p. 188; Edersheim, 'Life,' i. 285.) **From heaven**; *out of the heavens* (Revised Version), pointing to the phrase in ver. 16. **Saying.** Western authorities add, "unto him," mostly reading the following words in the second person (cf. Mark and Luke). **This is my beloved Son.** Very similar if not identical words were spoken at the Transfiguration (ch. xvii. 5), Matthew giving precisely the same, Mark and Luke only omitting "in whom I am well pleased," and Luke also reading "chosen" instead of "beloved." It would seem more natural to suppose that the words spoken on the two occasions were really slightly different, and that therefore Matthew is the less accurate. *My . . . Son* (cf. Ps. ii. 7). *My beloved Son.* The expression is probably based on Isa. xlii. 1 (cf. *infra*, ch. xii. 18, note); but this does not necessitate the punctuation of the Revised Version margin, and Westcott and Hort margin: "My Son; my beloved

in whom," etc. (For the expression, comp. also Mark xii. 6 (not in the parallel passage, Matt. xxi. 37); Eph. i. 6.) **In whom I am well pleased**; rather, *in whom I have delight* (cf. Isa. lxii. 4, Authorized Version). The tense (εὐδόκησα) is equivalent to "my delight fell on him, he became the object of my love" (Winer, xl. 5, *b*, 2). The Spirit came, the Father bore witness. "Thus the Baptist receives through a revelation the certainty of the Messiahship of Jesus, and thus the reader learns that the Son of David, who through his birth (ch. i.) and the fortunes of his childhood (ch. ii.) was certified as the Messiah, now also is announced to the last of the prophets as the Son of God, to whom Jehovah, in Ps. ii. 7, etc., had promised the Messianic dominion of the world" (Weiss, 'Matthäus-Evang.'). Yet not only so; the words probably revealed to the Lord Jesus himself more of his exact relationship to the Father than he had before as Man realized. Such an assurance of his true nature, and of the Father's delight in him, would be of essential service in strengthening him for his work (cf. ch. xvii. 5). There are two other matters connected with our Lord's baptism recorded by tradition (cf. especially Resch, 'Agrapha,' pp. 346—367)—additional words spoken, and an additional sign given. The words spoken are found in "Western" authorities of Luke iii. 22, "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee," evidently with a desire to emphasize the application of the second psalm. The additional sign is the light or fire. The simplest form of this is (Tatian's 'Diatessaron,' edit. Zahn), "A light rose upon the waters;" and in the Ebionite Gospel apud Epiph., "Immediately a great light shone round about the place;" more fully in Justin Martyr ('Trypho,' § 88), "When Jesus had gone down into the water, fire was kindled in the Jordan;" also in a now lost 'Pred. Paul,' "When he was being baptized, fire was seen upon the water;" and in the Cod. Vercellensis of the Old Latin, "When he was being baptized, an immense light shone round from the water, so that all who had come thither were afraid." Although there is no intrinsic objection to this symbol having taken place, it is very improbable that in this case the evangelists would not have recorded it. The legend may have arisen from ver. 11, or, and more probably, from an endeavour to make the baptism parallel to the Transfiguration (ch. xvii. 2); cf. Ephraem, in Resch ('Agrapha,' p. 358), "John drew near and worshipped the Son, whose form an unwonted lustre surrounded."

## HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—12.—*The forerunner.* I. HIS ANNOUNCEMENT. **1.** ***His sudden appearance.*** It is the first mention of John the Baptist in St. Matthew's Gospel. He flashes upon us suddenly, like his prototype Elijah in the Old Testament. St. Luke tells us of his birth, of his solitary life: he "was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel." Now the time was come. "In those days," St. Matthew says, while the Lord was still at Nazareth, living a family life with brethren and sisters—the children, in all probability, of Joseph by a former marriage—taking his share in the family duties, labouring with his hands to support his virgin mother;—in those days, while the Lord was still unknown, unrecognized, in the world that was made by him, comes John the Baptist. **2.** ***His preaching.*** (1) "Repentance." The word means properly a change of mind, an inner, spiritual change. It is the first note of warning in the New Testament, the first practical exhortation addressed generally to all men—the first sermon in the First Gospel. St. John, indeed, belonged rather to the Law than to the gospel. He was the embodiment of the Old Testament, as Christ is the embodiment of the New. But he was preparing the way of the Lord, announcing the kingdom that was coming; therefore he preached repentance. A mighty change must come over all who are to be true citizens of that kingdom, fellow-citizens with the saints. All needed that great change. The Sadducees must lay aside their false doctrine, their worldliness, their indifference; the Pharisees must be set free from their formalism, their hypocrisy, their self-righteousness. All who would receive the Christ, who would come to him for peace and for salvation, must alike repent. Old things must pass away; all things must become new; indifference must make way for devotion, selfishness for self-sacrifice, the love of the world for the holy love of God. This is the blessed change of repentance, the great need of every human soul. (2) "The kingdom of heaven." The Hebrew nation had been the kingdom of God, the theocracy. But Daniel had prophesied a kingdom that should fill the whole earth, that should never be destroyed—an ever-

lasting dominion that should not pass away. That kingdom came from heaven; its government, its laws, its modes of life and thought and worship, are those of heaven; the great commonwealth of which the saints are citizens is now (ὑπάρχει) centred in heaven (Phil. iii. 20); it looks to heaven as its home, its proper country; it shall be established there when the kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. It is the great Church of Christ, the congregation of Christian people dispersed throughout the whole world. It was at hand, not yet come, but very near. Those who would be true citizens of that heavenly kingdom must repent; they must die unto sin, they must receive the consecration of a new and higher life. It is true still as it was then, "Except ye be converted, . . . ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." 3. *His description.* (1) By the prophet. He was a voice. John himself applied that description to himself (John i. 23). He was not the Christ, he said, not Elias, not that prophet; he was but a voice. Humility was one of his most striking characteristics. It was scarcely to be looked for in a man of his stern, severe character. In such a one you would expect unworldliness, self-sacrifice, austere self-control; but scarcely that deep, sincere humility which marked the holy Baptist. The power of God's Spirit can unite in one personality graces which seem almost incompatible. "He must increase, but I must decrease," he said afterwards. He had been famous while Christ was still unknown. He was willing to be forgotten so that Christ should be glorified; nay, in his utter self-forgetfulness, he rejoiced with joy in the overshadowing glory of the greater Prophet. He is an example to all Christian preachers. He was only a voice—the voice of one crying. His preaching was powerful, aggressive, energetic; the voice was loud and strong. His self-forgetfulness, the intensity of his conviction, gave strength to his preaching. It was the voice of one crying in the wilderness, not in great cities, not in the crowded haunts of men. God sets his ministers sometimes in what seems to them a wilderness; they must work there, where he has placed them; each must do his best in that station to which God has called him. The voice must sound everywhere—in the quiet country and in the great city, in the cottage and in the palace. God sends his ministers where it pleases him; they must accept the leadings of his providence. "Here am I; send me," is the trustful answer of the obedient Christian. But what was the cry? "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." Isaiah's words, it may be, referred in their primary sense to the return from the Captivity. The Lord of hosts was about to lead his people back; he goeth before them. A high way through the desert must be made for the great King; every valley must be exalted, every mountain and hill made low. But they had a deeper meaning, a more august fulfilment. The Lord, the incarnate God, was coming now. The proud heart must be abased; the hands that hang down, the feeble knees, must be lifted up; the path must be made straight; there must be no wavering, no inconsistency, no crooked designs, but a simple, straightforward, decided readiness to receive the coming Saviour. He was at hand; soon he would knock at the door; the gates must be lifted up; the hearts of men must be prepared to welcome and to admit the Lord of glory. (2) By the evangelist. He was an ascetic; he wore the rough garment of the prophet; like Elijah, he was a hairy man. He was a Nazarite; his unshorn locks waved rough and long in the wind; he drank neither wine nor strong drink; his food was of the commonest, that which the desert supplied—locusts and wild honey, the food of the very poor. He was a very high saint of God, but a saint of the Old Testament type rather than of the New; suited for the times, as Elijah had been; greater than any who had preceded him. But, our Lord has told us, "he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

II. HIS BAPTISM. 1. *The multitudes.* There was great excitement. It was a time of eager expectation. John's character, his asceticism, his strange, solitary life, his stern, awful, heart-stirring preaching, commanded attention. Multitudes went out to listen to him—"Jerusalem, and all Judæa, and all the region round about Jordan." The wilderness was lonely no more; it was filled with thronging crowds. There was an attraction not to be resisted in his preaching. Men could not but come; they could not but listen. Alas! they did not, most of them, repent. To the many he was what Ezekiel had been in his time, "a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument;" for they heard his words, but they did them not. 2. *They were baptized of him in Jordan.* He preached the baptism of repentance for

the remission of sins. John baptized with water; Christ, with the Holy Ghost and with fire. John's baptism was a preparatory rite; Christ's baptism was a sacrament of regeneration, the one baptism (Eph. iv. 5). John's baptism was unto repentance; Christ's baptism was into Christ. John's baptism was incomplete; it was not baptism with the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. xii. 13); it did not remove the necessity of Christian baptism (Acts xix. 5). But it was a holy rite, performed in accordance with the Divine command (John i. 33), symbolical, like the purifications under the Law, of that spiritual cleansing which the sinful heart needs, and consecrated at last by the example of the Lord Jesus himself. 3. *Their confession.* The Greek word seems to imply that the confession was complete, not a mere general acknowledgment of sinfulness, but a special confession of definite sins. John's baptism was unto repentance; confession was the preliminary, the pledge of that repentance without which the baptism was an empty sign. God requires confession of us, not necessarily to man, but to himself. There is no word of Holy Scripture more precious than that gracious promise, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

III. His reception of the Pharisees and Sadducees. 1. *They came to his baptism.* It was strange—the Pharisees came with their intense sectarianism, their hollow formalism; the Sadducees with their indifference, their unbelief. But they came; the power of John's preaching, the attraction of his character and ascetic life, the widespread excitement, drew them with the multitudes who flocked to the banks of Jordan. So people come now in crowds to hear a great preacher; but, alas! often their hearts are not touched. They listen, but they are not converted. Did they seek to be baptized? We might have thought that they were drawn to John only by curiosity, but the Greek preposition seems to imply that they sought baptism at his hands. We cannot tell their motive. Perhaps it was simply the strong current of public opinion; they came because others came; as, alas! many come to church nowadays. Perhaps it was the desire to stand well in the sight of the people, who all regarded John as a prophet. Certainly it was not the right motive. John was unwilling to receive them; they were unfit for his baptism; they wanted the baptism only, not the repentance; the putting away of the filth of the flesh, not the inquiry of a good conscience after God; they did not feel the need of that change of heart which was the necessary preparation for the coming kingdom. Probably John refused to receive them. St. Luke tells us (Luke vii. 30) that the Pharisees generally were not baptized of him. 2. *His address.* (1) He rebukes them. Mark his unsparing severity. He was no flatterer. The high places in the Church were then in the hands of the Sadducees. The Pharisees had great influence; men revered them for their supposed sanctity; they were the recognized guides of public opinion. But John had no soft words for them. It is painful to Christians to speak sternly; but sometimes holy sternness is necessary, sometimes it is a bounden duty. It is never more necessary than in the case of those who have deluded themselves into the belief that they are righteous men, while their religion is mere formalism, hypocrisy, outside pretence. John called them a generation of vipers, offspring of vipers; our Lord used the same strong words afterwards. They were like the serpent in Genesis—cunning, deceitful, dangerous; all the more so, because they hid their venom under the appearance of godliness. The Baptist distrusted them: "Who hath warned you?" he said. He had not expected that such as they would seek his baptism. He knew the hardness of their hearts, the hollowness of the formalism to which they had enslaved themselves, their pride and confidence in their exclusive privileges. Nothing short of a miracle, he thought, could arouse them. They knew, indeed, that there was wrath to come; but they supposed it was reserved for the Gentiles, and that they, the seed of Abraham, were safe. Could it be that God's Holy Spirit had touched even those proud zealots, and softened even those stony hearts? Nothing is impossible with God. If he bears with hardened sinners, his ministers may well bear with them. Therefore (2) he counsels them. They must show the sincerity of their repentance by bringing forth the fruit of a holy life—fruit worthy of the repentance which they professed. John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. Repentance is a change of heart and thought; such a change must manifest itself in a renewed, a consecrated life. They must not trust in their descent from Abraham. God could raise up children to Abraham from

the very pebbles that lay in the bed of Jordan. He would gather Gentile believers in crowds into his Church. They would become heirs of the faith of Abraham, true children of that father of many nations, in whose seed all the nations of the earth were to be blessed. We must always be on our guard against putting our trust in external privileges. Those privileges may be very great, very precious helps; but they are only helps toward the spiritual life; they are not the life itself. We must not dare to despise others who seem destitute of our privileges, but rather strive always to show, by increasing holiness of life, that we value and use the blessings which have been conferred upon us. And (3) he warns them. Judgment was coming. Only holiness of heart and life could endure the searching eye of God. His baptism would not help them unless they brought forth fruit worthy of repentance. The Judge was already in the world. John was nothing in comparison with him—not worthy to do him the most menial service. And as John was inferior to the coming Saviour, so was his baptism inferior to the Lord's baptism. John baptized with water; Christ would baptize with the Holy Ghost, and with fire. The baptism which Christ afterwards ordained was a baptism of water, but not of water only; it was a laver of regeneration, a new birth of water and of the Spirit, a baptism into Christ by the one Spirit (1 Cor. xii. 13). And he was to baptize with fire. The prophecy was literally fulfilled on the great Day of Pentecost; but its meaning is not exhausted in that first fulfilment. Christ baptized with fire not only then; he baptizes with the Holy Ghost, not only in the sacrament which he ordained. There is a more precious baptism yet; the perpetual baptism of the blessed Spirit's presence, a true baptism with fire—the fire of holy love and sacred energy, which spring from that Divine indwelling. This is the baptism which we must seek and pray for with all the power of our spirit, the only baptism which can help us in the great day, the baptism which distinguishes the saved from the lost, the wheat from the chaff. We must seek it all the more earnestly because he who baptizeth with the Holy Ghost is also the Judge, the awful Judge of quick and dead. He will gather the wheat into his garner; he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

LESSONS. 1. Repent. See that your repentance is deep and true, a real change of heart; for only the children of repentance are children of the kingdom. 2. Imitate John the Baptist in his self-denial, in his ardent zeal, in his deep humility. 3. Trust not in external privileges; see that your religion is true—not words, not forms, not mere excitement, but a real active principle of life. 4. Think of the awful fire of judgment; pray for the refining fire of the gracious Spirit.

Vers. 13—17.—*The baptism of Jesus.* I. ITS REASON. 1. *He was made sin for us, though he was without sin.* He came to be baptized; it was the purpose of his coming. He would not have come that long journey from Galilee to Bethany beyond Jordan unless there had been some grave reason, some necessity, some deep meaning in his baptism. It was the baptism of repentance; he needed no repentance. It was accompanied with confession of sin; he could not confess, for he had no sin. But God had sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh; in some deep, mysterious sense "he was made sin for us." He bore the sin that was not his own. Therefore, as he submitted in his infancy to the rite of circumcision; as his mother, after the birth of the sinless Child, went through the ordinary purification; so now when he was about to begin his ministry, the Most Holy One came to the baptism of repentance. It seemed to John strange, unsuitable. He felt his own unworthiness in the presence of the Saviour. He himself, he knew, needed the baptism of the Holy Ghost; the Lord needed not the baptism of repentance. And so he would have hindered him. He had hindered, it seems most probable, the Pharisees and Sadducees. The reasons were very different. The Pharisees and Sadducees were not fit for his baptism; his baptism was not fit for Jesus. But the Lord who, in his ineffable condescension, had taken upon him the form of a servant, in that same condescension submitted to the rites which told of sin and uncleanness. He was baptized, not that he might be cleansed by the baptism of repentance, but rather, as Ignatius says in his 'Epistle to the Ephesians' (sect. 18), that he might by his baptism cleanse water and sanctify it to the mystical washing away of sin. 2. *It becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.* God had sent John to baptize with water (John i. 33). The Son of God, now in the form

of man, comes to the baptism which God had commanded. It is an example to us. It is our duty to fulfil all righteousness, all God's ordinances alike. We may not dare to neglect things external, things which some men call unimportant. If God has commanded them, that commandment gives them at once a deep and real importance; it makes them duties of righteousness. The principle of obedience is no less involved in things that seem to some small and trivial, than in the highest duties of religion. The Lord Jesus came to the baptism of John; no Christian man may dare to neglect the baptism of Jesus. For these reasons the Lord offered himself to be baptized. John knew him not at first. He must have heard of him from his parents; he must have known something of the wondrous birth at Bethlehem, and of his own destination to go before the face of the Lord in the spirit and power of Elias. But the two cousins had been long separated from each other; they had grown up far apart; John had lived a solitary life in the wilderness of Judæa; Jesus had lived unknown and unregarded in the quiet town of Nazareth. John did not recognize him at first; but he felt the power of his presence. Holy himself, he reverenced that majesty of unearthly holiness which beamed from the calm, sad, gracious eyes of the Saviour of the world. His heart told him that it was a most sacred Person who sought his baptism—a sinless, a Divine Presence that stood before him. His hopes were kindled, his soul filled with intense, eager anticipations. Surely it must be he that should come, the long-expected One. The descent of the Holy Ghost revealed the Messiah (John i. 33). But now a strange feeling of unworthiness came over him. A deep instinct prompted him to say, like Peter, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" It is ever so with his saints. The nearer we draw to Christ, the more fully the Lord manifests himself to us, the more we feel our own utter sinfulness and weakness. But the Lord, who in his gracious lowliness came to John the Baptist, comes to his people still. John shrank from his awful purity at first; he suffered him when he heard his reassuring words. It is a parable of the experience of many an awakened soul. He seems so awful in his majesty, in his spotless holiness, and we so feeble, defiled with so many sins; but he allures us with his tender pity, he speaks comfortably to our souls, till we welcome the Lord into our heart, seeking henceforth to live always in that blessed fellowship which is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

II. THE DIVINE MANIFESTATION. 1. *He went up straightway out of the water.* There seems to be meaning in these words. His baptism was a consecration for his great and blessed office. Son of God though he was, he had, in the mysterious union of the human and Divine, increased in wisdom from childhood to manhood; and now, it may be, the full consciousness of his Divine mission, the full clear knowledge of the awful, the most blessed, work which lay before him, dawned upon his holy human soul. He went up straightway; immediately, as he emerged from the baptismal waters, he went up prepared for his work; immediately he arose in the strength of holy purpose and self-sacrificing love. He had lived hitherto in the quiet life of lowly obedience; now he was manifested as the great High Priest, the Messiah, the Anointed One. Priests under the Law received at their consecration the baptismal purification and the anointing of the holy oil. The Lord Jesus, now about to enter upon his three years' ministry, submitted to the baptism of repentance, and was anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power. 2. *The heavens were opened.* Paradise was closed to Adam; heaven is opened to Christ. The sin of Adam closed the way to Paradise; the obedience of the incarnate Son opens heaven to all who follow him. As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. "He hath made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus;" "Our citizenship is in heaven." Our treasure must be there, our heart must be in that heaven which was opened at the baptism of Jesus to all his true disciples. Heaven was opened over him at his baptism. It is opened over those who are baptized by his commandment into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. For holy baptism admits us into covenant with God: "In one Spirit were we all baptized into one body"—the mystical body of Christ. The members of that body are bound by their baptism to obey the laws of the kingdom of heaven, and to live as citizens of the heavenly commonwealth. "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth." They who, by his grace, abide in spiritual union with Christ shall one day, like the holy martyr Stephen, see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. 3. *The descent of the Holy Spirit.* The Lord

was conceived by the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost was with him always; for in the indissoluble union of the Divine Persons, the Holy Three are One. But this was a consecration of the incarnate Son, God and Man, to his sacred office—a grand and heavenly anointing, visible to himself and to the Baptist. "I saw the Spirit," said John, "descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him." God anointed him with the Holy Ghost (Acts x. 38). God the Father consecrated his incarnate Son by this Divine anointing. Now he was revealed as the Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek; the King to whom the Lord God would give the throne of his father David; the Prophet who would declare to the faithful all that we need to know, all that we can know while we are in the flesh, of that God whom no man hath seen at any time. "The Spirit descended like a dove;" it descended on him who was dove-like, holy, harmless, undefiled. It found a resting-place in the holy heart of Jesus. Still the blessed Spirit is brooding, dove-like, over the face of the world; still he descends, another Comforter, sent by the Father at the prayer of him on whom he now descended, on those who are learning of the Lord Christ to be themselves pure in heart, gentle, harmless, holy. With such he abides for ever, a gracious, willing Guest. Such men he consecrates with a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. 4. *The voice from heaven.* The Father's voice was heard: "This is my beloved Son." How the heart of John the Baptist must have thrilled at the sound of the awful, holy words! It was the Christ indeed, the Only Begotten of the Father. John stood in the presence of the Most Holy One. So doth the Christian heart thrill now when the Lord Jesus Christ is revealed to the soul; when the believer feels that he is in the presence of God, alone with God—*solus cum solo;* when the heavenly voice is borne in upon his heart; when he knows that his Redeemer liveth. "This is my beloved Son," whom God the Father had loved before the beginning of the world, whom he loved now, always, with an eternal love; in whom he loves all those to whom the beloved Son hath given power to become the sons of God. In that beloved Son God was well pleased—well pleased always, well pleased now in the mysterious self-sacrifice of his incarnation, of his perfect obedience. Those who trust that they, too, being led by the Spirit of God, are in a true, though infinitely lower sense, the sons of God, must try to please him; it must be their highest ambition, whether present or absent, to be well-pleasing in his sight. As they draw nearer to him, serving him with a holier, humbler, obedience, the heavenly voice will grow clearer, more distinct, owning them to be his sons and daughters, the children of his love. 5. *The revelation of the blessed Trinity.* At the baptism of Jesus by the hand of John, the Holy Three were present—God the Son manifest in the flesh; God the Holy Ghost descending in a dove-like form; God the Father speaking from heaven, recognizing in Jesus, God and Man, the only begotten Son of his love. It was a manifestation of the eternal mystery—the mystery before which we bow in the lowliest adoration of loving faith. In Christian baptism, the sacrament which the Lord Jesus Christ himself ordained, the Name of the blessed Three is by the Lord's commandment pronounced over the new disciple: "Baptizing them into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The Name is One, the Persons are Three. The doctrine of the blessed Trinity is enshrined in holy baptism.

LESSONS. 1. Imitate the Lord Jesus; use all the means of grace; observe all the ordinances of religion. It becometh us to do as he did. 2. Heaven is opened to the eye of faith; it was opened to the dying Stephen. Steadfastly look up to heaven. See God in all his ordinances. 3. Pray earnestly for fuller gifts of the Holy Ghost. The dove-like Spirit is given to the dove-like heart. 4. Seek earnestly to be well-pleasing to God in all things.

## HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 1—3.—*Preparation for Christ.* It was no accident that brought about the conjunction of the mission of John the Baptist with the advent of our Lord. A Divine providence, the purpose of which was declared in an ancient prophecy, connected the two events. The conjunction is shown by that prophecy not to be like one of binary

stars. The work of Christ is not associated with that of John. The Baptist is but the forerunner—the pioneer opening up the way for the glorious King.

I. PREPARATION FOR CHRIST IS NEEDED. The Jews were not fit to receive their Messiah; they needed the preliminary work of the prophet of the wilderness to make them rightly susceptible to the new influences of the kingdom. The world will not welcome its Saviour till the way has been made ready for his approach. Individual men and women are far from the kingdom of heaven, and the intervening district is wild and impassable till God makes a providential path across it. The ploughman must precede the sower. It is the work of John the Baptists to break up the fallow ground. Sometimes the messenger comes in the form of a great sorrow. Men are arrested and aroused, made to feel their helplessness and their need. Then, but not till then, they may receive the kingdom.

II. THE METHOD OF PREPARATION MAY BE VERY UNLIKE THE METHOD OF SALVATION. John the Baptist is very different from Jesus Christ. The one is a recluse, the other a brotherly, sociable Man; the one lives in a wild, antique fashion, the other quite simply and naturally; the one speaks in thunder, the other in the still, small voice of sympathy and "sweet reasonableness." Nevertheless, John prepares for Jesus. The furnace that melts out the ore is harsh and fierce, yet it is making the metal ready for the goldsmith to work up into his beautiful design. Most un-Christlike experiences may bring us near to Christ.

III. THE ESSENTIAL PRELIMINARY TO THE RECEPTION OF CHRIST IS REPENTANCE. The burden of the Baptist's message was "Repent!" It is not to be supposed that he only preached the word. He must have laboured to produce the thing; he must have made it his aim to lead his hearers to a deep sense of their sin. Until a man owns his guilt he will not seek pardon. The reason of this is obvious directly it is perceived that salvation is just deliverance from sin; for who would wish for such a salvation while still clinging to his evil habits? To such a person Christ would appear not at all as a deliverer, but rather as an invader, as a robber who came to steal the choice treasures of the heart.

IV. REPENTANCE IS ENCOURAGED BY THE PROMISE OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. That kingdom is near at hand; therefore the Baptist urges his hearers to lose no time in making themselves ready for it. The vision of the better life reveals the shame and horror of the life of sin. If there were no hope there would be no repentance; in such a state the awakened conscience could only plunge the soul into remorse—which is hell. Therefore the message of the Baptist must be twofold. It is not right or wise to preach of sin by itself, nor to try to induce repentance chiefly by painting the guilt of the past in the blackest colours. The anticipation of Christ is the best inducement to repentance.—W. F. A.

Ver. 8.—*The fruit of repentance.* John sees a great danger. His preaching is immensely popular. Even the insincere are drawn under the spell of his oratory, and his rousing eloquence is enjoyed on its own account by many who refuse to obey its ideas. He is the lion of the season, and society runs after him as after the latest fashion. To one in dead earnest, as John was, this must have been perfectly abhorrent. Then no doubt there were sentimental, superficial hearers who were really impressed by his preaching for the time, but on whom the effect of it was merely emotional. Such people needed to see that they must have a repentance deeper than the tears of a day.

I. REPENTANCE MUST BE IN THE WILL AS WELL AS IN THE EMOTIONS. It is easy to feel sorry for the wrong one has done; yet this feeling may not carry with it any determination not to repeat the wrong. A wave of emotion may sweep over the soul, and during its passage all love of sin may be buried, and only the most becoming ideas appear on the surface. But they will be but froth and foam melting into nothing, and they will vanish with the retreating wave, leaving the hard rock beneath quite unmoved. There is no real repentance until the will is touched, until the penitent resolves to abandon his sin and to seek a better life. He may well see that he cannot do this himself; his sin is too strong for him, and the better life is above his reach. Repentance is not regeneration, but it is a sincere desire for a new life, an honest determination to seek it.

II. TRUE REPENTANCE WILL REVEAL ITSELF IN CONDUCT. It has its fruits. No one can be really turning round from sin and setting his face towards the light without

some results appearing in his behaviour. He will not immediately step on to the pedestal of the saint. He will be still down in the darkness, feeble, depressed, guilty, and conscious of guilt. But every action will show that he is trying to reach after better things, even though they may be still far beyond his grasp. Lorenzo di Medici on his death-bed sends for Savonarola and, in terror of the torments of hell, begs to be assured of the Divine forgiveness. The stern reformer bids the dying man return their possessions to those whom he has robbed, and set his imprisoned enemies free, and he consents. Then Savonarola makes a third demand, that the tyrant will restore their liberties to the Florentines. This is too much for him; he turns away in silent refusal and dies unrepentant—and therefore unshriven.

III. IT IS THE DUTY OF THE PENITENT TO CULTIVATE FRUITS OF REPENTANCE. People sometimes distress themselves with the fear that they have not repented sufficiently to receive the pardon of God. But they make a mistake if they suppose that the exciting of deeper feelings of compunction or the shedding of more tears is what God requires. Let them leave their emotions to take care of themselves, and set their attention on their conduct. This does require thought and effort. Yet the very fact that repentance must bear fruit shows that it is more than a work of man's production. Therefore it is necessary to seek the "grace" of repentance, to pray for the Spirit of God to make the true fruits appear. Lastly, let it be remembered when they do appear they are not all we need; they are only the signs of a right state of mind for receiving forgiveness.—W. F. A.

Vers. 9, 10.—*The axe at the root.* Here we have an insight into the method of John the Baptist. We see how he led his hearers to repentance. He found them too often soothing their consciences in a false security, and quite blind to the danger that threatened them. So he set to work first to destroy the false security and then to reveal the imminent danger.

I. A GREAT DELUSION. (Ver. 9.) 1. *Its excuse.* The Jews prided themselves in their pedigree. They were Abraham's children, and they expected to be favoured on account of their great ancestor. Glorious promises had been made to Abraham and his seed; the Jews were the seed of Abraham; therefore they concluded that the promises were for them, and that no final harm could come near them. The same delusion is found in those people who comfort themselves with the thought that they belong to a Christian Church, that they are members of a Christian family, that in some way they are included in a Christian covenant, although there is nothing Christian in their character and conduct. 2. *Its mistake.* There is no such thing as hereditary salvation. The children of a saint will suffer the doom of sinners if they are sinners, quite as much as the children of a sinner; nay, even a worse doom, because their advantages are greater. It is true that great promises are laid up for the children of Abraham; but only they are his true children who have their ancestor's faith. The Jews could not but admit that the Arabs were children of Abraham, yet they did not extend to them the hope of Abraham's blessings. It might have been urged that the Israelites cannot perish because, if they were lost, God would not have a people on whom he could fulfil his great promises to Abraham. This would be to limit the power of God, to forget his resources. If he wanted other children he could raise them from the very stones of the wilderness. He *did* raise them from the Gentile peoples. We are none of us necessary to God.

II. A NEAR DANGER. (Ver. 10.) This question of Abraham's family is not a subject for quiet speculation only. Soon the futility of the theory of the Jews with which they quiet their fears will be apparent. The axe is already lying by the root of the tree. The Roman power that is destined to cut down the Jewish state is close at hand. 1. *Its unsuspected presence.* (1) The tree is still standing—a great tree, with massive trunk and spreading branches. An imposing presence suggests strength and security. (2) The tree is vigorous. Its stem is not rotten. But it is bearing no good fruit, and it is cumbering the ground; in these facts is its danger. (3) The axe is unseen. It lies at the root—perhaps hidden among the grasses. Yet the place where it lies suggests utter destruction. We do not see dangers lurking at our feet. 2. *Its fatal power.* That cold gleam of steel at the root of the tree—how frightfully suggestive it is! It is a small thing by the side of the giant of the forest. Nevertheless how soon can it bring the proud tree crashing to the ground! No one can escape from the keen blows of the

axe of God's judgment. 3. *Its merciful warning.* Why is the axe laid at the root of the tree? why is it not used at once? Here is mercy in the midst of judgment. The Baptist points to the axe that he may drive his hearers to repentance. Our attention is drawn to it that we may escape—though at the eleventh hour.—W. F. A.

Ver. 11.—*The two baptisms.* John here contrasts himself and his work with Christ and the work of Christ. We cannot but be struck with the humility and the discernment of the Baptist. Thus he reveals himself as true to his mission; he is but the forerunner, preparing the way of the Lord.

I. THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE ADMINISTRATORS. John was regarded as the great prophet of his day; yet he considered himself to be infinitely inferior to the coming Christ. Wherein were the great differences between the Baptist and Jesus Christ? 1. *In character.* John was a holy man, but still a sinner. Christ was faultless, quite pure, and supreme in all goodness. Thus he was and is far above the best of men, as the stars are above the highest mountains; in comparison with the stars the distinction between mountain and plain sinks into insignificance. 2. *In power.* John was a strong and gifted man, yet how little could he do for the reformation of Israel, for the redemption of the world? He is but the labourer digging out the foundation; Christ is the Master-Builder who raises the great temple. 3. *In office.* John is the prophet, the messenger of God. Christ is the King. His office is regal, and his honour is the highest. 4. *In nature.* John is but a man, though the greatest man of his day; Jesus is the very Son of God. This may not have been known to the Baptist, but an instinctive foreshadowing of the great mystery may have touched him with an awed perception of the wonderful greatness of the Coming One.

II. THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE SACRAMENTS. 1. *The water-baptism.* This baptism of John's was a token of repentance. It seemed to express the desire of the penitent to wash away his past sin. It was concerned with his guilt and with the need of cleansing it. But it contained no power for the future. It did not regenerate; it did not quicken the dead soul. Thus it must be recognized that repentance by itself is not enough. The penitent still waits for his renewal. 2. *The fire-baptism.* It might have been thought that the consuming element of fire was better adapted to the ministration of the terrible prophet of the wilderness, while the gentler purifying water would be suitable for the milder methods of the Son of man. Yet the prophecy of the Baptist was fulfilled. We cannot confine his words to the second advent of Christ in judgment. Christ came in his first appearance with flames to burn the evil out of the hearts of men in the consuming power of the Holy Spirit. For here the fire seems to stand for the Holy Spirit, as it did on the Day of Pentecost, when the Gift came in cloven tongues of fire. When Christ enters the soul he both burns up the old evil and kindles the fire of a new life. All life is fire. Even applied physiologically this idea is true; we only live by burning up our own bodies, and that is why we need food, which is fuel. Christ's baptism is the gift of the Holy Spirit, and the coming of that Spirit is the lighting of a fire in a man's heart. Thus it is life.—W. F. A.

Vers. 13—17.—*The baptism of Jesus.* This is a narrative which authenticates itself. No Christian writer of a later generation would have invented a story of the baptism of Jesus by John; nor could any current ideas have started a myth in this form. The very difficulties of the story prove its historicity.

I. LET US INQUIRE WHAT WAS THE MEANING OF THE BAPTISM OF JESUS. 1. *Note some errors to be avoided.* (1) This was not a baptism of repentance. John saw that, and although he did not yet know who Jesus was, the pure and spotless life of his mysterious Relative was evidently not unknown to him. He saw that Jesus did not need the baptism as it was commonly understood. (2) This was not a mere form. Christ continually contended against the hypocrisy of formalism. He could not have begun his public life with a purely formal action. (3) This was not only intended as an example for others. In that case the action of Christ would have been simply a theatrical performance, unworthy of him, not to be countenanced by the serious Baptist. Moreover, the results of the baptism show that it had to do directly with the Person and work of Christ. 2. *Consider the truths of the incident.* Baptism has a double meaning. It looks forward as well as backward. As a rite in regard to the future it

is a dedication, an act of self-consecration. Jesus had no sins of the past to wash out; but there was a great future to which he would dedicate himself in baptism. Then he was a Man, and he was humbling himself to the whole round of human duties. It was not in accordance with his mission that he should abandon the religious duties of his day. On the contrary, it was incumbent on him to "fulfil all righteousness" in connection with them. Thus the method of his self-consecration was an act of lowly obedience in connection with the deepest religious movement of the time.

II. LET US LOOK AT THE RESULTS OF THE BAPTISM OF JESUS. There were a vision and a voice. 1. *The vision.* (1) The heavens opened. Self-surrender brings us near to God. The heavens open over the head of the utterly unselfish and truly consecrated man. (2) The descending Spirit. The Spirit comes to Christ, and is in him without measure (John iii. 34). The form was symbolical, but the fact was real. After this Christ displayed powers in miracle-working and teaching which he had never shown before. If Jesus needed this endowment of the Spirit, much more do we need it. (3) The form of the dove. This is very significant. The Spirit takes many forms. On Jesus it appears in love and gentleness. "A bruised reed shall he not break." This form of the manifestation is peculiarly true to the nature of the Spirit. God is most of all present in "the still, small voice." By his gentleness he makes us great (Ps. xviii. 35). 2. *The voice.* The vision was especially for Christ's benefit. The evangelist says that "he saw the Spirit of God," etc., as though the people did not see the dove descending. John also saw the vision (John i. 32), and probably no one else. But the voice is not thus restricted. The spiritual grace is personal, for Christ himself; the revelation of the Son of God is for all who have ears to hear. —W. F. A.

Ver. 17.—*Christ the beloved Son of God.* This declaration at the baptism of Christ was repeated later on in his ministry at the Transfiguration (ch. xvii. 5). Thus God owns his Son and bears witness to him. Let us consider what the heavenly voice teaches us about him.

I. THE NATURE OF CHRIST AS THE SON OF GOD. It will not profit us much to plunge into the fourth-century speculations concerning the Divine Sonship of Christ in order that we may know him in so far as he has been revealed to us. In metaphysical considerations about the mystery of the being of the Son of God we may lose all living perception of what he is really in his life among us. The broad fact is what is most important to us. Christ is *the* Son of God. He is not one of God's sons as we may be through him, as in a natural sense we all are because "we are also his offspring" (Acts xvii. 28). He is *the* Son of God in a supreme and unique sense. Now, this is not merely a sublime truth of theology. It has important bearings on religion. 1. *To know the Son is to know the Father,* of whom he is the Image (John xiv. 7). 2. *If the Son is our Friend, the Father cannot be our Enemy;* for they are "One" (John x. 30). Therefore our fellowship with Christ carries with it our reconciliation to God. 3. *Christ is able to save the world.* The Divinity of Christ implies his unlimited power. So great a Saviour is equal to the tremendous task of redeeming a whole fallen world.

II. THE HAPPY RELATIONS BETWEEN CHRIST AND HIS FATHER. 1. *He is God's beloved Son.* This truth seems to belong to the very nature of Christ. It throws light on his permanent relations with God. God is love, and Christ is good and worthy of love. Through all eternity the love of the Father is directed to the Son. But now we see Christ on earth, incarnate, a Man, and in lowly estate. Yet God does not fail to own or cease to love him. He is known to his Father, though he may be despised by men. Surely this must have been a cheering and sustaining influence for Christ in the midst of his hard and toilsome life. In a lower way may not the same be true of us? God recognizes his human family; he owns all his earthly children. The shame of outward conditions does not blind his eye. Rejected by men, his children are still owned and loved by God; and it is better to be loved by God than to be praised by the world. 2. *God is well pleased with him.* This further truth seems to refer to the immediate condition, to the recent action, of Christ. Jesus had just been baptized; he had persevered in spite of the flattering resistance of the Baptist; he had felt that he must fulfil all righteousness; he had consecrated himself to his great work. God is

well pleased with Christ for this. (1) The obedience of the Son pleases the Father. If, like Christ, we delight to do God's will, he will delight in us. (2) The good pleasure of God signifies his approval of Christ's work. This mission of saving the world that Christ has just consecrated himself to is well-pleasing to God. Thus God accepts the redeeming work from the first. Now the sacrifice of Christ, being acceptable to God, must be efficacious for man.—W. F. A.

Vers. 1—15.—*The appearance of John the Baptist.* The interval between the last verse of the second chapter and the first verse of this chapter measures the period of the life of Christ stretching from his earliest childhood to his entrance on his public ministry, or close thereupon. Meantime we are here brought to the time when appeared one of the most distinctly marked, most honoured, characters of all history. John the Baptist, son of Zacharias and Elisabeth, was the child of prophecy. He was one of the noblest expressions, if not the *very* noblest, of the true prophet in his character and work. And as he sealed the testimony of his life with his life's blood, it was given him to win the brilliant crown that awaits the prophet and martyr united in one. This is not the place for anything resembling a dissertation on the prophetic character in general, nor on the life and character of John the Baptist in particular. This only is proposed here, to give expression to what may seem the leading suggestions of this chapter as to "one called as was" John the Baptist, prophet and herald of the Teacher, the Example, the Saviour of the world. Let us remark respecting John the Baptist that—

I. HE WAS NOT MERELY CALLED TO BE A PROPHET WHEN THE TIME CAME—THE TIME OF BIRTH, OF TRAINING, AND OF ENTRANCE UPON PUBLIC LIFE—BUT HE WAS ANNOUNCED, AND HE WAS THE SPECIALLY ANNOUNCED, OF PROPHECY. (Vers. 2, 3.) 1. This circumstance places John the Baptist in a very small and select number. Many prophets there had been, and many things did they prophesy; but they did not prophesy of many *persons*. 2. The circumstance must equally stamp with a special *peculiarity* the prophet so announced. For such a man there must be some very special work. 3. To be long foretold by prophecy must wonderfully *stretch* the usefulness, or at all events the *use*, of the person so foretold. Through centuries his name is ordained to be a *power*. Faith attaches itself to it; hopes cluster round it; love invests something in it. 4. The fact itself must act as a lesson of *non-merit* and of *non-boasting* to the person who is all the while exalted by it. A man may be betrayed, perhaps, to think that what he *is* and what he *does*, and the consequences and results of his character and doings, are to his own praise (as, if these are wrong, they certainly redound to his own blame); *but the use that came of him before ever he was must be all* the work of a higher power. He can take nothing to himself for this. 5. In the light of *the fulfilling* of prophecy, the advent and career of John the Baptist is not only an *evidence* in the matter of revealed truth, but it is a leading, first-class evidence. It multiplies by a thousand the force of impression of that kind of evidence, when compared with all that results from the fulfilment of a mere event foretold.

II. THE FAITHFUL ATTITUDE OF HIS OUTER LIFE TO HIS VOCATION OR MISSION. The kingdom of God is indeed not meat, nor drink, nor dress. Yet these may have a tale to tell. They rarely fail, in fact, to bear testimony one way or another. They serve to a large degree the part of a test of the mind and the spirit that rule in any one, and certainly not least in one, a large portion of whose life is lived in public. 1. Plainness of dress, abstemiousness in diet, a strict if not severe hold upon the habit of life, shall neither constitute conclusive evidence of the inner life, nor constitute under any circumstances merit; but if the man be honest in these outside "appearances," they do constitute virtue, and are an evidence of wisdom and of goodness; even as their opposites, ostentation, intemperance, vanity, and heedlessness, are faults that soon hasten to number themselves in the rank of vice and sin. 2. In the dress and diet of John the Baptist there may sometimes seem to be an approach to the *ostentation* of austerity. We may correctly hold that a certain *proclamation* of temperateness and severity was intended to be heard. But as these were real, of ostentation there was nothing. The degeneracy of many a day, many a period, the extremes of "purple and fine linen" and "rags," betokened a state of things that required to have most plainly preached, the plainest gospel of plain dress, plain food, and plain, simple manner and speech.

3. *The particular* burden of the ministry of John the Baptist did simply *demand* a faithfully corresponding, practical illustration, in the presence of his audience, so to say. Otherwise nothing would have been, in this case, easier than for the whole congregation of the people to observe, to think, and to utter it forth, that their prophet of denunciation was one who "said, but did not." Harmonies there are in the vast ranges of nature—in its highest and in its deepest things; in its sights most open to vision, and its subtleties most veiled with secrecy. And let us learn that it is ours to make harmonies true and genuine in what shall seem all the littlenesses of our daily life, our outer life, our life of sense as well as of soul. 4. We are not to imagine that John the Baptist exhibits this temperateness and plainness simply as the prophet non-imitable (as the priest of old wore garments of splendour not to be assumed by others), but as the example, who is set forth for this purpose, *to be imitated*, and imitated of all. There is therefore no more uncertain witness beneath the sun than that of him whose sarcastic motto has been written, "Do as I say, but not as I do."

III. HIS ONE EXHORTATION TO THE PEOPLE. (Ver. 1.) As there are epochs and turning-points in the history of the individual, so also in the history of a nation, and even of the world. Such a one had notably come in the time of the Flood. But now one very different had arrived. The nation of "*Jerusalem* and all Judæa" was hoary in sin. Yet it led the world in Divine appointments. The short, sharp summons to it, that meant from the lips of this prophet all mercy, was one of: 1. *Alteration;* the alteration of the kind that the word "repentance" carries. This is an alteration (1) deep from conviction of mind; (2) deep bathed in sorrow of heart; and (3) developed into a reformed life. 2. The altering was challenged upon one ground, viz. the finding of a new principle of rule on earth—that which could be described as the kingdom or rule of heaven. The principle by which all heaven was ruled was to learn to acclimatize here on earth. Oh, wonderful grace and hope! If the "pattern of the tabernacle" once on a time came down from heaven, much more the pattern of this new-born rule, the not-passing, not-decaying, not-vanishing *régime* of human society. "For the kingdom of heaven is at hand." So this great practical repentance, rooted in all the deepest of spiritual thought, conviction, and feeling, is pleaded for because of the (1) novel opportunity; (2) unparalleled splendour and hope; and (3) tremendous responsibility that lay couched in the fact that "the kingdom of heaven was at hand." And this meant the regeneration of the world after long process of ages, through the regeneration of the individual.

IV. HIS FIRST RECEPTION ON THE PART OF THE PEOPLE, AND HIS VARIOUS TREATMENT OF THAT RECEPTION. 1. He was received with attention and obedience on the part of the great bulk of the sinful and sin-burdened people (vers. 5, 6); and he baptized these, with the manner and, no doubt, with some words of approbation and encouragement. 2. He was repaired to by "many of the Pharisees and Sadducees." This meant either a very great and real change already in them, or it meant less than none at all in any good direction, but, on the contrary, an adherence too faithful to their ingrained foolishness, their long blindness, and their rooted hypocrisy. The treatment accorded to these men by John the Baptist proves that the latter was the real state of the case with them. Notice in this treatment: (1) Its utter plain-spokenness. Fearless of the fearless must John the Baptist have been when he apostrophized such men in the terms, "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" Events proved that it was from no entrenched position that could reckon on safety, let a man say what his tongue might, that John spoke thus. (2) Its consenting still to believe that there was a chance, and, therefore, still holding to the words of exhortation: "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance." (3) Its measured, faithful warning, with urgency added (vers. 9—12). (4) Its self-disclaiming (ver. 11). (5) Its vigorous, fervent exalting of "the Mightier" (vers. 11, 12). The language John held in reference to his greater Successor Jesus, in vers. 11, 12, is not only an exalting of the Person of Christ, but a description unsurpassed of his Divinest energy, as "baptizing with the Holy Ghost;" of his purifying and discriminating energy with fire, and fan in hand, and cleansing of the threshing-floor; and of his consuming energy, "unquenchable fire" for the "chaff."

V. HIS MODEST RECEPTION OF JESUS, WITH ABSOLUTE SELF-RENOUNCING, IN HIS PRESENCE. The attitude of John the Baptist at this unexpected crisis was indeed to

be expected. The thing to be observed is that it did not *belie* expectation! The mark of this great character was made indeed in those days. And the picture is engraved on the page before us, like a lively portraiture indeed. Would that more, many more, of the true servants of God and disciples of Jesus Christ were as transparent and as straight and as charged with sacred energy and reverent modesty!—B.

Ver. 15.—*The overruling reply.* This overruling reply of Jesus to John the Baptist, who very naturally hesitated to administer baptism to him, teaches us a lesson of—

I. THE MODESTY OF THOSE WHO ARE TRUE MASTERS—MASTERS BY UTTEREST RIGHT; MASTERS BORN.

II. THE NOBLENESS OF THAT OBEDIENCE TO DUTY WHICH LEADS A MAN, WHOEVER HE MAY BE, WHATEVER HIS PLACE MAY BE, TO SERVE, WITH SOVEREIGN SURRENDER OF SELF, THE TRUTH AND THE RIGHT.

III. THE FAITHFUL REGARD THAT JESUS HAD TO THE LAW, UNDER WHICH HE HAD VOLUNTARILY AND SO CONDESCENDINGLY PLACED HIMSELF. HE REVERENCED IT AND MADE IT HONOURABLE BEYOND ALL IT MIGHT HAVE SEEMED BEFORE.

IV. THE UNAFFECTED MODESTY OF THE SERVANT ALSO, WHO KNOWS THE RIGHT MOMENT TO CONQUER EMBARRASSMENT AND TO PROCEED TO ACTION.—B.

Vers. 16, 17.—*The heavenly attestation of the Sonship of Jesus.* The singular and thrilling event recorded in these verses is recorded also by St. Mark (i. 9—11) and by St. Luke (iii. 21, 22) in an equally full manner, while it is distinctly alluded to by St. John (i. 32, 33). It is remarkable that, though nothing is said either way, we are left to conclude that the vision was confined to the two only—Jesus himself and John the Baptist. From that time John, who had *personally* long known Jesus, knew him for certain as the Messiah; and not only heralded the Christ, but could *point to him* as the Christ (John i. 29, 30). Notice—

I. THE CRISIS AT WHICH THIS GLORIOUS ATTESTATION OCCURRED. The first profound act of public, spontaneous self-humiliation is alighted upon by the visit of a supernatural glorification. *Immediately* the act of baptism was over, the heavens opened, the Dove sped down, the voice of the Majesty himself of all the universe uttered itself forth, and glory was poured on Jesus.

II. THE CONSTITUENT PARTS OF IT. 1. The "heavens opened." We are certainly entitled by Scripture warrant, to say the least, in order to help our weaker understanding and thought, to consider heaven as a *place*, that place being *the* abode of God. These helps to human imaginings of the Unknown will not discredit our faith in the Divine omnipresence and in the fact that he is perfect Spirit; but they are needful to our present limitations of apprehension of the dim, vast, uncomprehended. 2. The Spirit descended, and in the form of a dove. No doubt it was now that an enormous accession of the Spirit was made to the human nature of Jesus Christ. And the "bodily form" of the dove was to betoken alike the soft flight and that tenderest gentleness of the Spirit, and the peace and love of him who was now more fully replenished with the Spirit. 3. A voice from heaven speaks. It is here said "*a*" voice. But the words spoken prove that it was none less than *the* voice of Heaven, the voice of the majesty of the Father, of the Glory—*God himself!* (1) Great is the impression of *voice*. (2) Great may be the absolute charm of voice. (3) Great beside all else is the fixed, distinct certainty of *voice*, as *e.g.* compared with vision or with imagination. God speaks in all creation with ten thousand voices, it is true. But when he speaks with that voice which utters *words*, the ear hears as in its own right. The words uttered by the voice of God assert (*a*) the Sonship of Jesus; (*b*) that he is the object of the Father's unqualified complacence; and (*c*) because that might be the complacence of feeling chiefly, by the analogy of human relationship, the voice asserts the Father's perfect approbation as well.

III. THE GREAT OBJECT OF THIS ATTESTATION. It appears to have been vouchsafed for the absolute warranting of the faith of John the Baptist. The simplicity, and what should seem in some light the narrowness, of this object invest it to a very large extent with its greatness. 1. What a testimony of condescending graciousness to that one man! He is to live for Christ, to work for Christ, to die for Christ. And to furnish him with exactly the *enough* satisfaction of evidence, faith, growing into *knowledge*, all

the grandest apparatus of Heaven is brought into use! 2. What a testimony of real consideration to the world! Is a great trust committed to earthly vessels? Is it a trust of critical and tremendous responsibility? Are men, not angels, the ministers of truth, of life, of salvation to their fellow-men, in the name of Christ? Then alike it is mercy for those who are to be blessed, as for those who are to bless, that into these latter, though they should stand but one by one, and follow one another in narrowest line of succession, the whole force of absolute conviction should be thrown by Heaven's and God's own most approved methods. On this occasion we cannot doubt Jesus himself was refreshed with the vision of open heaven, with the alighting on him of the holy Dove, with the voice of the Father, and the words that voice spoke. But in that John was the witness, and presumably the only witness hereof, the significance can be but *one;* and it is plain and most striking.—B.

Vers. 1—12.— *The forerunner.* I. JOHN'S APPEARANCE AND CHARACTER. He claimed to belong to the old prophetic line by appearing clad in the prophetic garb, the single rough garment of skin. His manner of life harmonized with his dress; leaving the comfortable home and well-provided life and fair prospects of a priestly family, he adopted the meagre, comfortless life of an ascetic. To entangle himself with the world would have tended to blind him to its vices and silence his remonstrance. He gathered round him a few men like himself, and "taught them to pray." Thus he became "a voice." The rough garment, the long, uncared-for hair, the wiry, weather-beaten frame, the ascetic life, were all eloquent. In any age, in order to become a voice for good, a man must be unworldly, consistent, himself the most convinced. The men who have few desires for earthly gain and comfort are accepted as the messengers of Heaven. There is no power on earth like the power of a consecrated life.

II. JOHN'S WORK WAS TO ROUSE THE PEOPLE TO PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD; to make ready for the coming of their King. (For illustrations of the figure, Stanley's 'Through the Dark Continent' may be consulted.) The herald of a royal progress has generally nothing to do but proclaim the approach of the king; triumphal arches are extemporized by the meanest village, unseemly things are swept away or hidden, the entire population turns out to shout a welcome. But John had to turn the thoughts of men from lifelong pursuits; to convert, not an individual, which is hard enough, but a land. He had to prepare the way of One who came with power to bestow the Holy Ghost and make men the sons of God—a King who could be acceptable only to men thirsting for God and righteousness. Who are prepared to welcome Christ? Who are in a condition to hail as good tidings salvation from sin?

III. MEANS USED BY JOHN. 1. He preached and baptized. John preached that repentance was needed as a preparation for the coming King. He taught the people that it was a spiritual, not a physical, condition which qualified for entrance into the kingdom; that if it was a mere question of furnishing a number of Abraham's children as subjects for the Messiah, God could turn the stones into children of Abraham. In fact, he excommunicated the whole of Israel, and assured them they could enter the kingdom only by repentance and by the grace of him who would baptize with the Holy Ghost. 2. He put this teaching in a symbolic form. He baptized. The rite characterized his ministry. He was the Baptist. He made the born Jews undergo the rite proselytes underwent. Three things, say the Jews, make a proselyte—circumcision, baptism, sacrifice. And the law for the baptism of a proselyte was: "They bring the proselyte to baptism, and, when they have placed him in the water, they again instruct him in the weightier and lighter matters of the Law, which, being heard, he plunges down and comes up, and behold he is an Israelite in all things." Baptism was the symbol whereby the new birth was expressed to the eye. The Gentile went down into the water as into a grave, in which his old man was left, and he came up a new man, born now a Jew and not a Gentile—born of the water. To ask Jews to submit to this ordinance was to ask them to acknowledge that their physical birth as children of Abraham was insufficient to prepare them for their King. Points for homiletic elaboration: connection of word and symbol in sacraments—relation of sacrament to grace conferred—John's New Testament use of the title "Holy Ghost."

IV. RESULTS OF JOHN'S WORK. There was a fascination about him which drew all

classes. The very sight of an old prophet of the extinct type was worth a day's journey to the wilderness. It became the fashion to see John and be baptized. The authorities paid him a compliment they can have paid to very few—they sent a deputation to ask him if he was the Messiah. But a public character or a preacher may be very popular, and yet the impression he makes may be superficial and transitory. Some were guided to Jesus by John, but it is difficult to say how far he succeeded in his object.

V. TESTS OF THE REALITY OF THE IMPRESSION HE MADE WERE GIVEN BY HIMSELF. No one was more surprised than he was at the kind of people that came to him. "Who hath warned *you*?" They professed repentance, but it was not profession which fitted them for the kingdom, but the reality. Jesus was to come "with his fan in his hand," to make a thorough separation between bad men and good. Meanwhile judge of your repentance: 1. Not by its present expression in misery of mind or shame. Some derive a deceptive comfort from the remembrance of the wretched days they spent, the tears they shed, the shame they felt, when first they awoke to their sin. Others suspect their own repentance because it brought no such sorrow. Other griefs have struck them so fair and indubitably, have left so distinct a mark, have forced them to so genuine an expression of their pain, that they are staggered on finding no such evident sorrow in their repentance. But there are various temperaments, and you must not measure your grief with the grief of other men. And repentance is not like a worldly loss—it resembles not a fever or acute illness that seizes a man suddenly, but a chronic ailment, which hangs about him always, never making him cry out with pain, but always there, altering his whole life. 2. Judge by the fruits. Wait to see if it destroys sin in the life. Only a trained eye distinguishes the different kinds of corn in the blade, but any passer-by knows the difference between an ear of wheat and an ear of barley. Sunset is often a good deal like sunrise; but wait a little, and the difference is unmistakable. Fine spirit is like water; but apply a match, and the difference is apparent. Compare repentance about a worldly matter—investing in a bad concern; how careful a man is afterwards! The man whose repentance is genuine will not be able to indulge in sin as he did. Especially his characteristic sins will be abandoned.

CONCLUSION. Christ is now revealed the Giver of the Holy Ghost. This is the gospel preached to us—that there is a river into which we may be plunged, and from it rise new creatures, the whole past swept away, and ourselves started on a new life. We have been baptized in sign that the Holy Ghost is freely given to us. God has by baptism opened to us individually this greatest Gift. We need the outward symbol, for we disbelieve in the Spirit's indwelling. So superficial has been our repentance, so unhelpful, so deceitful, that we always feel as if we were left to struggle alone against sin. We need to listen still to John, whose message was, "There standeth One among you who baptizeth with the Holy Ghost."—D.

Vers. 13—17.—*Baptism of Jesus.* I. ITS OCCASION. How long was Jesus to be known merely as the village carpenter of Nazareth? What is to transpire which shall show him that God's time has come for his public ministry? Ambition makes opportunities. In general, kings have only to wait the demise of their predecessors. To our Lord came at last a summons he could not misunderstand nor resist. John's hearers longed for that which only Jesus could give. He could no longer hide himself in Nazareth when a movement was afoot which he alone could guide, utilize, and prosper. When men truly seek Christ, he does not hide himself from them. He will not cause by his absence the defeat of any righteous movement.

II. ITS MEANING. John did not recognize its meaning. He was taken aback when Jesus presented himself for baptism. This was a difficulty he had not foreseen. He had foreseen trouble with scrupulous consciences; that he would be abused, perhaps endangered; that he would be the repository of disagreeable secrets—a nation's confessor. But this he had not foreseen. How could he baptize One who had no sin? John's refusal a strong testimony to the sinlessness of Jesus. He might not yet know he was the Messiah; it was his personal character and private conduct which had impressed him. He was abashed in his presence, and would have changed places with him. But Jesus demanded the performance of the rite, because, as one with a

guilty race, he felt that baptism was for him. He was so truly one with us that he felt ashamed of our sins, grieved because of them, felt as if they were his. The father hangs his head, sickens and dies when the son is disgraced. The wife cannot persuade herself she need not be ashamed when the husband commits a fraud. Our Lord could not claim separation from those whom he more intensely loved than human heart has ever loved; nor could he help feeling a truer sorrow and a deeper shame for sin than the holiest of sinners or the most despairing has ever felt. The baptism may also be looked upon as an anticipation of his death; or, again, as the anointing of the King.

III. OUTWARD SIGNS ACCOMPANYING THE BAPTISM. Outward signs were required to identify the Messiah. John tells us he did not know the Christ till these signs were given. The dove, used in scriptural language as symbol of guileless innocence, here represented the Spirit. It was only the form of a bird which would not have seemed grotesque descending from above; and the dove, which would not settle on anything unclean, was the most appropriate symbol now. Luke adds, "in a bodily form," to remind us that it was not by one attribute or influence the Holy Spirit came upon our Lord, but in his complete Personality. For though Jesus was Divine, he regularly ascribes his power to work miracles to the Holy Spirit. He prays, as if to receive from without the aid he required. His body was sustained by bread, and not by the energy of the Divinity with which it was joined. So his human soul was sanctified by the Spirit, and his human nature empowered to do wonderful works by the same Spirit.

IV. RESULT OF THE BAPTISM. It was not only needful for the people that Jesus be proclaimed publicly as the Messiah, but he himself, when his consciousness of Messiahship was numbed by the contradiction of sinners, needed some sure word of God to fall back upon. The sign from heaven was given, no doubt mainly in order that John might be able to identify Jesus as the Messiah, but to Jesus himself it was a helpful sign on which, in times of outward discouragement, he could fall back. Compare instances in which our Lord needed such comfort (Matt. xi. 27, etc.); and use to be made of our own baptism.

USES. The Spirit is given to Christ without measure, in a *bodily* form. The Father makes him Heir of all his treasure, and takes no account of all he takes. There is no gauge, no metre. The more that is used the better. This fulness he received as Man and for us. The head being anointed, refreshment is felt to the very skirts of the garments—to the least and last and lowest of the members of Christ's body. Claiming to be our King, it is this he claims—to give us his Spirit. That very Spirit which enabled him to be what he was and to do what he did, he gives to us. Had Jesus lacked anything which he needed for his office, had he found himself helpless to heal the sick, bewildered by the arguments of clever men, outwearied by the wretched blindness of sinners, unmanned by danger and the approach of death, this could only have arisen from his being abandoned by the Spirit; and when we fail and stop short, when we are overcome by outward difficulties or inward weakness, it is because we are trying to live without the Spirit. The finishing of his work is the guarantee that ours shall be finished. And the indwelling of the Spirit in Christ in a bodily completeness is the guarantee that we shall enjoy, not merely one, but all of his influences, and that in every part of our life he will be sufficient for all our occasions.—D.

Vers. 1—4.—*The herald.* "In those days," viz. while Jesus dwelt at Nazareth, the place of separation and reproach, "came John the Baptist," viz. to herald him. Man's order is to champion that which is popular, God's order is to herald truth. We note—

I. THAT JOHN CAME IN THE QUALITY OF ELIJAH. 1. *In this quality he was predicted.* (1) Gabriel stood at the right side of the altar of incense, evidently in response to the prayer of Zacharias which had ascended with the incense. Gabriel promised Zacharias that he should have a son in his old age, gave directions for the ordering of the child, adding, "And he shall go before the face of the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the heart of the fathers to the children," etc. (Luke i. 11—17). (2) Gabriel's words clearly allude to those of Malachi, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the

prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers," etc. (Mal. iv. 5, 6). (3) "Elijah," in these passages, comes in two senses, and on the same principle it is evident that the place in Isaiah (xl. 1—3), in the text applied to John, is in its ultimate sense also applicable to the Tishbite. 2. *John accordingly behaved like Elijah.* (1) His dwelling was in the wilderness. There he was brought up (Luke i. 80). There he exercised his ministry. Note: We get our moral strength for the rough work of life by retirement with God. (2) John applied to himself the words of Isaiah, "I am the voice," etc. (see John i. 23). Note: (*a*) John was simply the "voice," Jesus is the "Word." (*b*) This voice arose out of silence. Zacharias was dumb until he pronounced the name of "John." So we, until visited by the pledges of his mercy and grace, are dumb before God. (3) His diet was the wild food of nature. "Locusts" were "clean" (Lev. xi. 22). Our conversation should be pure. "Wild honey," whether from the rock in which the bee had swarmed, or the saccharine exudation from the palm, date, or olive trees (see Deut. xxxii. 13; 1 Sam. xiv. 26). Note: Men of heavenly tempers are not epicures in earthly food. (4) He wore a rough garment. This appears to have been the usual dress of the prophets (see Isa. xx. 2; Heb. xi. 37). Therefore psuedo-prophets assumed it (Zech. xiii. 4). John's garb particularly resembled that of Elijah (2 Kings i. 8). The girdle of dried skin, rough and strong, denoted the wearer to be a man of resolution, like his prototype (Luke xii. 35; 1 Pet. i. 13). Note: If John's dress was plain in the sight of men, he was himself "great in the sight of God" (Luke i. 15). Let us not plume ourselves upon our clothes, or value our fellows by outward appearances. 3. *Yet is John distinguished from that prophet.* (1) He distinguished himself. When priests and Levites demanded if he were Elijah, he said, "I am not" (John i. 21). (2) Jesus also distinguished him. "If ye are willing to receive it, this is Elijah *which is to come.*" So after John's death he said, "Elijah indeed cometh first and restoreth all things" (ch. xi. 14; Mark ix. 12). John Baptist did not "restore all things." (3) It is evident that in these prophecies there is a double sense. They point to two advents of Jesus. In the first he came to set up a spiritual kingdom, and was heralded by Elijah in "spirit and power." In the second he will come to establish a visible kingdom, and will be heralded by Elijah in *person.*

II. THAT JOHN CAME TO HERALD THE KING MESSIAH. 1. *His testimony was unequivocal.* (1) The "Lord" whom he proclaimed is styled "Jehovah" in Isaiah. John pointed out Jesus of Nazareth as that very personage (see John i. 15, 29). (2) Herein was John the greatest of all the prophets (ch. xi. 9—11). Other prophets gave marks and tokens by which Christ might be known. John pointed him out in Person. The greatest triumph of prophecy is to bring men to the personal Jesus, in their very soul to see him as the saving Christ. 2. *His qualifications were unimpeachable.* (1) John was indicated as a prophet of the Lord in the extraordinary circumstances of his birth (Luke i. 5—25). In these he resembled Samson and Jeremiah (Judg. xiii.; Jer. i. 5). (2) He had his commission immediately from heaven (Luke iii. 2). (3) The Jews acknowledged him. Multitudes of them came to his baptism (ver. 6). No one disputed his claims (ch. xxi. 26; Mark xi. 32; Luke xx. 6). (4) The testimony of John to Jesus is therefore most valuable. The marks by which John identified Jesus as the Christ were Divine and inimitable (John i. 32—34). It is difficult to conceive how the unbelieving Jews can dispose of John's testimony.

III. JOHN CAME ALSO TO HERALD MESSIAH'S KINGDOM. 1. *He heralded it as the kingdom of the heavens.* (1) The Christian discipleship is a kingdom. (*a*) It has subjects. (*b*) It has a King. (*c*) It has laws. (2) It is called the kingdom of the heavens. (*a*) Its principles are those of heaven. (*b*) In the heavens its principles are made eternal. (*c*) It prepares its subjects for translation to the heavens. (3) It is in "spirit and power" the "kingdom of the God of heaven" described by Daniel (ii. 44; vii. 13, 14). In the other Gospels it is called the "kingdom of God." (4) John, though a priest, never officiated in the temple. But he introduced the Lord of the temple (Mal. iii. 1). Was there not here an intimation that the priesthood of Aaron was now to give place to that of Melchizedek? 2. *He proclaimed its near approach.* (1) The coming of the kingdom in "spirit and power" dates from the ascension of Christ (cf. Ps. cx. 1, 2; Luke xix. 12—14). That event was indeed "at hand," but

not the coming of the kingdom in visible glory. (2) The spiritual kingdom is entered by faith. Believers do not pass out of it at death. In that "article" Jesus, however, comes in Person, though invisibly, to receive them to himself (John xiv. 1—3). 3. *He therefore preached repentance.* (1) "The voice," etc. The imagery here is borrowed from the practice of Eastern monarchs, who on taking a journey or going on a military expedition, used to send persons to "form the road." So repentance must: (*a*) Bring down the *eminences* of pride, presumption, ingratitude. (*b*) Fill up the *hollows* of inattention, apathy, despondency. (*c*) Straighten the *crooked places* of prejudice, censoriousness, covetousness. (*d*) Smooth the *rough places* of sabbath-breaking, drunkenness, profanity, immorality, instability. (2) John's garb and mode of living preached. His habits were in keeping with his doctrine. Sweet is the harmony between the lip and life. (3) The time of his preaching was opportune. Jewish writers admit that their nation was then fearfully degenerated. They soon filled up the measure of their iniquity. No preaching was more needed than that of the Baptist. (4) The place also was opportune. The mind of every man, whether Jew or Gentile, is like the wilderness in which John preached, and needs his stirring words.—J. A. M.

Vers. 5—12.—*Religious revival.* When the Baptist opened his commission the Jewish nation was in a woeful state of degeneracy. In connection with his ministry there was a remarkable revival of religion. This may be viewed as a specimen of revivals of religion in general.

I. IT WAS A SEASON OF FAITHFUL PREACHING. 1. *Christ was prominent in the sermon.* (1) "Make ye ready the way of the Lord!" was the "cry" of the "voice" in the wilderness. "He that cometh" was the grand theme—the Promise of prophecy, the Hope and Expectation of the world. (2) The sermon set forth Christ in his dignity. "The Lord," equivalent to "Jehovah" in the Hebrew of Isaiah. If amongst men there had not arisen a greater than the Baptist, then who must that Person be whose shoes John was not worthy to bear? Maimonides says, "All services which a servant does for his master a disciple does for his teacher, excepting unloosing his shoes" (cf. John viii. 58). (3) It set forth Christ in his *power.* "Mightier than I." "God is able of these stones," etc., viz. as he raised up Adam from the dust. "These stones." "John was now baptizing in Jordan at *Bethabara* (John i. 28), *the House of passage*, where the children of Israel passed over; and there were the twelve stones, one for each tribe, which Joshua set up for a memorial (Josh. iv. 20). It is not unlikely that he pointed to those stones, which God could make to be, more than in representation, the twelve tribes of Israel" (Henry). (4) It set forth Christ also in his *official* distinction. "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." John, though a priest, did not presume to wield the fire of the sanctuary. That was a Divine prerogative (cf. Luke xxiv. 49; John xv. 26). Apostles presumed not to claim it. Sacraments have no efficacy from those who minister them (cf. 2 Kings iv. 31; 1 Cor. iii. 6). 2. *It insisted upon essential things.* (1) John preached *repentance* in order to remission of sins. He insisted that true repentance will have meet fruit. Shakespeare well describes it as

> "Heart's sorrow,
> And a clear life ensuing."

Those are not true penitents who say they are sorry for sin, and persist in sinning. (2) John also preached *faith* in Jesus as the Christ. In the text he spoke of him as *coming.* Afterwards he pointed him out in Person (John i. 29). That is grand preaching which brings the sinner into *personal* relationship to his Saviour. (3) John also preached *holiness.* His baptism was a ceremonial purification, of which the baptism conferred by Jesus is the spiritual complement. John's baptism was "with *water*," viz. which washes the surface; Christ's, "with *fire*," viz. which purges the *substance.* The regeneration of water is outward and ceremonial, that of the Holy Ghost is inward and spiritual. 3. *Its lessons were closely applied.* (1) With *encouragement.* This was in the forefront. John's ministry was "the beginning of the gospel [or, 'good news'] of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (Mark i. 1). (2) With *entreaty.* He besought the people to repent of their sins. (3) With *admonition.* (*a*) The lineage of goodness is no substitute for repentance. The Talmud says that "Abraham sits next the gates of

hell, and does not permit any Israelite, however wicked, to go down there." John preached a different doctrine. Visible Church-membership will not save. (*b*) "Think not to say *within yourselves*," etc. Do not attempt secretly to justify impenitence by things that you have not the courage to announce. Hide no lie that will ruin you. (*c*) God is not restricted to any law of succession in his Church. "Of these *stones*"—Gentiles, apparently without any covenant life, in opposition to fruitless "*trees*," he could "raise up children unto Abraham" (cf. Rom. iv. 16—18; Gal. iii. 22—29). (4) With *reproof*. The Pharisees and Sadducees, who claimed to be children of Abraham, are described as a brood of vipers—the seed of the old serpent. They are also described as "trees" with leaves (of profession), but without fruit of performance. They are described as the "chaff"—light, hollow, hypocritical, having only the semblance of "wheat." (5) With *warning*. (*a*) The "axe" of judgment lay at the root of the trees (cf. Isa. x. 33, 34; Dan. iv. 11, 20, 23; Luke xiii. 7—9). (*b*) The "fan" to separate the chaff from the wheat was in Messiah's hand (cf. Ps. i. 4; Dan. ii. 35; ch. xiii. 30, 49). (*c*) The "wrath to come," or predicted destruction of Messiah's enemies (Mal. iv. 6), was set before them. (*d*) The "unquenchable fire" of hell was shadowed in the horrors of the judgments of God upon the city. Gurnell says, speaking of the lost, "Their torment makes them sin, and their sin feeds their torment, one being fuel for the other." (*e*) "He that cometh" and "the wrath to come" are nearly associated (see 1 Thess. i. 10). It is evermore "wrath to come." (*f*) The danger is imminent. "Even now," etc. Fools only can make a mock of sin.

II. IT WAS A SEASON OF STRONG RELIGIOUS EXCITEMENT. 1. *Multitudes were deeply moved.* This fact is clearly set forth in the text (see also Luke iii. 7). (1) Here was a great honour put upon John. He was a man of retirement. God often confers the greater honour on those who court it least. (2) These multitudes were not moved solely by John's eloquence. They were "a people prepared of the Lord" (Luke i. 17). The same Holy Spirit who called and qualified John moved the people to wait upon his ministry. (3) The prayers of the faithful probably had much to do with it. (*a*) Like his prototype Elijah, John himself was a man of prayer. This was the moral of his retirement in the wilderness. (*b*) There were also those who "looked for redemption in Jerusalem"—those who, like Anna, "departed not from the temple, worshipping with fastings and supplications night and day" (Luke ii. 37, 38). (*c*) Who can say to what extent blessings come upon the Church and upon the world in response to the prayers of saints dwelling in obscurity (cf. Ezra x. 1)? 2. *Notorious sinners were moved.* (1) Such there would naturally be amongst the multitudes. (2) "Publicans and harlots" appear to have been baptized by John (see ch. xxi. 32). None are too wicked to be saved but those who are too wicked to repent. 3. *Unlikely sinners were moved.* (1) Of this number were the Pharisees. (*a*) They were orthodox Jews, who believed in Church doctrines and traditions. (*b*) They were formalists, strict in life, and who prided themselves upon their righteousness. What need could such persons feel for repentance? (*c*) Yet many of them, their righteousness notwithstanding, had the viper's venom in their hearts. Formalism may consist with heart-malice. (2) Of this number also were the Sadducees. They were the opposite of the Pharisees. They rejected Church traditions. They interpreted the Scriptures in the rationalistic spirit. They denied the immortality of the soul and the existence of the angels. They were materialists and deists. Of what use would repentance be to such? (3) John was astonished to see these coming. He noticed how they came in company. So he treated them alike. Extremes meet. 4. *The results of the movement were various.* (1) Some came under true religious conviction. They confessed their sins, *i.e.* took them home to themselves. With these there was no attempt to throw the blame, in whole or part, upon either God or man (see 1 John i. 8). Those who thus received the baptism of John were prepared to become disciples of Jesus (John i. 35—37). (2) Some came because their neighbours came. Note here the power of (*a*) example; (*b*) fashion; (*c*) numbers. Men, like sheep, are gregarious. Of these some became true disciples. Others went back when the excitement subsided (cf. Ezek. xxxiii. 31—33; John v. 35). Many come to ordinances the power of which they never feel. (3) Some came from selfish policy. Forming conceptions of the coming kingdom suited to their gross affections, they thought it might offer them advantages of civil distinction. Upon discovering the spiritual nature of the kingdom, they were offended. Such were the majority

of the Pharisees and lawyers (cf. ch. xxi. 25; Luke vii. 27—30). There are still those who join Churches for worldly ends.—J. A. M.

Vers. 13—15.—*The baptism of Jesus by John.* The baptisms of Jesus at the Jordan were two, viz. that ministered by John and that ministered by the Holy Ghost. The former now claims attention. Jesus himself sought this baptism. Why?

I. WHY DID JESUS COME TO THE JORDAN? 1. *That the Scripture might be fulfilled.* (1) At the Jordan God "began to magnify Joshua in the sight of all Israel," that he might be the successor of Moses (Josh. iii. 7). (2) Therein Joshua was a type of Jesus. Jesus and his gospel replace Moses and his Law. How fitting, then, that Jesus should be authenticated at the same Jordan! (3) Both authentications took place at the same spot. John baptized at *Bethabara* (John i. 28). This place had its name, the "House of passage," from the passage of Israel under Joshua through the Jordan there. What a tissue of wonders is the providence of God! 2. *That the mission of Jesus might be indicated.* (1) How expressive is the language of signs! To have described the mission of Jesus in words would have been to have written the Gospels by anticipation. This is done in prophecy. We see it in the typical history of Joshua. The sign of the baptism *at Bethabara* calls attention to this. (2) In it we see that, as Joshua became the successor of Moses there, so now Jesus comes to abolish the Law and to introduce the better hope of his gospel. (3) Further, that as Moses died in the wilderness and left the people there, so the Law can bring us into its entanglements and terrify us with trumpet-blasts and thunders, but is powerless to bring us out. But as Joshua brought the people out, so can Jesus do by his gospel what the Law never could effect. (4) Also that as Joshua became a captain over Israel to fight their battles, vanquish giants, and settle them in Canaan, so is Jesus become "the Captain of our salvation."

II. WHY DID JESUS COME TO JOHN? 1. *John himself was astonished at this.* (1) Jesus was *personally*, immeasurably, John's superior. John, though amongst the greatest of men, was but a man. Jesus was Immanuel. He was that "Jehovah" of whom John was but the herald. (2) Jesus was *officially*, unanswerably, John's superior. John baptized with "water." Jesus, with the "Holy Ghost." (3) But how did John discover this? Previously, he only knew that Messiah had arrived (see John i. 31—33). He was a prophet, and saw as a seer (cf. 1 Sam. ix. 15, 17; Luke i. 15; ii. 26). We see Jesus unto salvation when God opens the eyes of the soul. (4) John had need of the baptism of Jesus. No man is so great as to be independent of him. The purest are most sensible of their remaining impurity, and seek the more earnestly the spiritual washing. (5) But what need had Jesus of the baptism of John? It was the "baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." Jesus had no sins to confess. Therefore he "went up *straightway* from the water." 2. *He came to fulfil all righteousness.* (1) The dispensation of John was "from heaven" as truly as was that of Moses (cf. Mark xi. 30, 31; 1 Cor. x. 2). It was therefore as necessary that Jesus should respect it as that he should fulfil the Law of Moses. (2) In this, as in other things, Jesus is our *Exemplar;* and he teaches us to yield exact obedience to positive precepts. Questionings of reason that would make us hesitate must have no place. And as the baptism of the Spirit followed, we are taught to expect special blessing upon such obedience. (3) Jesus submitted to the baptism of John as our *Surety;* and he shows us that he took our sin upon him that he might wash it away. And the voice of Divine approbation which followed assures us of the effectual manner in which he did this for us. So listen to that voice that it may carry the heavenly witness to your heart. Through Jesus becoming Righteousness we may become righteous. Hence the plural, "Thus it becometh *us* to fulfil all righteousness." (4) "John forbade" Jesus, as Peter did when Jesus offered to wash his feet (John xiii. 6—8; cf. Luke i. 43). "Suffer it to be so now." No pretence of humility must induce us to neglect a duty.

III. WHY DID JESUS COME "THEN"? 1. *He was then of the legal age to enter upon his ministry.* (1) (Cf. Numb. iv. 3; Luke iii. 23.) (2) John had commenced his ministry six months earlier; for there was that difference of age. God has an *order* as well as a *law.* Both should be respected. 2. *The juncture was fitting.* (1) It was while John was in the midst of his ministry. He had already spent six months of it, and within another similar term that ministry was closed. As Moses the Levite

testified to Joshua, and passed away; so John the Levite—a representative of Moses—testified to Jesus, and passed away. The end of every holy ministry is to testify to Christ. (2) John's reputation as a prophet was established. His testimony was conclusive (see Mark xi. 29—32). Our influence, at its best, should testify to Christ. (3) Joshua prepared for the passage of the Jordan *three days* before that passage was effected. This testimony at the Jordan was *three years* before Jesus crossed the Jordan of death. He was in his passage through that *river in judgment* "three days." The baptism of Jesus at the Jordan, that river being viewed as an emblem of death, gives emphasis and illustration to those words of Paul, "Are ye ignorant that all ye who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?" (Rom. vi. 3). It is through the *death* of Christ that we *live*.—J. A. M.

Vers. 16, 17.—*The baptism of Jesus by the Holy Ghost.* After receiving John's baptism, Jesus "went up *straightway* from the water." He did not remain to make confession of sin, and for the obvious reason that he had none. He went up "from the water," or ascended the outer bank of the Jordan; for John appears to have ministered his baptism within the double bank of that river. Then "lo, the heavens were opened unto him," etc. An interval is here clearly marked between the baptism of John and that of the Holy Ghost, to show that the baptisms are distinct. The latter was the true baptism of Jesus.

I. THE SCENE MANIFESTED THE BLESSED TRINITY. 1. *Here is Jesus, declared to be the Son of God.* (1) This is a Messianic title (see Ps. ii. 7; also 2 Sam. vii. 14, cited Heb. i. 5; and Luke i. 35). (2) It does not appear to be used to set forth the pre-existence of Jesus. It is even remarkable that John, when speaking of that pre-existence, uses the title "Word;" but when he comes to treat of the Incarnation, then he uses this title (John i. 1—14). (3) Nevertheless, as a title of the Incarnation, it expresses the Divinity of Christ. It sets forth Messiah as an the same nature with the Father (see ch. xxvi. 63—65; John i. 18; v. 18; x. 36; xix. 7; Rom. i. 3, 4; Heb. i.). 2. *He is so declared by the voice of the Father.* (1) This voice was probably like thunder (cf. John xii. 29; also Job xl. 9; xxxvii. 4, 5; Ps. xviii. 13; xxix. 3, 4). (2) Yet was it distinct from thunder, for it came in articulate phrase. It was therefore supernatural. It resembled the voice in which the Lord spake to Moses or answered the high priests who consulted him by the Urim and Thummim. (3) The *vision* of the Father is reserved for the heavenly state. The angels do there continually enjoy it (see ch. xviii. 10; Luke i. 19; cf. Esth. i. 14). Hitherto man has not *seen* the Father (see Deut. iv. 12; John i. 18). The sonship of man will be revealed in the resurrection; then will also be revealed the Fatherhood of God. We hear of these things now by the hearing of the ear; the eye shall see them then (Rom. viii. 19). 3. *The Spirit of the Father rests upon the Son.* (1) It came from the cloven heavens—from the "excellent glory." It was "the Spirit of glory and of God." (2) It came as a dove. The stream of glory hovered as a dove hovers before it alights, and then rested upon him. Possibly also in the very form of a dove. In either case it was supernatural. (3) "It abode upon him" (John i. 32—34). The gift of the Spirit as a Spirit of wisdom and power is to be distinguished from the indwelling of the same Spirit as a Spirit of holiness. The apostles are repeatedly said to be "filled with the Holy Ghost;" but of Jesus it is said once for all that he was "full of the Holy Ghost" (Luke iv. 1). (4) Out of his fulness we receive the measures of grace (John i. 16; iii. 34, 35).

II. THE BAPTISM INTRODUCED JESUS INTO HIS PROPHETIC OFFICE. 1. *As to the fact* (1) This is certified by Luke, who, after describing the baptism of Jesus, adds this note: "And Jesus himself, *when he began to teach*, was about thirty years of age" (Luke iii. 23). (2) It is also evident from the event. For immediately after his baptism Jesus was driven into the wilderness. There he engaged in conflict with Satan; and after forty days he entered a synagogue and opened his commission in these words: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach . . . To-day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Luke iv. 18—21). (3) He had his commission in the voice. God spake in old time by the prophets. The Baptist was the last and greatest of these. "This is my Son." He now calls attention to the mission and teaching of Jesus (cf. ch. xvii. 5). 2. *As to the form.* (1) The Spirit of

God came upon him. This is the indispensable qualification. When he descends upon the preacher, the light of heaven comes into his soul. Without the Spirit of God there can be no effective spiritual teaching. (2) It came upon him as a dove. The Holy Spirit came upon the apostles in tongues or flames, of fire. There was something to be purged in them. Christ had nothing that needed cleansing. The dove is the emblem of innocence, purity, and meekness (see Isa. xlii. 1, 2). These qualities should be sought and cultivated by all preachers (cf. ch. x. 16). 3. *As to the effect.* (1) It was *illuminating.* The glory streaming from the opened heavens was the symbol and sign of spiritual illumination. (2) It was *miracle-working.* To the qualification of his baptism his doctrine and miracles are ascribed (see Isa. xi. 2; xlii. 1; ch. xii. 28; John iii. 34; Acts x. 37, 38). (3) All God's people have the Spirit of sanctification. Special gifts are specially given.

III. THIS BAPTISM WAS THE FIRST ACT IN THE CONSECRATION OF JESUS TO HIS PRIESTHOOD. 1. *In the complete consecration the baptisms are three.* (1) There was the baptism of *water.* "Moses brought Aaron and his sons" to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation and "washed them with water." (2) This was followed by the baptism of *oil.* "Moses poured of the anointing oil upon Aaron's head, and anointed him to sanctify him." (3) The baptisms were completed in that of *blood.* "Moses took the blood" of the ram of consecration, "and put it upon Aaron's right ear, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot." (4) These baptisms had their counterpart severally in the consecration of Christ, viz. at the Jordan; on the Mount of Transfiguration; and in Gethsemane and Calvary. 2. *We are here concerned with the first of these.* (1) As Moses the Levite washed Aaron with water; so John, also a Levite, washed Jesus with water, to mark him as the Antitype of Aaron. (2) But the baptism which really inaugurated Jesus was that of the Holy Ghost, which followed the baptism of John. "It is the Spirit that beareth witness" in this case, not the "water" (cf. 1 John v. 6, 8, 9). (3) The attesting voice comes now with fresh meaning. "My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Jesus came to do the will and fulfil the pleasure of God, which the Law failed to do or fulfil (cf. Heb. x. 5—10). (4) No eulogy could be greater. We, in Christ, may hear this voice of eulogy in the last day. We are "accepted in the *Beloved*" (Eph. i. 6). (5) Bethabara had its name, the "House of passage," from the passage of the children of Israel over the Jordan at that place. Then the *river* was cloven. Now the *heavens* are cloven. There the people went up into Canaan, the type of heaven. The gospel is the kingdom of heaven, and brings heaven near. (6) Jesus at Bethabara represented his Church. There the glory of heaven came down upon him, though he did not *then* cross the Jordan. We must be baptized from heaven and with heaven before we can ascend into heaven.—J. A. M.

Ver. 1.—*The mission of preaching.* "Preaching in the wilderness of Judæa." John Baptist was not a teacher; he was precisely a preacher, in the first and proper sense of that word. Everywhere in the New Testament it implies proclaiming after the manner of a herald. It is the term used in the Old Testament of the witnessing work of the prophets (see Neh. vi. 7; Isa. lxi. 1; Jonah iii. 2, etc.). There is a distinct place for the preacher and for the teacher. They *may* be combined in one man, and the processes of preaching and teaching *may* go on together; but usually, if a man has the one gift, he has not the other; and we are constantly making the mistake of expecting a man to have the one gift because we see plainly that he has the other. Two things are gathered up in the term "preaching."

I. PREACHING AS PROCLAIMING A MESSAGE. The preacher is but the agency, or medium, by means of which a message is conveyed. So John calls himself a "voice," because *what* he said was the all-important thing. This is the idea of the prophet, who was the medium through which a message of God was carried into the minds of men. It is essential to every preacher that he should have something to proclaim; therefore what Christian preachers preach is called the "gospel," or "good news." 1. But the preacher must be sure of his message. Compare the expression used by prophets, "The word of God came to me." A preacher proclaims, not what he thinks, but what he knows; what he grips as the truth of God given him to declare. The "accent of conviction" is the test of the true preacher. 2. And they who hear must

feel convinced of the authority of the messenger. Not an authority arising out of his office, but out of the evidence that he holds a commission, and has a message. In what sense can preachers nowadays be said to have their messages direct from God?

II. PREACHING AS PERSUADING TO RESPOND TO THE MESSAGE. This brings to view the personal force of the preacher. To be a herald he need but be a voice. To be a persuader he must be a voice with a tone in it; and that tone is the personal element. See, then, the kind of preachers that become men of power. They are men who "tell the truth;" but they are much more than this—they are men who, like John the Baptist, can "make the truth tell."—R. T.

Ver. 2.—*The plea by which repentance is urged.* "For the kingdom of heaven is at hand." There seems to be evidence that Judæa was in a very low moral condition when John the Baptist appeared. Ceremonial religion took the place of practical righteousness, rabbinical rules covered personal indulgence and iniquity, luxury enervated the wealthy, and restlessness led to crime among the masses. It was a time when a moral reformation was needed, and John was, first of all, a national reformer. What John sought was the *national* repentance—the change of mind of the nation (compare Jonah's preaching to Nineveh). He dealt with individuals, not in relation to their private concerns, but as representatives of the nation; so we find that he convicts of the sins of *classes*, not of personal sins. From this point of view John's work can be effectively compared with that of the ancient prophets (*e.g.* Elijah), who were essentially *national* reformers. Those old prophets had demanded national repentance as a preparation for some special manifestation of the delivering or restoring power of God. The revelation of grace could not come unless men were morally prepared to receive it. So John pleads that the Messianic manifestation is close at hand, is at the doors; and there should be *readiness to receive it.* Illustrate by the Eastern custom of demanding that the roads should be repaired when an Eastern king proposed to visit a district.

I. WE CLAIM REPENTANCE BECAUSE GOD WILL JUDGE. Our plea is the sinfulness of sin, the certain consequences of sin, the future judgment on sins. "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." This is right for the *individual.* Partly right. But even for the individual it may be doubted whether the revelation of Divine grace is not a more truly humbling force. "A sense of blood-bought pardon soon dissolves a heart of stone."

II. JOHN CLAIMED REPENTANCE BECAUSE GOD WILL SAVE. The "kingdom of heaven" is the manifestation of God's delivering grace and power, the fulfilment of the national hope. He says, because God is *gracious,* therefore repent. The apostle ventures to declare that the "goodness of God" should "lead to repentance." And that is true to human nature, though doctrinal theologies have tended to obscure the truth. Love is the great melting, humbling power. God's redemption is the true convicter of sin.—R. T.

Ver. 3.—*The law of Divine preparation.* God never acts suddenly. He who sees the end from the beginning never needs to act suddenly, for he never can be taken at unawares. It is easy to grasp this thought when we consider only material things; but it is not so easy when we take account of the complications introduced by the ever-varying human will. Do man's impulsive actions never call for Divine promptitude in response to them? To this we answer—No. God's omniscience is to be thought of as including, as anticipating, every movement of the human will. Illustrate by showing how science has corrected the older notion of the suddenness of creation. We now know that preparing the earth for the probation of man was the work of long millenniums, and was arranged in stages, each one of which prepared the way for the other. The older geology explained many things by the theory of sudden catastrophies; the newer geology traces the long preparations for what takes climactic form at last. So it is prophesied that the Lord shall suddenly come to his temple, but the suddenness is only an outward seeming, a sensible impression; really the long ages prepared for his coming. Then it follows that God must always have servants engaged in *preparing* work, who never can have the cheer of results; and are always in danger

of being misunderstood by others, as accomplishing nothing. God will say, "Well done, preparers!"

I. THINGS THAT SEEM SUDDEN AND ISOLATED ARE ALWAYS ISSUES, AND ALWAYS STAND IN CONNECTIONS. Illustrate by the coming of Messiah as prepared for by John and connected with his ministry. Take any event that ever has happened, modern scientific inquiry demands to know where it stands; how it is related; what it has come up out of; by what processes it is arrived at. Our Bible is really the history of the Divine series of preparations; and our very life is only apprehended aright when it is regarded as the preparation for the life to come.

II. THE ADVENT OF MESSIAH SEEMS SUDDEN AND ISOLATED, BUT IT IS AN ISSUE, AND IT STANDS IN CONNECTIONS. This opens a familiar line of thought. Preparations for Messiah are found (1) in promises; (2) in prophecies; (3) in songs of hope; (4) in historical events; (5) in preaching demands, such as John's, etc. The issue of four thousand years of Divine preparation.—R. T.

Ver. 4.—*A man may be his message.* The evangelists dwell on the peculiarities of John's dress, food, and habits, as if the utmost importance attached to these, and they were an essential part of John's witness. To see the man was to apprehend his message. His peculiarities were not personal oddities, but designed ministry. How far his dress was the recognized prophet's dress cannot be decided; but it is clear that he designed to present an example of severe self-restraint as a marked contrast to the luxury and self-indulgence of that age. Illustrate by reference to Diogenes the Cynic, who testified against the gaiety and luxury of the Athenians. He limited his desires to necessities. He ate little, and what he ate was often the coarsest. His dress consisted solely of a cloak. A wallet and a huge stick completed his accoutrements. He lived in a tub. Note also the witness of the Quakers' plain garb; and the moral force of distinctive dress such as that worn by sisters of mercy, etc.

I. A MAN HIMSELF IS A POWER OF INFLUENCE. We are so constantly thinking of, and estimating, what a man does or says, that we are in danger of thinking that a man's power is exclusively his activity. Then we are likely to divorce character and work, and say, "It does not matter what a man is privately so that he does well publicly." But the fact is that the man himself does more than the man's activity. What he *is* is more important than what he *does*. His unconscious influence is more effective than his conscious. Here is the ministry of a man's words and works, but there is also the more searching ministry of the man himself. If John the Baptist had said nothing, he would have preached repentance by his clothes and by his food. From this impress the duty of making our dress and habits the simple expression of ourselves.

II. A MAN SHOULD CULTURE HIMSELF IN ORDER TO BE THE BEST POSSIBLE POWER OF INFLUENCE. Just this John did. He put his daily habits into severe self-restraint; reduced his clothes and food to the narrowest limits. And this because he intelligently set before himself a precise aim, and resolved to secure fitness for accomplishing that aim. Impress the truth that a man is never his true self while he allows his personal influence to be a mere accident. Most men merely *happen* to influence. Noble men *resolve* to influence, decide how they will influence, and put themselves into holy restraints in order to gain power.—R. T.

Ver. 6.—*The moral value of confession.* "Confessing their sins." "There are two cases which lead men in communities to the confession of particular sins in the presence of their fellows, before God and before man. Any moral exaltation which places them so that they see evil from a plane higher than that on which they live ordinarily, and where its relations, its tendencies, its nature, and character are clearly revealed, constantly tends to produce confession. There is also a confession which results from social magnetism. Communities are sometimes possessed, for short periods, with a paroxysm of contrition." There are many, however, who are quite willing to confess their *sinfulness* who will not confess their *sins*. It may be asked—Why should confession be demanded? What moral value lies in it? God knows all things: why, then, does he want us to say to him what he knows? Yet we observe that man demands open acknowledgment of fault, that is, confession, as the sign of

sincerity of repentance, on the part of those who grieve him. Repentance as mere sentiment is of no value. If it is more than sentiment, it will gain two forms of expression. 1. Acknowledgment of the sin. 2. Putting away of the sin henceforth. It is not evangelical repentance we feel if we shrink from doing either of these two things. The moral value of repentance that finds expression in confession is exhibited in a very striking way by St. Paul. "What carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge!" (2 Cor. vii. 11). The special point which may be opened and illustrated is, that confession assures of *personal thought and feeling*. It is the expression of the aroused, awakened man, whose indifference is gone, who sees himself, and is oppressed with the sight. If a man really confesses, he must have got a real self-hold.

I. A RELIGION OF MERE ASSOCIATION IS WORTHLESS. Yet that is all the religion so many have. It has no *confession* in it, save the unintelligent, parrot-like repetition of a formula.

II. A RELIGION OF PERSONAL CONVICTIONS ALONE IS WORTHY. One of its earliest signs is confession: because as soon as a man comes to think, he is dissatisfied with himself, and finds that he wants to say so. Saying so is the way toward gaining relief.—R. T.

Ver. 9.—*The subtlety of self-deceptions.* The Jews always were, and still are, remarkable for their pride of race; for their confidence of acceptance with God on the simple ground of their Abrahamic relations. And there was a certain amount of reasonable ground for such pride. The Abrahamic was a privileged race; it did stand in a special covenant with God. But, in a subtle way, this merely outward relationship had come to be used as an excuse for neglecting personal piety. Their relation to God was secure for this life and any other, and therefore all anxiety was removed, personal religious concern came to be regarded as a work of supererogation. Illustrate by the deceptive influence of antinomian tenets. How easily they take on a garb of supreme piety, and yet hide out of sight negligences, and even permitted moral evil! In many subtle ways men try to deceive themselves into the idea that race-relations, formal connections, will suffice to secure their eternal safety. In so many forms men say, "We have Abraham to our father;" all is well. Men are glad to get away from the searching *spiritual*, from that personal Word of God which is "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." They can do with general and official relations with God; they cannot do with personal relations. There is a thrill of fear if prophets abruptly say, "Prepare to meet thy God." So they are *willing* to be deceived. This deception, which John Baptist deals with so scornfully, put on a semblance of piety. Who could take exception to it? And yet the relationship was not necessarily a spiritual one. They are the true children of Abraham who inherit Abraham's *faith*. This the classes John reproved did not care to see. Spiritual relationships are the only important relationships. Work out two thoughts.

I. Religious self-deceptions provide BODILY OCCUPATIONS AND RELATIONS in place of spiritual ones. Routines, ceremonials, relationships.

II. Religious self-deceptions put MAN'S AUTHORITIES IN PLACE OF GOD'S. Ministries of helpfulness man may provide; "dominion over faith" even the great apostle steadfastly refused to claim.—R. T.

Ver. 11.—*The twofold baptism.* The author of 'Ecce Homo' suggests the distinction between the baptism of John and the baptism of Jesus, which John himself puts in such strong contrast. "Christ was to baptize with a Holy Spirit and with fire. John felt his own baptism to have something cold and negative about it. It was a renouncing of definite bad practices. The soldier bound himself to refrain from violence; the tax-gatherer, from extortion. But more than this was wanting. It was necessary that an enthusiasm should be kindled. The phrase, 'baptize with fire,' seems at first sight to contain a mixture of metaphors. Baptism means cleansing, and fire means warmth. How can warmth cleanse? The answer is that *moral* warmth does cleanse. No heart is pure that is not passionate; no virtue is safe that is not enthusiastic. And such an enthusiastic virtue Christ was to introduce." This

suggestion helps us to a more precise view of the distinction between the two baptisms, and the relation of one to the other.

I. WATER-BAPTISM IS THE TYPE OF PUTTING OFF SURFACE ACTS OF SIN. Attention should be fixed on the ministry of water. It washes off; it cleanses surfaces. "The result of John's baptism, even for those who received it faithfully, did not go beyond the change of character and life implied in repentance." Illustrate by the advice given to the different classes who came to John. They were to cease their wrong-doing, to put away their characteristic faults, to wash off their particular sins from the record of their lives. In a similar way Isaiah pleads, "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil" (Isa. i. 16). This is the proper beginning of moral reformation; but it is only a *beginning*.

II. FIRE-BAPTISM IS THE TYPE OF BURNING OUT THE SOUL OF SIN, THE LOVE OF SIN. Fire is a cleanser; it is, indeed, the supreme cleanser, because it searches into the very *substance* of a thing. So fire is applied to metals. The fire is to "try every man's work, of what sort it is." Christ is to deal with that spiritual condition out of which the acts of sin come. To put the matter sharply, John only dealt with actions and opinions. Christ deals with feelings, and will; cleansing the very thoughts of the heart.—R. T.

Ver. 12.—*Christ's unquenchable fire.* It is not possible to think that John could have referred to what we call "hell-fire"—the punishment-fires of the next life. And we need have no definite opinions concerning the nature of *that* fire in order to understand John's figure here. Speaking of Messiah's actual present work in souls, he calls it a "baptism of fire," and he further remarks on its severity and continuity. His baptism of water was but of a temporary and symbolical character. Christ's baptism of fire would be permanent and spiritually real—a fire that would go on burning until all the world's evil was burned up. As illustration, note that "every year all effete substances that have served their purpose in the old form are burnt up in the autumn fire of nature, and only what has promise of life and usefulness passes scatheless through the ordeal. This flaming besom of nature's fire sweeps from sight in the most obscure nooks, as well as in the most open places, the impurities of death and decay, in order to prepare the stage for fresh life and new growth."

I. THE SEVERITY OF CHRIST'S WORK. Apparently John's seems to be more arresting and severe; but really it does not prove to be so. There is all the difference between "washing off" and "burning out." The very forces themselves, "water," "fire," suggest the distinction. Repentance seems severe; the after-time resolute dealing with sin and rooting it out is much more severe. Christian *keeping on* is much more stern than Christian *beginning*. Illustrate by the Book of Revelation. The living Christ is actually present in his Churches, and at work, making them altogether *white;* and all the forces, famine, war, commotions, disease, etc., are the fires in which he is burning away the dross, and making the silver shine perfectly white. He were no true friend of sinners if he withheld necessary severity.

II. THE CONTINUITY OF CHRIST'S WORK. What is presented to thought is, that nothing will check or stop the Divine fire-cleansing. That it will stop when its work is done is assumed. The fire will keep on consuming as long as there is anything to consume, but no one conceives evil to be eternal. Christ will burn on until his burning work is needed no more.—R. T.

Ver. 15.—*The claims of righteousness.* "For thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." The term "righteousness" here plainly means the lawful claims of the authority to which, at a given time, we are subject. It may be the Mosaic Law. It may be the Christian law. But the point of our Lord's answer is really this: "The Messianic law is not yet come in; it is not yet established; I am still under the Mosaic Law; that requires my obedience to the Jehovah-prophets who may be raised up; I have no right to make laws for myself. I must obey the Law I know until that Law is evidently set aside for another." It is the answer of the truly loyal Jew, of the man who personally feared God, and meant to show his fear by a simple, unquestioning, persistent obedience.

I. THE CLAIMS OF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS WE KNOW. Every man must be judged in the

light of his response to *those* claims. A man cannot be judged in the light of a righteousness that somebody else knows, or that he may get to know some day. He is responsible if he might have known of a higher righteousness, and made no effort to use his opportunity. From a later standpoint it would have been fitter for Jesus to baptize John; but from *that* standpoint it was the right thing for John to baptize Jesus. What is our idea of right *to-day*? And what is our conduct regarded as a response to our idea?

II. THE CLAIMS OF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS WE MAY COME TO KNOW. For the standard of righteousness can improve; it does change. Our Lord distinctly apprehended stages in the conception of righteousness when he said, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees." And the old standard ceases to be our standard when we have gained a new and a better. Illustrate by the disciples found who had only reached to John's baptism. St. Paul instructed them in the more perfect way, and they were baptized in the Name of Christ. So elevation of the standard of righteousness brings serious increase of personal responsibility.—R. T.

Ver. 16.—*The dove-Spirit on Christ.* "Descending like a dove, and lighting upon him." Comparing the accounts given by the evangelists, it still remains uncertain whether what was seen by John actually had the form of a dove, or hovered or brooded as a descending bird does. But for our fixed associations, and the familiar comments, we should be more willing to see that the brooding, resting, abiding of the Spirit on Jesus, is the thing intended to be set prominently before us by the figure. It will be safer, perhaps, to fix attention on both the explanations.

I. THE SPIRIT ON CHRIST UNDER THE DOVE-FIGURE. "The gift of supernatural power and wisdom brought with it also the perfection of the tenderness, the purity, the gentleness, of which the dove was the acknowledged symbol" (see Matt. x. 16). "Harmless as doves;" and compare the Baptist's figures, "Behold the *Lamb* of God!" Seeley says, "There settled on his head a dove, in which the Baptist saw a visible incarnation of that Holy Spirit with which he declared that Christ should baptize." "According to the symbolism of the Bible, certain mental characters appear expressed in several animals, as in the lion, the lamb, the eagle, and the ox. In this system of natural hieroglyphics the dove denotes purity and sincerity, and hence the Spirit of purity may be most fittingly compared with the dove. The coming of the Spirit like a dove denotes, consequently, that the fulness of the Spirit of purity and sincerity was imparted to Jesus, whereby he became the Purifier of mankind."

II. THE SPIRIT ON CHRIST UNDER THE BROODING FIGURE. The impression to be made both on John and Jesus was of the abiding, permanent endowment of Christ with the precise spiritual power needed for his Messianic mission. We are to distinguish carefully between the Divine nature of Christ, which was unaffected by this brooding Spirit, and the precise gift needed for the Messiahship. The Spirit *dwelt in* him.—R. T.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER IV.

VERS. 1—11.—THE TEMPTATION. (Parallel passages: Luke iv. 1—13; a summary in Mark i. 12, 13.) The Father's acceptance of the Lord's consecration of himself for the work of the kingdom does not exclude temptation, but rather necessitates it. Psychologically, the reaction from the ecstasy of joy in hearing the announcement of ch. iii. 17 was certain; ethically, such testing as would accompany the reaction was desirable. Even the Baptist was, as it seems, not without a special temptation during this period (cf. John i. 19; and Bishop Westcott's note). At the very commencement of his official life the Lord is led consciously to realize that he has entered on a path of complete trust (even as his brethren in the flesh, Heb. ii. 13) for all personal needs, a path which required great calmness and common sense, and along which he must take his orders for final victory, not from worldly principles, but direct from God. In Luke the order of the second and third temptations is reversed. Against the supposition of Godet and Ellicott, that St. Luke is historically correct, the "Get thee hence

Satan!" (ver. 10) seems conclusive. At any rate, for St. Matthew's aim in this Gospel the temptation that he places third is the crucial one; the true King will not take an irregular method of acquiring sovereignty.

Ver. 1.—**Then**; temporal. Mark, "and straightway." Immediately after the descent of the Holy Ghost upon him. **Was led up . . . into the wilderness.** *Up* (Matthew only); from the Jordan valley into the higher country round (cf. Josh. xvi. 1), in this case into the desert (ch. iii. 1). There is nothing told us by which we may identify the place, but as the scene of the temptation must have been near the scene of the baptism, namely, on the west side of Jordan (ch. iii. 1, note), it may be presumed that the temptation was on the west side also. The sharp limestone peak (Godet) known since the Crusades as Quarantana, "from the quarantain, or forty days of fasting" (Trench, 'Studies,' p. 6), may, perhaps, have been the actual spot. The only important objection to this is that directly after the temptation (as seems most probable) he comes to John in "Bethany beyond Jordan," John i. 28 (not necessarily to be identified with "Bethabara" of the Received Text; its locality is quite unknown). If he went east of Jordan after the temptation, he would still be on one of the great roads to Galilee (Luke ix. 52, etc.). The conjecture that the fasting and temptation took place on Sinai is suggested by the analogy of Moses and Elijah, but by absolutely nothing in the Gospels. **Led up of the Spirit into the wilderness**; Mark, "the Spirit driveth him forth;" Luke, "Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and was led in the Spirit in the wilderness" (with a leading that lasted throughout the temptation, ἤγετο . . . ἐν . . . ἐν . . . πειραζόμενος). He was no doubt himself inclined to go apart into the desert that he might meditate uninterruptedly upon the assurance just given, and the momentous issues involved in his baptism; but the Holy Spirit had also his own purposes with him. The Holy Spirit cannot, indeed, tempt, but he can and does lead us into circumstances where temptation is permitted, that we may thereby be proved and disciplined for future work. In Christ's case the temptation was an important part of that moral suffering by which he learned full obedience (Heb. v. 8). Notice that even if the expression in ch. iii. 16, "the Spirit of God descending," does not in itself go beyond the expressions of Jewish teachers who deny his Personality, it would be hard to find so personal an action as is implied by the words, "Jesus was led up of the Spirit," attributed to the Spirit in non-Christian writings. For Isa. lxiii. 10, 11, 14 is much less definite, and passages in Ezekiel, *e.g.* iii. 12—14, interpret themselves by Ezek. i. 21. To St. Matthew himself the Personality of the Holy Ghost must, in the light of ch. xxviii. 19, have been an assured fact. **To be tempted of the devil.** So Luke; *i.e.* the great calumniator, him whose characteristic is false accusation; *e.g.* against men (Rev. xii. 10—12); against God (Gen. iii. 1—5). Here chiefly in the latter aspect. Each of the three temptations, and they are typical of all temptations, is primarily a calumniation of God and his methods. Mark has "of Satan," a Hebrew word equivalent to "adversary," which the LXX. nearly always renders by διαβάλλω (compare also Numb. xxii. 22, 32). Probably by the time of the LXX. the idea of the evil spirit accusing as in a law-court, was more prominent than the earlier thought of him as an adversary. Spiritual resistance by the evil spirit to all good is a less-developed thought than his traducing God to man, and, after some success obtained, traducing man to God. Evil may resist good; it may also accuse both God and those made after the likeness of God.

Ver. 2.—**And when he had fasted . . . he was afterwards an hungred.** He was so absorbed in prayer that it was only after his six weeks' meditation that he felt the need of food. But though his humanity had been elevated and his spiritual sense quickened by this at the time almost unconscious fast, it left him physically prostrate and completely exposed to attack. "In certain morbid conditions, which involve a more or less entire abstinence from food, a period of six weeks generally brings about a crisis, after which the demand for nourishment is renewed with extreme urgency. The exhausted body becomes a prey to a deathly sinking. Such, doubtless, was the condition of Jesus; he felt himself dying. It was the moment the tempter had waited for to make his decisive assault" (Godet). Luke (cf. Mark?) probably (though not in the Revised Version) represents the temptation as continuous during the whole period. Of this Matthew says nothing, but only describes the final scenes, when the might of the tempter was felt to the uttermost, and his defeat was most crucial. **Forty.** Trench's remark is well worth study: "On a close examination we note it to be everywhere there [*i.e.* in Holy Scripture] the number or signature of penalty, of affliction, of the confession, or the punishment, of sin" ('Studies,' p. 14). **Nights.** The mention of nights as well as days brings out more vividly the continuance and the completeness of the abstinence (cf Gen. vii. 4, 12 [17, LXX.]; Exod. xxiv. 18; Deut. ix., especially 18; 1 Kings xix. 8).

Ver. 3.—**The tempter** (1 Thess. iii. 5 only; cf. 2 Cor. xi. 3). **Came**; came up to him (*προσελθών*). The word expresses local nearness, and suggests, though we cannot affirm it as certain, that he appeared visibly. The thought of physical nearness is continued in "taketh him" (vers. 5, 8), and "the devil leaveth him" and "angels came near" (ver. 11; cf. ver. 5, note). On the other hand, such expressions may be parabolic, and intended to express the closeness of the spiritual combat. **To him**; not after "came," but after "said" (Revised Version, with manuscripts). **If thou be**; *art* (Revised Version) (*εἰ . . . εἶ*)—the "if" of assumption (cf. Col. iii. 1). The devil does not attempt to throw doubt on the truth of the utterance in ch. iii. 17. His words rather mean, "Thou knowest what was said, thou hast been gradually realizing that assurance of Sonship; use, then, that privilege which thou undoubtedly hast" (comp. ch. xxvii. 40, where, in mockery, the same truth is assumed). Wetstein, following Origen and pseudo-Ignatius, 'Philipp.,' § 9, says that the tempter did not know, or at least doubted, whether Jesus was really God, for otherwise he would never have tempted him. This is, surely, to miss the meaning of the temptation for our Lord himself; for he was tempted as Man. Satan might well have known that he was God incarnate, and yet not have known whether as Man he might not yield. Weiss ('Life,' i. 343) mistakenly thinks that the object of this first temptation was to insinuate doubt in the mind of Jesus as to his Messiahship. "Command that these stones become bread, and if thou canst not do so, then thou art not the Son of God." **Command that**; *εἰπὸν* (cf. Westcott and Hort, ii. App., p. 164) *ἵνα* (cf. ch. xx. 21, and Winer, § xliv. 8). **These stones**, *i.e.* lying about. Farrar (on Luke iv. 3; and especially in 'Life of Christ,' illustrated edit., pp. 99, 100) suggests that there is a special reference to the "loaf-shaped fossils," *septaria*, which are found in Palestine—as, indeed, in most other countries. But though these "flattened nodules of calcareous clay, ironstone, or other matter" (Page, 'Handbook of Geolog. Terms,' etc., 1859, p. 327) often assume fantastic shapes, perhaps even distantly resembling either an English loaf or a flat Jewish cake (*vide infra*), it seems quite unnecessary to see any allusion to them here. (For the comparison of bread and a stone, cf. ch. vii. 9.) **Be made**; Revised Version, *become*; rightly, because there is no thought of the process of manufacture in *γένωνται*. **Bread**; Revised Version margin, "Greek, loaves" (*ἄρτοι*). "The Israelites made bread in the form of an oblong or round cake, as thick as one's thumb, and as large as a plate or platter; hence it was not cut, but [*e.g.* ch. xiv. 19] broken" (Thayer). In Luke the devil points to one stone only, and tempts him to bid it become a loaf.

Ver. 4.—**It is written.** Our Lord's three quotations are from Deut. viii. 3; vi. 16, 13. Some portion of Deuteronomy (ch. vi. 4—9; xi. 13—21, because included in the Sh'ma) was the first part of Scripture taught a Jewish child. Possibly, though there is no evidence upon the subject, the neighbouring portions were often added. If they had been in our Lord's case, such a recurrence of them to his mind in his present state of exhaustion is in complete accord with psychological probability. **Man . . . God** (Deut. viii. 3, LXX.). As we could not accept Weiss's interpretation of the object of the devil's temptation, so neither can we accept his interpretation of our Lord's reply, that it is equivalent to "Not by means either natural or supernatural, is man's life really sustained, but by exact obedience to God's command." Our Lord quotes the passage in its primary meaning, which was fully applicable to the present occasion. It is equivalent to "Man lives, not necessarily by natural means, but by even supernatural means, if God so wishes." "The creative word, the *ῥῆμα Θεοῦ*, which alone imparts to the bread its sustaining power, can sustain, even as he is confident that in the present need it will sustain, apart from the bread" (Trench, 'Studies,' p. 35). The words of Deuteronomy are paraphrased in Wisd. xvi. 26, where the author, in a thoroughly Jewish exposition, enumerates the lessons taught by the giving of the manna. "It was altered . . . that thy children, O Lord, whom thou lovest, might know that it is not the growing of fruits that nourisheth man; but that it is thy Word, which preserveth them that put their trust in thee." **By every word.** *Ἐπί* (Textus Receptus; Westcott and Hort) is doubtless right. The alteration to *ἐν* (Lachmann, Tregelles) is probably due to a tendency towards the simple expression of *means*, but perhaps to the feeling that life, especially spiritual life, is maintained rather *in* a sphere than *on* a basis (cf. Rom. x. 5; Gal. iii. 12).

Ver. 5.—**Then the devil taketh him up.** Revised Version omits "up." Matthew (*παραλαμβάνει* here and ver. 8) lays stress on the companionship, and, in a sense, compulsion; Luke (*ἤγαγεν*, ver. 9; *ἀναγαγών*, ver. 5), on guidance and locality. **Into the holy city** (Luke, "into Jerusalem"). From Isa. lii. 1, the end of which verse, "There shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean," heightens the implied contrast of the devil's presence there. (For the expression, cf. also ch. xxvii. 53; Rev. xi. 2; xxi. 2, 10; also Heb. xi., xii.) The name has remained down to the present

day (*El-Kuds*). **And setteth**; *and he set* (Revised Version, with manuscripts). The right reading (ἔστησεν, as in Luke) is probably a trace of the basis common to the two records. Possibly, however, it may here be a merely accidental similarity with Luke (who employs the aorist throughout the section), caused by Matthew's desire to emphasize the momentariness of the devil's act. Some think that, as at the end of the temptation Christ is in the wilderness, this removal to Jerusalem is solely mental, without any motion of his body. Improbable; for to make such a temptation *real*, our Lord's mind must have suffered complete illusion. He must have *thought* that he was "on the pinnacle." **On a** (*the*, Revised Version) **pinnacle of the temple** (ἐπὶ τὸ πτερύγιον τοῦ ἱεροῦ). What is exactly meant by this definite and evidently well-known term is not easy now to determine. "Some understand this of the top or apex of the sanctuary (τοῦ ναοῦ) [cf. Hegesippus, in Eusebius, 'Hist. Eccl.,' ii. xxiii. 11, 12 (Heinichen), where the Jews bid James stand, ἐπὶ τὸ πτερύγιον τοῦ ἱεροῦ, and it is afterwards said that they set him ἐπὶ τὸ πτερύγιον τοῦ ναοῦ]; others of the top of Solomon's porch; and others of the top of the Royal Portico" (Thayer). Of this last Josephus ('Ant.,' xv. 11. 5) makes special mention, saying, in his exaggerated style, that human sight could not reach from the top of it to the bottom of the ravine on whose edge it stood. Edersheim ('Life,' etc., i. 303) thinks that possibly the term means "the extreme corner of the 'wing-like' porch, or *ulam*, which led into the Sanctuary." This last would suit a possible interpretation of Dan. ix. 27, as referring to a part of the temple under the name of "the pinnacle," which had been used for heathen sacrifices, probably in the worship of the sun. Cf. Revised Version margin there, with the ἐπὶ τὸ ἱερόν of Theodotion's version, and also the LXX. itself (*vide* Field's 'Hexapla').

Ver. 6.—**If thou be the Son of God** (ver. 3, note). **For it is written.** Ps. xci. 11, 12, verbally from the LXX., but omitting the clause, "to keep thee in all thy ways." Luke omits only "in all thy ways." The clause, according to either record, was omitted possibly because the devil shrank from reminding Jesus of "ways" which he need not take; more probably because "ways" hardly fitted this case (cf. Weiss). Trench ('Studies,' p. 40), following St. Bernard, says that the omission of the clause alters the whole character of the quotation, considering that "ways" implies ways appointed by God. But this appears to be strained. The devil, appealing to Jesus' consciousness of abiding communion with God (Ps. xci. 1), bids him enjoy to the full the promise of God's protection. There is no thought here of a "miracle of display" to the multitudes who were assembled, "as a matter of course," on the temple area (Meyer; cf. even Trench). Neither the devil's solicitation nor our Lord's reply hint at anything else than Divine protection. If it be urged that for this any one of the many precipices by the Dead Sea, *e.g.* those of the Quarantana (ver. 1, note) itself, would have been sufficient, the answer may be found in the fact that at the temple, the seat of God's special manifestation, God's special protection might be looked for. There is a slight doubt whether the ὅτι after γέγραπται is recitative (Westcott and Hort, and most) or part of the quotation (Rheims, Meyer, Weiss). In favour of the latter view is the fact that the recitative ὅτι is not used elsewhere in this section (vers. 4, 7, 10), but as in Luke iv. 10 it can hardly be other than recitative (for another ὅτι is inserted before "on their hands"), the probability is that it was recitative in the oral source, and therefore recitative here. **In their hands**; Revised Version, *on*; ἐπὶ χειρῶν. The thought is not so much of surrounding care as of physical support through space. **Lest at any time**; Revised Version, *lest haply*; and so always, for "in the New Testament use of this particle (μή ποτε) the notion of time usual to ποτέ seems to recede before that of contingency" (Thayer).

Ver. 7.—**It is written again**; *i.e.* in addition, not to our Lord's previous quotation (ver. 4), in which case we should expect to find πάλιν in ver. 10, but to the devil's appeal to Scripture. Bengel, "Scriptura per Scripturam interpretanda et concilianda" (cf. Art. XX., "Neither may it [the Church] so expound one place of Scripture that it be repugnant to another"). **Thou shalt not tempt** (Deut. vi. 16, verbally from the LXX., and equivalent to the Hebrew, except that the Hebrew verb is in the plural). In Deuteronomy the sentence continues, "as ye tempted him in Massah;" *i.e.* ye shall not test the reality of his presence and the greatness of his power as ye did (Exod. xvii. 1—7) at Rephidim. The act proposed to our Lord would have been precisely parallel to that sin of old (cf. Judith's words to the people of Bethulia that, by fixing a limit of days for God to deliver them, they in reality tempted God [ἐπειράσατε τὸν Θεόν] Judith viii. 12; cf. also Ps. lxxviii. 41). "In this refusal of Christ's are implicitly condemned all who run before they are sent, who thrust themselves into perils to which they are not called; all who would fain be reformers, but whom God has not raised up and equipped for the work of reformation; and who therefore for the most part bring

themselves and their cause together to shame, dishonour, and defeat; with all those who presumptuously draw drafts on the faithfulness of God, which they have no scriptural warrant to justify them in believing that He will honour" (Trench, 'Studies,' p. 43).

Ver. 8.—**Into an exceeding high mountain** (*εἰς ὄρος ὑψηλὸν λίαν*; cf. Ezek. xl. 2; Rev. xxi. 10). Not in Luke. While no material mountain would have enabled our Lord to see all the kingdoms, etc., with his bodily eyes, it is probable that the physical elevation and distance of landscape would psychologically help such a vision. The Quarantana, which "commands a noble prospect" (Socin's 'Bædeker,' p. 263), may have been the spot. In the case of Ezekiel it is expressly said that his being "brought into the land of Israel, and set upon a very high mountain," was only "in the visions of God." **All the kingdoms of the world** (*τοῦ κόσμου*; but Luke, *τῆς οἰκουμένης*, *i.e.* of the whole world as occupied by man, cf. Bishop Westcott on Heb. ii 5). Cyrus says (Ezra i. 2), "All the kingdoms of the earth hath the Lord, the God of heaven, given me." **And the glory of them**; "*i.e.* their resources, wealth, the magnificence and greatness of their cities, their fertile lands, their thronging population" (Thayer); cf. ch. vi. 29; Rev. xxi. 24, 26. The kingdoms themselves and their outward show. Contrast the words of the seraphim, "The whole earth is full of his glory" (Isa. vi. 3). In Luke this expression does not occur at this point, but in the tempter's words. As it there comes more abruptly, that is perhaps the more original position. St. Luke adds, "In a moment of time."

Ver. 9.—**All these things will I give thee** (*ταῦτά σοι πάντα δώσω*). The devil puts "these things" and "thee" in the sharpest contrast. In Luke the devil says, "To thee will I give all this authority, and the glory of them: for it [*i.e.* the authority] hath been delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it;" *i.e.* there the devil speaks of giving, not actual possession of the things themselves (Matthew), but the authority that this implied, "and the glory of them." According to St. Luke, he does not attempt to conceal the fact that he has not absolute possession, but he claims authority as delegated to him, and as capable of being delegated by him to another. His claim was false as absolutely stated, but is true relatively in so far that even his usurpation of power must have been permitted (cf. our Lord's term for him, "The prince of this world"). **If thou wilt fall down and worship me**; *i.e.* prostrate thyself in obeisance before me—the Eastern method of acknowledging the superiority of a person (cf. Gen. xxiii. 7; 1 Sam. xx. 41; 2 Sam. i. 2; ix. 6). The expression does not mean "worship me as God" (for this surely was far too coarse a temptation to overcome any even ordinarily pious Israelite; cf. Weiss), but "acknowledge my rights as over-lord." It is not a question of apostasy (1 Kings xviii. 21; cf. Josh. xxiv. 15), but of submission to the methods inculcated by Satan, which placed the immediate and the visible above the future and the unseen (Gen. iii. 5; Exod. xxxii. 4).

Ver. 10.—**Get thee hence, Satan.** "Avaunt, Satan" (Rheims). Christ does not address him directly till this climax. The two previous temptations were, comparatively speaking, ordinary and limited. This temptation calls out a passionate utterance of a personality stirred, because touched, in its depths. Only once again do we find our Lord so moved, in ch. xvi. 23 (the "Western" and "Syrian" addition here of *ὀπίσω μου* from that passage emphasizes the feeling common to the two cases), when a similar representation is made to him that he ought to escape the troubles which his Messianic position, in fact, brought upon him. **For it is written** (Deut. vi. 13); from the **LXX.**, which differs from the Hebrew by (1) translating יראה, "fear," by *προσκυνήσεις* (but B has *φοβηθήσῃ*); and (2) the paraphrastic insertion of "only." **Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.** *Worship; προσκυνέω*, as in ver. 9. *Serve; λατρεύω*, "in perfect subjection to a sovereign power" (Bishop Westcott on Heb. viii. 2, Add. Note). Our Lord's reply cuts up the devil's solicitation by the root. "I do not enter," he means, "into the question of thy authority over these things, and of thy power concerning them. I acknowledge thee not. The command which I willingly obey excludes all homage and service to any other over-lord than God alone. I accept not thy orders and thy methods. I take my commands direct from God." Observe that our Lord does not say *how* he is to gain the kingdoms for his own; this would be the care of him whose command he follows. But before ascending, the Lord proclaimed (ch. xxviii. 18) that he had received (*i.e.* gained through suffering, Heb. ii. 10; Phil. ii. 9) more than (note "in heaven") what the devil would have given him as a reward of obedience to false principles.

Ver. 11.—**The devil leaveth him**; Luke, "departed from him for a season." For though there are crises of temptation, the devil never finally gives up his attack while the object of it is still on earth. May not even direct assaults be included in the remarkable epitome of Messianic life found in Luke xxii. 28? **And, behold, angels came and ministered unto him. Kept back**

before both by the presence of the evil one, and by the need for the God-Man to contend alone, they now came up to him and ministered to him so long as they could be helpful (for the change of tenses, cf. ch. viii. 15). Mark however (i. 13) implies that they had been present at other times than after this last crisis. *Ministered;* possibly supplying his bodily need (cf. ch. viii. 15; Luke x. 40); but as, after all, bodily sustenance is but secondary to spiritual, the latter must at least be included (cf. Heb. i. 14). In Luke xxii. 43 the "strengthening" would appear to be of his whole nature within and without, through the medium of his spirit.

Vers. 12—16.—JESUS' WITHDRAWAL INTO GALILEE. (Parallel passages: Mark i. 14; Luke iv. 14, 15.) According to some commentators, a new section begins here; but probably these verses are still preliminary. Our Lord's activity does not begin till ver. 17. But now he withdraws to Galilee, settling in Capernaum, thus fulfilling prophecy.

Ver. 12.—**Now when Jesus had heard.** If we had the synoptic Gospels alone, we should have supposed that the Baptist was imprisoned immediately after the end of our Lord's temptation (cf. this verse with Luke iv. 14); but St. John (iii. 24) expressly states that he had not been cast into prison when the events recorded in John i. 43—iii. 23 took place. "For a time Christ and the Baptist worked side by side, preaching 'repentance' (Mark i. 15 [also Matt. iv. 17]) and baptizing [John iii. 22]. The Messiah took up the position of a prophet in Judæa, as afterwards in Galilee" (Bishop Westcott, on John iii. 22—24). The events in Galilee related in John ii. 1—12 were "preparatory to the manifestation at Jerusalem which was the real commencement of Christ's Messianic work. St. John records the course and issue of this manifestation: the other Evangelists start with the record of the Galilæan ministry, which dates from the imprisonment of the Baptist" (Bishop Westcott, on John iii. 24). He adds, on John iv. 43, "It seems probable that the earlier part of the synoptic narratives (Mark i. 14—ii. 14, and parallels) must be placed in the interval which extended from John iv. 43—v. 1." Matthew alone states directly that the news of the Baptist having been taken by Herod was the motive of our Lord's withdrawal into Galilee. He says nothing to show whether our Lord withdrew because he would avoid a like treatment himself, or, as is on the whole more likely, because he did not wish to be mixed up in the tumults to which John's capture appears to have given rise (cf. ch. xiv. 5). **Was cast into prison;** "was delivered up" (Revised Version and Authorized Version margin); *παρεδόθη*, absolutely (cf. Mark i. 14; Rom. iv. 25; also *infra*, ch. x. 19; 1 Cor. xiii. 3). If the more proper meaning of the word may be insisted on, the thought is of the person to whom John was committed rather than of the place; John being delivered up, that is to say, by Herod to his officials But in usage it appears rather to mean only compulsory removal, loss of liberty. Mark (vi. 19, 20) points out the temporary protection that the imprisonment gave to John against the resentment of Herodias. **He departed;** Revised Version, *he withdrew; ἀνεχώρησεν.* A favourite word of St. Matthew's (ten times; Mark and John once each; Acts twice). It always implies some motive for the change of place, and is frequently used of departure directly consequent upon knowledge acquired. Hence it often implies a feeling of danger. **Into Galilee;** whence he had come (ch. iii. 13). Hence "returned" (Luke). In Galilee he would still be in Herod's dominions; but, as being in his own home, he would not attract so much attention. N.B.—Between vers. 12 and 13 some place the incident of his preaching at Nazareth (Luke iv. 16—30); but ver. 23 of that passage assumes much previous work at Capernaum, and can therefore hardly be as early as this.

Ver. 13.—**And leaving Nazareth.** Finally as a place of residence. The form Ναζαρά occurs only here and Luke iv. 16, which in itself well suits the opinion that Luke iv. 16—30 is only a fuller account of this sojourn at Nazareth (cf. Weiss, 'Matthäus-Evang.'). **He came and dwelt;** *i.e.* made his home in (cf. ch. ii. 23). Not as having a house of his own there, so that he could take shelter in it as of right (cf. ch. viii. 20, "The foxes have holes," etc.); but probably settling his mother there, and being himself generally admitted to some one's house (perhaps Peter's, cf. ch. viii. 14, 16) when he came to the town. **In Capernaum.** Most probably the modern *Tell-Hûm*, upon the north-western shore, two miles from where the Jordan enters the lake. On the interesting relic of the synagogue, presumably that built by the centurion (Luke vii. 5), *vide* especially Bishop Westcott on John vi. 59. The identification with *Tell-Hûm* can, however, hardly be considered as absolutely settled. "Some of the narratives of pilgrims of the sixth and seventh centuries appear to place Capernaum here. Jewish authors mention a place called *Kafar Tankhum*, or *Nakhum;* and as the Arabic *Tell* ("hill") might easily be substituted for the word Kaphar ("village"), and Nakhum corrupted to Hûm, Capernaum and Tell-Hûm may be identical. On the other

hand, Sepp supposes that the name of the *Minim* (Jewish Christians), who are known to have been numerous at Capernaum down to the time of Constantine, has been preserved in the Khân Minyeh" (Socin's 'Baedeker,' p. 373). **Which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim.** The details are mentioned to show the accordance with the following prophecy. Neubauer ('Géogr. du Talm.,' p. 222, edit. 1868) points out that, according to Josh. xix. 33, 34, and the notices in the Talmud, the whole western side of the lake was in Naphtali, and that hence Capernaum could not, strictly speaking, be "in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim." He himself explains the discrepancy by saying that St. Matthew imitates the Haggadistic methods in accommodating the geography to the text he quotes. But it is clear that the expression is satisfied by the fact that Zebulun was really near Capernaum, and that numbers of those who frequented the town must have come from Zebulun. The position of Capernaum thus formed quite a sufficient reason for quoting the prophecy in Isaiah. Our evangelist, who (ch. ii.) had noticed the coming of distant heathen to worship Messiah, though he was persecuted by the then ruler of the nation, found it very significant that his public activity should begin at a distance from the home of the hierarchy, and in a district which had been the first to suffer from heathen attacks in the past, and had at the present moment a population in which there was a great mixture of the heathen element (cf. Weiss, 'Matthäus-Evang.').

Ver. 15.—**The land of Zabulon, etc.** From Isa. ix. 1, 2, spoiled in the Authorized Version, but rendered correctly in the Revised Version. Isaiah says that those parts of the land which had borne the first brunt of the Assyrian invasions under Tiglath-Pileser (2 Kings xv. 29; cf. Zech. x. 10), shall be proportionately glorified by the advent of Messiah. Wetstein gives a tradition from the 'Pesikt. Zut.,' of Messiah ben Joseph first appearing in Galilee; but the whole passage (quoted in Dalman's 'Der Leidende und der Sterbende Messias,' pp. 10—13) clearly points to a knowledge of the New Testament. As to the form of the quotation, observe: (1) Matthew disregards the Hebrew construction, and gives merely the general sense. (2) He takes it from the Hebrew, not the LXX. (3) This last point is doubtless to be connected with the fact that the quotation does not occur in the other Gospels, *i.e.* that it did not belong to the Petrine cycle of teaching, and if it did belong to the "Matthean" cycle, not to that form which was current among Gentile Christians (cf. A. Wright, 'Composition of the Four Gospels,' p. 104). **Zabulon and . . . Nephthalim,** equivalent to the later Upper and Lower Galilee. **By the way of the sea;** *toward the sea* (Revised Version); cf. Jer. ii. 18; "*i.e.* the district on the W. of the Sea of Galilee, as opposed to 'the other side of Jordan,' and 'the circle of the nations,' *i.e.* the frontier districts nearest to Phœnicia, including 'the land of Cabul' (1 Kings ix. 11—13), which formed part of the later Upper Galilee. *Via Maris*, M. Renan observes, was the name of the high road from Acre to Damascus, as late as the Crusades. 'Way,' however, here means 'region' (cf. Isa. lviii. 12; Job xxiv. 4)" (Cheyne, on Isa. ix. 1). Yet hardly so; ὁδόν is adverbial, 1 Kings viii. 48 (equivalent to 2 Chron. vi. 38), and designates the stretching of the districts of Zebulun and Naphtali towards the sea. The sea is the Sea of Galilee. The close union of this clause in the Authorized Version with the following words, "beyond Jordan," misses its true meaning as explanatory of the position of Zebulun and Naphtali, and rather takes it as describing some special locality east of Jordan. **Beyond Jordan;** *i.e.* the eastern side, mentioned in 2 Kings xv. 29 as having suffered with Naphtali under the Assyrian invasion; see further ver. 25. **Galilee of the Gentiles** (*vide supra*, "by the way of the sea").

Ver. 16.—**The people which sat;** "who walk" (Hebrew). **Saw great light;** *saw a great light* (Revised Version); unnecessarily except as a matter of English, for it can hardly mean a definite light, Messiah. Φῶς both here and in the next clause means light as such. **And to them which sat.** So the Hebrew, but the LXX. generally οἱ κατοικοῦντες. **In the region and shadow of death.** The region where death abides, and where it casts its thickest shade. The Hebrew is simply "in the land of the shadow of death" (בארץ צלמות, according to the traditional interpretation), which the present LXX. (Vatican) probably represents (ἐν χώρᾳ σκιᾷ θανάτου), the *s* of σκιᾶς having been misread before θ. But copyists, not understanding this, inserted καὶ between χώρᾳ and σκιᾷ (as in A), and this reading became popularly known, and was used by the evangelist. That the reading of A was derived from the evangelist is unlikely, for the reading σκιᾷ must, at all events, have been before his time. **Light is sprung up;** *to them did light spring up* (Revised Version); ἀνέτειλεν. The tense emphasizes not the abiding effect (*e.g.* in the fact that so many of the disciples were Galilæans), but the moment of his appearance. The father of the Baptist also remembered this passage of Isaiah (Luke i. 78, 79, where cf. Godet).

Ver. 17—ch. xvi. 20.—THE FIRST STAGE OF CHRIST'S WORK AND TEACHING.

Ver. 17—*The proclamation.* **From that time**; ἀπὸ τότε (elsewhere in the New Testament only ch. xvi. 21; xxvi. 16; Luke xvi. 16); *i.e.* from the time of his residence in Capernaum (ver. 13). Apparently our Lord, after the baptism, went to John (*vide supra*, ver. 1), then retired to Galilee, going first to Nazareth, then finally leaving it as his home for Capernaum. At Capernaum his public activity begins. *From that time;* the phrase expresses not merely "at that time," but "from that time," as the starting-point. Henceforth this was to be his message, even though its form might be altered. The phrase marks, as in ch. xvi. 21, the commencement of a new stage in his life. His earlier work with John the Baptist is not included in the oral Gospel, probably because the twelve were not yet joined to him in formal and continuous adhesion. **Repent**, etc. His words are exactly the same as the Baptist's (ch. iii. 2), with whom, indeed, he had been very lately associated. There is no evidence that he meant by them anything else than the Baptist meant (cf. Introduction, p. xxiv.). It is very intelligible that quite early (Old Syriac) an attempt should be made to harmonize this summary of his preaching rather with that of his disciples (ch. x. 7).

Vers. 18—22.—*The summons to help in his work: his first formal adherents.* (Parallel passage: Mark i. 16—20 [Luke v. 1, 2, 9—11, very doubtful, but cf. Godet].) On the relation of this call to the meeting with Andrew and Peter, recorded in John i. 40—42, *vide* especially Bishop Westcott there. That was "the establishment of a personal relationship;" this "a call to an official work."

Ver. 18.—**And Jesus, walking.** Revised Version rightly omits "Jesus," and inserts "he" before "saw." The right reading does not detract so much from the emphatic statement of ver. 17. **By the Sea of Galilee.** His walk lay along the lake. Socin ('Baedeker,' p. 372) speaks of "the probability that there was a frequented road from the mouth of the Jordan skirting the bank of the lake." **Two brethren, Simon . . . and Andrew his brother;** the addition, "his brother," emphasizing the relationship. Christ's coming would divide households (ch. x. 21). He would, therefore, be the more glad when members of one family united in following him. *Simon*, etc. (*vide* ch. x. 2, note). **Called;** Revised Version, *who is called;* i.e. not specially by Christ, but in common usage among Christians (ch. x. 2). **Casting a net;** βάλλοντας ἀμφίβληστρον (no *var. lect.*). Probably later than and explanatory of the form found in the parallel passage, Mark i. 16, ἀμφιβάλλοντας (alone). *A net;* i.e. a casting-net of circular, bell-like shape, "which, when skilfully cast from over the shoulder by one standing on the shore or in a boat, spreads out into a circle (ἀμφιβάλλεται) as it falls upon the water, and then, sinking swiftly by the weight of the leads attached to it, encloses whatever is below it" (Trench, 'Syn.,' § lxiv.). It specializes δίκτυον (any net, ver 20), and differs from σαγήνη (the long draw-net, ch. xiii. 47).

Ver. 19.—**Follow me;** *come ye after me* (Revised Version); δεῦτε ὀπίσω μου. There is no thought of continuous following from place to place (ἀκολουθεῖν), but of immediate detachment from the present sphere of their interest and of attachment to Jesus as their leader. **And I will make you fishers of men;** Mark, "to become fishers of men," laying more stress on the change in their character necessary for success in this new kind of fishing. Luke v. 10 brings out the change in the nature of the work (ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν). *Fishers.* The word suggests care, patience, skill, besides habits of life fitted for endurance of privation and fatigue. The same promise is, as it seems, related in Luke v. 10, where notice: (1) It is connected with the miracle of the draught of fishes. (2) It is not verbally identical with this: Μὴ φοβοῦ· ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν ἀνθρώπους ἔσῃ ζωγρῶν. (3) The words are addressed individually to Simon.

Ver. 20.—**And they straightway left their nets.** (For their leaving everything Wetstein, on ver. 19, compares Epictetus, 12, Ἐὰν δὲ ὁ κυβερνήτης καλέσῃ, τρέχε ἐπὶ τὸ πλοῖον ἀφεὶς ἐκεῖνα πάντα, μηδὲν ἐπιστρεφόμενος, "If the steersman call, run to the ship, leaving all those things, without regarding anything.") The Rheims Version, with its love of archaisms, has, "But they *incontinent*, leaving the nettes, followed him."

Ver. 21.—**Other two brethren** (cf. ver. 18, note); in Matthew only. **James the son of Zebedee.** Why is the father of Peter and Andrew never mentioned, save incidentally, and by our Lord (ch. xvi. 17; John i. 42; xxi. 15—17)? Probably Zebedee and his wife Salome became, unlike Peter's parents, well-known believers. It may be that Peter was the eldest of the Twelve, and that his father was already dead or, though perhaps believing on Jesus, was too old to take any special part in the work. Luke (v. 10) adds, "Who were partners with Simon"—an item of information perhaps obtained from the same source as his first and second chapters. **In a ship;** *in the boat* (Revised Version), and so

always in the Gospels. The word (πλοῖον) may be used of any sized vessel (equivalent to "large ship" in Acts xxvii.), but here, as managed by so few men, it is equivalent to "boat." Other words translated "boat" in the New Testament are πλοιάριον, "little boat" (Mark once, John four times), and σκάφη, "small ship's boat" (Acts xxvii. 16, 30, 32). Josephus says ('Bell. Jud.,' ii. 21. 8) that when he gathered all the boats on the lake to attack Tiberias, there were "not more than four sailors in each;" by which he probably means, not the number of men wherewith he was able to equip them, but the number he found already managing them. **With Zebedee their father.** In Matthew only. **Mending their nets.** The first pair of brothers were in the excitement of catching; the second had perhaps caught, and were mending their nets with a view to a fresh attempt; in neither case was there a moment's delay. **And he called them.** This time his words are not given.

Ver. 22.—**Left the ship and their father, and followed him** (ἠκολούθησαν αὐτῷ). St. Matthew emphasizes the facts that they left both natural relations (so also St. Mark, adding the vivid detail, "the hired servants") and means of livelihood, and that here their continuous following of Christ began. St. Mark rather lay stress on their leaving the old life (ἀπῆλθον ὀπίσω αὐτοῦ).

Vers. 23—25.—*The firstfruits of popular enthusiasm.* As on Christ's call a few followed him (vers. 20—22), so after his circuit in Galilee did crowds, from all parts of the Holy Land, also follow him (ver. 25), though less immediately and devotedly. As to these verses (23—25), notice—

(1) Nearly all ver. 23 recurs in ch. ix. 35.

(2) Vers. 24, 25 occur in the parallels in different connexions. St. Mark places them in ch. iii. 7, 8, after he has recorded details of many miracles which are found later in Matthew. St. Luke places them in ch. vi. 17, 18, immediately before the sermon on the mount (as in Matthew), but *after* the call of the Twelve.

(3) St. Matthew, therefore, did not arrange his Gospel with a sole regard to chronology.

(4) The verses are clearly a summary of our Lord's work and influence in the early part of his ministry.

(5) Weiss ('Manual,' ii. 277, etc.) considers that vers. 23 and 24 are a *heading* to the description of the teaching and healing activity of Jesus (ch. iv. 25—ix. 34), and that the repetition of ver. 23 in ch. ix. 35 marks the heading of the next section (ch. ix. 36—xiv. 12). It is, indeed, remarkable that in ch. ix. 35 it occurs just before the definite setting apart of the twelve, and again that the phrase, "And seeing the multitudes," is found both in ch. v. 1 and in ch. ix. 36. Possibly the saying was part of the *original* setting of the two discourses, ch. v.—vii. and ch. x.

Ver. 23.—**And Jesus went about all Galilee;** *in all Galilee* (Revised Version, with the manuscripts). This indicates, not so much systematic itineration round the cities in order (contrast the simple accusative in ch. ix. 35 [Mark vi. 6]; xxiii. 15), as going hither and thither among them (cf. Acts xiii. 11). *All* (ch. viii. 34, note). **Teaching . . . preaching . . . healing.** Our Lord, unlike the Baptist, takes men as and where he can find them; the religious, by teaching in the synagogues; the mass of people, by preaching, presumably in public places; the sick, by healing them wherever they are brought to him. Notice the threefold cord of all Christ-like ministry—teaching, especially those who have desires heavenwards; preaching, especially to the unconverted; healing, which cares for all physical life. **Synagogues.** (For a detailed account, *vide* Schürer, II. ii. pp. 52, etc.; and for a short account, *vide* Keil, 'Arch.,' § 30.) "The synagogues were places of assembly for public worship, where on sabbaths and feast-days (at a later period, also on the second and fifth days of the week) the people met together for prayer, and to listen to the reading of portions of the Old Testament, which were translated and explained in the vernacular dialect. With the permission of the president, any one who was fitted might deliver addresses" (Meyer). **The gospel.** The first time it occurs in the text of St. Matthew. **Of the kingdom.** The phrase is used thus absolutely only elsewhere in ch. ix. 35 and xxiv. 14 (Mark i. 15 is a false reading). This expression (with ver. 17, "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand") is the earliest form of the message. The good news centred in the kingdom, *i.e.* the realization of the position accepted by the nation at Sinai, with all that that involved (*vide* Introduction, p. xxiii.). The phrase, "the gospel of the kingdom," refers only to the blessedness of its approach, and says nothing (unlike ver. 17) of the preparation for it. *Healing* (θεραπεύων). As compared with ἰάομαι (rare in Matthew, in the active only ch. xiii. 15, which is from the LXX., but frequent in Luke) θεραπεύω thinks rather of the healer, who renders the service; ἰάομαι, rather of the healed, the completeness of the cure (cf. ch. viii 7, 8). **Sickness;**

*disease*, Revised Version; *νόσον*, laying stress on the pain and disorder. **Disease**; *sickness*, Revised Version; *μαλακίαν*, laying stress on the weakness. (For the two words in combination, cf. Deut. vii. 15.) **Among the people** (*ἐν τῷ λαῷ*). These words are wanting in the true text of ch. ix. 35. *The people;* i.e. the Jews, as contrasted with those included in ver. 24. Not that St. Matthew means to exclude any sick Gentile who happened to be living among the Jews; but in this verse he is thinking only of those who lived near, and he naturally uses the word which connotes the *Jewish* people. If others came, it was only because they lived *ἐν τῷ λαῷ*.

Ver. 24.—**And his fame**; Revised Version, *and the report of him* (*ἡ ἀκοὴ αὐτοῦ*). Our use of the word "fame" implies reputation and honour, which are not included under *ἀκοή*. **Went throughout all** (ver. 23) **Syria**; Revised Version, *went forth into*; *ἀπῆλθεν εἰς*. The expression not merely means that the report spread far and wide, but that it went beyond the expected limits of the Holy Land into the whole of Syria, *i.e.*, probably, the Roman province with which Palestine was in some degree (Schürer, I. ii. 46) incorporated. **All sick people that were taken with divers diseases**; Revised Version, grammatically, *all that were sick, holden with*, etc. Possibly, "all that were sick" is the genus of which the following expressions represent species; but ch. viii. 16 and Mark i. 32—34 suggest that the words *all* to *diseases* refer to bodily diseases only. The arrangement would then be (1) bodily diseases, (*a*) ordinary (*ποικίλαις νόσοις*), (*b*) violent and painful cases (*βασάνοις*); (2) mental diseases, (*a*) supernatural, (*b*) natural; (3) incurable, affecting the body also. **And those which were possessed with devils.** Weiss, 'Life,' ii. pp. 76—88 (especially against Meyer), points out that our Lord shared the belief in the reality of possession by evil spirits, and that therefore, though some of the current ideas may have been superstitious, there must have been a basis of truth in the belief. See by all means Trench on the healing of the Gadarene demoniacs (ch. viii. 28). **And those which were lunatick**; Revised Version, *and epileptic*—"epilepsy being supposed to return and increase with the increase of the moon" (Thayer, *s.v.* *σεληνιάζεσθαι*, which occurs in the New Testament only here and in ch. xvii. 15).

Ver. 25.—The mention of the multitudes here serves as a transition to the sermon on the mount. The description of the constituent parts of the multitudes is very similar to that found in Mark iii. 7, 8, and is probably derived from the same source, Mark preserving in most respects the fuller form. **Great multitudes**; *ὄχλοι πολλοί* (not "many multitudes," but as plural of *ὄχλος πολύς*, ch. xx. 29); almost (Luke v. 15) peculiar to this Gospel (ch. viii. 1, where see note [18, Received Text; xii. 15, Received Text]; xiii. 2; xv. 30; xix. 2). **Decapolis.** A kind of confederacy, originally of ten towns, the organization being apparently the work of Pompey. All were east of Jordan except Bethshan (Scythopolis). The names, as given in Pliny, are—Damascus, Philadelphia, Raphana, Scythopolis, Gadara, Hippus, Dium, Pella, Galasa (read *Gerasa*), Kanatha. Schürer adds, Abila (not *Abila* of Lysanias) and Kanata (distinct from *Kanatha*). These towns, like the great maritime cities, *e.g.* Joppa, and Cæsarea Stratonis, were independent political communities, "which—at least, after the time of Pompey—were never internally blended into an organic unity with the Jewish region, but were at most externally united with it under the same ruler" (Schürer, II. i. p. 121). The population in them was chiefly heathen. **Across Jordan**; equivalent to Peræa, as in ver. 15 and ch. xix. 1, *i.e.* from Mount Hermon to the river Arnon (Weiss-Meyer); but according to Josephus ('Bell. Jud.,' iii. 3. 3), between the rivers Jabbok and Arnon (Alford). "The country east of Jordan was known as *Peræa* (the country beyond) in the wider sense, but Peræa proper was the small district extending from the river Arnon (*Môjib*) to the Zerḳa, and now called Belḳâ" (Socin's 'Bædeker,' p. 54). To the places mentioned here as those whence people came, Mark adds Idumæa; Mark and Luke add Tyre and Sidon.

## HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—11.—*The temptation of Christ.* I. THE PREPARATION. 1. *The Spirit.* He was "full of the Holy Ghost" (Luke iv. 1). The Spirit had descended from heaven like a dove, and abode upon him. He was now in the full consciousness of his Divine mission. His sacred human nature was filled through and through with the abiding presence of the Holy Ghost: "God gave not the Spirit by measure unto him" (John iii. 34). His holy soul must have glowed with a deep, heavenly joy in ineffable communion with the Father, in the calm contemplation of the blessed work which lay before him. He had hitherto led a quiet life; he had wrought no mighty works; he had not taught, save by the silent influence of the beauty of holiness. We know not what deep, unutterable thoughts had stirred his heart; we cannot penetrate

the inscrutable mystery of the union of the Divine and human natures. We know that in his early youth he was continually advancing in wisdom. His mind unfolded itself gradually; perhaps the conception of the mystery of his Being, the wondrous memories of the glory which he had with the Father before the world was, the knowledge of his sacred mission, of his blessed office, dawned little by little on his holy human soul. Now he had reached his thirtieth year; he was in the full strength of manhood, bodily and intellectually; he had received an august consecration. He was declared by the heavenly voice to be the beloved Son of God; the holy Dove had revealed him to the Baptist as the Christ, descending upon him with a message of peace from God to man, as, ages before, the dove had brought to the ark the welcome token that the wrath of God had passed away. He was "full of the Holy Ghost," strengthened for his work by that sacred Presence, as afterwards he was strengthened by the angel in his awful agony. But great joy is often followed by great sorrow; very high spiritual experiences are often succeeded by seasons of peculiar temptation. It was so with Christ the Lord; it is so with advanced Christians now. The abundant grace vouchsafed unto them, the felt presence of the Holy Spirit, is granted to prepare them for the coming trials. They are strengthened with all might by his Spirit in the inner man, that they may be able to bear themselves manfully in the dread conflict, and to win the victory through his assisting grace. 2. *The wilderness.* The Spirit led him thither; it may be, to the dreary solitudes of Quarantana; it may be, to the rocks of Sinai. There was need of lonely meditation, of sustained prayer, of solitary preparation for his momentous task. Such an episode of solemn calm occurred in the lives of Moses, of Elijah, of St. Paul. Such an episode was interposed now between the wondrous manifestations of the Divine Presence and the hurry of hard, wearying labour that was to follow. The Lord was made like unto us. In his perfect humanity he needed, as we do, time for quiet thought, time to collect himself, to brace himself for the coming trials, to realize the great change that was at hand, the strange contrast between the life that was coming, crowded with works of power and labours of love, and the peaceful seclusion of Nazareth which was now for ever past. We need our quiet days, time for recollection, self-examination, and solemn thought. We must find time for meditation, if we are to advance far in the spiritual life. The Spirit led our Lord into the wilderness; the Spirit leads us from time to time to retirement for solitary devotional exercises. 3. *The tempter.* (1) The tempter found our Lord in the wilderness. Solitude has its dangers, as well as busy life. The hermits, who in old times used to retire from the busy haunts of men, had their own peculiar trials. They could in some degree escape from outward temptations; they could not escape from their own thoughts, their own sinful hearts, the power and allurements of the evil one. Their temptations were different, but to the full as great as those of active life. Probably the danger was greater; for God did not create us for the wilderness, for solitude; he has given us work to do for him. That work commonly lies in the world, among men. Work is a necessity for us. It was a curse; it becomes a blessing if it is performed in faith and loving obedience. Work is a great safeguard against temptation. Without work the thoughts run wild; often they wander into sinful fancies; often, turned always inward, they become morbid and unnatural. Solitude is good sometimes, for a while; but it should be an episode in a life of active work for God. (2) The Lord was absolutely pure and holy. No sinful thought ever arose in his sacred heart; in his case there could be no temptation from within. But Satan tempted him. The temptations came from without, from the direct agency of the evil spirit. They did not harm him; they glanced off from the clear surface of his holy soul. But they were real temptations. He hungered, as we do; he had all our natural longings for food, for rest, for other objects of human desire. The suggestions of the wicked spirit solicited him, harassed him; he felt the appetite, the rising desire. But he crushed it down by the strength of a holy will. He set us an example; he overcame Satan for us. (3) The Spirit led him into the wilderness to be tempted. It was part of his humiliation, part of his suffering, part of his redeeming work. It was necessary that he should learn, by his own experience in his sinless human nature, the bitter trials of temptation; that, having himself suffered being tempted, he might be able to succour them that are tempted; that we might have the help of his Divine sympathy in our temptations. It was necessary for our salvation that he should in

our flesh overcome the devil; that as Man, in our human nature, he might conquer that sin by which death came into the world; that as in Adam all died, even so in Christ might all be made alive. He hath given us an example, teaching us that by self-denial, prayer, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, we too may resist temptation. But, more than this, if we are his, he abiding in us and we in him, then his victory is ours; in the strength of his victory we overcome the same dreadful enemy: "God giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Therefore he was led by the Spirit to be tempted. We sometimes seem to be led into temptation; the temptation may be necessary for us, to try our faith, to brace our energies, to make us approved soldiers of the cross. He cannot be a conqueror who has never fought a battle; that virtue is not the highest which is pure simply because it has never met with temptation. But "God will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able." He who suffered being tempted is with his people in their hour of trial; his sympathy is their comfort; his strength their victory. If need be, they are in heaviness through manifold temptations; but the trial of their faith is precious; it will be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. (4) The temptation was necessary, but it must have caused the Lord exceeding anguish. We have admitted sin into our hearts; we have loved it in our madness; we cannot tell the intense loathing and horror which the presence of sin must cause in a pure and holy soul. The Lord Jesus, the most Holy One, endured for our salvation's sake to be confronted with that hateful being whose home is in the darkness and the burning flame, whose heart is filled with malice and cruelty, thirsting to destroy those precious souls whom the Lord loved so dearly, for whom he gave himself to die. The close presence of evil, that loathsome thing which God hates, the wicked suggestions of Satan, must have been intensely horrible to the blessed Saviour. He endured all this for us; he loved us with so great a love. 4. *The fasting.* The Lord was absorbed in high thoughts and spiritual communion with the Father; this lifted him up for a time above the ordinary needs of humanity. His fast was miraculous, like the fast of Moses, of Elijah. But it is our example also in a measure; we too must fast and pray if we would conquer as the Saviour conquered. Our Father will reward those who fast after the pattern of the Lord, in the like spirit, in faith and in humility. We must practise self-denial in little things, if we would gain strength to support us in the dread conflict with the tempter. Bodily exercise profiteth little in comparison with the inner spirit of self-mortification; but we cannot afford to despise those outward helps; and certainly we cannot do wrong in following the example of our Lord and his apostles (Acts xiii. 3; xiv. 23; 1 Cor. vii. 5; 2 Cor. vi. 5).

II. THE FIRST TEMPTATION. 1. *The suggestion of the tempter.* (1) The doubt. "If thou be the Son of God." So he tempted Eve, "Hath God said?" So he tempts us now with his evil whispers, breathing doubts into our souls—doubts of the truth of God's revelation, doubts of his power and love, doubts of our own conversion: "If thou be a child of God." He suggests again and again that terrible "if," harassing our souls with miserable fears and awful perplexities. He knew probably that Jesus was the Son of God; Jesus knew it certainly with a full, Divine consciousness. God grants the peace of God sooner or later to all who come to him in humility and faith. They may be sorely tried for a time with anxious doubts; but they shall find rest for their souls in Christ their Saviour. Only let them trust even amid fears; and in his good time the saddening doubt, "If thou be a child of God," will make room for the blessed assurance, "I know that my Redeemer liveth;" "I know whom I have believed." (2) The tempter's bidding. "Command that these stones be made bread." It was an appeal to the bodily appetite, the lust of the flesh; the temptation once addressed to Eve—"the tree was good for food." The Lord hungered. It was not meet, the tempter whispered, that the Son of God should be so distressed; it needed only to put forth his power. That power was his for the good of souls; the devil would have him use it to supply his own wants. So he tempts men now to use for worldly advancement, worldly glory, means that were given them to work out their own salvation, to help on the work of God in the world. 2. *The Lord's answer.* (1) "It is written." This was the first word, as far as we are told, spoken by our Lord after his baptism. He was the Son of God; he was full of the Holy Ghost; but he begins his ministry with the simple words, "It is written." He meets the tempter

with the sword of the Spirit. So must the Christian now. The memory should be stored through and through with the sacred words; they should be wrought into the heart by holy thought and diligent obedience, written there by the Holy Spirit of God. Then they will be at hand ready for use in the hour of trial, in the deadly struggle. Then search the Scriptures; be not content with the knowledge of the letter; but pray for grace to realize and to know by personal experience that inner spiritual meaning without which "the letter killeth." (2) "Man shall not live by bread alone." "Man," the Lord says. He meets the evil one as a Man, in our human flesh, and as a Man he conquers. He conquers for us, in our humanity; he sets us an example that, through spiritual union with the one holiest Man, we men may share his victory, and overcome, even as he overcame. And this is his lesson: "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." Life comes from God; he breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life. He fed the Israelites in the wilderness with manna, the bread of heaven; he sustained his blessed Son in the wilderness throughout that lengthened fast; he can in his own way support the life which he gave. The soul that trusts in God will not mean only common food by the "daily bread" for which we pray. Life is too great a thing, too Divine a gift, to be supported wholly by things outward. The true life, life worthy of the name, life worth living, needs a Diviner food—the Bread that came down from heaven, the Lord Christ himself. Man doth not live by bread alone; he will lose his life who seeks only that earthly bread. Christ is the Life—the Life of the world; they live indeed, in the full meaning of life, who have that Life abiding in them; they live in the faith of God, trusting in him. The words which proceed out of his mouth are the food of their souls, the stay of their hearts; for the Word of God is living and powerful; it liveth and abideth for ever.

III. THE SECOND TEMPTATION. 1. *The suggestion.* Again the doubt; the tempting, or perhaps the sarcastic, "if." But this time pride was the weak point in human nature which the tempter sought to find in the Lord—the pride of life. The tree, he had once whispered to Eve, was a tree to be desired to make one wise. He took him to the holy city, to the temple. Alas! the devil can find an entrance there, into the very Church of Christ; sometimes he has found an entrance into the highest places in the visible Church. Pride has been the ruin of many who are set over their brethren; spiritual pride has ruined many a Christian who once seemed not far from the kingdom of God. He set him on the pinnacle of the temple, perhaps the pinnacle from which, years afterwards, James, the Lord's brother, was cast down to meet the martyr's death. He set the Lord there on high as the Lord of the temple, the Messiah, the great King, the royal Priest. He bade him cast himself down. It would display his power, his dignity, his Divine majesty. Such a miracle, in such a place, before the eyes of assembled priests and people, would at once establish his claims; he would be recognized at once as the Lord that was to come, the Priest after the order of Melchizedek; and that without difficulty, without painful self-denials, without the cross. 2. *The scriptural quotation.* The words were true, but there was an important omission. "He shall give his angels charge over thee," said the psalmist, "to keep thee in all thy ways." "In all thy ways"—in all the ways marked out for us by his providence, not in self-chosen ways, which he had not appointed. The holy words of Scripture may be misapplied; they may be used to suggest a meaning which they were never intended to convey; they may be bandied about in controversy, and employed simply as means to gain a theological victory. Such a use of the Bible tends to produce pride. "Knowledge puffeth up." Pride perverts the sacred words; holy and humble men of heart, led by the Spirit of God, enter into their deep and blessed meaning. The devil might have misled some vain man; to such the Scripture quoted might have seemed apposite, and so he might have been beguiled to his ruin. But the Lord was meek and lowly in heart; he sought not honour from men; there was no thought of display, no ostentation in his holy soul. He knew what the Scripture really meant. The blessed angels are charged with the care of God's saints; they do keep them in all their ways; they do bear them in their hands; but not if they cease to be saints, not "when the righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity;" not when he becomes presumptuous and self-willed. Misquoted texts, misapplied Scripture, did not ensnare the Lord; they will not ensnare

the humble Christian who trusts not in his own knowledge or his own strength, but in the living God. 3. *The Lord's answer.* (1) Again the appeal to Scripture: "It is written again." Scripture is best interpreted by Scripture; one part of Holy Writ throws light upon another. The devil takes the text which seems to suit his purpose; he isolates it; he draws wrong conclusions from it. The Lord brings another passage to bear on the suggested act. He teaches us how to use God's Holy Word. We must compare Scripture with Scripture; we may not "so expound one place of Scripture that it be repugnant to another." (2) "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." It is tempting God to put ourselves into dangers to which he has not called us, to expect his help in self-chosen ways, to look for his miraculous interposition to save us from the consequences of our own folly. To trust God is faith, to tempt him is presumption. We cannot trust him with too entire a confidence while we are walking in the path of obedience and duty, the path marked out for us by his providence; but to choose our own path, to thrust ourselves into perilous positions, to think of forcing, so to speak, a miracle from God, this is fanaticism, not faith. Christ's miracles were part of the great scheme of redemption; they were wrought to relieve distress or to increase the faith of his followers; not needlessly, not to display his power or to satisfy curiosity; not at the bidding of Satan, or the Pharisees, or Herod. The Saviour would not work a miracle from any of these lower motives; it would have been inconsistent with his high and holy character. Such a miracle, if it were possible, would be the work of a faith like that described by St. Paul—a faith which, though it might remove mountains, was destitute of the blessed grace of love, and therefore nothing worth in the sight of God.

IV. THE THIRD TEMPTATION. 1. *The suggestion.* Satan had long ago whispered to Eve that the tree was "pleasant to the eyes." He had tempted her through the lust of the eyes; now he raises before the eyes of the Lord a vision of unexampled grandeur. As the angel (Rev. xxi. 10) carried away St. John in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed him that great city, the holy Jerusalem; so now the tempter showed our Lord all the kingdoms of the world, a dream of world-wide empire, majesty, and power beyond all that Alexander had once attained, or that Tiberius then possessed. Satan had been twice defeated. He felt that he must put forth all his energies. A small bribe might lure weak men to their destruction; it does not need a kingdom to ensnare them. Satan offered to the Lord the empire of the world. It was a tempting prospect. The Lord knew that he was the Messiah, the Prince of the kings of the earth; all this glory was rightfully his; he was to rule over the nations, and his rule was for the happiness of mankind. It seemed now within his grasp. He would use it (so, perhaps, the tempter whispered; so he would whisper, we know, to a mere man in such a position)—he would use it for the best interests of the human race; he would put down the avarice, cruelty, lust, oppression, which reigned rampant in the world; he would improve the condition of the poor; he would put a stop to war and violence and bloodshed; he would introduce universal peace, universal happiness; and that at once and with ease, without self-sacrifice, without labour, without the cross; at once, by one simple act (so a weak man might say)—an act which, perhaps, was not right, but which was only momentary, which could be soon repented of, the guilt of which would be as nothing compared with the great good that was to follow. So a man might reason with himself; so in smaller matters many men have reasoned with themselves, and have deceived themselves. The end, they said, sanctified the means; they would do evil, so they thought, that good might come. But they deceived their own hearts; the temptation came from the wicked one. Men never do evil from good motives; the thing cannot be. They may say so; they may have said it so often to themselves that they have come almost to believe it by force of habitual self-deceit. But the motive was really selfish, their own interest, their own gratification, their own ease. The good end was only talk, mere pretence to gloss over their sin, to hide their real character from men, even, if it might be, from themselves; if it were possible, from their God. It is Satan who suggests the sinful compliance; he conceals its wickedness; he uses it to destroy the soul. And his promises are deceitful; he offers the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; it is not his to give; he is a liar from the beginning; he promises, he does not give; his deluded followers lose their own souls, but do not always gain the good things of this world.

Or, if they gain them, they find that rank, riches, pleasure, bought by sin, are but dust and ashes in the mouth—vanity of vanities. The enjoyment is but a dream, a phantom; the misery, alas! is very real. 2. *The Lord's answer.* (1) He calls the tempter by his name, Satan, the adversary. He had revealed himself now; his previous advances had been insidious; he had even claimed the countenance of Holy Scripture. Now he stands confessed as the enemy of God; he claims the worship which is due to God alone. The Lord expresses his indignation: "Get thee hence, Satan!" It is right to call an evil thing by an evil name; the use of fair names for foul things is one of the deceits of the wicked one; it tends to hide the malignity of sin, and helps to entrap unwary souls. A transgression is not an indiscretion; a sin is not a misfortune. (2) Again he says, "It is written." The Bible is many-sided; its range extends over all the needs of humanity; there is help to be found there against all temptations. Whatever our difficulties may be, our perplexities, our trials, we shall find light and guidance in the blessed Word of God, if we have been used to study it aright in earnest prayer, in dependence on the promised aid of God the Holy Ghost. (3) "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God." Here is the Christian's victory. God must be first in our hearts. Nothing can be right which tends to turn our soul's devotion from the Lord. However fair the prospect may seem, whatever excuses Satan may suggest, however he may palliate the guilt, or hide the danger, or draw enticing pictures of advantages to follow, here is the one only right answer, the answer of the Lord Jesus to the tempter: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Our heart's allegiance is due to God; he is our rightful King. To try to serve two masters, to halt between God and the world, is to fail in that allegiance, to transfer it to "the world-rulers of this darkness;" it is, in effect, to take Satan for our master, to worship him instead of God. The one hope of safety in the midst of dangers is to hold fast to the prime duty, the highest privilege of the Christian: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." He who herein imitates the Saviour is more than conqueror.

V. THE VICTORY. 1. *The devil leaveth him.* He had failed completely. The clear, calm decision of the Saviour's holy soul, the resolute will, sorely tried and harassed, but ever steadfast and unflinching in the path of duty, had defeated the tempter at all points. He had nothing more left that he could do: he fled, awed by the Saviour's perfect purity. So the devil fleeth now before those who resist him in the strength of Christ. Our victory is sure if only we are steadfast; for Christ hath conquered for us, and we are his and he is ours. 2. *The angels came.* The strife was o'er, the battle done; angels came and ministered to the wants of the triumphant Lord. They had watched the struggle, we may be sure, with the deepest, the most awful interest; they had sympathized with the blessed Lord in the intense anguish of that dread agony of temptation. They rejoiced in his victory. Even so they help the Christian warrior now in his conflict against the same dreadful foe: "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him;" and "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." The moments of victory—victory after sore temptation, are sweet beyond expression; they are sweetened by the unseen presence and sympathy of the blessed angels, rejoicing with the Christian's joy, "singing sweet fragments of the songs above" to cheer the wearied pilgrim.

LESSONS. 1. The devil who tempted Christ tempts us now. Temptations will come; they come every day; but there are decisive moments in the life of every one. Prepare for those decisive conflicts by prayer for the Spirit, by meditation, by the practice of daily self-denial. 2. Imitate the Saviour. Treasure in the heart the blessed words of Holy Scripture. 3. Love not the world. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life are not of the Father, but of the world. 4. "Resist the devil, and he shall flee from you."

Vers. 12—25.—*The beginning of our Lord's ministry.* I. HE REMOVES TO CAPERNAUM. 1. *John was cast into prison.* His ministry was ended; the Lord's begins. God continues his servants' work; when one passes away, another takes his place; when the voice of one prophet is silenced, a greater follows. Each must work in faith while time is given; the work is not man's, but God's. He will fulfil it. His servants may seem to be laid aside and to be forgotten; he will carry on their work.

He does not forget their labours; he will reward them openly. 2. *Jesus begins to preach.* (1) He repeats the words of the Baptist, but from his lips they have a deeper meaning. "Repent ye," he said; the Greek word means literally "change your mind." That great change is the work of God the Holy Ghost, but yet in some sense the work of man. The Lord would not urge men to do that which in no sense depended on their own will; such an exhortation would be meaningless, ironical; it could not come from the loving heart of the Lord Jesus. The soul must yield itself to the blessed influences of the Holy Spirit; the will must consent to be guided by the holy will of God; there must be a felt effort to come after Christ and follow his example, a real striving to enter in at the strait gate, and to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. Such a change is necessary in all the children of the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom was close at hand now, for Christ himself was the King; he was preaching the gospel of the kingdom; he was inviting men into his own kingdom; the gate of that kingdom was repentance. (2) He preaches by the Sea of Galilee. It had been the land of the shadow of death. The people sat in darkness—a deep, spiritual darkness which might be felt. But the light was springing up, the great light of truth and righteousness. So now many souls are lying in darkness; but when the Lord's voice is heard, "Repent, be converted," the light arises in the heart that once was dark, the great light of the gracious Saviour's presence. (3) The true servant of the Lord must be full of the Holy Ghost; he must be tried and approved by experience of many temptations; he must be willing to work in the dark places if God calls him there.

II. THE FOUR APOSTLES. 1. *The call.* The Lord saw them as he walked by the sea. It was not the first interview; two of them certainly, probably three, possibly all the four, already knew him (John i. 40, 41). Now he calls them to be his apostles, to forsake their old employment, and to give themselves up to the work of the kingdom of heaven. He could read their hearts; he knew their characters, their capabilities. He calls his servants still; it is that Divine call alone which raises up true and faithful men for the sacred ministry of his Church. 2. *The words of the call.* "Follow me." (1) Those who would do Christ's work faithfully and successfully must follow him themselves. They must know him by that inner personal knowledge which is granted only to those who, having been called of Christ, have through grace obeyed the calling. They must themselves in their daily walk imitate the holy example of the Lord. They must be content to bear the cross, following the Lord who bore the cross for them and died upon the cross for their salvation. They must be willing for his sake to renounce earthly ambitions and the hope of earthly riches, as he turned away from the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, and as his first apostles left their earthly all—their nets, their boats, their father—to give themselves wholly to his service. But (2) the words contain a promise as well as a command. Those whom he hath called are invited to share the blessedness of spiritual communion with the Lord; they are to live in that holy fellowship which is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. And they are to share his glory: "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them." They are to follow him, not only through their earthly pilgrimage, but onwards beyond the grave, till they reach the golden city and behold face to face the glory of the Lord. 3. *Fishers of men.* Their earthly calling was a parable of the higher calling to which they were now summoned. God's ministers must take a lesson from the fishermen of the Sea of Galilee. They must try to know thoroughly the portion of the work assigned to them, as the fishers knew every corner of the lake. They must study the art of winning souls, as the fishers studied how best to allure the fish into their nets. They must be willing to work hard, to toil all the night. They must work on patiently even when they seem to be taking nothing. But they must have confidence in the Lord's promise, and expect by his grace and in his own good time to "enclose a great multitude of fishes," to draw many souls to Christ.

III. THE CIRCUIT THROUGH GALILEE. 1. *The preaching of Jesus.* (1) He went about all Galilee; he was not like John the Baptist, for the most part stationary; he was in constant movement. The people came to John for baptism and instruction; the Lord carried the gospel to the people. He is an Example to his ministers, an Example of unwearying activity and care for all the souls within his reach. (2) He taught habitually in the synagogues; he was soon recognized as a Rabbi, and invited to address the people at their ordinary meetings in the synagogue. The synagogue-worship was

not prescribed in the Old Testament. It was an institution which sprang up probably during the Captivity, and spread through the towns of Palestine after the return. The Lord attended the synagogues; he kept the Feast of Dedication. They were institutions of the Jewish Church, not ordered in the Scriptures, but not repugnant to the Word of God. Christians should observe the ordinances of the Christian Church. (3) He preached the gospel of the kingdom, the good news that the kingdom of heaven was at hand—the kingdom of which Daniel had prophesied, the kingdom which should never be destroyed, the kingdom prefigured by the stone cut out without hands, which became a mountain and filled the whole earth. He himself was the King; the four whom he had called, the few disciples who followed him, were the beginning of the kingdom—the kingdom which was destined to fill the whole earth. It was good news, indeed; it spoke of peace, and purity, and love, and hope beyond the grave to a world wearied out with war and lust and cruelty, a world which had lost what faith there once was in God, in goodness, in immortality. 2. *His miracles.* He would do no mighty works to relieve his own hunger or to display his own power; but he was ever ready to listen to the cry of pain and sorrow. He would do no miracle at the bidding of the tempter or to satisfy the curiosity of Herod; now among scenes of suffering he was prodigal of his miraculous energy. He teaches us by his Divine example that holy teaching and works of Christian love should go together. His followers must show loving care, not only for the souls, but also for the bodies of the sick and suffering, for so did the blessed Lord himself. It is vain to preach the gospel of love unless we show the power of that gospel by works of love ourselves. He was moved with compassion for suffering humanity; his followers have built hospitals and ministered to the sick and dying. Care for the sick is one of the marks by which the King recognizes the blessed children of his Father. He cared for them himself; his true disciples imitate him. 3. *The multitudes.* Crowds followed him now. His fame spread from north to south through the whole Holy Land, and even beyond its borders. They came from Decapolis and from Jerusalem, from the half-heathen country peopled by the descendants of Alexander's soldiers, and from the holy city, the centre of the influence of Pharisees and priests. His influence spread wider and wider; his holy teaching, his works of mercy, attracted crowds from every quarter. It seemed as if the whole world was going after him, as if all Palestine would submit to his authority. It was not to be so; sunshine would give place to darkness, favour to persecution. The disciples of the Lord must not trust in popular applause; they may have it, it comes sometimes; but it is uncertain, fickle, not to be relied on. We must do our duty, looking simply to Jesus, not to human praise.

LESSONS. 1. The Lord calls his ministering servants. They must follow him; they must preach where his providence sends them; they must watch for souls as they that must give account. 2. They must preach repentance and the good news of the kingdom; they must care, as far as lies in their power, for the sick and suffering. 3. They must give no heed to the praise of men; they must think only of saving souls and pleasing their Lord.

## HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 1.—*Christ tempted.* The very fact that Christ was subject to temptation is immensely significant, both as regards his nature and life and as regards our experience of temptation.

I. THE PICTURE OF CHRIST. We see him assailed by the tempter, wrestling with the fiend, and flinging the monster at every bout. Jesus tempted in the wilderness appears very different from the Christ seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Here some remarkable features of his nature and work are unveiled. 1. *His perfect humanity.* Plainly Jesus was a Man. He lacked nothing that is truly and essentially human. He had a human soul to be tempted, as well as a human body to suffer hunger. In the temptation he comes down to the level of our poor, toiling, fighting humanity. Thus all the grandeur of his Divinity does not remove one jot from the completeness of his humanity. 2. *His brotherly sympathy.* "He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. iv. 15), in order that he might be able to succour the tempted (Heb. ii. 18). This was his apprenticeship to his office of High Priest. He

understands our battle with evil, for he fought a similar battle himself. 3. *His redeeming work.* Christ came to overthrow the works of the devil. He began by facing and conquering the spirit of evil himself. Satan had never been completely vanquished before. The utter rout of his forces in this battle in the wilderness must have left him weakened for all future encounters. 4. *His victorious purity.* Christ was tempted, yet he did not fall. He came out of the ordeal tested and revealed in his sinless strength. Now it cannot be said that the goodness of Christ is only perfect because he had not an opportunity to do wrong. He was met by the strongest possible inducements to sin. Yet he resisted them. The result was all gain. It was good for Christ to be tempted. Therefore he was led by the Spirit to the wilderness.

II. THE REVELATION OF TEMPTATION. 1. *Temptation may come from without.* St. James shows how it often springs up in our own hearts from the evil lurking there. Old sins shed seeds which spring up as new sins. But this is not the only way in which temptations arise, or the first man could not have been tempted, nor could Christ. Adam and Eve were tempted by the serpent, and Christ was tempted by the devil. (1) Therefore a good man is not to expect to be free from temptation. (2) Temptation is no sign of sin. The tempted need not accuse themselves of guilt in their being liable to temptation. Sin only begins when we yield to temptation in our own wills. 2. *Temptation lays hold of innocent desires.* Christ was tempted by sinful appeals to what was innocent within him. He was tempted to gratify natural desires—hunger, etc., but in a wrong way. He had not our indwelling sins to urge him to evil, but he had greater powers to keep in control. It would seem that, with the descent of the Holy Spirit at his baptism, there had come the consciousness of his great and awful power to work miracles. His temptations were inducements to abuse that power for selfish ends. Every new acquisition is a new ground for temptation; every enlargement and growth of faculty carries with it fresh possibilities of evil—and also, if the evil is resisted, of good.—W. F. A.

Vers. 2—4.—*The temptation of hunger.* This was a serious encounter. One rebuff was not sufficient to drive off the tempter. The devil is most persevering; only persevering resistance can hope to overcome him. The successive temptations were varied in form. The tempter is wily and subtle. If he does not succeed in one way he will try another. Each temptation has its own features; yet there is a common character running through them all. In every case Jesus was urged to use his miraculous powers and Messianic privileges for his own advantage. The great conflict raged round one central position—the life-work of Jesus as the Christ. Should this be degraded to selfish ends? or should it be carried on in self-sacrifice for its highest purposes? Let us consider the first temptation.

I. THE TEMPTATION THROUGH HUNGER. 1. *The tempter waited for his opportunity.* For forty days Jesus fasted in the wilderness. All this while the tempter delayed, like a wild beast crouching in the bush and waiting for a favourable moment to pounce on his prey. Would that Christians had Satan's patience in watching for souls! 2. *The tempter chose a weak moment.* When Christ was exhausted by lack of food. Physical weakness may indicate the moment of approaching temptation; much more probably it will come in times of spiritual weakness. 3. *The tempter worked on a strong natural appetite.* Hunger. This is a fundamental appetite in all living animals. When it is keenly excited it will turn the gentlest beings into wild beasts. Beware of a hungry man! 4. *The tempter suggested an easy satisfaction.* The famished man is haunted by tantalizing visions of food. Nothing is more natural than that the stones of the wilderness should suggest the idea of the bread they resembled in form and colour!

II. HOW IT IS MET. 1. *By an appeal to Scripture.* In dark moments we cannot trust our own thoughts, for temptation is sophistical. Then, like Christ, we may find the advantage of a familiar knowledge of the Bible. If he needed this extraneous aid—he the Sinless! much more do we whose thoughts are dark and foolish. 2. *By imparting a new current of thought.* Here was the use of the recollection of Scripture. So long as his mind rested on his physical condition he could not but feel the terrible force of the temptation. By a great effort of will he turned the current of his thinking into another channel. Knowing the Bible from early days, he found a helpful scriptural idea flashing through his mind. 3. *By consideration of the dignity of man.*

The suggestion of the tempter is degrading. Christ rises above it by considering the true greatness of man. This is not a method which he only can follow, because it is not the dignity of the Son of God, but the dignity of man, that he thinks of. Every man may avail himself of the same bracing thought. There is a higher life than that of the body. Man is more than a feeding animal. In his true self he is not wholly dependent on bread. 4. *By a reflection on man's chief food.* Man needs more than bread, and man can feed his soul on the better food even while his body is fasting. Probably the very purpose of Christ's fast was that he might give himself wholly to feeding his higher life on the Word, the truth of God.—W. F. A.

Vers. 5—11.—*Presumption and ambition.* All three of the temptations of our Lord turned on the abuse of his newly developed Messianic powers; but while the first temptation urged him to use those powers for the satisfaction of a natural appetite common to all men, the other two were concerned directly with his unique position and destiny. The tempter perceives that he has made a mistake in choosing too low a ground on which to approach One so completely emancipated from the dominion of the body as Christ. Therefore he now proceeds to ply him with more elaborate motives.

I. PRESUMPTION. Note the perseverance of the tempter: foiled in one attack, he immediately makes another. Observe his versatility: seeing that one line of assault is ineffectual, he shifts his basis. Consider the special characteristics of the second temptation. 1. *Favourable circumstances.* The devil sets Christ on the pinnacle of the temple. That this was probably done in vision, or even only in imagination, does not affect the essential nature of the temptation. Mentally such was the condition of Christ, and the force of any temptation is largely dependent on the state of mind of its victim. 2. *A primary doubt.* "If thou art the Son of God." This thought, repeated from the first temptation, shows how doubt may be used as a door to sin. 3. *A Scripture quotation.* Christ had quoted Scripture; the devil can do the same—but with a difference. Christ perceived the true meaning of the words he cited, and used them aright; the tempter made an unworthy use of Scripture, and he did it by simply insisting on its literal meaning. A false light on truth may turn it into a lie. 4. *A dreadful fascination.* Many have felt the impulse to throw themselves down from a cliff or a high building. With Christ this was immensely aggravated by the thought that surely God would not let his Son suffer any harm. 5. *A masterly rebuff.* Again Jesus quotes from the Old Testament. Scripture must be interpreted by Scripture. One truth cannot be inconsistent with another truth. A Divine promise can never justify what God has forbidden. 6. *A vital lesson.* There is a limit to the security of faith. It is useless to trust God when we are off the path of duty. We have no right to expect God's protection in dangers which we manufacture for ourselves. He who courts temptation invites his own ruin.

II. AMBITION. Yet once again the indomitable enemy of souls rallies his shattered forces and hurls them on the Saviour in a last mad assault. 1. *An open attack.* Disguise is now useless; so Satan scorns any longer to use it. There is a certain fascination in ugliness. If serpents do not glide up to their victims unseen, they approach them most openly, paralyzing them with horror; sin itself has a hideous attractiveness in its naked blackness. 2. *A powerful appeal.* Christ is to have the world for his possession. He comes to be the King; here is his kingdom, and an easy way of reaching it. 3. *A diabolical condition.* To worship Satan. This is just to make evil principles the rule of life. Such principles lie very near to the hand of the public man. Macchiavellian politicians cannot see how they are to be avoided. Pander to the passions of men, and you will win their applause—that is gaining kingdoms by the worship of the devil. 4. *A bold rejection.* We need not behave to the tempter with courtesy. It is dangerous to treat with him. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." It needs an effort to do this. With Christ it meant the rejection of all worldly success and the deliberate choice of the way of the cross. Yet this choice is rewarded by angel-ministry.—W. F. A.

Vers. 12—17.—*Light in darkness.* The end of John's work was the signal for the commencement of Christ's. Thus our Lord would appear to some as the successor of

the Baptist. To a nearer view it seems that the completion of the preparation makes it fitting that the full advent of the kingdom should be manifested.

I. CHRIST COMES TO PEOPLE SITTING IN DARKNESS. Here is the prophet's image—a land of gloom, its inhabitants seated disconsolately and helplessly, not having enough light to arise and do their work, or any heart to bestir themselves and seek for such a light, till it suddenly bursts upon their surprised and startled gaze. 1. *What is the darkness?* Primarily, ignorance. Without Christ we do not know God or ourselves, our duty or our destiny. From this ignorance comes a sense of dull bewilderment, and that sinks down to the deadness of despair. Or if there is external cheerfulness, the benighted soul shrinks into torpor and death. In this state the greater darkness of sin invades the conscience, and sits like a brooding raven hatching baleful birds of the night. 2. *Who are the people?* The immediate reference is to the inhabitants of Northern Palestine—those unfortunate Israelites who were the first to forsake the God of their fathers, and the first to fall under the rod of the heathen oppressor. Now we see two great classes of dark souls. (1) The pagan nations. Here there opens before us the vast field of foreign missions—dark in spiritual ignorance, error, and superstition; dark too in sin, for "the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty" (Ps. lxxiv. 20). (2) The heathen of Christendom. Many of these do not know the bare elements of the gospel; many more have no spiritual perception of its power and life; and multitudes live in benighted regions of moral corruption. 3. *What are these people doing?* They sit—that is all. They seem to be content with their condition. A strange lethargy has taken possession of them. This is partly inevitable; for they cannot illuminate their own dark souls.

II. THE ADVENT OF CHRIST IS THE DAWNING OF A GREAT LIGHT. 1. *The light does not arise out of the darkness.* The idea of the prophet is that the people of the dark north see the light that is rising in happy Judæa—so splendid and far-reaching is its radiance. Christ appeared as a Jew. Even to the Jews he came not as they expected, and his work drew none of its splendour from their goodness or their theology. The sun is not dependent on the candle-factory for its illuminating properties. 2. *The light penetrates to the most remote regions.* There is no limit to the penetrating power of light when this is not counteracted by the intervention of some opaque body. Every star radiates light through the whole universe. The light of Christ is for the darkest places of the earth. In our own day it has reached the heart of "darkest Africa;" it is penetrating the dense populations of China; it is spreading like a grey dawn over the vast empire of India; it shines in diamond points on many a remote island of the southern seas; and still, in spite of shameful darkness, it is brighter in England to-day than ever it was. 3. *The light calls to repentance and heralds the kingdom of heaven.* Christ took up the Baptist's message—beginning just where his forerunner had left off. The light of Christ reveals the sin of man. When we see Christ we see the door into the kingdom of heaven. Christ sheds light to bring men to repentance, and to guide them into the kingdom.—W. F. A.

Vers. 18—22.—"*Fishers of men.*" Jesus was not content to preach the word and leave it to work unseen and uncared for. He desired to gather in a harvest of souls. His first effort in this direction was to form a little group of recognized and confessed disciples who should help him in his great work. Himself the supreme Fisher of men, he drew choice souls that he might fit them to undertake the same work in seeking for others.

I. THE FISHERS. 1. *Their relationship.* Brothers. Family union is consecrated by Christ. 2. *Their class.* Christ was a carpenter; the first apostles were fishermen; St. Paul was a weaver. Surely, then, the working classes of all people ought to be interested in Christianity. If social arrangements mean anything in religion, these classes should be the first to claim the gospel as their own. Why are so many of them the last to do so? 3. *Their work.* The life of the sea was a good discipline. These theological students of Christ had no preliminary "arts course." Nature was their university; hard toil and danger made their discipline. They were not educated as scholars; they were schooled as men. It is best to have both trainings, but we can more easily dispense with the first than with the second. 4. *Their immediate occupation.* They were at work—casting a net. We are never so fit for Christ to meet us as when we are doing our daily duty.

II. THE CALL. In St. John we see that these men already knew Christ (John i. 40—42); but they had not yet learnt that he would wish them to be his constant companions. 1. *The essential character of the call.* (1) From Christ. He is not willing to be alone in his great work. He seeks associates. (2) To individual men. All are invited to his grace (John vii. 37). But separate men are called to separate spheres of work. How, then, shall we recognize our call when it comes, seeing that Christ is no longer with us in the flesh? By the opening of a door, by the consciousness of a gift, by the conviction of conscience. 2. *The twofold contents of the call.* (1) To follow Christ. This comes first. Only they can serve Christ who follow him. We must first be Christians if we would do Christian work. The most Christ-like are the best fishers of men. (2) To win men. This is better than catching fish in the lake. Thus Christ promotes his disciples. Note the practical aim—so intelligible in Christ's manner of presenting it to fishermen. Much spiritual energy is dissipated by vagueness. We beat the air for want of an object. But true Christian work is practical. It is to fill the gospel net.

III. THE RESPONSE. 1. *Its promptness.* "Straightway," etc. There is no excuse for delay when Christ calls. The fisherman may say he is not fit to be an apostle; but not he but Christ is the Judge of his fitness. There is no time for delay. The harvest is plenteous, and the labourers are few. 2. *Its absoluteness.* They left all. Christ does not call all his people to abandon their secular occupations, but when such a call comes, there is no excuse for parrying it. The obedience must be unconditional. 3. *Its action.* They did not merely assent verbally. They followed Christ. Our Christianity is seen, not in the creeds we profess, but in the way in which we go.—W. F. A.

Vers. 23—25.—*The Galilæan ministry.* Three things are here described in regard to the Galilæan ministry of our Lord—the work of Christ; the popular fame; and the consequent conduct of the people.

I. THE WORK OF CHRIST. 1. *It was itinerant.* John the Baptist stayed in the wilderness, while the people flocked to him; Jesus went about among the people, seeking them. Thus we see his sociability, his graciousness of spirit, and his desire to include many in the blessings he brought. 2. *It was not revolutionary.* Christ preached in the synagogues. He was not yet excommunicated, and he used his privilege of access to the public assemblies of the Jews in order to link on his new teaching with the old truth and piety of Israel. 3. *It was instructive.* "Teaching." Christ based his synagogue instructions in the exposition of Scripture (Luke iv. 16—21). 4. *It was declaratory.* "Preaching." This was heralding the advent of the kingdom, and it seems to have been done in the open air—in streets and market-places and by the seashore. Christ desires all to hear the call of his gospel. 5. *It was healing.* First came the teaching and preaching; for these were most important. But Christ was both merciful and powerful. He had compassion on sickness, and he had power to cure it. His gospel is for this world as well as for the next, for physical amelioration as well as for spiritual salvation.

II. HIS POPULAR FAME. 1. *Its early origin.* In Galilee Christ immediately rises into popularity. His very aspect was gracious; his words were beyond comparison with any other teaching; his miracles were as beneficent as wonderful. It is not surprising that he was popular. All who know his grace and goodness have reason to adore and love him. 2. *Its wide circulation.* It passed beyond the borders of Galilee, and through all Syria. It is even now spreading through the world. Yet it is strange that nearly two thousand years should have passed before the greater part of mankind has even heard of his name. That name is not the private property of the select few. He has come to be the Saviour of the world.

III. THE CONDUCT OF THE PEOPLE. The fame of Christ was not lost on those who heard it. It is useless merely to know of Christ, his work, and his gospel. The knowledge is useful just in proportion as it leads to action. Now, the action of the multitudes who were affected by the renown of Christ was twofold: 1. *Bringing the needy to Christ.* It is one of the marvellous effects of Christ's work in the hearts of men that he induces them to bring others to him. The compassion of Christ spreads, through those who know him, out to the needy. A true Christian must be an

evangelist. 2. *Following Christ.* Multitudes felt the spell of his presence, and were drawn to him with an enthusiasm of devotion. In too many cases this was but a superficial, temporary movement. It is possible to follow Christ by outward action in Church-life, and not to be his true disciples inwardly. The inward following is just the very heart and essence of Christianity. A Christian is not one who merely believes certain things about Christ, but one who also follows him.—W. F. A.

Ver. 1.—*The preliminaries of the ordeal temptations of Jesus Christ.* The baptism of water, to which Jesus Christ had submitted in obedience to the human nature which he had assumed, and to the conditions under which he had assumed it, is now succeeded by the more significant, far more intrinsic, inward baptism of temptation. Let us here consider—

I. WHAT THIS BAPTISM OF TEMPTATION REALLY MEANS AND AMOUNTS TO. It means a *testing*, practical investigation into (1) the moral direction of a man's will; and (2) the strength of it in that direction. The present associations of the word and the thing temptation in the minds of us all are perhaps almost without exception of an unfavourable kind. It arises from the fact that temptation in the original example of it, and in the infinite majority of all cases from that time to the present, issued in disaster. Our way, therefore, is both to dread it for ourselves, and to attach a bad name to it. But if the issue of the original temptation had been the opposite of what it was, and had the amazing majority of all succeeding cases taken pattern of it, we can easily imagine how the mere utterance of the word would have availed to strike a *joyous* key-note; and the word itself been the watchword of noble endeavour and enthusiastic effort. Till Jesus, however, the word knew no association of this kind. It is, then, in *this* sense that Jesus and temptation are brought into relation. *His* moral bent and the strength of it are to be as really and as fairly tested as were those of the first Adam. Nor is it less evident that, while the temptation-test of the first Adam was presented to him in the simplest possible form, and when he was no way "a-hungred," that of the second Adam is described in brief in that threefold form which stands for all the rest as regards its matter, and with every accompanying circumstance of aggravation.

II. AT WHOSE INSTANCE THE DATE OF IT WAS DETERMINED. Though Jesus was always moved by the Holy Spirit, yet it is here with distinct emphasis said, "He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." In that dimmest background of time to which the garden of Eden belongs, it is at present impossible to institute comparison between the age of Adam and that of Christ on the days of their temptation respectively; but it may be held that there is a ripe time, an exact time, in the life of every man, known to the Spirit and appropriated by the Spirit, for the critical temptation of life. It is true that we cannot say *that* temptation is, except in a few cases, *the* final, *deciding* one, so far as time is concerned; but perhaps oftener than men think it is to solemn truth the *crucial* one, the one on which hinge many succeeding victories, each made easier, or disgraceful defeats, each less regretted and less striven against. Surely it is legitimate and real source of comfort for all those who seek the right, and would do faithfully the battle with the tempter, to have *this* view of the time and occasion of the battle put before them on such high authority, that they are adapted and timed of the Spirit. It may also well be observed here that so surely as the Spirit led, so meekly Jesus followed. He followed without resistance, without murmur, and without shrinking, so far as his own conflict or humiliation in meeting such an enemy was concerned. Calm submission before conflict, steadfast determination to encounter the enemy in the path of our life, and unfaltering trust in the Stronger than self,—these are the omens that go before the successful as well as the valiant spiritual warrior.

III. THE PLACE OF THE TEMPTATION. It can scarcely be sustained that the "wilderness" (described here by the same word as in vers. 1 and 3 of the previous chapter) denotes absolutely desert tracts of country. It must probably mean the same as in the former chapter, the thinly inhabited and vaster pastoral stretches of country. There can be no doubt, however, that some point is to be understood as made in this kind of scene or theatre being appointed for Christ's temptation. In the world's actual life the occasion of temptation abounds in the crowd and in the solitary place. It is

still a study and a question in which it may abound most. On the other hand, perhaps, it may be held—and in analogy with much else in matter quite different—that though in the crowded city temptation may be yielded to most *recklessly*, yet conflict, and the fiercer and more prolonged conflict, and remorse, and the fiercer and more prolonged remorse, find solitude to a special degree their thriving ground, and make it all their own as battle-ground. The analysis would be of this kind. In the wilderness: 1. The larger force and number of the spiritual powers of the individual will have the chance of coming into action. The *calculating* will be more and more manifold with the effect of making the *consenting* more deliberate. 2. The position will be a clearer one of antagonists just opposed to each other, the one with no help from friends on which to fall back; the other when he would do his worst, with no hindrance arising from a sense of intimidation, as conscious that others are onlookers, and *they* such as sympathize with his victim, not with himself. The sense of isolation will be a weakness to the assaulted; the sense of unobservedness will be added unscrupulousness to the assaulter. 3. The *feelings* of the tempted will be naturally and almost inevitably highly stimulated, probably often in a morbid condition. It would need a spirit to which all goodness and *all strength* were already *native* to remain uninfluenced by the associations or, otherwise put, the non-associations, of the wilderness. Nevertheless, the victory once won, *these* shall leave the victor stronger than if all surroundings had been in his favour. 4. Though the trial must be in these aspects *severer*, yet, everything considered, it will also be the *fairer* test of the person in his own real self.

IV. THE PERSON OF THE TEMPTER. It is stated with distinctness that Jesus was led up—was led up by the Spirit, was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness, was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness in order to be tempted, *i.e.* meet the ordeal of temptation, *and* this at the ministration of "the devil." The naturalness and very harmony of the verse and the narrative are with a ruthless gratuitousness set at nought if we are not at liberty to learn here (1) the personality of the devil, as a thing upheld by the authority of the New Testament. We learn (2) that our great Head and Leader, the second Adam, the Captain of our salvation, the Author and Finisher of our faith; was ordained to meet the ordeal of temptation, in what must be considered the most direct and the most fierce and concentrated form. We may very probably be justly reminded here (3) that both the *genius* of temptation at the first, as temptation is constituted in the present life, originated with Satan, and also that it is still and always really his *peculium*, in whatever disguised and sugared form of circumstance, apparent accident and the like, it may seem to address us. Temptation now, like painful labour and the sweat of the brow, has in secondary and derived aspects its points of interest, its uses of advantage, and even phases to ask admiration. But primarily, none of these things can be credited to it. We may be reminded (4) that Satan is probably never far to seek or difficult to be found. Jesus is "led up of the Spirit into the wilderness," but not in consequence of any appointment with Satan to meet him. He is sure to be found.—B.

Vers. 2—4.—*The first ordeal-temptation recorded of Jesus.* This reply of Jesus to the first temptation specially recorded as addressed to him by Satan is a quotation from Deut. viii.—part of the language spoken by the lips of Moses, but dictated by the Spirit of God for the admonishment of his people. The words occur in that impressive review which Moses took of the career of the people whom he had led like a flock through the wilderness, when now the time was approaching for those wanderings to cease, and for the entrance into a land flowing with milk and honey. In the review Moses makes particular reference to the apprehensions the people had suffered under of starvation amid their hunger in the wilderness; and he distinctly says God had permitted them to suffer hunger for the purpose of "humbling them, and proving them, and of knowing what was in their heart." A lesson, however, was to be learnt, not merely from their hunger, but also from the way in which it was to be removed. When they should have first felt right well what hunger was, they were to be fed with a food which they knew not, nor their fathers before them. That *unknown* food was to teach them that human life does not depend exclusively on the known and seen, the touched and tasted and handled, but on the Word, the sovereign Word, of God; or, as it is more fully expressed elsewhere, "on every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of

God." This new food was in a double sense unknown, and the object of wonder to them; for they knew neither how nor whence it came, nor what it was when it had come. Perhaps it may seem rather remarkable that Jesus should put away and promptly reject the temptation by a mere quotation, and one found in such a comparatively humble connection. But we must remember, on the other hand, that it was little enough of a quotation, really speaking; it was little else than his own original language—Moses rather the person who *quotes*. Meantime Jesus honours the Bible, reminding us how it is a storehouse of truths and principles, the application and practice of which it is ours to find. The temptation of Jesus is one of the deep things of his life, of Scripture, and even of our world. There is something in it which at present we fail, and are sure to fail, to compass. Be it so. There is also much in it that we can compass; much fraught with spiritual instruction and practical service for us. Else it would not have been here, and in the very foreground of three out of the four Gospel narratives. There is often a little confusion in some people's minds as to the phrase, "a man is tempted;" for it does confessedly sometimes mean that a man feels working guiltily within him the temptation presented to him. But otherwise it *strictly* means, simply that the matter of temptation *has been* presented to him, been tried upon him, to its utmost power to influence or fascinate has sought to bewitch him; yet, perhaps, though it charmed never so wisely, charmed all in vain. It is in this latter sense only that Jesus "was tempted." Whatever could smile after the manner of a tempting would smile on him; whatever could frown would frown; whatever could have the remotest chance of making his heart's perfect rectitude tremble but one moment like the needle to the pole, hovering one moment uncertain, tried its most subtle, but utterly in vain. Open as the heart of Jesus was beyond any other to all love, goodness, kindness, pain, it also resented more immediately and more thoroughly the faintest touch and impress of evil than any other nature. This *immediate* resentment of the challenge of evil was what kept the soul of Jesus so free from a finger-mark's impress or soil; while some, detracting thereby from the meritoriousness of Christ's victory over temptations, have assumed that, because he resisted so immediately, it was the symptom of a stoical absence of feeling! Jesus Christ had just submitted to the baptism of water, and received that of the Holy Ghost. He was now to receive the baptism of temptation, while in no far distance awaited him that of blood and untold agony.

(A) Notice in the attack of this, the first of the three recorded temptations, that—

I. IT PURPORTED TO BASE ITS FORCE AND PLANT ITS ATTACK, IN FAITH OF THE WEAKNESS THAT LURKS IN BODILY APPETITE. Jesus was prepared, *presumably*, not to resist and conquer, but rather to yield, by reason of being "a-hungered," and, if the expression be allowable, fiercely so. Compare the essence of this temptation with that presented to our first parents, which rested not on hunger, but on the attraction of indulgence and *inviting*, luscious food; again, with that of Esau; and with that of the Israelites.

II. SATAN APPEARS IN ORDER BY HUNGER TO TEMPT TO EVIL DISTINCTLY. When God tempted the Israelites by hunger, he did *not* tempt *by* evil, for hunger is not in itself any evil in the sense of being sinful; nor did he tempt *to* evil, for he would have been infinitely more pleased that the end of that tempting should have brought honour and confirmed strength to the people. But in the present instance, while it is not Satan who makes Jesus "a-hungered," it *is* he who comes, in the day of Jesus' fierce hunger, to attempt what worst thing he can get out of that hunger.

III. THE POINT OF THE TEMPTATION LAY IN SUGGESTING AND SOLICITING THE SATISFYING OF A PERFECTLY INNOCENT APPETITE, BUT IN A MANNER AND BY A METHOD UNWORTHY OF JESUS. At the first blush of the thing, the evil feature in the temptation may not seem so patent. But the unerring eye unveils it at once. 1. Christ *can* do things which he nevertheless *won't* do. It is a reminder for us all that we have no *right* always to do the thing for which we may have the resources of abundant *might*. It is like a man saying, as men often have said, with as infinite wrongness to their own soul as supreme complaisance, that "he has a right to do what he likes with his own money"—a speech most infidel! We have *no* right to do what we "like," but only what *is* right! 2. Not only can Jesus do things he won't do, but also he won't do for himself what he *will* do for others. He *can* make stones bread; he can make stones cry out; he can make the stones of the temple walls utter forth his praise; he can out of stones

raise up children to Abraham. *But* he will not command stones to become bread for himself; *this*, doubtless, the reason, that he will let faith, and patience, and bodily endurance, and the highest style of trust, have each its perfect work. Not to do so is to him, clearly and distinctly, sin. 3. When Satan now tempts Jesus through the appetite of the body, natural and innocent as the appetite was, there was something yet more natural to him, viz. to *wait*—to wait with trust; to wait, with perfect trust and perfect filial love, the great Father's time. He well knew him who fed Elijah by the raven; who fed also ravens and sparrows at all times; and for *his* feeding would he wait. Had Jesus on this occasion fallen back on his *power* for the behoof of himself, he might as well have done so again, and then again and again. No longer would he have been suffering Man for and amongst us suffering men! No longer patient Man amongst us impatient; pattern Man amongst us who so needed such a Pattern! No longer would he have been One learning sympathy by fellow-experience and the sharing of our lot and our weakness! No; all the contrary; not a day but would have distanced him further from us, and increased most decisively our sense of isolation from his majestic self. We should have felt overpoweringly how absolute our inability to be "like him." Painfully a-hungered, then, as Jesus was, the temptation was powerless, rebounding as the arrow from the rock; his strong fortitude builded partly at least on this foundation, "Man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

(B) Notice in the answer of Christ to this, the first of the three temptations—

I. ITS ABSOLUTE PROMPTNESS.

II. THE SOURCE OR SECRET OF THIS DECISIVE PROMPTNESS. It was one simple and very imitable thing. It was the living, speaking Word of God that was in Christ. He knew that Word by memory, and in all the faith and love of his heart. And he knew it, not as a dead letter, but as a working, useful, trusty force.

III. THE METHOD OF THE ANSWER. 1. By the barest statement, and that in quotation, of the fallacy that the question of bread was a *supreme* question in man's life, he scouts that fallacy at once off the ground. It becomes ludicrously dwarfed to its just proportions, and it takes not a moment to do it. "Man lives not by bread alone." 2. By one suggestion of the *right* direction in which to look, he lays bare the very basis of the truth in that matter. Not only so, a whole vista of truth and thought seems to stand revealed. The creative, paternal Word seems to be heard proclaiming itself in its manifold, myriad tones of thoughtful, providing, loving care. And the omens of its future utterances seem to be caught. Whatever we may think of our lives, and however little; however we may estimate, misestimate, use, misuse, or fail to use them; we live subject to "every word of God." The breathing of God is on our life. How will that Word some day reverberate in all our inner ear, and in all its new-born power to hear, which now finds in but our outer ear echoes often so hollow! Let us now open our most listening ear to it. Its burden is hope, promise, mercy, and eternal life.—B.

Vers. 5—7.—*The second ordeal-temptation.* It is very naturally and universally supposed that the three temptations recorded here, as making their assault on Jesus, are typical of those to which human nature is exposed. All are exposed to temptations that come through the body, wide as is their range of variety. And therefore, probably, it was that this kind is exampled in the most generic instance and the simplest—one of *hunger*. According to this very supposable theory, we must expect to find the second temptation addressed to the nature of Jesus one that moves in a higher sphere, and not less generic in its type. It evidently *is* so. It speaks not to the need of a body, but to the ambition of life, and of a higher sort of life—that, in one word, of *power*. Inadequate as this word is as an exhaustive description, yet perhaps it contains the essence of the matter in hand. Thought, active thought, and the very sense of energy, beg some exhibition of themselves. And as their first wonder of exercise is over *matter*, so they postulate some typical instance hereof. No greater discipline, no severer chastisement, occurs in this world to *life* than its confinedness within the conditions of *matter* in general, and of the body in particular. And what may be called the mind's ambition is never more proudly gratified than in some leading instance of victory, or apparen victory, over the usual conditions of matter or of the human body itself. Notice, then—

I. THE INCIDENCE OF THIS TEMPTATION. It may be set forth *generally* as above. More particularly, (1) its subtleness; (2) its special fascination for some temperaments; (3) its plausibleness, as able to clothe itself with a shadow of greatness, and to redeem itself from the associations of low *kinds* of desire; (4) its rapid and imperious habit of growth, may be enlarged upon. The wonderful lessons and examples the life and conduct of Jesus afford as to the safeguards that real power and necessary wielding of it require, may be pointed out. Hence his own (1) extremely conspicuous *economy of miracle*; (2) his meekness most genuine; (3) his perpetual resignation of, abnegation of, and even refusal in so many words of the offer of, the *forms* of power (that tinsel which is in many instances large part of the whole question), that come not merely as the fruit of influence over fellow-men, but of mastery over unconscious matter. Of the *vanity* of miracle, accordingly, and even of the vanity of might, there was not a trace in Jesus. Satan then aimed this temptation within spiritual domain; within spiritual domain with which it is incontestable Jesus had of necessity great familiarity; and in one of the most seducing forms of it—for it was proposed that Jesus should instance himself as at one and the same time subject and *object* of an unwonted energy; and finally as one authorized to pose as the charmed of angels and the favourite of Heaven. On the other hand, as the combatants in this temptation were only the two, without spectators, we do not think any part of the temptation consisted in the suggestion of a short and royal road to fame, and to the conviction of priests or people in the matter of the Messiahship of Jesus.

II. THE AGGRAVATION OF THE ATTACK AS DELIVERED IN QUOTATION OF SACRED, SCRIPTURE PROMISE, AND PROMISE MOST DIFFERENTLY DESIGNED. Dwell on the odiousness of the presumption that wrests sacredest promises to the humble into the suggestion, the justification, the very plea for daring danger on the part of the proud and self-opinionate. Point this same thought by speaking of the deeper meaning of the promise. The angels' charge is to be understood, not merely as sovereign against great and surprising dangers and *violent* accident, but against the mere hurt of a mere foot against a mere stone. Possibly note should be made also of the supposition that Satan borrowed the idea of couching his language of temptation in Scripture quotation from Christ's own use of quotation in repelling the first temptation.

III. THE REPLY OF JESUS TO THE TEMPTATION. 1. It is a genuine instance of *retort*. 2. It is pre-eminently short, conclusive, and unchallengeably absolute. 3. It puts for the first time, into words of the most forcible deliverance, the enormity of the act and the sin involved in an illegitimate, whether a careless or a reckless, challenging of the promises of God. These may be challenged, often enough are challenged, by *deed* rather than word; in the way they are thought of or calculated upon, far more than in the language used with respect to them. And to do these things is to offer "to tempt God." God is not the proper Object of temptation at *any* time, under *any* circumstances. Man *is* the right object of God's temptations, which are right temptations and useful, and adapted by infinite capability of knowledge and wisdom; but the converse *never*.—B.

Vers. 8—10.—*The third ordeal-temptation of Jesus.* The *first* temptation was aimed at Jesus in the matter of the appetite of the body. The *second* in that of the audacious ambition of a daring mind, whose pride of self and of thought would court every presumption whatsoever. The *third* is an immediate assault on the properly spiritual nature of man, which involves first of all conception of duty, of religion, and of its grandest presentation in commandment the first, for ever and ever *the first!* It "goes without saying" that no description more brief, comprehensive, true, addresses itself to the fixing of what it is that is amiss with man than *this*—that he forgets that he is estranged from his being's first glory, the worship of its Creator, Father, sovereign Owner, God. And when this is well remembered, that one type of temptation should be recorded in *this* direction is what we should entirely expect. It may be held probable that the eighth verse goes a long way to give a satisfactory clue as to how far the details of the scenery of these temptations are to be read *literally*. It is plain that here they cannot be read so absolutely. None the less, in our opinion, is the groundwork in this case itself *most real*; in other words, we believe the scene *was* the summit of a high mountain, although even the narrowest exegesis of the expression,

"all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them," may be too wide for literal construing. Notice in the description of this temptation that—

I. IT BEGS THE VANTAGE-GROUND, THE ENHANCING CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE IMPRESSION, LENT BY ACTUAL SIGHT. That this kind of consideration may legitimately be set to the credit of Christ's combined nature is sufficiently shown by the numerous occasions in which we find such things as these—that his "tears," his "deep anger," his immeasurable "grief," reached their climax respectively when his eye actually "beheld" (*the city*), "saw" (*her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her*), "looked round about" (*upon them, being grieved*, etc.). For those even who believe that the temptations of Jesus were conducted *only* in vision, the words "actual sight" may still have their meaning.

II. IT WENT DIRECT TO THE SUBSTANCE OF THE WORK WHICH BROUGHT CHRIST TO EARTH, THE SECURING OF THE KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD. To give what facility may be possible to any conception of the *feasibility* of Satan's fulfilling the offer of his tempting, we might imagine that he meant he would "give all the kingdoms," etc., in the sense of utterly retreating himself from the conflict; and from the endeavour, at present too successful, to win the world for his own. On the other hand, we know by what very different method, of the Passion and blood of Christ, the victory was to be won, and Satan to be dispossessed of his hold.

III. IT ASSERTS (Luke iv. 6), WHAT CHRIST AT ALL EVENTS DOES NOT DENY OR CHALLENGE, A CERTAIN ABSOLUTE HOLD ON THE WORLD ON THE PART OF SATAN, AND BY SOME SORT OF RIGHT. It is a thing supremely worthy of note that, in so small a compass as the description of the facts of the temptation, a place should thus be found for the recognition of a phenomenon so inscrutable, and so undeniably embedded in the facts of the world, in the statements of Scripture, and in the very grain of universal theology.

IV. IT PRESENTS ITSELF IN TEMPTATION'S ABSOLUTE, ESSENTIAL FORM. The essential crucial question in all temptation of moral matter is this—Will a man bow down from himself, from his God, to worship untruth, to do the thing called sin, to honour the thing called evil, to act the thing called a lie, to *worship Satan*? These things, all mystery apart, *are* to "worship" Satan, and *not* to "worship the Lord God."

V. IT GETS ITSELF ITS ANSWER, POSITIVE AND SWIFT. This twofold answer is revealed. 1. The instinctive resentment of the nature: "Get thee behind me, Satan!" 2. The unqualified confession of the philosophy of that resentment: "*It is written*," i.e. written in reason, in conscience, in the Word: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."—B.

Ver. 11.—*The rest from temptation.* Remark on these representations of Scripture, and remark on them *as the representations of Scripture*, that—

I. THE THRICE-DENIED SATAN IS DAUNTED, AND LEAVES OFF AWHILE AT LEAST HIS TEMPTING. Contrast this with the thrice-denied Jesus (Luke xxii. 61), *not then* daunted, but with an intense love recalling Peter by a look.

II. THE NEED OF CHRIST WAS A REAL NEED. The "ministry" given now to him was probably in answer both to (1) his bodily exhaustion by hunger, and (2) his soul's weariness—a weariness not resulting from any supposed severity in the shape of *struggle* to overcome temptation, but from the "exceeding trouble" of the aspect of sin, of the presumptuous challenge of sin coming so near, and of the inevitable ruffle of perfect purity under the mere glare of the incarnation of impurity and evil.

III. THE MINISTRY OF ANGELS IS A FACT, AND THE KNOWN GRANT OF SUCH MINISTRY AT DIFFERENT TIMES TO MEN IS ALL THAT IS NOW PROFFERED TO CHRIST HIMSELF! 1. This instance of fact, with a hundred others, helps to corroborate our information as to the reality of Christ's humanity. 2. It is a fresh conviction for all of the watchful unforgettingness of supreme sympathy and divinest compassion. 3. It should greatly help to dignify our sense of the value and the adaptedness of the help and the solace vouchsafed to us, of the conflict, anxiety, vexation, and the irritation of a contact with the world, from which we should so often prefer to be saved, if things were left to our choice. 4. It may well be accepted as the expression and earnest of the calm after all storm is over, and the Divine feeding and succour after all work, trial, life's-length duty are laid down for the last time on earth.—B.

Ver. 16.—*The extremes of light and darkness.* The interval between the place of this verse and the close of the three temptations is considerable, and is not evident from the passage before us. It is also even obscured by the order of the verses here. Much history belongs to the gap between vers. 11 and 12. The seventeenth verse, as regards the matter of it, follows the twelfth. That, again, begs the fuller explanations of ch. xiv. 3—5; and lastly, after all the history of Jesus visiting the synagogue of that Nazareth "where he had been brought up," given us in Luke iv. 16—31, the proper chronological place of our vers. 13—16 is found. The one chief fact of history revealed by these verses is to the intent that Jesus, for whatsoever reason, takes up his abode in Capernaum; and certainly one chief *moral* significance is exhibited as attaching to that fact, namely, that so far from being an enlightened place, or a little more enlightened haply than some others, it was in and of itself, as also of the announcement of signal prophecy, the head-quarters and metropolis of darkness. The place was dark, the district was dark, the people were dark—they even "sat in darkness." This spot was the principal residence of Jesus, this district the principal scene of his ministry, and "mighty works" and "gracious words." Notice in this prophetic announcement, now reduced to fact—

I. A SPLENDID ILLUSTRATION OF ONE LEADING METHOD FOLLOWED BY CHRISTIANITY FOR THE REGENERATION OF MANKIND. The Light comes to the darkness, though it take the darkness a long time to "comprehend" it.

II. A CONVINCING ILLUSTRATION OF THE GENUINELY CONDESCENDING CHARACTER OF THE FOUNDER AND EXEMPLAR OF CHRISTIANITY. The personal Light comes to those thick-covered and sunk in the very degradation of darkness, and endures patiently all the consequence.

III. A CONSUMMATE ILLUSTRATION OF THE THRILLING RESPONSIBILITY THAT GATHERS UPON MEN ON WHOM CHRISTIAN GIFT IS BESTOWED. Light itself is offered them—the light of (1) correct information about themselves; (2) correct instruction about their Help and Deliverer; (3) perfect holiness and goodness; (4) a perfect Example and Model; (5) the unseen future and eternal. These are the things that make responsibility.—B.

Ver. 17.—*The summons—to repent!* It would appear that while first John the Baptist uttered the summons, "Repent ye," when announcing the advent of "the kingdom of heaven" (ch. iii. 1), and while now Jesus himself does the same, the charge to utter it was *not* committed to "the twelve" (ch. x. 7), nor to "the seventy" (Luke x. 9). The reason, perhaps, is this, that the work of these disciples was intentionally didactic rather than dogmatic for the present, while all the weight of the solemn responsibility of appealing to men's souls and awakening them would strictly attach to the prophet John the Baptist, and to that "greater Prophet" "like unto him," Jesus. The text informs us, now at all events, that Jesus does not only teach but preach, does not only work mighty works, but demand a hearing for mighty appeals of a direct and personal nature, and practical results from them. Remark—

I. THE UNIQUE NOVELTY ONCE OF THIS SHORT, SHARP SUMMONS FROM THE SPEAKER'S STANDPOINT. The world knew many a "cry" before this—perhaps never before one *like* this, except in the case of the older prophet-appeals, and *those* almost exclusively addressed to their own people. Nevertheless, Noah's preaching to the old world, and Jonah's preaching to Nineveh, are fair samples of the real summons to men, on the rights of things, on eternal rights, to "repent." However, the present appeals of John the Baptist and of Jesus began the sound that was to travel the world round, to penetrate the densest Gentile masses, and never cease its reverberatings in human ear. We may remark distinctly (1) upon the peculiar attitude of the man who thus addresses a fellow-man; (2) upon the ground and warrant that he must claim for holding this attitude, if he does so rightly; (3) upon the very serious responsibility that he ought to feel, and the "constraint laid upon him" lest he but usurp what does not belong to him; (4) upon the unfeigned and deep dependence on unseen force he should feel and acknowledge. For in regard of all of these points it may be said that there is no assumption so great as that which is manifested when one man, facing his fellow-men, speaking into their ear, presumes to penetrate to all that is highest,

deepest, most solemn, most enduring, in them and their soul, and *commands* them to "repent."

II. THE STRANGE SURPRISE OF IT ON THE EAR OF THE HEARER. The command itself is to altered thought, altered love, altered life and works. For: 1. It is the typical, the grandest interference with the individual's love, nature's instinct, habit's easy and determined leaning, and the universal world's pronounced preference, manifested all unequivocally in favour of the doctrine of *laissez-faire*. 2. It is all this, where it must needs be felt (1) most penetratingly,—for *each* individual man is called on to set his own house in order; (2) most sensitively,—for the house is that wherein his innermost self has its haunt; (3) most comprehensively,—for outside and inside, what is most seen and most withdrawn from sight, have to be set in order; nay, diligent search and inquisition of self have to be made with pain, smart, sacrifice, self's denying, *if the contemplated* alteration, reformation, repentance, are really wrought. 3. It is all this, from a personal presence unambitious in its outer appearance, unimposing, untempting, and certainly unwinning.

III. A CERTAIN OSTENSIBLE GROUND UPON WHICH THE SUMMONS IS URGED. The ground *may* be called ostensible, but only for one reason—that by the vast majority it would be counted more ostensible than real. The eye that should see furthest, the thought that should pierce deepest and comprehend most, would well understand the genuineness, force, tellingness, of the plea, "For the kingdom of heaven is at hand." This announcement purported to describe in brief the more light, the purer light of knowledge now coming to earth; the clearer and the much more catholic revealing of the Father and his love to men, now to dawn on earth; and the more spiritual and inner methods by which justice, holiness, goodness, were to become the familiar study and search and possessions of humanity. The *plea*, therefore, is of the nature of *inducement*. The inducement is that which comes (1) of new opportunity; (2) of great encouragement in the fresh suggestions of the almighty Father's persevering watchfulness over his children on earth; (3) of splendid prospect, when the methods that now should be were compared with past methods; (4) of the suggestion of solemn added responsibilities, if vast increase of privilege were not responded to by increase of effort.—B.

Vers. 18—22.—*The call of Christ to his first disciples.* In the light of what we read in John i. 38—42, we may regard the present passage as giving the account of the *formal* and *final* call of the four disciples named Peter, Andrew, James, and John. Note may also be taken of the circumstance that these four were all fishers. Notice—

I. THE CALL ITSELF IN THESE ORIGINAL EXAMPLES OF IT. And under this general head consider: 1. What it is in the essential meaning of it. The meaning is self's entire, willing, glad surrender to a new dominant love, to a new devoted life, and to these without end. 2. What it is in certain *accidents* of it. (1) It is a great *novelty* as it falls on the ear of the person called. He has been called in a thousand other ways in life, but he hears himself now called to stand and surrender his deepest, realest self to a *Person*. (2) It speaks great pretension as it passes the lip of the Person who utters it forth; and that pretension is *just*, will stand scrutiny and hold all its own. (3) It is not futile; meets prompt obedience; and can afford to explain that obedience, as all its due, free from tyranny, free from jugglery, free from mere expedience, policy, or self-interest. (4) It is a distinct proclamation of sovereignty on the part of him who calls, and of responsibility entailed on him who is called.

II. THE LANGUAGE IN WHICH THE CALL IS UTTERED FORTH. Show how utterly unprofessional, untechnical, inartificial; and yet more, how, while already simplest of the simple, even *this* borrows illustration—illustration from life's familiar scenery.

III. THE OCCASION UTILIZED FOR A CALL SO GREAT, SO EVENTFUL. It is an occasion when the man concerned is found in the most ordinary, perhaps unhonoured and unloved, labours of his work-day life.—B.

Vers. 23—25.—*Early omens of the triple genius and functions of Christianity.* These three verses compress all the matter of three volumes, let the volumes be the largest that ever were. Or, again, they suggest to what periods of time, and to what devotion of labour in the life of Christ on earth, the paradoxical language of such a

passage as John xxi. 25 looks not in vain for its ample justification. We have in the present verses the statement of what may be well regarded as early omens of the future achievements of Christ, of the Spirit of Christ, of the movement and force which he set going. Numerous as these drops, they were still but the first drops of the universal shower, that should finally make the whole earth bring forth her full increase. The bare historic statements of these verses may be viewed as most significant omens of the genius and of the triple functions of Christianity. For—

I. IT TEACHES. It teaches in such senses as these following: 1. It arrests prevailing *moral* errors. Each several "beatitude" may be regarded as a leading and most conspicuous and literal illustration of this. Long-standing, long-grown, and closely grown moral misconceptions and *eidola* of human life and society it quietly strips off. 2. It offers positive truth; both of such things as unspoiled reason and pure philosophy and the cautiously studied lessons of human life and experience might of themselves point out, as well as of such things as belong to the sphere of genuine revelation. 3. This positive truth which it offers is of *the moral* distinctly, and therefore of the really and the for ever abiding. It is of the kind that belongs to the framework, not of the shorter life, our present rudiments of life, our present mental scope and horizon; but while touching, brightening, dignifying, all these growths and tributaries of life, it makes direct for the *heart*—that home of human life, that hearth of human nature, for which and round which all the rest whatsoever subsists.

II. IT PREACHES UNIQUE GOOD NEWS. The "gospel of the kingdom" is what it proclaims, first, last, and without end. That is, the good tidings of a new, unparalleled, unprecedented kingdom on earth; the kingdom of the kind known in heaven on earth. The sort of rule that characterizes the goodness, enlightenment, love, and willinghood of heaven comes to offer itself, and to make itself at home, *on earth*. This rule had, perhaps, always been whispered of, had always been whispering itself, in men's better heart and moods; but now it is announced with emphasis, with authority, with Divine manifestation.

III. IT HEALS. Thus: 1. It leaves out no part of human nature, disdains no interest of the present form of human life. The body is a most veritable element in every calculation of human nature. None but the shallowest and most artificial philosophy will leave it out of the reckoning. Scripture does not leave it out. As the work of God, and a masterpiece of organization, its effectiveness, health, comfort, are honoured by Christianity. 2. It compassionately regards all the *variety* of the sickness, infirmity, and deeper disease of the human body. The miracles of Christ *prefigure* (and only in miniature, miracles though they were) all the wide ameliorative influence of Christianity down through the ages. The miracles of Christ honour God's work, the marvellously made and curiously wrought body of man, as well as subserved the present comfort of those who lived in his time, and prefigured the impulse that should be given by the Spirit of Christ to the beneficent growth of science. 3. It is its own witness. And this it is still. This it will *ever* increasingly be. For all that it avails for the body, it will speak its own worth. For all that it does for mind and soul, it wins, and will ever win, its own triumphs. It begs no favour. It begs nothing but what its merit imperially demands.—B.

Vers. 1—11.—*The temptation of Jesus.* In his baptism our Lord was proclaimed as the Messiah. This must have intensified his feeling of the burden and glory of his vocation. A ferment of emotions must have been stirred in his soul. The inquisitive, critical eyes around him, the eager questioning to which he must straightway have been subjected, the necessity of determining what course he should pursue, made solitude a necessity for him at this time. He must ascertain with definiteness the principles which are to guide his work. And the great problems which presented themselves as he looked forward to his work were these: What use may I make of the powers committed to me? What means may I legitimately use to convince the people? What kind of Messiah am I to be? His mind had to work itself clear of all popular fallacies regarding the coming kingdom, and his heart had to face and count the cost of all that would come of resisting or disappointing popular expectations. Rejecting, therefore, the idea that he might use his miraculous power for his own comfort, he affirmed from the first the principle that he lived and worked for others. Rejecting the idea that he was to be a

mere Wonder-worker, he at once adopted the slow way of moral influence and waiting on God's time. And, thirdly, rejecting the idea that he might be an earthly Prince, he from the outset sustained the *rôle* of a spiritual King.

I. THE TEMPTATION TO USE HIS MIRACULOUS POWER FOR HIS OWN SUSTENANCE AND COMFORT. Absorbed during all these days in thought and mental conflict, the claims of intense bodily hunger at last make themselves felt. He finds himself faint, far from any dwelling where he could get food; ready to perish, and too giddy, sick, and spent to seek for relief. But he carries in his own Person the power to turn the very stones of the untilled hillside into bread. Why should he not use this power? Because he has taken the nature of man, to live a human life under human conditions, and were he to relieve himself of every threatening danger and evade every difficulty by a quick appeal to his supernatural power, this entrance into human life would be a mockery. His freedom from sin would have been no example to us if the danger and discomfort of resisting sin and living righteously were only in appearance. (Compare the chapter in 'Ecce Homo,' on Christ's credentials: "This temperance in the use of supernatural power is the masterpiece of Christ. It is a moral miracle superinduced upon a physical one. . . . The kind of life he prescribed to his followers he exemplified in the most striking way, by dedicating all his extraordinary powers to beneficent uses only, and deliberately placing himself for all purposes of hostility and self-defence on a level with the weakest.") Every young man looking forward to his career should bring himself to the measure here presented. I have certain gifts, means, capabilities, by which I can secure comfort and position in the world. For whose benefit am I to use what I have? He would be a fool who feared to bid every young man choose as Christ chose. You foresee discomfort, the obscure and dingy ways of poverty; you foresee what you would sum up in one word, "starvation." But choose as Christ chose, and though you may make what men will call a very poor thing of life, or lose it, you will find life eternal. Let no parent be so ill a counsellor as to turn away a son from generous self-sacrifice. Every man has his time of temptation; and once committed to certain courses of choice, is hampered.

II. THE TEMPTATION TO WIN THE PEOPLE BY AN ASTOUNDING FEAT. The vulgar seemed to expect that the Messiah would leap from a pinnacle of the temple. And now that Jesus was proclaimed, how could he more readily win the people's assent to his claims? He had not been in a hurry to proclaim himself, but now something must be done. The leap had no horror for Jesus; had it been warranted, he would not have feared it. It was an easy method compared to the tedious instruction; the slow, disappointing appeal to right feeling; the weary ministry he actually chose. How often must this temptation have returned when he met stupid, prejudiced, contemptuous people! How easy to refute their accusations by stupendous miracle! But to work a miracle merely to show that he had the power, to give a sign to those who merely asked for a sign, Christ constantly refused. His miracles had always another motive and a real occasion. Miracles did convince men of his Messiahship, but only when they saw that the miracles were dictated by loving consideration of the actual necessities of the men about him. And suppose such a leap, or any other such marvel, had been the manifestation of God! How feeble, how incongruous a testimony! Shall we ourselves take the quick road or the slow one? Shall we force God's providence? Are we to make opportunities for ourselves, or to wait till God gives us occasion? Shall we expect God's help when we have not used the ordinary means for escaping from danger or attaining our object (not used the stair to get down from the pinnacle)? We tempt God when we neglect the ordinary means.

III. THE TEMPTATION TO BE AN EARTHLY, NOT A SPIRITUAL KING. No one ever felt so much capacity to govern well, to reform social abuses, to lift a people to the pinnacle of glory. He felt in himself a power he must have longed to exercise for men's temporal welfare. Satan whispered, "You have come to bind men in a universal brotherhood, but it is hopeless to effect this by acting on men individually and spiritually. Men do not care to be delivered from sin; they do not wish to be led back to God, and you will never make the world what you wish it. But make an earthly kingdom for yourself; that is possible; no mere shadowy imagination. The people are now waiting for a leader who will throw off for them the Roman yoke, and lead them to dominion." We know this temptation in its petty appeals to our avarice or love of display, to our

hankering after posts of influence, to our desire to be known. We know it also when we wish Christ had provided for his people earthly good as well as spiritual. Nothing but a preference for what is spiritual will secure us against the temptation to wish, either for ourselves or others, what constitutes the glory of this world.

USES. 1. Temptation is possible without sin. Until the will consents, sin is not committed. Our Lord was tempted, yet without sin. 2. The depth and reality of our Lord's humiliation. His ability to sympathize is founded on his being of one nature with us, and living a life unsheltered from the temptations which assail us.—D.

Vers. 12—22.—*Call of the fishermen.* I. THE OCCASION OF THE CALL. Driven from Nazareth, our Lord repaired to the busy western shore of the Sea of Galilee. Through this district ran the great caravan-roads; and several important towns gathered all kinds of tradesmen. Herod the tetrarch had his court in Tiberias. The valuable fishings in the lake gave employment to many. Courtiers, soldiers, tax-gatherers, watching the caravans and fisheries, fishermen, women reputable and disreputable, filled the shore with movement and life. Crowds were readily attracted by the new Teacher. And our Lord, seeing the fields thus white to harvest, recognized that the time was come for selecting labourers to reap.

II. OBJECT OF THE CALL. "I will make you fishers of men." The fishermen would not at once see what he meant by this. Knowing that he was founding a kingdom, they may have supposed he would make them a kind of recruiting officers to assist him in enlisting others, as he had enlisted them. But his purpose was clear to himself; and what he here did as if casually was carefully deliberated. He meant to form a society coextensive with humanity and lasting as the world. He meant to introduce into every nation a new religion. He meant to convert all men to his own way of looking at things. And he was resolved to accomplish this purpose, not by committing his ideas to a book which could be verified as his to all time, and from which each generation might receive unadulterated his very ideas, but by means of living men, who by word of mouth should tell men about himself and his kingdom, and by their life show what a Christian is. To accomplish this great object they were to cast their net and to angle. They were to study men's ways and habits, to circumvent and gently constrain them, to wile and attract them to their own good, to show the untiring patience, skill, and study of professional fishermen. God is the great Fisher of men, patiently accommodating himself to the suspicious, intractable ways of the sinner, playing him and humouring him, but ever drawing him onwards towards himself. Note our wild rushes back to freedom, our sullen retreat under the cold stone of doubt, our petulant refusal to be led on. Compare, too, the parable of the net.

III. THE PERSONS CALLED. Everywhere the world was preoccupied by religions rooted in centuries of tradition and national memories, by philosophies buttressed by great and cherished names, by venerable institutions and local prejudices. To what kind of men will Jesus commit the exceptionally arduous enterprise of establishing his own kingdom as supreme over all? Nicodemus, the Pharisee of position? The instructed scribe who sought to follow him? The grateful nobleman whose child he had saved from death? He turns for help to quite another class. One of the earliest called was a publican: as if some modern reformer should secure the help of an actor or a tavern-keeper. This choice at once brought on him a storm of indignation. But he had no misgivings. He knew these fishermen were ignorant, and would easily be foiled in argument by a clever scribe. But they had the one essential requisite of thorough attachment to him. He knew them also as disciples of John, sober, God-fearing men, who were waiting for the kingdom.

IV. IMMEDIATE RESULT OF THE CALL. "They immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him." They were to be fitted for their work of preaching Jesus by knowing him thoroughly. For this purpose they must live with him, and see how he works, and learn his mind and method. They must leave that glittering pile of fish they were already calculating the value of; they must leave their accustomed way of winning their daily bread; they must abandon their father, and go where Jesus went. The physical following of Jesus which was required of the apostles is not required of all Christians; but all Christians are required to love Christ above all, and to accept his will as supreme law.

V. ENCOURAGEMENT GIVEN TO THE CALLED. Luke relates that our Lord stimulated the faith of these fishermen by a miraculous draught of fishes (Luke v. 1—11). This helped them to take the step he invited them to take. 1. For it showed them he could provide for them. Does not our refusal to listen to the call of Christ, and unflinchingly follow where he leads, arise chiefly from the fear that by so doing worldly loss of one kind or other (pleasure, advancement, gain, comfort, renown) will be occasioned us? This miracle reminds us that Christ can easily give us more than all self-seeking toil of our own can achieve. 2. But the miracle encouraged them to believe he could make them fishers of men. If in their own calling he could give them successes they could not for themselves achieve, much more would he ensure their success in the calling which was peculiarly his own. He confirmed his promise by a symbol which spoke volumes to them. And when we shrink from duties to which we are plainly called, it is encouraging to remember that our Lord, who calls us to them, can give us success where all professional skill would avail us nothing.—D.

Vers. 1—11.—*The temptation.* This appears to have extended through the forty days of the sojourn of Jesus in the wilderness. Mark says, "He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan" (i. 13). The text describes only the *acme* at the close of the forty days. It is given as a specimen of the wiles of Satan, and forms an epitome of all the temptations he has ever contrived. From it we learn—

I. THAT SATAN IS ARMED WITH FORMIDABLE POWERS. 1. *Probably he appeared in an assumed shape.* (1) For he appeared to the manhood of Christ. He is introduced as "the tempter," but not named. Jesus did not give him his name until the tempter had fully discovered himself as the god of this world (ver. 10). (2) This was not the only instance in which Satan assumed a disguise. He tempted Eve under the form of a serpent. After the fall he enshrined himself in men. Demoniacs. Some suppose that Satan appeared to Jesus in the character of a *scribe*, as he appealed to the Scriptures. He "fashioneth himself into an angel of light" (cf. Zech. iii. 1; 2 Cor. xi. 14). (3) Beware of the devil in disguises. In men: "One of you hath a devil." In good men: Peter (ch. xvi. 23). 2. *Probably he literally transported the body of Jesus.* (1) Jesus was in "the wilderness." Certainly not a rural wilderness in the vicinity of Bethabara; for he was in solitude, and "with the wild beasts" (Mark i. 13). The presumption, then, is that it was "the wilderness of the people;" for what other could be distinguished as "*the* wilderness"? Analogy also suggests the desert of Sinai, for there Moses and Elijah also had "fasted forty days" (cf. Exod. xxxiv. 28; 1 Kings xix. 8). (2) Thus, then, the "prince of the powers of the air" would have hurried the body of Jesus, as in an elemental chariot, over an interval of two hundred and fifty British statute miles, in order to "set him on the pinnacle of the temple." Philip was carried by the Spirit of God from the desert of Gaza to Azotus (Acts viii. 39; see also 1 Kings xviii. 12; 2 Kings ii. 16; Ezek. iii. 11—15). (3) From the holy city Satan then carried Jesus away to the summit of "an exceeding high mountain." Could this have been that "high mountain" upon which the Transfiguration afterwards took place? It is noteworthy that, in the Transfiguration, with Jesus appeared in glory Moses and Elias, who, like him, had fasted (ch. xvii. 1—3). If Hermon was that mountain, then about a hundred miles would have been traversed. If Nebo, whence Moses viewed the promised land, then about twenty-five miles. (4) With such an adversary it is obviously our wisdom never to contend single-handed. We have the promised help of God. With all our armour we should be armed with "all prayer" (Eph. vi. 13—18). 3. *He wrought wonderfully upon the imagination of Jesus.* (1) This must have been so, if, as some suppose, Jesus had been simply carried by Satan mentally from the wilderness to the holy city, and from thence to Hermon or some other eminence. (2) But from the mountain summit he certainly wrought wonderfully upon the imagination of Jesus when he "showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them." Luke adds, "in a moment of time." Such a view of the tetrarchies of Palestine as could be obtained from Nebo or any other mountain summit scarcely comes up to the description, "all the kingdoms of the world," or "all the kingdoms of the inhabited earth" (see Luke iv. 5, Greek). The panoramic effect wrought by Satan upon the phantasy of Jesus was wonderful. (3) Herein we are warned never to cherish an evil imagination. If we yield ourselves to the power

of such a master of image-working we place ourselves at the mercy of the impersonation of cruelty.

II. THAT SATAN WIELDS HIS ENERGIES WITH SUBTLETY. 1. *He selects a wilderness as the theatre of his operations.* (1) A wilderness, in the *natural* sense, is a wild, uncultivated waste. Such certainly was the desert of Sinai. In the *metaphorical* sense it is a state of mental solitude, depression, perplexity, or suffering. (2) In such a state Satan finds us at a disadvantage, and then plies his arts with vigour. When the spirit is bruised he would excite in us rebellious thoughts of God and harsh thoughts of men. 2. *He practises adroitly upon our necessities.* (1) Our Lord was "an hungered," and Satan tempted him to supply his need by supernatural means. If he finds us an hungered he may tempt us to supply our need by illicit means. He would have us justify thievery under the plea of necessity. (2) The temptation is to distrust Providence. That Providence cannot lack resources which fed a nation in the wilderness for forty years. Angels in due time ministered to Jesus—brought him food (cf. 1 Kings xix. 4—8). (3) "Man does not live by bread alone." The animal part of the man lives on bread; the nobler part of the man is nourished by faith in the Word of God. The spirit must not be starved in unbelief to supply the wants of the body. He that feeds the soul will feed the body also (ch. vi. 33). 3. *He turns our weapons against us.* (1) If we say, "It is written," Satan also will say, "It is written." He will take care to put his own interpretation upon the Scripture he quotes. Therefore we must say, "It is written again." To do this we must study the Scriptures. The Scriptures are the best interpreters of themselves. To the comparison of spiritual things Satan has no answer. Ignorance is danger. (2) If we profess to trust in God, Satan will tempt us to trust in our faith alone. "Cast thyself down: for it is written," etc. He would push our confidence to the extreme of presumption. 4. *He "bids up" for the soul of the good.* (1) He will, if possible, subvert us with trifles. Satan has a malignant pleasure in vanquishing and destroying us with trifles. (2) Where trifles will not serve, he bids higher. To Christ he offered "all the kingdoms of the world." The bribe which Christ refused Antichrist accepts (cf. Rev. xiii. 2, 4, 8). (3) Every man has not his price. There have been those who have laid down their lives for the truth. The race of the martyrs is not extinct.

III. THAT GOD SUPERINTENDS THE CONFLICTS OF HIS SAINTS. 1. *He strengthens them for the battle.* (1) "This is my beloved Son. . . . Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit," etc. (2) So the Transfiguration, wherein the pores of the body of Jesus were avenues for the streaming glory, was preparatory to that ordeal of agony in Gethsemane, wherein the same pores became the avenues for his blood. (3) In your conflicts remember your baptisms. "Do not question the validity of your baptism because it was succeeded by a fierce temptation" (Dr. Parker). 2. *He permits temptations for gracious ends.* (1) Christ was Divine, therefore invulnerable. Why, then, was he "led up of the Spirit" to be tempted? For our benefit. That he might be our Exemplar. (2) Temptations are our educators. Who can grow in patience, in long-suffering, in courage, without trial? 3. *He retains Satan under his control.* (1) Satan was permitted to convey Jesus to the pinnacle of the temple (Alford supposes this to have been the royal portico of Herod, overlooking at a fearful height the valley of Jehoshaphat). Satan was not permitted to push him over. He was permitted to convey Jesus to the summit of the mountain. He was restrained from dashing his foot against a stone. (2) The will of God, as a chain, limits and restrains the evil one. This Satan confesses (cf. Luke iv. 6). Remarkable illustrations of this principle are furnished in the history of Job (i. 12; ii. 6). (3) That will is defined in the promises for our confidence and comfort (see 1 Cor. x. 13; Heb. ii. 18). 4. *He gives final victory to the faithful.* (1) The "forty days" of our Lord's temptation in the wilderness correspond to the "forty years" of Israel's pilgrimage. This is evident from the allusion to the manna (cf. vers. 1—4 with Deut. viii. 3). Both may be taken as representing the pilgrimage of life. (2) As the temptation became fierce at the close of the forty days, so may we expect fierce assaults towards the close of our pilgrimage. (3) But Satan will leave us at death. "Then," viz. at the end of the forty days. "Then," viz. when Jesus resolutely avowed his complete devotion to God—"the devil leaveth him." (4) The rout of Satan is the signal for the ministry of angels. With a convoy of angels the victorious Spirit ascends to heaven.—J. A. M.

Vers. 12—17.—*Light in darkness.* The public work of Christ followed upon his temptation. "No man can be prepared for any deep vital work in the world who has not come through the devil's school" (Dr. Parker). Let no truth-seeker be dispirited by the severity of his temptations. Consider here—

I. THE MELANCHOLY CONDITION OF THE CHRISTLESS. 1. *They sit in darkness.* (1) What a miserable picture! The felon in his dismal dungeon. The traveller benighted in a craggy wild. (2) Such morally is the condition of the "Gentiles." Shrouded with the triple night of ignorance, superstition, vice. "Galilee of the Gentiles." Twenty cities of Galilee were given by Solomon to Hiram (1 Kings ix. 11). Though these were twenty years later restored to Solomon, the Phœnicians would still largely mingle with the Jews there (2 Chron. viii. 2). The Cuthæans with whom Shalmaneser replaced the Israelites taken into captivity stocked Galilee as well as Samaria proper (2 Kings xvii. 24). Though under the Maccabees the Jews subdued the Cuthæans, they did not expel them. "The way of the sea" was a high-road from Syria into Egypt, and Strabo had reason to say that this country was inhabited by Egyptians, Arabians, and Phœnicians. (3) The Jews in general, and those of Galilee in particular, were woefully degenerate at the time of Christ's coming (John i. 5). There is no deeper darkness than that of apostasy. 2. *Their darkness is the "shadow of death."* (1) The death of perdition is called "outer darkness." Those involved in it are shut out permanently from the holy universe. (2) The "shadow" of death is the *dominion* or *influence* of the infernal world. It is a synonym for the "power of Satan" (Acts xxvi. 18). The expression is used for the grave, and for the obscure abodes of the departed spirits of the wicked. The state of sin is the very gloom of hell upon earth (comp. Ps. xci. 1 with cvii. 14).

II. THE SUFFICIENCY OF CHRIST AS A SAVIOUR. 1. *He is the Messiah of prophecy.* (1) His appearance in Galilee was ignorantly used to discredit this (see John vii. 41, 52). (2) Yet the appearance of Messiah in Galilee was the very thing the prophets required. Matthew cites Isaiah to this effect. Mede refers the first four or five words of the ninth chapter of Isaiah to the last verse of the chapter preceding. In this he is in agreement with the Chaldee Paraphrast and Jerome. He translates the prophet thus: "According as the first time he made vile (or debased) the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali; so in the latter times he shall make it glorious." Then follow the words quoted by Matthew, "The way of the sea by Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles," etc. No prophecy of Christ is clearer than this of Isaiah (ix. 1—7), and it requires that "Galilee" should be the place of his ministry. (3) Jesus accordingly was brought up at Nazareth, and afterwards resided principally at Capernaum. In Galilee the principal events of his ministry occurred. His birth, indeed, was at Bethlehem of Judah, and his death at Jerusalem, which also agreed to the requirements of prophecy. 2. *The Messiah of prophecy is the Saviour of men.* (1) His presence brings light. "The heathen writers," says Elsner, "represented the arrival of some great public benefactor in a place, as a *new light* sprung up in the midst of darkness." John was a "burning and shining light," but he burned and shined in the fire and light of Christ. Herod imprisoned John, but he could not imprison John's light. No tyrant can imprison sunbeams. He may shut them out; he cannot shut them in. (2) His light brings life. He shows the way of life. His teaching brings with it the energy of life (John i. 4). His illumination is salvation (Acts xiii. 47). (3) He is the Saviour of the whole world. His light is not limited to the Jew, though his mission was first to the Jew (ch. xv. 24). He went to Capernaum "that it might be fulfilled," etc. This is one of those passages which Lord Bacon says, "have a germinant accomplishment." An instalment was fulfilled when Jesus exercised his ministry in Galilee. That ministry there was also a presage of what will yet occur when the "whole earth shall be filled with his glory."

III. THE TERMS OF HIS SALVATION. 1. *The first thing is repentance.* (1) The source of true repentance is conviction of sin. This comes to us through the shining of the light of Divine truth. "That which maketh manifest is light." The conscience is rendered sensitive by the quickening beams of Divine truth. (2) The evidences of a true conviction of sin are (*a*) sorrow for sin, (*b*) confession of sin, (*c*) forsaking of sin. (3) If we refuse the light it will leave us. Jesus left Nazareth because the people there rejected him. After his temptation Jesus went from Judæa into Galilee

(John i. 43; ii. 1). Thence he returned to Judæa to celebrate the Passover (John ii. 13). Then he baptized in Judæa, while John baptized at Ænon (John iii. 22, 23). After the imprisonment of John, Jesus returned to Nazareth. Here the people rejected his testimony and sought to kill him. So he left them (Luke iv. 16, 29—31). Beware how you trifle with the Light of life. (4) Let Capernaum know the day of her visitation. Else, "exalted to heaven" by the presence of Christ, she may be "thrust down to hell" by his absence. Privileges bring responsibilities. The brightest blessings, by misimprovement, are converted into the blackest curses. 2. *This repentance is in prospect of the kingdom.* (1) The kingdom of heaven here is the gospel dispensation as opposed to the Mosaic. (2) It is, moreover, the faithful acceptance of the gospel as opposed to the preparatory repentance (cf. Mark i. 15). Otherwise it is the perfecting of repentance in faith. Faith is here preached, though the term is not used. (3) Furthermore, the kingdom of heaven here is hearty submission to the rule of Christ; (*a*) in the heart (Luke xvii. 21); (*b*) in the life; (*c*) at any cost. Jesus took up the preaching of John when John was cast into prison. It is Christ-like to be baptized for the dead. (4) Jesus adopted the dispensation of John as "the beginning of his gospel" (see Mark i. 1). There is no true Christian faith without repentance and reformation.—J. A. M.

Vers. 18—22.—*The ministerial vocation.* The Sea of Galilee, on the shore of which Jesus walked, was an inland lake of about six miles broad and seventeen long. It was surrounded by a varied scenery of mountain and valley, amidst which were embosomed several populous villages and towns. Henceforth this region was destined to become the theatre of many a wonderful history. The history before us invites attention to a vocation, a voice, and persons called.

I. THE VOCATION. 1. *The call was to the Christian ministry.* (1) The persons now called were already disciples of Jesus. They were, in the first instance, disciples of John, and upon John's testimony to Jesus they accepted Jesus as the Christ of promise (see John i. 35—42). John does not mention the name of the second disciple of the Baptist who followed Jesus, which is presumption that it was himself. Nor does he tells us how, doubtless, he brought his brother James, as Andrew brought his brother Simon. (2) The call here, then, was not to piety, but to work. Some call to holy service has come to you. Have you heeded it? Have you discerned in it the voice of Jesus? Have you neglected it? (3) Hitherto their discipleship was consistent with secular business. They were with Jesus at Cana. They accompanied him to Jerusalem, and were with him in Judæa. Yet they kept hold of their trade. (4) Now they are to be separated from the secular. (*a*) They have to forsake their property. They left their nets and boats by which they had their living. (*b*) They have to sacrifice their worldly prospects. Simon and Andrew, when called, had their nets in the sea; but they did not wait to haul them in. The call of Christ to work for him, like the call of death, breaks the thread in the shuttle before the piece is woven. (*c*) They have to renounce the comforts and endearments of home. They left their father and the servants (cf. ch. viii. 19—22; Luke xiv. 26, 27). 2. *The call was a promotion from the secular to the spiritual.* (1) The fishermen are to become "fishers of men." Their business henceforth is to be with *men*—rational, emotional, immortal, God-like men. How much is a man better than a fish? (2) Their employment henceforth is to be eminently beneficent. Their fishing is not to be the gaining of a living by the death of God's creatures. It is to save the precious life of men by bringing them out of the waters of worldliness. It is to transfer them from an element foreign to their true nature, and brighten them with the congenial prospects of a blissful eternity. (3) Note: ministers of Christ are out of their calling when they fish for wealth. Though the Lord hath ordained that they that preach the gospel should live of it, the minister who makes merchandise of his office proves himself to be a hireling (cf. 2 Cor. xii. 14—16; Heb. xiii. 17). 3. *It was a call to holy association.* (1) In the first place, a more intimate and constant association with Jesus. If ministers have not closer communion with Christ than other persons the fault is their own. Their very profession brings them into the closest relations to him, as they lead the devotion of the Churches, and carry the messages of God to men. The message of the true minister is not simply from the written Word, but, in the written Word, from the living God.

(2) It is also a call to ministerial brotherhood. Here we have the disciples called in couples. So when Jesus sent them forth to preach he sent them in company—"two and two" (Luke x. 1). Twelve of them were constituted into a college of apostles. (3) The religion of Christ is eminently social. Disciples congregate in Churches. Churches congregate into a universal Church. This "Church of the Firstborn" is associated with "an innumerable company of angels" (Heb. xii. 22, 23).

II. THE VOICE. 1. *It is a voice of authority.* (1) The words are peremptory and without preamble. "Follow me;" literally, "Come behind me." It is the same voice that said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden." The same that said, "Lazarus, come forth!" (2) The words are inspiriting. "And I will make you fishers of men." Here already the "kingdom of heaven is likened unto a net" (ch. xiii. 47). "Fishers of men" (cf. Jer. xvi. 16; Ezek. xlvii. 8—10). Memorably fulfilled (see Acts ii. 41). (3) Those who follow Christ take a difficult way. The example is high. Yet the way is made easy, viz. by his companionship, guidance, help. 2. *The authority of the voice is certified.* (1) The claims of Jesus are the highest. He claims to be Messiah. Immanuel. But here is no presumption. (2) He has the seal of prophecy. Born at the right juncture, when the Roman power was at its zenith (Dan. ii. 44). Born in the right place, Bethlehem of Judah (Micah v. 2). Brought up out of Egypt (Hos. xi. 1). A resident of Nazareth (Judg. xiii. 5; 1 Sam. i. 11). The Prophet of Galilee (Isa. ix. 1—7). Had the testimony of Elijah (cf. Mal. iv. 5; ch. xi. 13, 14). (3) He had already wrought many miracles. He had turned the water into wine at Cana. He had read the heart-secrets of Simon, of Nathanael, of the woman of Samaria. He had wrought "signs" at the Passover in Jerusalem (John ii. 23). He had healed the nobleman's servant at Capernaum. (4) Have you duly considered the authority of that voice of Jesus which hath called you to his service? Have you duly weighed the responsibility of refusing him that speaketh from heaven (Heb. xii. 25)?

III. THE PERSONS CALLED. 1. *They were not men of rank.* (1) Social rank is much esteemed by men. "Have any of the rulers believed on him, or of the Pharisees?" was the confident question of the unbelieving Pharisees (John vii. 47—49). Had Jesus followed the wisdom of this world, he would have enlisted the rabbis. (2) He makes the weak things of the world to confound the mighty. "On the humble shoemaker's bench Carey laid the foundation of the British Baptist Missions. John Newton found in his congregation an unfriended Scotch boy, whose soul was then aglow with new-born love to Christ. He took him to John Thornton, one of those noble merchants whose wealth, whose piety, and whose beneficence increased together. They educated him; and that boy became Claudius Buchanan, whose name India will bless when the names of Clive and Hastings are forgotten. John Bunyan was a gift of poverty to the Church. Zwingle came forth from an Alpine shepherd's cabin; Melancthon, from an armourer's workshop; Luther, from a miner's cottage; the apostles, some of them, from fishermen's huts" (Dr. J. Harris). 2. *But they were men of character.* (1) They were religious men. (*a*) Disciples of the Baptist. Therefore repentant as to sin, expectant as to salvation. (*b*) Disciples of Jesus. Those are welcomed to the joys of faith who have been disciplined to repentance. (2) They were industrious men. Jesus found them busy at their callings. Christ does not want louts for ministers. Some of them were letting down their nets; others were mending theirs. Ministers are best employed either in preaching or in study. (3) They were men of decision. Jesus called. "Straightway"—"immediately," they responded. They had something to lose. They did not hesitate to lose it. They lost nothing. They gained everything.—J. A. M.

Vers. 23—25.—*The ministry of Jesus.* Though he had called out workers he did not cease himself to work. In all holy ministries *Jesus* is the Worker. He exercised his personal ministry chiefly in "Galilee." This was in pursuance of prophecy (Isa. ix. 1—7).

I. HIS GOSPEL CAME IN WORD. "Teaching . . . preaching." 1. *He taught in synagogues.* (1) We may admire the providence that prepared the synagogue. Synagogues, as some think, originated about the time of the Babylonish captivity (Ps. lxxiv. 8). Others give them a more venerable antiquity, associating and identifying them with the *proseuchæ*, or open groves, from the earliest times used as oratories, or places for

prayer (cf. Exod. iii. 1; Josh. xxiv. 26; 2 Chron. i. 3; Luke vi. 12; Acts xvi. 13). (2) Jesus availed himself freely of the liberty to teach afforded in these. They were 'places of concourse," in which it was proper "Wisdom should lift up her voice" (Prov. i. 21). The people accustomed to assemble in them would be educated to listen. The reading of the Scriptures in them afforded a fine opportunity for introducing the message of the gospel. We should be quick to improve providential facilities. (3) The disciples of Jesus followed his example in using synagogues. The result was, in many cases, that synagogues became gradually converted into Christian churches (Jas. ii. 2). The forms of worship were generally continued, only with the addition of the Supper of the Lord. Merciful are the destructions effected by conversion. 2. *He preached in the open air.* (1) In this Jonah was his type (Jonah iii. 2—4). Jesus might have issued a proclamation. He "went about" in person through the two hundred cities and towns of Galilee. His interest in our welfare is deep and earnest (cf. ch. v. 1; x. 27; xi. 1). (2) He proclaimed his kingdom. (*a*) "*The* kingdom." That with which no earthly kingdom can compare. Supreme in splendour. Destined to survive all others. (*b*) The kingdom of *grace.* "Gospel"—*glad tidings.* The original name for our religion. Whoever receives it proves it to be so. "The gospel is the charter of that kingdom, containing the King's coronation oath, by which he graciously obliges himself to pardon, protect, and save his subjects. It contains also their oath of allegiance, by which they oblige themselves to observe his statutes and seek his honour" (Henry). (*c*) The passage through the kingdom of grace into the kingdom of *glory.*

II. HIS GOSPEL CAME WITH POWER. 1. *He healed all that he met with.* (1) The skill of the most accomplished physicians is baffled by particular diseases. No malady resisted the power of Christ. He cured the chronic, the acute, the intolerable. (2) His cures were *complete.* No miracle of Christ was ever called in question by those who witnessed it. Some were malicious enough to ascribe the miracles he wrought to Satan, but their reality was confessed (cf. ch. xi. 4, 5; John iii. 2; v. 36). 2. *He healed all that were brought to him.* (1) Amongst these were the epileptic. The word translated "lunatic" does not describe mental disorder, but a bodily disease on which the moon was supposed to exercise periodical influence (cf. ch. xvii. 15). Our Revisers, accordingly, render the term by "epilepsy." Paralysis also owned his power. So likewise spasmodic torments. (2) These typical *maladies* may be taken as descriptive of typical moral evils. The *miracles* evinced the power of the Worker to remove also the corresponding moral maladies. (3) Those who hear the fame of Jesus should *come* to him for spiritual healing. Those who have experienced his healing power should *invite* their neighbours to the Healer. 3. *Even the devils were subject to him.* (1) *Demons* amongst the heathen were not generally *evil,* but, in their estimation, *good* spirits, whom they worshipped as *gods.* Amongst the Jews the term was restricted to *evil* spirits. (2) Evil spirits actually possessed human beings. So far from demoniacs being simply epileptics, as some suppose, these are distinguished here (cf. Acts v. 16). Personal actions are ascribed to demons. Christ addressed them as persons. (3) Demoniacs were not unknown in more ancient times (see Lev. xx. 27; 1 Sam. xvi. 14; xxviii. 7; 1 Kings xxii. 21—23; Zech. xiii. 2). But they abounded in our Lord's day. (4) It is not surprising that Satan should have been permitted, at the period of the advent of Messiah, to exercise this power and malignity against men. It was the time for the bruising of the heel of the woman's Seed—"the hour and power of darkness." It afforded an illustrious opportunity to the Saviour of men to display his superior power in crushing the serpent's head.

III. HIS GOSPEL WAS WITH MUCH ASSURANCE. 1. *His miracles were demonstrative.* (1) They were wrought "among the people"—openly, in the light of day. There was no machinery of obscure theatres—no possibility of collusion. Many were healed—all that came, all that were brought; and the healed were to be seen everywhere among their friends. (2) They were characteristic as the works of Messiah (see Isa. xxxv. 5, 6). The miracles of Moses were chiefly plagues—works of *judgment*—suited to the terror of his dispensation. These of Christ were miracles of *mercy* (Hos. xi. 4). The goodness of his works was calculated to lead men to repentance (John x. 32; Rom. ii. 4). 2. *Hence the spreading of his fame.* (1) It spread throughout *Syria*—through the whole extent of that Roman province of which Palestine was

a part. Hence the people from *Decapolis*, that portion of Syria north of Galilee, so called because it contained a group of *ten cities*, the metropolis and most ancient of which was Damascus. (2) Great multitudes from all parts followed him. He deserves the attention of *universal man*. He deserves the universal attention of the faculties of *every man*. (3) Those who came for healing had spiritual instruction. They were like the Syrian of earlier times (2 Kings v. 15, 17). They were like Saul, who, seeking the asses, found a kingdom. The kingdom they found was *heavenly*. Faith gains assurance in the preaching of the King.—J. A. M.

Ver. 1.—*The leadings of the Spirit.* Whether we are to understand an impulse from Christ's own spirit, or a direction of the Divine indwelling Spirit, need not be disputed, because the two may be regarded as included, and the relation of the one to the other may be shown. The analogy of such verses as Ezek. viii. 3; Acts viii. 39; Rev. i. 10 suggests a state of ecstasy. As Bushnell expresses it, "The fact is signified that the Spirit, coming here upon him in the full revelation of his call, raises such a ferment in his bosom of great thoughts and strangely contesting emotions, that he is hurried away to the wilderness, and the state of privacy before God, for relief and settlement."

I. THE IMPULSE AS A NATURAL SUGGESTION. If we place ourselves in our Lord's circumstances, we shall realize that we should have felt and acted precisely as our Lord did. Compare his action when the news came of John Baptist's death. At once he said to his disciples, "Come ye into a desert place, and rest awhile." There is no more natural feeling than the desire for seclusion when the heart is oppressed with great and anxious thoughts. Illustrate by the impulsive flight of Elijah into the desert of the Tih, by St. Paul's flight into the desert of Arabia, and by our Lord's seeking seclusion in Gethsemane. That there was a certain intensity in our Lord's impulse after his ordination is sufficiently explained by the unusual character of the descent of the Spirit on him. We need not hesitate to say that he was moved by his own desires.

II. THE IMPULSE AS A DIVINE OVERRULING. God may be in our impulses. He often is. He works through them. They are in the Divine sanctifying. This truth is even explicitly stated: "The Spirit witnesseth with our spirit." This, indeed, is the higher truth apprehended by the devout soul, who can see, and is always glad to see, *the Divine* in things, God working in what seems, to casual view, merely human work. The difficulty may be suggested, that we may easily be subject to delusions if we follow our impulses. In reply it may be said: 1. There is no danger, if we are open-souled, sincere, as Jesus was. 2. If we are trustfully seeking Divine guidance, as Jesus was. 3. If we are prepared to use the divinely provided tests, which will reveal any mere self-seeking in our impulses.—R. T.

Ver. 1.—*The model temptation.* All the best writers hold that, whatever may have been the outward machinery of the temptation, the temptation was really a spiritual struggle. It was no model of our human temptations if it was not. Some have thought that the devil appeared as an old man, and talked with Jesus. But evidently all the things were suggestions to his mind; the first from the feeling of hunger and the sight of the stones; the others from his anxious thoughts about the modes of executing his mission. The suggestions themselves were not evil; the sin could only have come by our Lord's yielding to them when he knew that they opposed the will of God. It would help us greatly if we could see that suggestion to the mind is not sin; our dealing with the suggestion makes the sin. It is, perhaps, better to conceive of the devil here as a personification of the enticing force—of evil suggestion. Suggestion is suggestion of the devil whensoever it is an enticement to *wrong*. Olshausen says, "The temptation of Jesus took place in the depths of his inward life," in the sphere of his soul. By way of introduction, the probable scene of the temptation may be described, with a view to bringing out the effects of nature on sensitive, poetical minds. Illustrate the influence of the awful silence, and towering mountain-forms, of Sinai on Elijah. The Apostle John gives the great world-forces of temptation as "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John ii. 16). Read our Lord's temptation in the light of St. John's terms.

I. THE LUST OF THE FLESH; OR, THE TEMPTATION THAT COMES THROUGH MAN'S

APPETITES AND PASSIONS. The force of the first temptation lies in the natural cravings of hunger and thirst; these set men on intense endeavour to satisfy the craving. With the consciousness of possessing miraculous power, our Lord was tempted to use his *trust* for the relief of his own needs. Illustrate by the hungry man who is tempted to steal. The claims of the flesh may urge us to do what we know is wrong.

II. THE LUST OF THE EYES. Temptation through the intellect. Conscious mental superiority may lead men to deceive their weaker fellows, and deceive themselves, by persuading themselves that such deception is for their good. There is a special temptation for the intelligent.

III. THE PRIDE OF LIFE. Pride in the command and use of worldly forces, state, class-privilege, equipage, soldiers, etc. To Christ the temptation came in this form: "You are superior; you know you are superior; assert your superiority, and men will bow down to you."—R. T.

Ver. 3.—*Temptation through physical conditions.* In this and two later homilies the several temptations are to be more precisely treated. The four homilies will be suggestive of a series of sermons on the "Lord's temptation." The temptation must be closely associated with the baptism. The one thing necessary to the understanding of it is our apprehension of the fact, that Jesus had become suddenly conscious of the trust of miraculous powers; and he had to fix the principle on which alone he would use those powers. The first question to decide was—Would he use them to supply his own necessities? Meeting the deepest sense of bodily hunger, a passionate craving for food after a prolonged fast, came the consciousness of possessing miraculous power. He heard, as if in the depths of his soul, a cry saying, "Why do you suffer? Make the stones bread. You can do it." The force of the temptation lay on one side in the cravings of bodily appetite, and on the other side in this new sense of power.

I. HUMAN TEMPTATION THROUGH BODILY CRAVINGS. It is the first form that human temptation took. Eve saw that the fruit of the tree was pleasant, and good for food. It is the universal form of temptation, but it is the lowest; it belongs to man as an animal. Beneath the temptation of bodily appetite, the glutton, the drunkard, and the sensualist have fallen in all the ages. The first sphere of conflict for the spiritual being man is that animal nature in which he is set in order to sustain earthly relations. That bodily organization ought to be his servant; it is ever striving to be his master, and seeks to secure its end by subtleties of craving and allurement. Easily men have been led to think that the body itself is evil. But the wrong lies in the unbalanced will, which fails to restrain and control bodily appetite.

II. THE LAW OF TRIUMPH OVER TEMPTATION COMING THROUGH BODILY CRAVINGS. The soul is of more value than the body. A man is not a body; all that is true is that he *has* a body. A man's life is not the material thing, eating and drinking; that only sustains the animal nature. A man's real life consists in obedience to the will of God, as he may come to know it; and if that means starving the body, the body must be starved.—R. T.

Ver. 4.—*The true food of a spiritual being.* "Man shall not live by bread alone." Observing the original connection of the words quoted, we find an illustration of the fact that God could sustain life by other means than ordinary food. "Such an answer must have peculiar force and meaning, as it comes from the lips of Christ. He tells Satan that obedience to God is better than bread; that if either is to be given up there cannot be a doubt, there can hardly be a difficulty, about the decision. . . . Simply as men, we all, the poorest and the greatest of us all together, need the life of obedience, and any sacrifice of the flesh is cheap that wins it for us" (Brooks).

I. MAN AS A SPIRITUAL BEING. The older division of the human being was into "body" and "soul;" it is now more precisely divided into "body," "animal life," and "spirit;" *sarx, psyche, pneuma.* Body and life we have in common with the animals: and we share with them all the common experiences and needs. But man is a *spirit*, an immortal spirit, dwelling in and using the animated body. We *are* spirits, and *have* bodies. It is true that we are variously affected by our bodily relations; but even as the eternal Spirit dwells in, and controls, the material sphere, so man, the spirit, dwells in, and controls, the limited sphere of his body. Then the claims of the spirit which

man *is* must always stand before the claims of the body, of which he has only a temporary occupancy.

II. THE FOOD FOR MAN AS A SPIRITUAL BEING. Complication arises in considering this matter, because the food for the spirit has to come mainly through the bodily faculties and receptivities. But there is a clear distinction between the food which simply supplies bodily hunger, the indulgence that satisfies bodily appetite, and the food which nourishes emotion and affection, and cultures the conscience and the will. Take the sensual man and the spiritual man, and show how differently they stand related to daily food for body and mind. The food of a spiritual being is spiritual. It goes into the term "obedience," which includes submissions, humilities, affections, communings, service, praise, devotion, etc. Let a man first feed his soul, and the fed soul will put into safe and wise regulation all feedings of the bodily appetite.—R. T.

Vers. 5, 6.—*Temptation through human ambitions.* The second temptation was to the sin of presumption, to which sin the ambitious man, who sets an end before him, and means to gain it somehow, is especially exposed. From the tempter's point of view Jesus was ambitious to be the Messiah, so he tempted him to adopt the most showy and most speedy way of fulfilling his ambitions. "Make a show; the people love a show, and you will gain the end of your ambition at once; everybody will shout that you are Messiah." There is such a thing as a holy ambition, a proper love of admiration, an honourable desire for fame. But all its expressions and actions must be absolutely true and fair. No sincere man will deceive in order to succeed—will "do evil that good may come."

I. MEN'S AMBITIONS. Every man ought to have his ambition. He ought to mean something in life; he should set an aim before him. No man ever accomplishes anything unless he has ambition. Because the word has been misused is no reason why we should refuse to recognize its possible good use. Ambition may be an inspiring, ennobling force. Using the term in relation to Christ, we may recognize his ambition to save and bless the people of his day, and in the end all humanity. He would be the Messiah they needed.

II. MEN'S AMBITIONS PROVING TEMPTATIONS. This they do: 1. When they are simply self-seeking. Low-charactered ambitions are sure to lead men astray. Wealth, pleasure, fame, are sure to affect men's spirit and conduct; they always deteriorate men when they are made the life-aim. 2. When they set men on unworthy schemes. This was the kind of suggestion made by the tempter to our Lord. "Float down from the corner of the temple; men will think you have come down out of heaven, and accept your Messiahship at once." Ambitions provide perilous temptations when they suggest "schemes" and "dodges" and "deceptions."

III. MEN'S TEMPTATIONS THROUGH AMBITIONS MASTERED BY RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLE. This is the force of Christ's answer. A good man will only gain his ambitions on honest lines. A right-minded man feels that any attempt to deceive man is really that wicked thing, an attempt to get an advantage of God.—R. T.

Ver. 6.—*The limits of angel-charge.* Observe the sentence omitted in the quotation. The psalmist wrote, "For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." It may be that, from our points of view, the omission is not important, because we can see that it is involved even if it be not explicitly stated. The Divine care always assumes that its objects are in the sphere of duty. But it is significant that the tempter should omit what he evidently felt would spoil his persuasion.

I. ANGEL-CHARGE. There will always be two ways of dealing with the references to angels which are found in the Word of God. 1. The one way will be taken by the practical-minded, who can be content with the surface of things, and to whom facts are just facts. These will always people the unseen world with personal beings, who are conceived as constantly engaged in Divine ministries, and who have sometimes actually come into the field of human vision. "Are they not ministering spirits," etc.? 2. The other way will be taken by the mystical-minded, who cannot imprison their minds in forms, who are always seeking essences, spiritual realities, the *things* which gain varying embodiments for the apprehension of the human senses. To these, angels will seem to be personifications of the many Divine forces and influences that affect men's

lives. God caring for us, God working for us, is for them the fact; angel-charge is for them the appearance. All join in recognizing that angel-charge is God with us as our Helper.

II. THE LIMITS UNDER WHICH ANGEL-CHARGE IS SET. "I being in the way, the Lord led me." It is always assumed that we are trying to go right and to do right. God helps those who mean to be obedient. The self-willed, those who, like Ephraim, are "joined to their idols," God lets alone. The angels are removed if a man persistently resolves to "follow the devices and desires of his own heart." "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land." There is, however, the gracious truth of the Divine *overruling*, even of man's infirmity and wilfulness, of which, in this connection, due account needs to be taken.—R. T.

Vers. 8, 9.—*Temptation through the consciousness of power.* Bushnell observes that the report of the temptation can only have come from Christ himself. "And he simply meant, I have no doubt, in the three temptations recited, to report what appeared to him visionally speaking, or how they stood before his fevered brain. To believe that he was taken up into a mountain so exceedingly high that he could see all the kingdoms of the round world from the top, is fairly impossible. All temptations are but seemings. The devils bait their hook never with truths, always with illusions." Before the mind of Christ a great procession of all the world-kingdoms seems to pass—kingdoms of nations, of learning, of pleasure, of wealth; and the evil suggestion seems to say, "That power you are conscious of possessing includes and involves the command of all these world-forces. Use them, then. Be the temporal Messiah that you are expected to be, and that you can be, and then, when your position is gained, you can use it for higher spiritual ends." It is the most subtle form that temptation takes for man. Get a position, anyhow. Get power, anyhow. And then you can use the position and the power for noble ends. It is always Satanic temptation; for if a man gets position and power unworthily, he is damaged and deteriorated in the getting, and so made unfit for the using when he has got. Christ would neither win his power nor use his power otherwise than as God's will should arrange.

I. WHAT THE LORD JESUS COULD DO. Seeley says, "The mental struggle is still caused by the question how to use the supernatural power. Nothing more natural than that it should occur to Christ that his power was expressly given to him for the purpose of establishing, in defiance of all resistance, his everlasting kingdom." Clearly see that Christ's miraculous power placed all the world-forces at his command. He might have used them to found his Messianic kingdom. He would have used them if that had been God's will. It was not God's will, so for him to have used them would have been to serve the devil. This temptation comes to all who are born with genius, who are conscious of power in any direction—Is that genius to be self-ordered or divinely ordered?

II. WHAT THE LORD JESUS WOULD DO. Worshipping the Lord God is no mere act of homage; it is the life of obedience to the Divine will; the ordering of conduct by the Divine rule. The powers Christ had could only be used for God's purposes, in God's way.—R. T.

Ver. 12.—*Jesus as John's successor.* The events in our Lord's life immediately following upon his temptation are exceedingly difficult to trace. There seems to have been a first ministry in Judæa, but the length of it is much disputed. Then a ministry in Galilee, which seems to have been begun before the news came of John's imprisonment. There is, therefore, a gap between vers. 11 and 12 of this chapter. Matthew's general statements can be filled in from the more precise details of the other Gospels, and more especially of John's Gospel. The point on which we fix attention is, that as soon as John's work ceased, Jesus took his work up and carried it on. God never lets his work fail. He always keeps his witnesses witnessing. The removal of one is always the placing of another. The truth is kept alive in the world by a constant succession of truth-bearers; and there never was a time when the Church or the truth was in danger because God had left himself without a witness.

I. A MAN'S SUCCESSOR CARRIES ON A MAN'S WORK. Work out three Scripture illustrations. 1. Joshua, as Moses' successor, carried on Moses' work. That work was the

removal of Israel from Egypt, and its settlement in the promised land. 2. Elisha, as Elijah's successor, carried on Elijah's work. The confession of the lip at Carmel had to be made the confession of the life; and that meant quiet, persistent, family work throughout the land. 3. The Lord Jesus carried on the work of John the Baptist. *Penitence* is but a beginning, a preparation for *righteousness*. The Lord Jesus led penitent souls on to the joy of pardon and the power of holiness.

II. A MAN'S SUCCESSOR CARRIES ON THE WORK IN HIS OWN WAY. True succession never destroys individuality. Joshua differed from Moses, Elisha differed from Elijah, the Lord Jesus differed from John. It is often noticed that successors in statesmanship, in offices, and in pulpits, are usually strongly contrasted men. Marked individuality is found to be quite consistent with continuity in aim and service. We best fit to our places, we are found even to fit in best with others, by being our own true selves. If we see clearly the relation of John to Jesus, let us be willing also to see clearly the relation of Jesus to John.—R. T.

Ver. 17.—*The common message of John and Jesus.* Here is a fact of the records to which sufficient attention has not been given. Our Lord did not realize at once the individuality of his Messianic message. He began public labour by doing John's work and repeating's John's message. Both had this for their gospel, "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Another remarkable fact needs to be noticed in this connection. When our Lord sent out his apostles on their trial-mission—a beginning of gospel-preaching for them, in which we expect them to deal with first principles—we find that he gave them John's message, "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

I. THE HONOUR THUS PUT ON JOHN. It is usual to represent John's work as superseded by Christ's. It is not so. His work was carried on by Christ. The "repentance" he demanded was shown by Christ to be the permanent demand which must be made of every man in all the ages. John never dies; his voice is never silenced; he reappears at Pentecost. "Repent and be converted." John is no mere passing voice. He speaks to the world to-day. His message is seen to be God's message for humanity when it gains repetition from the lips of the Lord Jesus. "Of those born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist."

II. THE HONOUR THUS PUT ON REPENTANCE. It is seen to stand permanently in the very forefront of the Divine requirements. It is the strait gate at the very head of the Christian way. When the way of salvation is represented as easy, as a weak yielding of the Divine love, it is well to remember that door of repentance which blocks the entrance. So many now take up Christian profession on the persuasion of mere passing emotion, without any soul-humblings through repentance. John and the Lord Jesus gave the first place to repentance. No man can ever apprehend what Jesus is, as the *Forgiver* of sin, who has not learned of John what is repentance of sin. The weakness of so-called gospel-preaching nowadays is the absence of Johannine demands of repentance, which both the Lord Jesus and his apostles made.—R. T.

Ver. 19.—*Christ's call to service.* "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." From John i. we learn that these men were previously called to discipleship. It was well that they should have a time of fellowship with Christ before they were further called to the service of Christ. Observe how the full idea of the Messiahship was gradually unfolded, stage by stage. Our Lord never hurried. He set a noble example of "doing the next thing;" and all the Divine plan for him gradually but surely unfolded. These men were fishers. Our Lord used a figure which was quite familiar to them, and would be very suggestive. These thoughts would surely have come to their minds. As the fish have to be gathered, to be skilfully gathered, and to be persistently gathered, so have men. Christ wants us to fish for men as, during these long years, we have fished in this lake for fish. Here will come in careful descriptions of the boats, nets, and methods of the fishermen of Galilee.

I. MEN HAVE TO BE GATHERED. Morally, and in view of their independence and self-willedness, men are like the fishes that roam free in the water, going this way or that at their own pleasure. But this freedom is moral peril. There are foes for men in their freedom, as there are for the fishes. Gather the fish and deliver them

from their foes. Gather the men into the allegiance of Christ, and so deliver them from evil.

II. MEN HAVE TO BE SKILFULLY GATHERED. Few occupations involve more skill than fishing. The fisherman must judge the weather, decide on his net or line, adapt his bait, and know the habits of the creatures. So the Apostle Paul, as the great gospel fisherman, would make himself "all things to all men." Illustrate by the conversions recorded in the New Testament, pointing out how different were the methods used in each case in order to effect the ingathering.

III. MEN HAVE TO BE PERSISTENTLY GATHERED. Because there is a natural resistance which is too often successful, and must be dealt with again and again. Show where the fisher-figure fails. They who fish for men gather them in order that they may be *everlastingly saved.*—R. T.

Ver. 23.—*The healing mission of Jesus.* The excitement produced in the East by the occasional visits of a hakim, or physician, effectively explain the scenes described in our Lord's life, but seem very strange to us, and very difficult to realize. Dean Stanley has the following note: "It was after a walk through the village of Ehden, beneath the mountain of the cedars, that we found the stairs and corridors of the castle of the Maronite chief, Sheikh Joseph, lined with a crowd of eager applicants, 'sick people taken with divers diseases,' who, hearing that there was a medical man in the party, had thronged round him, 'beseeching him that he would heal them.' It was an affecting scene; our kind doctor was distressed to find how many cases there were which, with proper medical appliances, might have been cured." Some have thought that disease in our Lord's time took unusual and severe forms, but we probably need do no more than imagine the condition of a population living in unsanitary conditions, and with no scientific doctoring at command. All forms of disease were then thought of as irritations of evil and malicious spirits, and all healing was really "exorcism." Our Lord's bodily healings seem to have been specially characteristic of the earlier ministry of Jesus; and it should always be treated as *illustrative* of his work, not as his proper work. The healing mission of Jesus may be set in three forms.

I. TO CALL ATTENTION. It is a singular fact that almost immediately on Christ's beginning his ministry he was followed by crowds. He could not have gathered them as a moral Teacher. Nicodemus shows us what arrested attention. "No man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him." So the healings made a sphere for Jesus, in which he could do spiritual work.

II. TO SHOW HIS SPIRIT. Contrast with that of the Pharisees, who despised the people; and with the Eastern physician, who demands ruinous fees. Jesus sought the poor and the sick, and did his best to help them *for nothing.* It was a revelation of love to man.

III. TO INDICATE HIS MISSION. Which bore relation to the great sin-disease of the soul, and was illustrated in these healings, deliverings, and redeemings, which bore relation to men's bodily disabilities. All disease is fruitage of sin. Christ came to deal with sin, both in root, and branch, and flower, and fruit.—R. T.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER V.

Ver. 1.—**And seeing the multitudes**; *i.e.* those spoken of in ch. iv. 25—the multitudes who were at that point of time following him. **He went up.** From the lower ground by the lake. **Into a mountain**; Revised Version, *into the mountain* (εἰς τὸ ὄρος); *i.e.* not any special mountain, but "the mountain nearest the place spoken of—the mountain near by" (Thayer); in contrast to any lower place, whether that was itself fairly high ground (as probably Luke ix. 28) or the shore of the lake (ch. xiv. 23 [parallel passages: Mark vi. 46; John vi. 15]; xv. 29). The actual spot here referred to may have been far from, or, and more probably (ch. iv. 18), near to, the Lake of Gennesareth. It cannot now be identified. The traditional "Mount of Beatitudes" is *Karn-Hattin*, "a round, rocky hill" (Socin's Bædeker, p. 366), "a square-shaped hill with two tops" (Stanley, p. 368), about five miles north-west of Tiberias. This tradition, dating only from the time of the Crusades, is accepted by Stanley (cf. also Ellicott, 'Hist. Lects.,' p. 178), especially for the reasons that (1) τὸ ὄρος is equivalent to "the moun-

tain" as a distinct name, and this mountain alone, with the exception of Tabor which is too distant, stands separate from the uniform barrier of hills round the lake; (2) "the platform at the top is evidently suitable for the collection of a multitude, and corresponds precisely to the 'level place' (*τόπου πεδινοῦ*, Luke vi. 17) to which our Lord would 'come down,' as from one of its higher horns, to address the people." But these reasons seem insufficient. **And when he was set**; Revised Version, *had sat down*; as his custom was when preaching (ch. xiii. 1; xxiv. 3; Mark ix. 35). **His disciples**; *i.e.* the twelve, and also those others out of whom they had, as it seems, just been chosen (Luke vi. 12, 20). The word is used of all those personal followers who, as still more distinctly indicated in the Fourth Gospel, attached themselves to him to learn of him, at least until the time of the crisis in John vi. 66, when many withdrew (cf. also *infra*, ch. viii. 21, and for an example in the end of his ministry, Luke xix. 37). In English we unavoidably miss some of the meaning of *μαθητής*, to our loss, as may be seen from the saying of Ignatius, 'Magn.,' § 10, Μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ γενόμενοι μάθωμεν κατὰ Χριστιανισμὸν ζῆν. **Came unto him** (*προσῆλθαν αὐτῷ*). Came up to him, and, presumably, sat down in front of him to listen.

Ver. 2.—**And he opened his mouth.** Frequent in the Old Testament; *e.g.* Job iii. 1. A Hebraism, indicating that the words spoken are not the utterance of chance, but of set will and purpose. In the Gospels (in this sense) only ch. xiii. 35 (from Ps. lxxviii. 2, LXX.); also in Acts viii. 35 (Philip); x. 34 (Peter); xviii. 14 (Paul); Rev. xiii. 6 (the beast); cf. 2 Cor. vi. 11, of perfect frankness of expression, and Eph. vi. 19, perhaps of courage in the utterance of the Divine message. **And taught them** (*ἐδίδασκεν αὐτούς*). That which follows is represented, not as a proclamation, but as teaching, given to those who in some measure desired to follow and serve him. Some progress already made by the listeners, if only in a relation of respect and reverence, is implied in "teaching." The discourse was therefore spoken, not simply to the multitudes, a chance audience, but with primary and special reference to those who had already made some advance in relation to him. The multitudes, however, were standing by, and were amazed at the unique character of his teaching (cf. ch. vii. 28, 29; cf. also Luke vi. 20 with vii. 1).

Ver. 3—ch. vii. 27.—THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT. The following may serve as a brief summary.

1. The *ideal character* of his disciples (ch. v. 3—10), which must be allowed to appear (ch. v. 11—16).

2. The *relation* that they ought to hold towards the religion of the day, of which the Law was the accepted standard (ch. v. 17—vi. 18).

(1) The fundamental principle of this relation is found in the relation which Christ himself holds towards the Law (ch. v. 17—20).

(2) Their relation further defined by illustrations taken from the religion of the day, as this is seen in—

(*a*) Cases deduced directly from the Law (ch. v. 21—48).

(*b*) Cases not so deduced (ch. vi. 1—18).

3. *General principles* regarding—

(1) Their relation to wealth. They must remember that only the single eye receives the light (ch. vi. 19—34).

(2) Their relation to men. They must remember the dangers of differentiating others. They must treat them as they would themselves be treated (ch. vii. 1—12).

4. *Epilogue* (ch. vii. 13—27). A call to decision and independence of walk (ch. vii. 13—23). Assent is useless if it becomes not action (ch. vii. 24—27).

There is little doubt that the two accounts (here and Luke vi.) represent one and the same discourse, the main arguments for this belief being thus given by Ellicott ('Hist. Lects.,' p. 179): "That the beginning and end of the Sermon are nearly identical in both Gospels; that the precepts, as recited by St. Luke, are in the same general order as those in St. Matthew, and that they are often expressed in nearly the same words; and lastly, that each Evangelist specifies the same miracle, viz. the healing of the centurion's servant, as having taken place shortly after the Sermon, on our Lord's entry into Capernaum."

Vers. 3—16.—1. *The ideal character of his disciples.*

Ver. 3.—**Blessed** (*μακάριοι*); Vulgate, *beati*; hence "Beatitudes." The word describes "the poor in spirit," etc., not as recipients of blessing (*εὐλογημένοι*) from God, or even from men, but as possessors of "happiness" (cf. the Authorized Version of John xiii. 17, and frequently). It describes them in reference to their inherent state, not to the gifts or the rewards that they receive. It thus answers in thought to the common אַשְׁרֵי of the Old Testament; *e.g.* 1 Kings x.

8; Ps. i. 1; xxxii. 1; lxxxiv. 5. **Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.** The first Beatitude is the sum and substance of the whole sermon. Poverty of spirit stands in contrast to self-sufficiency (Rev. iii. 17) and as such is perhaps the quality which is most of all opposed to the Jewish temper in all ages (cf. Rom. ii. 17—20). For in this, as in much else, the Jewish nation is the type of the human race since the Fall. Observe that vers. 3, 4 (*οἱ πτωχοί, οἱ πενθοῦντες*, possibly also ver. 5, *vide infra*) recall Isa. lxi. 1, 2. As recently in the synagogue at Nazareth (Luke iv. 18, 19), so also here, he bases the explanation of his work on the prophecy of that work in the Book of Isaiah. *The poor* (*οἱ πτωχοί*). Πτωχός, in classical and philosophical usage, implies a lower degree of poverty than *πένης* (2 Cor. ix. 9 and LXX.). "The *πένης* may be so poor that he earns his bread by daily labour; but the *πτωχός* is so poor that he only obtains his living by begging. . . . The *πένης* has nothing superfluous, the *πτωχός* nothing at all" (Trench, 'Syn.,' § xxxvi.). Hence Tertullian ('Adv. Marc.,' iv. 14; cf. 15) purposely altered *Beati pauperes* of the Old Latin to *Beati mendici*, and elsewhere ('De Idol.,' 12) rendered it by *egeni*. But in Hellenistic Greek, so far as the usage of the LXX. and the Hexapla goes (*vide* Hatch, 'Biblical Greek,' p. 73), the distinction seems hardly to hold good. Hatch even infers—on, we think, very insufficient premisses — that these two words, with *ταπεινός* and *πραΰς* (but *vide infra*), designate the poor of an oppressed country, *i.e.* the peasantry, the *fellahin* of Palestine as a class, and he considers it probable that this special meaning underlies the use of the words in these verses. Whether this be the case or not, the addition of *τῷ πνεύματι* completely excludes the supposition that our Lord meant to refer to any merely external circumstances. *In spirit;* Matthew only (*τῷ πνεύματι*). Dative of sphere (cf. ch. xi. 29; 1 Cor. vii. 34; xiv. 20; Rom. xii. 11). Jas. ii. 5 (*τοὺς πτωχοὺς τῷ κόσμῳ*) forms an apparent rather than a real contrast; for the dative there marks, not the sphere in which, but the object with reference to which, the poverty is felt ("the poor as to the world," Revised Version; Wiesinger in Huther), or possibly the object which is the standard of comparison, *i.e.* in the judgment of the world (Winer, § xxxi. 4, *a*). Christ here affirms the blessedness of those who are in their spirit absolutely devoid of wealth. It cannot mean that they are this in God's opinion, for in God's opinion all are so. It means, therefore, that they are this in their own opinion. While many feel in themselves a wealth of soul-satisfaction, these do not, but realize their insufficiency. Christ says that they realize this "in (their) spirit;" for the spirit is that part of us which specially craves for satisfaction, and which is the means by which we lay hold of true satisfaction. The actual craving for spiritual wealth is not mentioned in this verse. It is implied, but direct mention of it comes partly in ver. 4, and especially in ver. 6. *For theirs.* Emphatic, as in all the Beatitudes (*αὐτῶν, αὐτοί*). *Is.* Not hereafter (Meyer), but even already. *The kingdom of heaven* (*vide* note, p. 150). The poor in spirit already belong to and have a share in that realm of God which now is realized chiefly in relation to our spirit, but ultimately will be realized in relation to every element of our nature, and to all other persons, and to every part, animate and inanimate, of the whole world.

Ver. 4.—In some, especially "Western" authorities, vers. 4, 5 are transposed (*vide* Westcott and Hort, 'Appendix'), possibly because the terms of ver. 5 seemed to be more closely parallel to ver. 3 (cf. Meyer, Weiss), and also those of ver. 4 fitted excellently with ver. 6. But far the greater balance of evidence is in favour of the usual order, which also, though not on the surface, is in the deepest connexion with the preceding and the following verses. **They that mourn** (cf. Isa. lxi. 2). Our Lord does not define that which causes the mourning, but as the preceding and the following verses all refer to the religious or at least the ethical sphere, merely carnal and worldly mourning is excluded. The mourning referred to must, therefore, be produced by religious or moral causes. Mourners for the state of Israel, so far as they mourned not for its political but for its spiritual condition (cf. similar mourning in the Christian Church, 2 Cor. vii. 9, 10), would be included (cf. Weiss, 'Life,' ii. 142); but our Lord's primary thought must have been of mourning over one's personal state, not exactly, perhaps, over one's sins, but over the realized poverty in spirit just spoken of (cf. Weiss-Meyer). As the deepest poverty lies in the sphere of the spirit, so the deepest mourning lies there also. All other mourning is but partial and slight compared with this (Prov. xviii. 14). **For they shall be comforted.** When? On having the kingdom of heaven (ver. 3); *i.e.* during this life in measure (cf. Luke ii. 25), but fully only hereafter. The mourning over one's personal poverty in spirit is removed in proportion as Christ is received and appropriated; but during this life such appropriation can be only partial.

Ver. 5.—**Blessed are the meek.** In this Beatitude our Lord still quotes Old Testament expressions. The phrase, "shall inherit the earth," comes even in Isa. lx. 21,

only two verses before lxi. 1, 2, to which he has already referred. In the present copies of the LXX. it is found also in Isa. lxi. 7, but there it is evidently a corruption. It occurs also in Ps. xxxvii. 9, 11, 22, 29, 34; and since in the eleventh verse of the psalm it is directly said of the meek: "But the meek shall inherit the land (LXX., *οἱ δὲ πραεῖς κληρονομήσουσιν γῆν*)," it is, doubtless, from this latter passage that our Lord borrows the phrase. The meaning attributed by our Lord to the word *meek* is not clear. The ordinary use of the words *πραΰς, πραΰτης*, in the New Testament refers solely to the relation of men to men, and this is the sense in which *οἱ πραεῖς* is taken by most commentators here. But with this sense, taken barely and solely, there seems to be no satisfactory explanation of the position of the Beatitude. Vers. 3 and 4 refer to men in their relation to God; ver. 6, to say the least, includes the relation of men to God; what has ver. 5 to do here if it refers solely to the relation of men to men? It would have come very naturally either before or after ver. 9 ("the peacemakers"); but why here? The reason, however, for the position of the Beatitude lies in the true conception of meekness. While the thought is here primarily that of meekness exhibited towards men (as is evident from the implied contrast in *they shall inherit the earth*), yet meekness towards men is closely connected with, and is the result of, meekness towards God. This is not exactly humility (*ταπεινοφροσύνη*, which, as regards God, is equivalent to a sense of creatureliness or dependence; cf. Trench, 'Syn.,' § xlii.). Meekness is rather the attitude of the soul towards another when that other is in a state of activity towards it. It is the attitude of the disciple to the teacher when teaching; of the son to the father when exercising his paternal authority; of the servant to the master when giving him orders. It is therefore essentially as applicable to the relation of man to God as to that of man to man. It is for this reason that we find עָנָו, עֲנָוָה very frequently used of man's relation to God, in fact, more often than of man's relation to man; and this common meaning of עָנָו must be specially remembered here, where the phrase is taken directly from the Old Testament. Weiss ('Matthäus-ev.') objects to Tholuck adducing the evidence of the Hebrew words, on the ground that the Greek terms are used solely of the relation to man, and that this usage is kept to throughout the New Testament. But the latter statement is hardly true. For, not to mention ch. xi. 29, in which the reference is doubtful, Jas. i. 21 certainly refers to the meekness shown towards God in receiving his word. "The Scriptural *πραΰτης*," says Trench, *loc. cit.*, "is not in a man's outward behaviour only; nor yet in his relations to his fellow-men; as little in his mere natural disposition. Rather is it an inwrought grace of the soul; and the exercises of it are first and chiefly towards God (Matt. xi. 29; Jas. i. 21). It is that temper of spirit in which we accept his dealings with us as good, and therefore without disputing or resisting; and it is closely linked with the *ταπεινοφροσύνη*, and follows directly upon it (Eph. iv. 2; Col. iii. 12; cf. Zeph. iii. 12), because it is only the humble heart which is also the meek; and which, as such, does not fight against God, and more or less struggle and contend with him." Yet, as this meekness must be felt towards God not only in his *direct* dealings with the soul, but also in his *indirect* dealings (*i.e.* by secondary means and agents), it must also be exhibited towards men. Meekness towards God necessarily issues in meekness towards men. Our Lord's concise teaching seizes, therefore, on this furthest expression of meekness. Thus it is not meekness in the relation of man to man barely stated, of which Christ here speaks, but meekness in the relation of man to man, with its prior and presupposed fact of meekness in the relation of man to God. **Shall inherit the earth.** In the Psalm this is equivalent to the land of Palestine, and the psalmist means that, though the wicked may have temporary power, yet God's true servants shall really and finally have dominion in the land. But what is intended here? Probably our Lord's audience understood the phrase on his lips as a Messianic adaptation of the original meaning, and as therefore implying that those who manifested a meek reception of his will would obtain that full possession of the land of Palestine which was now denied to the Israelites through the conquest of the Romans. But to our Lord, and to the evangelist who, years after, recorded them, the meaning of the words must have been much fuller, corresponding, in fact, to the true meaning of the "kingdom of heaven," viz. that the meek *shall inherit*—shall receive, as their rightful possession from their Father, the whole earth; renewed, it may be (Isa. xi. 6—9; lxv. 25; Rev. xxi. 1), but still the earth (Rom. viii. 21), with all the powers of nature therein implied. Of this the conquest of nature already gained through the civilization produced under Christianity is at once the promise and, though but in a small degree, the firstfruits.

Ver. 6.—**They which do hunger and thirst.** The application of the figure of eating and drinking to spiritual things (cf. Luke xxii. 30) is not infrequent in the Old Testament; *e.g.* Isa. lv. 1. Yet the thought here is not

the actual participation, but the craving. The Benediction marks a distinct stage in our Lord's argument. He spoke first of the consciously poor in their spirit; next of those who mourned over their poverty; then of those who were ready to receive whatever teaching or chastisement might be given them; here of those who had an earnest longing for that right relation to God in which they were so lacking. This is the positive stage. Intense longing, such as can only be compared to that of a starving man for food, is sure of satisfaction. After righteousness (*τὴν δικαιοσύνην*). Observe: (1) The accusative. In Greek writers *πεινάω* and *διψάω* are regularly followed by the genitive. Here by the accusative; for the desire is after the whole object, and not after a part of it (cf. Weiss; also Bishop Westcott, on Heb. vi. 4, 5). (2) The article. It idealizes. There is but one righteousness worthy of the name, and for this and all that it includes, both in standing before God and in relation to men, the soul longs. How it is to be obtained Christ does not here say. For they. Emphatic, as always (ver. 3, note). Shall be filled (*χορτασθήσονται*); *vide* Bishop Lightfoot on Phil. iv. 12. Properly of animals being fed with fodder (*χόρτος*); cf. Rev. xix. 21, "All the birds were filled (*ἐχορτάσθησαν*) with their flesh." At first only used of men depreciatingly (Plato, 'Rep.,' ix. 9, p. 586 *a*), afterwards readily. Rare in the sense of moral and spiritual satisfaction (cf. Ps. xvii. 15). When shall they be filled? As in the case of vers. 3, 4, now in part, fully hereafter. "St. Austin, wondering at the overflowing measure of God's Spirit in the Apostles' hearts, observes that the reason why they were so full of God was because they were so empty of his creatures. 'They were very full,' he says, 'because they were very empty'" (Anon., in Ford). That on earth, but in heaven with all the saints—

> "Ever filled and ever seeking, what they have they still desire,
> Hunger there shall fret them never, nor satiety shall tire,—
> Still enjoying whilst aspiring, in their joy they still aspire."
>
> ('Chronicles of the Schönberg-Cotta Family,' ch. ix., from the Latin Hymn of Peter Damiani, † 1072.)

Ver. 7.—Our Lord here turns more directly to the character of his followers in relation to men; and in the next three Beatitudes mentions particulars which might be suggested by the sixth, seventh, and ninth commandments. The merciful (*οἱ ἐλεήμονες*). The mercy referred to here is not so much the almost negative quality which the word usually suggests to us (not dealing harshly, not inflicting punishment when due, sparing an animal or a fellow-man some unnecessary labour), as active kindness to the destitute and to any who are in trouble (cf. ch. ix. 27; xv. 22; xvii. 15; Mark v. 19). As compared with *οἰκτίρμονες* (Luke vi. 36), it seems to lay more stress on the feeling of pity showing itself in action and not only existing in thought. To this statement of our Lord's, that they who show mercy to those in need shall themselves be the objects of mercy (*i.e.* from God) in their time of need, many parallels have been adduced, *e.g.*, by Wetstein. Rabbi Gamaliel (? the second, circa A.D. 100), as reported by Rabbi Judah (circa A.D. 180), says (Talm. Bab., 'Sabb.,' 151 *b*), on Deut. xiii. 18, "Every one that showeth mercy to others, they show mercy to him from heaven, and every one that showeth not mercy to others, they show him not mercy from heaven;" cf. also 'Test. XII. Patr.:' Zab., § 8, "In proportion as a man has compassion (*σπλαγχνίζεται*) on his neighbour, so has the Lord upon him;" and, probably with reference to this passage, Clem. Rom., § 13, *ἐλεᾶτε ἵνα ἐλεηθῆτε*. (For the converse, cf. Jas. ii. 13.) Calvin remarks, "Hoc etiam paradoxon cum humano judicio pugnat. Mundus reputat beatos, qui malorum alienorum securi quieti suæ consulunt: Christus autem hic beatos dicit, qui non modo ferendis propriis malis parati sunt, sed aliena etiam in se suscipiunt, ut miseris succurrant."

Ver. 8.—The pure in heart. Our Lord naturally passes in thought from the sixth to the seventh commandment (cf. vers. 21, 27), finding the basis of his phraseology in Ps. xxiv. 3, 4, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? . . . He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart (LXX. *ἀθῷος χερσὶν καὶ καθαρὸς τῇ καρδίᾳ*)" (cf. also Ps. lxxii. 1). *Καθαρός* (besides speaking of mere physical cleanness, ch. xxvii. 59) specially refers to freedom from pollution, judged by God's standard of what pollution is, whether it be a matter of ceremonial enactment (meats, Rom. xiv. 20; cf. Mark vii. 19; cf. leprosy, viii. 2, 3; x. 8, *et al.*) or of ethical relation (John xiii. 10, 11; xv. 3); cf. Origen, 'Hom. in Joh.,' lxxiii. 2 (Meyer), "Every sin soils the soul (*Πᾶσα ἁμαρτία ῥύπον ἐντίθησι τῇ ψυχῇ*)" (cf. also Bishop Westcott, 'Hebrews,' p. 346). *In heart.* The seat of the affections (ch. vi. 21; xxii. 37) and the understanding (ch. xiii. 15), also the central spring of all human words and actions (ch. xv. 19); cf. *καθαρὰ καρδία* (1 Tim. i. 5; 2 Tim. ii. 22), which implies something deeper than *καθαρὰ συνείδησις* (1 Tim. iii. 9; 2 Tim. i. 3). Shall see God. Not in his courts (Ps. xxiv.) on Mount Moriah, but above; and in one complete vision fully grasped (*ὄψονται*). The thought of present spiritual sight of God, though, per-

haps, hardly to be excluded (contrast Weiss, 'Matthäusev.'), is at least swallowed up in the thought of the full and final revelation. Those who are pure in heart, and care not for such sights as lead men into sin, are unconsciously preparing themselves for the great spiritual sight—the beatific vision (Rev. xxii. 4; cf. 1 John iii. 2). In Heb. xii. 14 holiness (*ἁγιασμός*) is an indispensable quality for such a vision of "the Lord."

Ver. 9.—**The peacemakers** (*οἱ εἰρηνοποιοί*). More than "peaceable" (*εἰρηνικός*, Jas. iii. 17; *εἰρηνεύοντες*, Rom. xii. 18; Mark ix. 50). This is the peaceable character consciously exerted outside itself. The same compound in the New Testament in Col. i. 20 only: *Εἰρηνοποιήσας διὰ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ σταυροῦ αὐτοῦ* (cf. Eph. ii. 14, 15). Christians, in their measure, share in Christ's work, and, we may add, can attain it generally as he did, only by personal suffering. Observe that this Beatitude must have been specially distasteful to the warlike Galilæans. Mishna, 'Ab.,' i. 13 (Taylor), "Hillel said, Be of the disciples of Aharon, loving peace and pursuing peace," hardly refers to peace-*making*, but in Mishna, 'Peah,' i. 1, "These are the things whose fruit a man eats in this world, but which have their capital reward in the world to come: honouring one's father and mother, showing kindness, and bringing about peace between a man and his neighbour, but study of the Law is equivalent to them all." **For they**; *αὐτοί*, omitted by ℵ, C, D, 13, 124, Latt., Peshito. Possibly it is an addition inserted from a desire to make this Beatitude harmonize with the others. But more probably it is genuine, and was omitted by accident, either by homoiot. of *υἱοί* (Meyer), or (better) because the scribe forgot the *αὐτοί* in the emphatic *υἱοὶ Θεοῦ*, the form of the second clause being peculiar to this Beatitude. **Shall be called**; by God and angels and men. **The children of God**; Revised Version, *sons of God*; to show that the word used here is *υἱοί*, not *τέκνα*. Christ's reference is, that is to say, not so much to the nature as to the privileges involved in sonship. The earthly privileges which peacemakers give up rather than disturb their peaceful relations with others, and in order that they may bring about peace between others, shall be much more than made up to them, and that with the approving verdict of all. They shall, with general approval, enter on the full privileges of their relation to God, who is "the God of peace" (Rom. xv. 33). Dr. Taylor ('Ab.,' i. 19) has an interesting note on "Peace" as a Talmudic name of God. For language similar to our Lord's, cf. Hos. i. 10 [LXX.], equivalent to Rom. ix. 26. Here, as often in this Gospel, there may be a tacit contradiction to the assumption that natural birth as Israelites involves the full blessings of sons of God; cf. 'Ab.,' iii. 22 (Taylor).

Ver. 10.—**Which are persecuted**; *which have been persecuted* (Revised Version); *οἱ δεδιωγμένοι*. "Those who are harassed, hunted, spoiled. The term is properly used of wild beasts pursued by hunters, or of an enemy or malefactor in flight" (Wetstein). Our Lord, by the use of the perfect, wishes to indicate (1) the fact that they have endured persecution, and still stand firm; and probably (2) the condition of temporal loss to which they have been reduced by such persecution. They have "suffered the loss," possibly, "of all things," but they are "blessed." **For righteousness' sake** (*ἕνεκεν δικαιοσύνης*). No article (contrast ver. 6), either as indicating that for even a part of righteousness persecution can be undergone, or, and more probably, simply dwelling on the cause of persecution without idealizing it. St. Peter also says, perhaps with a reference to our Lord's words, that they who suffer *διὰ δικαιοσύνην* are *μακάριοι* (1 Pet. iii. 14). **For theirs is the kingdom of heaven**. The same promise that was given to "the poor in spirit" (ver. 3) is here given to the persecuted for righteousness' sake. In the former case, poverty in the sphere of the spirit obtains the fullest possessions; here the same promise is given to temporal loss produced by faithfulness to the cause of righteousness. In ver. 3 our Lord removed all occasion for intellectual and spiritual pride. Here he comforts for temporal and social losses (cf. especially 2 Cor. vi. 10; further see ver. 3, note). Clement of Alexandria, 'Strom.,' iv. 6 (p. 582, Potter) (1) confuses this and the preceding Beatitude; (2) gives a curious reading of some who alter the Gospels: "Blessed are they who have been persecuted through righteousness (*ὑπὸ τῆς δικαιοσύνης*), for they shall be perfect; and blessed are they who have been persecuted for my sake, for they shall have a place where they shall not be persecuted" (cf. Westcott, 'Introd. Gospp.,' Appendix C).

Vers. 11—16.—Some critics (*e.g.* Godet, Weiss) think that vers. 13—16 are no part of the original sermon, but only an interweaving of sayings which were originally spoken at other times. This is possible, but external evidence exists only in the case of vers. 13 and 15 (for vers. 14 and 16 are peculiar to Matthew); and even in the case of these verses it is by no means clear (*vide infra*) that the occasions on which, according to the other Gospels, the sayings were uttered are the more original. Weiss's as-

sertion ('Life,' ii. 144), "The remarks in Matt. v. 13—16, bearing on the calling of discipleship, . . . cannot belong to the sermon on the mount, carefully as they are there introduced, for the prophesied sufferings of his followers might have made them disloyal," is wholly gratuitous. In fact, the sufferings have been much more strongly spoken of in vers. 11, 12.

The disciples are now addressed directly, and are urged to "walk worthily of the vocation wherewith they are called." The mention of those who have endured persecution leads our Lord to warn his disciples not to faint under persecution in any of its forms; they are but entering on the succession of the prophets; their work is that of purifying and preserving and of illuminating; they must therefore allow their character as disciples to appear, as appear it must if they are true to their position. There is a purpose in this, namely, that men may see their actions, and glorify their Father which is in heaven.

Vers. 11, 12.—Parallel passage: Luke vi. 22, 23.

Ver. 11.—As ver. 10 spoke of the blessedness of those who had suffered persecution and had endured it, so this verse speaks of the blessedness of those who are suffering from it at the moment, whether it be in act or word. Whilst Christ still keeps up the form of the Beatitudes, he speaks now in the second person, this and the following verse thus forming the transition to his directly addressing those immediately before him. His present audience was not yet among *οἱ δεδιωγμένοι*, but might already be enduring something of the reproach and suffering now referred to. **Revile** (*ὀνειδίσωσιν*); Revised Version, *reproach*; as also the Authorized Version in Luke vi. 22. "Revile" in itself implies moral error in the person that reviles. Not so *ὀνειδίζειν* (cf. ch. xi. 20; Mark xvi. 14). Our Lord purposely uses a word which includes, not only mere abuse, but also stern, and occasionally loving, rebuke. **Falsely, for my sake.** The comma in both the Authorized (Scrivener) and the Revised Versions after "falsely" is opposed to that interpretation (Meyer) which closely connects *ψευδόμενοι* with both *καθ' ὑμῶν* and *ἕνεκεν ἐμοῦ*. *Ψευδόμενοι* is really a modal definition of *εἴπωσιν* (Sovin, Weiss), and *ἕνεκεν ἐμοῦ* goes with the whole sentence "when men," etc. ***For my sake.*** In ver. 10 he had said *ἕνεκεν δικαιοσύνης*; here he directly speaks of himself. In Luke vi. the phrase is transitional, "for the Son of man's sake." In ch. iv. 19 he had claimed to be the Source of power for service; here he claims to be the Object of devotion. His "Messianic consciousness" (Meyer) is, at even this early stage of his ministry, fully developed (cf. also vers. 17, 22). It is possible that Heb. xi. 26 (*vide* Rendall, *in loc.*) and 1 Pet. iv. 14 refer to this expression.

Ver. 12.—**Rejoice, and be exceeding glad** (*χαίρετε καὶ ἀγαλλιᾶσθε*). Our Lord uses no weaker expressions than those which describe the joy of the saints over the marriage of the Lamb (Rev. xix. 7). The first word expresses joy as such, the second its effect in stirring the emotions; this thought St. Luke carries still further in *σκιρτήσατε*. (For joy felt under persecution, cf. Acts v. 41.) **For great.** The order of the Greek, *ὅτι ὁ μισθὸς ὑμῶν πολύς*, does not bear out the emphatic position assigned to "great" in the English Versions from Tyndale downwards (except Rheims), including Revised Version. **Is your reward.** The doctrine of recompense, which has so large a place in Jewish thought (for a not offensive example, cf. 'Ab.,' ii. 19, Taylor) comes also in Christ's teaching. In ch. xx. 1—16 reward is expressly divested of its merely legal side, and exhibited as ultimately dependent on the will of the great Householder. But here it is mentioned without reference to the difficulties involved in the conception. These difficulties centre round the thought of obligation from God to man. But it may be doubted whether these difficulties are not caused by too exclusively regarding the metaphor of contracting, instead of considering the fact indicated by the metaphor. In God's kingdom every action has a corresponding effect, and this effect is the more certain in proportion as the action is in the sphere of morality. The idea of "quantity" hardly enters into the relation of such cause and effect. It is a question of moral correspondence. But such effect may not unfitly be called by the metaphors "hire," "reward," because, on the one hand, it is the result of conditions of moral service, and, on the other, such terms imply a Personal Will at the back of the effect, as well as a will on the part of the human "servant." (For the subject in other connexions, cf. Weiss, 'Bibl. Theol.,' § 32; cf. also ver. 46; ch. vi. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6.) **In heaven.** Our Lord says, "your reward is *great*," because the effect of your exercise of moral powers will be received in a sphere where the accidents of the surroundings will entirely correspond to moral influences. The effect of your present faithfulness, etc., will be seen in the reception of powers of work and usefulness and enjoyment, beside which those possessed on earth will appear small. On earth the

opportunities, etc., are but "few things;" hereafter they will be "many things" (ch. xxv. 21). **For.** Not as giving a reason for the assurance of reward (apparently Meyer and Weiss), but for the command, "rejoice, and be exceeding glad," and perhaps also for the predicate "blessed." Rejoice if persecuted, for such persecutions prove you to be the true successors of the prophets, your predecessors in like faithfulness (cf. Jas. v. 10). **So.** By reproach, *e.g.* Elijah (1 Kings xviii. 17), Amos (vii. 12, 13); by persecution, *e.g.* Hanani (2 Chron. xvi. 10), Jeremiah (xxxvii. 15); by saying all manner of evil, *e.g.* Amos (vii. 10), Jeremiah (xxxvii. 13), Daniel (vi. 13). **Which were before you.** Added, surely, not as a mere temporal fact, but to indicate spiritual relationship (*vide supra*).

Ver. 13.—**Ye are the salt,** etc. (cf. a similar saying in Mark ix. 50; Luke xiv. 34, 35). Weiss thinks that St. Luke gives it in its original context; that St. Matthew is right in interpreting it as of special reference to the disciples; and that St. Mark applies it the most freely. It may, indeed, be that its position here is only the result of the inspired guidance of the evangelist; but, on the whole, it seems more probable that so natural a figure was used more than once by our Lord, and that he really spoke these words in his sermon on the mount, as well as on the later occasion indicated by St. Luke. *Ye;* i.e. the μαθηταί of ver. 1. *Are,* in fact (ἐστέ); therefore recognize the responsibility. *The salt of the earth.* It has been disputed whether allusion is here made to the preservative properties of salt or to the flavour it imparts; *i.e.* whether Christ is thinking of his disciples as preserving the world from decay, or as giving it a good flavour to the Divine taste. Surely a useless question; forgetful of the fact that spiritual realities are being dealt with, and that it is therefore impossible for the one effect to be really separated from the other. Our Lord is thinking of the moral tone which his disciples are to give to humanity. The connexion with vers. 11, 12 is—Persecution must be borne unless you are to lose your moral tone, which is to be to the earth what salt is to its surroundings, preserving from corruption and fitting for (in your case Divine) appreciation. What χάρις is to be to the Christian λόγος (Col. iv. 6), that the Christian himself is to be to the world. **If . . . have lost its savour** (μωρανθῇ); so elsewhere in Luke xiv. 34 only. Salt that has lost its distinctive qualities is here said to lack its proper mind or sense. Salt without sharpness is like an ἄνθρωπος ἄλογος; for man is a ζῷον λογικόν. On the fact of salt losing its virtue, cf. Thomson ('Land and the Book,' p. 382: 1887), "It is a well-known fact that the salt *of this country* [*i.e.* Palestine] when in contact with the ground, or exposed to rain and sun, does become insipid and useless. From the manner in which it is gathered [*vide infra*], much earth and other impurities are necessarily collected with it. Not a little of it is so impure that it cannot be used at all; and such salt soon effloresces and turns to dust —not to fruitful soil, however. It is not only good for nothing itself, but it actually destroys all fertility wherever it is thrown. . . . No man will allow it to be thrown on to his field, and the only place for it is the street; and there it is cast, to be trodden under foot of men." It should be observed that the salt used in Palestine is not manufactured by boiling clean salt water, nor quarried from mines, but is obtained from marshes along the seashore, as in Cyprus, or from salt lakes in the interior, which dry up in summer, as the one in the desert north of Palmyra, and the great Lake of Jebbûl, south-east of Aleppo. Further, rock-salt is found in abundance at the south end of the Dead Sea (cf. Thomson, *loc. cit.*). **Wherewith shall it be salted?** *i.e.* not if you will not act as salt, wherewith shall the earth be salted? (apparently Luther and Erasmus); but what quality can take the place of moral tone to produce in you the same result? You are as salt. If you lose your distinctive qualities, where can you find that which answers to them? **It is thenceforth good for nothing.** Our Lord here lays stress, not on want of fitness (εὔθετον, Luke), but on want of inherent power. "It is only useful for that purpose to which one applies what is absolutely useless" (Weiss-Meyer).

Ver. 14.—Matthew only. **Ye are the light of the world.** After speaking of the moral tone that the disciples were to give to the world, in contrast to sin in its corrupting power, Christ refers to them as enlightening, in contrast to sin as darkness and ignorance. Our Lord further naturally exchanges the term "the earth" (which from its strong materialism had suited the figure of the salt) for "the world"—a phrase which must, indeed, as regards the disciples, be limited to this earth, but as regards the light, need not be limited to less than the solar system. In other words, the simple reason why he exchanges "earth" for "world" is that they are respectively the best suited to the figure employed. Notice that Christ never applies the former figure, of salt, to himself; but the latter, of light, once or twice, especially John viii. 12, where, since he is speaking of himself, and not of others, he adds the thought of life being connected with light. **A city,** etc.; literally, *a city cannot be hid when set on a mountain.* It seems at first slightly

awkward to introduce the figure of a city between those of the sun and the lamp, both these having to do with light. The reason is that the city is not considered as such, but only as an object which can be seen, and which cannot (*οὐ δύναται*, emphatic) from its physical conditions avoid being seen. There is a true gradation in the thought of influence. The sun must be seen by all; the city, by the whole neighbourhood; the lamp, by the family. Our Lord comes from the general to the particular; from what is almost theory, at best a matter of hope and faith, to hard fact and practice. The influence you are to have—if it is to be for the whole world, as indeed it is, must be felt in the neighbourhood in which you live, and *à fortiori* in the immediate circle of your own home. Conjectures have been made whether any one city can reasonably be mentioned as being in sight, and so having suggested this image to our Lord. If the exact spot where he was then sitting were itself certain, such conjectures might be worth considering. But, in fact, so many "cities" in Palestine were set on hills that the inquiry seems vain. *Safed*, some twelve miles north-west of Capernaum, the view from which extends to Tiberias (Neubaur, 'Geogr.,' p. 228), has been accepted by many, but evidence is lacking for it having been a city at that time. Tabor, at the south-west of the lake, has also been thought of, and at all events seems to have been then a fortified town. The view from it is even more extensive than from *Safed* (*vide* especially Socin's Bædeker, p. 365).

Ver. 15.—**Neither do men light a candle, etc.** The same illustration comes in Luke viii. 16 (Mark iv. 21), immediately after the parable of the sower, and again in Luke xi. 33, immediately after the reference to the repentance of the men of Nineveh at the preaching of Jonah. All four passages have too much verbal similarity to admit of any of them being absolutely independent. Mark iv. 21 has the greatest number of peculiarities. The two passages in Luke agree very closely with each other, but of the two, Luke xi. 33 most resembles Matthew. The close agreement here with the context seems to point to this being an original position of the utterance. Of the other two contexts Luke xi. 33, if we must choose, seems the more natural. Godet, however, says, "This passage has been placed in the sermon on the mount, like so many others, rather because of the association of ideas than from historical reminiscence" (similarly Weiss). *Neither*. The inherent position, so to speak, of Christ's disciples, as of a city set on a mountain, is not accidental. It answers to the purpose of their being disciples, as is explained further by the illustration of a lamp. *A candle;* Revised Version, *a lamp* (*λύχνον*); *i.e.* the flat, saucer-like Eastern lamp, in which sometimes the wick merely floats on the oil. **A bushel . . . a candlestick**; Revised Version, *the bushel . . . the stand* (*τὸν μόδιον . . . τὴν λυχνίαν*). Probably rightly, for if the article had been generic (cf. Mishna, 'Sabb.,' iv. 2, "One may fill a pitcher [literally, 'the pitcher,' את הקיתון], and put it under a [literally, 'the'] pillow, or under a [literally, 'the'] bolster [on the sabbath in order to take the chill off it]," W. H. Lowe, 'Fragment of Pesachim,' 1879, p. 95; cf. also Driver on 1 Sam. xix. 13) it would have been found also before *λύχνον*. "The description applies to the common houses of the people. In each there was one principal room, in which they ate and slept; the lampstand, with its single light, the flour-bin, and the bed, with a few seats, were all its furniture" (Cook, in 'Speaker's Commentary,' on Mark iv. 21). *A bushel* (*τὸν μόδιον*). This is probably equivalent to the *seah* (so Peshito), which was "the ordinary measure for domestic purposes," and, as stated in the margins of the Authorized and the Revised Versions on ch. xiii. 33, held "nearly a peck and a half" dry measure. The Latin *modius*, here used to render *seah*, itself held nearly a peck. In Luke viii. 16 the vaguer term *σκεῦος* is used. "Bushel" is retained in the Revised Version probably because it can be used of the vessel apart from all thought of measure; cf. "The Sense represents the Sun no bigger than a Bushel" (Hale [1677], in Murray's 'Oxford Dictionary'). *But on a candlestick;* Revised Version, *but on the stand* (*ἐπὶ τὴν λυχνίαν*); Vulgate, from Old Latin, *Neque accendunt lucernam et possunt eam sub modio sed super candelabrum. Candelabrum* (cf. "chandelier") meant a stand for either candles or lamps; hence Wickliffe, translating from the Vulgate, could say, "Ne me[n] teendith not a lanterne & puttith it vndir a buyschel: but on a candilstik." We still use "candlestick" in the rarer sense when we speak of the seven-branched "candlestick" of the tabernacle, which was lighted by lamps, not candles (cf. Humphry, on Revised Version, *in loc.*). **It giveth light;** Revised Version, *it shineth* (*λάμπει*). The Rheims alone of the older English versions renders "shine," thus showing that the same Greek word is used as in the next verse. The Vulgate (followed by Wickliffe and Rheims) renders it in the subjunctive, *ut luceat*, possibly originally a copyist's error from the *luceat* of ver. 16. If so, it was apparently made before the time of Tertullian ('De Prescript.,' § 26). The thought is still primarily of the light itself being

necessarily seen rather than of its benefiting others (φωτίζω, Luke xi. 36; cf. John i. 9). **To all.** For in a room none can help noticing it, even though the lamp and the light itself be but small. The negative of this verse is given in Pseudo-Cyprian, 'De Aleat.,' iii., "Monet dominus et dicit: nolite contristare Spiritum Sanctum, qui in vobis est, et *nolite extinguere lumen, quod in vobis effulsit*" (*vide* Resch, 'Agrapha,' pp. 111, 215).

Ver. 16.—Matthew only. **Let your light so shine**; *even so let your light shine* (Revised Version); οὕτως λαμψάτω τὸ φῶς ὑμῶν. The Revised Version (cf. Rheims) does away with the misinterpretation suggested by the Authorized Version, "so that;" for οὕτως refers solely to the method of shining spoken of in ver. 15, "like a burning lamp upon its stand" (Meyer). Our Lord has here no thought of effort in shining, such as may improve the brightness of the light given, or of illuminating others, but of not concealing what light the disciples have. (For a similar οὕτως, cf. 1 Cor. ix. 24.) Yet remember, "A lamp for one is a lamp for a hundred" (Talm. Bab., 'Sabb.,' 122*a*) and "Adam was the lamp of the world" (Talm. Jer., 'Sabb.,' ii. 4—a play on Prov. xx. 27). *Your light. Either* genitive of apposition, the light which you are (Achelis), cf. ver. 14; *or* genitive of possession, the light of which you are the trusted possessors (Meyer, Weiss). The latter is preferable, as the disciples have, in ver. 15, been compared to the lamp, *i.e.* the light-bearer. **Before men** (ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ἀνθρώπων). More than ἐνώπιον, "in presence of," for the position of the lamp "in front of" the people is what our Lord is here emphasizing (cf. John xii. 37). **That they may see your good works** (ὑμῶν τὰ καλὰ ἔργα). *Your.* Three times in this verse. Our Lord lays stress on personal possession of light, personal action, personal relationship and origin. *Good works;* i.e. of your lives generally (Weiss-Meyer), not ministerially (Meyer). "*Noble works*, works which by their generous and attractive character win the natural admiration of men" (Bishop Westcott, on Heb. x. 24). **And glorify.** This is actually done in ch. ix. 8; xv. 31. St. Peter's language (1 Pet. ii. 12) is probably due to a reminiscence of our Lord's words. **Your Father which is in heaven.** The Fatherhood of God is here predicated in a special sense of the disciples, in the same way as the Fatherhood of God is, in the Old Testament, always connected with his covenant relation to his people as a nation (cf. Isa. lxiii. 16; lxiv. 8; Jer. iii. 4; Deut. xxxii. 6). Our Lord here is not thinking of "the original relation of God to being and especially to humanity, in virtue of man's creation in the Divine image" (ὁ πατήρ), but of the relation into which the disciples have entered through the revelation of God in Christ; cf. further Bishop Westcott, on John iv. 21 (Add. Note) and on 1 John i. 2 (Add. Note); also Weiss, 'Life,' ii. 348. The phrase, which occurs here for the first time in St. Matthew (but cf. ver. 9, note), henceforth occurs frequently, becoming of great importance for this Gospel (cf. vers. 45, 48; ch. vi. 1, 9, etc.).

Ver. 17—ch. vi. 18.—Having spoken of the ideal character of his disciples (vers. 3—10), and of their need of allowing that character to appear (vers. 11—16), our Lord turns to speak of *the position that they should hold towards the religion of the day* (ver. 17—ch. vi. 18), of which the Law was the accepted standard.

Vers. 17—20.—(1) With this aim he first states summarily and in nucleus the position that he himself holds towards the Law—a statement which was the more necessary as he had already (ver. 11) claimed to be the object of his disciples' devotion.

Ver. 17.—Matthew only. **Think not.** Probably the tendency of his teaching was even already seen to be so different from that of the recognized authorities, that some had in consequence formed this opinion (νομίζω) of him which he now repudiates, and which was near akin to the basis of the charge formulated afterwards against St. Stephen (Acts vi. 14). In both cases the tendency of the new teaching (Mark i. 27) to abolish temporary forms was perceived by at least those whose powers of perception were quickened through their opposition. **That I am come**; Revised Version, *that I came* (ὅτι ἦλθον). Our Lord, both here and in the next clause, lays stress on his coming as an historic fact. The primary reference is probably to his coming forth from private life (cf. John i. 31). Yet in his own mind there may have been a further allusion to his coming from above (cf. John viii. 14; and further, ch. x. 34). **To destroy.** The connexion between καταλῦσαι here and λύσῃ ver. 19 (*vide* note) is lost in the English. **The Law or the Prophets.** The phrase, "the law *and* the prophets," is sometimes used as practically equivalent to the whole of the Old Testament (ch. vii. 12; John i. 45; Rom. iii. 21; cf. ch. xi. 13; xxii. 40; Acts xxiv. 14), and our Lord means probably much the same here, the "or" distributing the καταλῦσαι (cf. Alford), and being used because of the negative. Such a distribution, however, though it could not have been expressed in an affirmative sentence, has for its background the consciousness of a difference in the nature of these two chief components of the Old Testament.

Observe that the third part of the Hebrew Scriptures, "the (Holy) Writings"—of which 'Psalms' (Luke xxiv. 44) form the most characteristic portion—is omitted in this summary reference to the Old Testament. The reason may be either that of the three parts it was used less than the other two as a basis for doctrine and for rule of life, or that it was practically included in the Prophets (Acts ii. 30). The essential teaching of the Law may be distinguished from that of the Prophets by saying that, while the Law was the direct revelation of God's will as law for the people's daily life—personal, social, and national—the Prophets (including the historical books and the prophets proper) were rather the indirect revelation of his will for them under the fresh circumstances into which they came; this indirect revelation being seen more especially in God's providential guidance of the nation, and in his explanation of principles of worship, as well as in occasional predictions of the future. It is to his relation to the Prophets in this connexion, as an indirect revelation of God's will under changing circumstances (cf. Weiss) that our Lord here chiefly refers. For he is led to speak of his own relation to them from the bearing that this has on the conduct of his disciples. Many, however (*e.g.* Chrysostom), consider that he is thinking of his relation to them as containing predictions concerning himself. In answer to this it is not sufficient to say (Meyer, Weiss, Alford) that it was impossible that Messiah could be thought to abrogate the Prophets; for, in fact, to many Jews during his ministry (even if not at this early stage of it), and much more to Jews at the time when the evangelist recorded the words, our Lord must have seemed to contradict the predictions about himself as they were then understood. It is indeed true that the *primâ facie* ground that existed for thinking that our Lord's teaching was opposed, not merely to the religion of the day as dependent on the Law and the Prophets, but also to the predictions of Messiah contained in them, is enough to give a certain plausibility to this interpretation. But that is all. The absence in the context of any hint that he refers to his relation to predictions as such quite forbids our accepting it. It was probably derived solely from a misinterpretation of "fulfil" (*vide infra*), no regard being paid to the train of thought by which our Lord was led to speak of the subject at all. Our Lord says that he is not come to "destroy" the Prophets *as exponents of the will of God.* I am not come to destroy; emphasizing his statement by repetition. **But to fulfil.** By establishing the absolute and final meaning of the Law and the Prophets. Christ came not to abrogate the Law or the Prophets, but to satisfy them—to bring about in his own Person, and ultimately in the persons of his followers, that righteousness of life which, however limited by the historical conditions under which the Divine oracles had been delivered, was the sum and substance of their teaching. The fulfilment of the Law and the Prophets "is the perfect development of their ideal reality out of the positive form, in which the same is historically apprehended and limited" (Meyer). Martensen puts the matter thus: "How can he say that not a tittle shall pass from the Law, since the development of the Church shows us that the ceremonial law, that the whole Mosaic dispensation, has been annihilated by the influences proceeding from Christ? We answer: He has fulfilled the Law, whilst he has released it from the temporary forms in which its eternal validity was confined; he has unfolded its spiritual essence, its inward perfection. Not even a tittle of the ceremonial law has passed away, if we regard the Mosaic Law as a whole; for the ideas which form its basis, as the distinction between the unclean and the clean, are confirmed by Christ, and contained in the law of holiness which he teaches men" ('Christian Ethics: General,' § 125); cf. ver. 18, notes, "till heaven and earth pass," "till all be fulfilled."

Ver. 18.—Cf. Luke xvi. 17, "But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one tittle of the Law to fail" (Revised Version). The words are so similar that the two evangelists probably record the same utterance, the difference in the form of the sentence pointing rather to an oral than a written common source. St. Luke places it in an attack on the Pharisees, who had scoffed at our Lord for his parable of the dishonest steward. **Verily;** ἀμήν (אמן, literally, "established," "sure"). It has hardly been sufficiently noticed by commentators that the New Testament usage of the word "Amen" often slightly differs from that found in the Old Testament. "Amen" in the Old Testament always involves the personal acceptance of the statement to which it refers ("so be it"), whether this be a statement upon oath (Numb. v. 22, perhaps), *or* a statement of penalties incurred under certain circumstances (Numb. v. 22, probably; Deut. xxvii. 15—26; Neh. v. 13); *or* a statement expressing a pious hope uttered either by another (1 Kings i. 36; Jer xxviii. 6; xi. 5 (?); cf. Neh. viii. 6; cf. also 1 Cor. xiv. 16); or by one's self (Ps. xli. 13). Hence the LXX. either leaves it untranslated or, with but one exception, translates it by γένοιτο. In Hellenistic Greek, however, it became often used as little more

than a mere asseveration ("verily"). The earliest trace of this usage is found in Jer. xxviii. 6, where the LXX. renders אמן by ἀληθῶς (Aquila much better πιστωθήτω, though generally elsewhere πεπιστωμένως), and it is frequent in the New Testament, cf. especially Luke ix. 27, λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν ἀληθῶς, with parallels, ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν (cf. also Luke xii. 44 with Matt. xxiv. 47, and Luke xxi. 3 with Mark xii. 43). Yet this usage of "Amen" in Hellenistic Greek does not seem to have ever spread into Hebrew or Aramaic. W. H. Lowe ('Fragm. Pesach.,' p. 70) says, and apparently truly, "The Jews never used *'amēn* in the sense of 'verily.' They say באמת, *be'ĕmeth*', 'in truth,' or בימנותא, *hĕmānuthā*, 'Faith!' or אמנם, *'omnām*, 'verily.'" If so, the fact is interesting, for it implies that, notwithstanding the usage of "Amen" in Greek, our Lord himself, as speaking Aramaic, probably did not use it in the mere sense of strong asseveration, but rather always with its connotation of his entire concurrence in the statement he was making. In his mouth, that is to say, it always emphasized the thought of his personal acceptance of the statement with its legitimate issue. Observe that it makes no difference (cf. Jer. xxviii. 6) whether the "Amen" comes at the beginning or at the end of his utterance. N.B.—Ναί (Luke xi. 51; cf. ch. xxiii. 36) may be taken as intermediate between ἀληθῶς and ἀμήν. Ἀληθῶς states a truth; ναί assents with the intellect; ἀμήν, in at least Hebrew and Aramaic usage, accepts it with all its consequences (cf. 2 Cor. i. 19, 20). **Till heaven and earth pass**; Revised Version, *pass away* (παρέλθῃ); and so in the next clause. The same almost archaic sense of "pass" occurs in Ps. cxlviii. 6, Authorized Version (Revised Version, "pass away"). Observe that our Lord does not say that the Law will then pass away. He says, not till then; *i.e.* he affirms, as in Luke xvi. 17, that it is *easier* for heaven and earth to pass away than for the Law. For, in fact, as being constantly fulfilled in its ideal and therefore permanent character, it must necessarily remain in the new world; cf. 1 Pet. i. 25 (the everlasting duration of the word of the Lord); 1 Cor. xiii. 13 (love); 2 Pet. iii. 13 (righteousness); cf. Meyer. The belief in the permanence of the Law which the Jews had (*vide* references in Meyer, and especially Weber, 'Altsynag. Theol.,' §§ 5, 84) here finds its true satisfaction. "The least element of holiness which the Law contains has more reality and durability than the whole visible universe" (Godet on Luke). Comp. also Mark xiii. 31, "My words shall not pass away"—a claim only seen in its full force when put beside these words about the Law. **One jot.** The permanence of even every *yod* (*y*, *j*), though the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet, is not infrequently referred to by Jewish writers (cf. *e.g.* in Lightfoot, 'Hor Hebr.;' Edersheim, 'Life,' i. 537). Observe (1) The mention of *yod*, evidently because of its small size, is one proof of the fact that the Hebrew characters in use in our Lord's time were much more similar to the usual form under which we know them (*Quadratschrift*) than to the form found on the Moabite Stone (Phœnician), where the *yod* is no smaller than other letters (*vide* Euting's very complete table of forms of the Hebrew alphabet in Chwolson, 'Corp. Inscript. Hebr.,' 1882; *vide* pp. 404—415 of the same work for Chwolson's much-controverted theory of the gradual development of the *Quadratschrift*, roughly from the time of Ezra till the eighth or ninth century A.D., out of old Aramaic forms slightly removed from Phœnician; and for the early history of the Hebrew alphabet generally, see the introduction to Driver's 'Samuel.' (2) We may, perhaps, see in our Lord's reference to *yod* and a "tittle" an indication that even already scrupulous care was taken of the text. The objection to this, derived from the non-literal quotations in the New Testament, is due to a misunderstanding of Jewish methods of quotation. **Or one tittle.** So Wickliffe and Tyndale downwards; "apparently a diminutive of *tit*, small" (Ald. Wright, 'Bible Word-Book'); κεραία (κερέα, Westcott and Hort, *vide* Appendix, p. 151), probably "a horn," then anything projecting like a horn. Used by the early Greek grammarians, like *apex* by the Latin, to designate: (1) A little projection in a letter, especially the top, the apex; Nicander, "the top and bottom are each called κεραία" (κεραία λέγεται τὸ ἄκρον καὶ ἔσχατον; gloss, κεραία, γράμματος ἄκρον); cf. Plutarch, "disputing about syllables and κεραιῶν (λογομαχεῖν περὶ συλλαβῶν καὶ κεραιῶν);" *vide* Wetstein. (2) Accents. So Thayer's Grimm; cf. Sophocles' 'Lex.' (1870), *s.v.* κεραία, "Apex, a mark over a letter, as in ᾱ (Philon., ii. 536. 27);" but Philo in this passage only refers to κεραίαν ἑκάστην without defining it. This double use of the Greek word forbids absolute certainty as to what our Lord was referring to, especially as the Hebrew word (קוץ, literally, "thorn") of which κεραία is a translation has itself a double sense, viz.: (1) The end of a letter, especially the "thorn-like" small upward stroke of *yod*. So most interpreters since Origen (in Wetstein), who says that the Hebrew letters *caph* (כ) and *beth* (ב) differ only by a short κεραία. They also quote the well-known Jewish examples (*e.g.* in Wetstein) of the effect of negligence in writing similar letters; *e.g.* if one writes *resh* (ר) for *daleth* (ד), "one" (Deut. vi. 4) becomes "another;" if *ḥeth* (ח) for *he* (ה), "praise" (Ps. cl.) be-

comes "profane." It must be noticed that the extremities of such Hebrew letters as we possess, which were actually written in our Lord's time on earth, are much more "thorn"-"horn"-like than those of our printed texts. I cannot, however, find קוץ actually used in this sense of other letters than *yod*. (2) Some distinguishing mark over a letter to indicate care in writing and reading it, or to remind readers of some interpretation or rule attached as a peg to it or to the word of which it forms a part. It was much later, indeed, that such marks became very elaborate, but it is probable that the rudiments of them were known in our Lord's time (for such קוצים, cf. Weber, 'Altsynag. Theol.,' § 27, 2 *a*, and the article on Akiba in 'Dict. of Christian Biogr.'). If it be objected that our Lord could hardly refer to these marks of traditional explanation as of such permanence, the answer is that in so far as these expressed legitimate issues (*vide infra*, ver. 21) of the Mosaic Law, he could place them on the same level as that Law itself. **Till all**; Revised Version, *till all things*; i.e. all things in the Law—all the requirements of the Law, in contrast to the one "jot" or "tittle" just mentioned. **Till all be fulfilled**; Revised Version, *be accomplished* (γένηται). The clause is probably epexegetical of "till heaven and earth pass away." Nothing in the Law shall pass away till heaven and earth pass away, when, with a new heaven and earth, all the contents of the Law will be completely realized (cf. Nösgen) so that even then nothing in the Law shall pass away (*vide infra*). On the contrary, every part of it, moral or ceremonial (Weiss), shall then, by being fully understood and obeyed in its true meaning, enter on its full and complete existence (γένηται).

Ver. 19.—Matthew only. As Christ honoured the Law (ver. 17) so are his disciples to honour it. Whosoever therefore. Seeing that every part of the Law is of permanent value. In this verse our Lord once for all declares his opposition to antinomianism. Every one of the commands in the Law is, in its true and ideal meaning, still binding. **Shall break** (λύσῃ). Not merely in contrast to "do" (ποιήσῃ, *vide infra*) in the sense of "transgress" (Fritzsche), but "abrogate" (cf. Bishop Westcott, on John v. 18, "Not the violation of the sanctity of the day in a special case, but the abrogation of the duty of observance;" cf. also ch. xvi. 19; xviii. 18; 1 John iii. 8). It expresses, indeed, a less complete abrogation than καταλῦσαι (ver. 17), because, while speaking of himself, the Lord could use the strongest word possible, and that with reference to the whole Law or the Prophets; but here his expression is limited by the inability of any individual disciple to carry out an abrogation even of one command. **One of these least commandments.** Not necessarily such as the Pharisees reckoned least, in their enumeration of small and great, but such as our Lord himself symbolized by "jot" or "tittle;" those precepts which in reality are the least important (Meyer). Chrysostom strangely says that our Lord here refers, not to old laws, but to those which he was about to lay down; similarly Bengel thinks of vers. 22—28, etc. While the Jews distinguished carefully between small and great precepts, they insisted on the importance of keeping even the smallest; cf. 'Ab.,' iv. 5 (Taylor), "Hasten to a slight precept . . . for the reward of precept is precept." **And shall teach men so.** Doing his best to abrogate it, not only in his own person by neglect or violation, but also for others by teaching them to disregard it. **He shall be called the least.** The Revised Version omits "he," "the." He is not cast out of the kingdom ("Ubi nisi magni esse non possunt," Augustine), but his want of moral insight (did he consider it "breadth of thought"?) leads to his being called *least* in the kingdom. It is the converse of the parable in Luke xix. 17, etc. There faithfulness in a very little (ἐλαχίστῳ) wins much; here disregard of a very little causes a person to be reckoned (ver. 9, note) as very little—the principle of judgment being that of Luke xvi. 10, "He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and he that is unrighteous in a very little is unrighteous also in much." **In the kingdom of heaven**; *i.e.* probably in its full and final establishment. The doctrine of grades of blessedness and of punishment hereafter is clearly taught in Scripture (*e.g.* Luke xii. 47, 48). **But whosoever shall do and teach them.** Similarly the Revised Version; but rather supply "it," *i.e.* "that which is required in the smallest commandment" (Meyer). The personal performance and conscious spreading of one of the least commandments will be found to involve so much that it gains for the person a high position. **Do and teach.** For many will perform a command without taking any conscious part in spreading it. **The same**; Revised Version, *he* (οὗτος). Why inserted here and not in the previous clause? Partly because of the awkwardness of inserting οὗτος there so soon after οὕτως; partly because our Lord wished to lay stress there on the recompense, here on the person ("he and no other") who receives recompense. On the thought, cf. 'Test. XII. Patr.' (Levi., § 13), "If he teach these things and practise them, he shall share the throne of the king, as also Joseph our brother." It is worth adding Tyndale's remark in his 'Exposition,' "Whosoever shall first fulfil them

[these least commandments following] himself, and then teach other, and set all his study to the furtherance and maintaining of them, that doctor shall all they of the kingdom of heaven have in price, and follow him and seek him out, as doth an eagle her prey, and cleave to him as burre."

Ver. 20.—Matthew only. The verse from "except" to the end is quoted verbally in Justin Martyr ('Trypho,' § 105), as being in "the Memoirs." **For I say.** So far from you my disciples (ver. 19) being right in despising any of the commands contained in the Law, they are all to be specially honoured by you; *for* **your righteousness** (*i.e.* the righteousness you show in observing them; there is no thought here of the imputed righteousness of Christ) must far exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees; otherwise there is no entrance for you into the kingdom of heaven. But wherein lay the superiority of the righteousness which the disciples were to have? Did our Lord mean that his disciples were to painfully toil through the various enactments, ceremonial and other, of the Law as the scribes and Pharisees did, only with more serious and earnest purpose than they? That were in the case of many scribes and Pharisees hardly possible. For notwithstanding our Lord's occasional denunciations, many of them were men of the severest earnestness and the deepest conscientiousness, *e.g.* Gamaliel and Saul of Tarsus. Our Lord must refer to the Law otherwise than as a system of enactments. His thought is similar to that of his words addressed to Nicodemus (John iii. 5), where he says that change of heart evidenced by public profession (cf. Rom. x. 10) is necessary for entrance into the kingdom of God (cf. also ch. xviii. 3). So here; while the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, even when joined to earnestness of purpose, nevertheless consists in the observance of external rules, there is a higher principle in the Law, by observing which a higher righteousness can be attained. Christ points, that is to say, away from the Law as a system of external rules to the Law in its deeper meaning, affecting the relation of the heart to God (cf. further Weiss, 'Life,' ii. 147). **Shall exceed**; rather, *shall abound still more than.* The statement is not merely comparative, but implies an abundance (cf. 1 Thess. iv. 10) even in the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. The Jewish spirit reckons up good actions as producing in many cases even a superfluity of righteousness. But the righteousness which Christ's disciples must have needs to be still more abundant. *The righteousness*; omitted in the Greek (Westcott and Hort) by condensation. **The scribes and Pharisees.** The most learned (scribes) and the most zealous (Pharisees) in the Law (cf. Nösgen) are here placed in one class (*τῶν γραμματέων καὶ Φαρισαίων*). **Ye shall in no case**; Revised Version, *in no wise.* "The emphatic negative *οὐ μή* is not elsewhere so rendered in the Authorized Version. The previous versions have in this place simply 'ye shall not,' following the Vulgate, *non intrabitis*" (Humphry). **Enter into the kingdom of heaven** (cf. ch. xviii. 3; vii. 21). A much stronger statement than that of ver. 19, though some would identify the two. There Christ was comparing one disciple with another; here his disciples with non-disciples. "Such a relaxing for yourselves and others of the commandments will *set you low* in the true kingdom of obedience and holiness; but this of having a righteousness so utterly false and hollow as that of the scribes and Pharisees will not merely set you low, but will exclude you from that kingdom altogether (ver. 20); for while that marks an *impaired* spiritual vision, this marks a vision utterly darkened and destroyed" (Trench, 'Sermon on the Mount').

Ver. 21—ch. vi. 18.—(2) *Their relation further defined.*

Vers. 21—48.—(*a*) Our Lord is still concerned with the relation of himself and his followers to the religion of the day, of which the Old Testament (ver. 17), and more especially the Law (ver. 18), was the accepted standard. But after having spoken of the need of careful attention to (vers. 17, 18), and observance of (ver. 19), even the least commands of the Law, he goes on to point out the far-reaching character of these commands, whether they are such as we should call more (vers. 21, 27, 31) or less (vers. 33, 38, 43) important.

It is essential to notice that our Lord refers to these commands, not merely as statements contained in the Law, but as part of the religion of the day, and that he contrasts their true bearing on life and conduct with that false bearing on this which was commonly predicated of them. By this it is not meant that our Lord was only opposing such narrow glosses and interpretations as had arisen at various times during the centuries after the promulgation of the Law (for these were for the most part perfectly natural and legitimate developments of the earliest possible interpretations of it), still less that he was thinking only of the worst of the misrepresentations of its commands, comparatively recently made by the Pharisees; but

that he was now going back, beyond this so far natural and normal development of the earliest interpretations, to the first principles underlying the revelation contained in the Law. While the Jews, not unnaturally, clung to the primary, but temporary, meaning of the Law as a revelation of God's will for them as a nation, our Lord was now about to expound its commands as a revelation of God's permanent will for them and all men as men. Our Lord was now, that is to say, wishing to do more than merely cut off the excrescences that, chiefly through the Pharisaic party, had grown up round the Law, but less than root up the Law itself. He rather cuts down the whole growth that had been, notwithstanding some mere excrescences, the right and proper outcome of the Law in its original environment, in order that, in fresh environment, which corresponded better to its nature, the Law might produce a growth still more right and proper.

Vers. 21—26.—*The sixth commandment.* Vers. 21—24 Matthew only; vers. 25, 26 have parts common to Luke.

Ver. 21.—**Ye have heard** (ἠκούσατε, frequentative aorist). Our Lord does not say, "ye have read" (cf. ch. xxi. 42), for he was not now speaking to the learned classes, but to a large audience many of whom were probably unable to read. "Ye have heard," *i.e.* from your teachers whose teaching claims to be the substance of the Law. So, probably, even in John xii. 34, where the multitude say that they "have heard out of the Law that the Christ abideth for ever," which, since this is hardly expressed in so many words in the Old Testament, must mean that the instructions they have received on this subject truly represent the substance of its teaching. So here our Lord says, "You have heard from your teachers (cf. Rom. ii. 18) that the substance of the sixth commandment is so-and-so." It is thus quite intelligible that in some of these utterances there should be found added to (vers. 21, 43) or intermingled with (ver. 33) the words of a passage of Scripture, other words which are *either* taken from Scripture, but from another place in it (perhaps ver. 33), *or* do not occur in Scripture at all, but merely help to form a compendious statement of a definite interpretation (here and ver. 43). It must remain doubtful whether our Lord himself formulated these statements of the popular teaching, or quoted them verbally as current. If the latter, as is perhaps more likely, there remains the at present still more insoluble question whether they were only oral or (cf. the case of the 'Didache') had already been committed to writing (cf. in this connexion Bishop Westcott, 'Hebr.,' p. 480). **That it was said by them of old time** (ὅτι ἐρρέθη τοῖς ἀρχαίοις). *By;* Revised Version, *to.* Similarly ver. 33. Although "by" may be defended (cf. Madvig, § 39 *g*), "to" (Wickliffe and Tyndale downwards) is certainly right, because (*a*) it is the common usage with a passive verb; (*b*) it is the constant usage with ἐρρέθη in the New Testament (*e.g.* Rom. ix. 12, 26); (*c*) the parallelism with ἐγὼ δέ, κ.τ.λ., is more exact; (*d*) the popular teaching claimed to be, even in its strictest esoteric form of oral tradition, derived ultimately, not from the words of any human teachers, however primitive, but from the words of God spoken by him to them. In the case before us our Lord accepts the popular teaching of the time as truly representing the Divine utterance in the giving of the Law, so far as that utterance was then intended to be understood. *Them of old time.* This can hardly be limited to "the original founders of the Jewish Commonwealth," to use Trench's curiously unbiblical expression ('Syn.,' § lxvii.). It probably includes all who lived a generation or more before our Lord's time (cf. Weiss). **Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment.** The substance, according to the popular teaching, of the sixth commandment (Exod. xx. 13; Deut v. 17). This the current form of it (based partly on Lev. xxiv. 21; Numb. xxxv.; Deut. xix. 12) was that murder was not to be committed, and that if it was committed the murderer was to be brought up for trial. *Shall be in danger of* (ἔνοχος ἔσται); *i.e.* in legal danger—legally guilty of a charge which involves the judgment (cf. ch. xxvi. 66). *The judgment;* i.e. the local Sanhedrin (cf. ch. x. 17), of apparently seven men in a smaller, twenty-three in a larger, town (cf. Schürer, II. i. pp. 149—154). This answers to "the congregation," or "the elders" of the town to which the murderer belonged, before whom he was to be tried (Numb. xxxv. 12, 16, 24; Deut. xix. 12).

Ver. 22.—**But I say unto you.** "I" emphatic (as also in vers. 28, 32, 34, 39, 44), in contrast to God, *as God's utterance was then conditioned;* i.e. in contrast to God's voice to and through Moses (cf. John i. 17; vii 23; Heb. x. 28, 29). Christ claims for his words the same authority, and more than the same authority, as for those spoken once by God. The circumstances had altered; the message for τοῖς ἀρχαίοις was insufficient now. Christ brings his own Personality forward, and claims to give a more perfect and far-reaching statement of the sixth commandment than the current form of its

teaching, notwithstanding the fact that this current form represented truly the original thought underlying its promulgation. In the following words our Lord speaks of three grades of anger, and, as answering to them, of three grades of punishment. The former will be examined under the several terms employed. Upon the latter it is necessary to make a few remarks here. They have been very variously understood. (1) (*a*) "The judgment" means the judgment of God alone, for he alone can take cognizance of mere anger; (*b*) "the council" means the judgment of the Sanhedrin, "a publick tryal;" (*c*) "the Gehenna of fire" means the judgment of hell (Lightfoot, 'Hor. Hebr.,' *in loc.*). (2) (*a*) "The judgment" means the local court; (*b*) "the council" means the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem; (*c*) "the Gehenna of fire" means hell (apparently Nösgen, and many other, especially Romish, expositors). It will be noticed that both the above interpretations are inconsistent. They make our Lord pass from literal to figurative language in the same sentence. Besides, in the second it is inexplicable how mere anger could be brought under the cognizance of a human court. For these reasons it is probable that (3) all three stages express metaphorically grades of Divine judgment under the form of the Jewish processes of law. (*a*) "The judgment" primarily means the local court; (*b*) "the council" primarily means the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem; (*c*) "the Gehenna of fire" primarily means the Valley of Hinnom, where the last processes of judgment seem to have taken place (*vide infra*). Christ does not say that the sins spoken of render a man liable to any of these earthly processes of law; he says that they render him liable to processes of Divine law which are fittingly symbolized by these expressions. (So Alford, Mansel, and especially Trench, 'Sermon on the Mount,' p. 190). **Whosoever is angry**; Revised Version, more precisely, *every one who* (*πᾶς ὁ ὀργιζόμενος*). This form of expression is specially frequent in 1 John, *e.g.* iii. 3, where Bishop Westcott says, "In each case where this characteristic form of language occurs there is apparently a reference to some who had questioned the application of a general principle in particular cases." (For the thought of this clause, cf. 1 John iii. 15.) **With his brother.** The term "brother" was applied in both Greek and Hebrew, by way of metaphor, to things that possessed merely such fellowship as arises from juxtaposition or from similarity of purpose (cf. of the cherubim, Exod. xxv. 20, "with their faces one to another," literally, "each (man) to his brother"). It is thus possible that here the thought is of any person with whom one is brought into temporary relation, quite apart from any question of a common source. Yet as this could have been represented by "neighbour" (cf. ch. xix. 19), it seems reasonable to see something more in "brother," and to view it with reference to its implied meaning, "fellowship of life based on identity of origin" (Cremer). To Jews as such the term would doubtless only suggest identity of origin nationally, *i.e.* a fellow-Jew (cf. especially Lev. xix. 17*a* with 16, 17*b*, 18; so even Mal. ii. 10); but to Christians of the time when the Gospel was written rather identity of spiritual origin, *i.e.* a follow-Christian. Probably when the expression fell from Christ's lips not one of those who heard him imagined that it could have any wider meaning than fellow-Jew or fellow-believer on Jesus, and probably most of them limited it to the former. In fact, Christ seems to have used it as a means whereby to lead up his hearers from the idea of a national to that of a spiritual relation (cf. vers. 47, 48). We are therefore hardly warranted (far-reaching as the word on Christ's lips is) in seeing here any reference to the thought of the universal brotherhood of man, based on the fact of all being children of one common Father (cf. further Bishop Westcott, on 1 John ii. 9). **Without a cause.** Omitted by the Revised Version; Revised Version margin, "many ancient authorities insert *without cause*." The *εἰκῇ*, though found in the Old Latin and Old Syriac, is certainly to be omitted, with ℵ, B, and Vulgate, notwithstanding Dean Burgon ('Revision,' p. 358); cf. especially Westcott and Hort, 'App.' It is redundant, because the two following expressions show that the anger itself is unloving and hostile (cf. further Meyer). There is a holy anger, but that is with a brother's sin, not with the brother himself (cf. Augustine, in Trench, 'Sermon on the Mount'). **Shall be in danger of the judgment**; *i.e.* of God's wrath as symbolized by the lowest degree of Jewish trial (*vide supra*). **And whosoever** (*ὃς δ' ἄν*). For in this case there was no need for the emphasizing inclusiveness of *πᾶς*. **Raca.** (1) Augustine's explanation (*in loc.*; *vide* Trench; cf. also 'In Joann. Evang.,' § li. 2; 'De Doctr. Christ.,' ii. 11), which he got "a quodam Hebræo," that *Raca* is in itself meaningless, and is only an interjection expressing indignation, as "Heu!" sorrow, or "Hem!" anger, or "Hosanna" (!) joy, will hardly commend itself to us to-day. (2) Nor will Chrysostom's (*in loc.*; *vide* Chase's admirable monograph on Chrysostom (1887), p. 133), "As we in giving orders to a servant or to some one of mean rank, say, *Go you; take you this message* (*ἄπελθε σὺ, εἰπὲ τῷ δεῖνι σύ*), so these who use the Syrian language used *Raca*, an equivalent to our *you* (*σύ*)," seem

much better, whether we take him as considering it as meaningless, or as in some way confusing its ending with the Shemitic suffix for "thee" (*ka*). (3) Ewald explains it by רקעא, "rascal" (*vide* Meyer); but (4) it is more probably the Aramaic ריקא, *reḳa* "empty;" cf. Hebrew plural *rekim*, "vain fellows," in Judg. ix. 4; xi. 3. St. James uses its equivalent (*ὦ ἄνθρωπε κενέ*, ii. 20) in solemn warning; but it was not infrequently used as a mere term of angry abuse (cf. Lightfoot, 'Hor. Hebr.,' *in loc.*, and Levy, *s.v.*). Buxtorf, *s.v.*, compares a favourite expression of Aben Ezra's, ריקי מוח, "empty-heads," for those who raise senseless objections, etc.; but the simple expression in our text refers rather to moral deficiency than to deficiency of brain. The council (*vide supra*). But; Revised Version, *and*. The Authorized Version interpolates an emphasis on the climax. Thou fool (Μωρέ). (1) This is probably the Greek word for "fool," equivalent to the Hebrew *nabal* (נָבָל), which was often used in the Old Testament of the folly of wickedness (Ps. xiv. 1; cf. 1 Sam. xxv. 25). In this sense *μωρός* is used by our Lord himself (ch. xxiii. 17[19]). (2) It may be the transliteration (cf. שכן, *σκηνοῦν*) of the Hebrew *moreh* (מורה), "rebel" (cf. Numb. xx. 10). (So Revised Version margin, Weiss, Nösgen.) In favour of this is the parallelism of language with *Raca*. The sense, too, is excellent, "Thou rebel against God!" It is almost equivalent to "Apostate!" But the absence of any evidence that the Jews used *moreh* as a term of abuse prevents our accepting this interpretation. Field ('Otium Norv.,' iii.) points out that if this interpretation were true, *moreh* would be "the *only* pure Hebrew word in the Greek Testament (*ἀλληλουΐα*, *ἀμήν*, and *σαβαώθ*, as being taken from the LXX., belong to a different class), all other foreign words being indisputably Aramaic, as *raca*, *talitha kumi*, *maran atha*, etc., which, as might have been expected, are retained by the authors of the Syriac versions without alteration. Not so *μωρέ*, for which both the Peschito and Philoxenian versions have *lelo* (ܠܠܐ) . . . a plain proof that these learned Syrians took it for an exotic, and not like *ῥακά*, a native word." In either case, the term expresses the absolute godlessness of him who is so addressed. Of the two terms, *Raca* is more negative, implying the absence of all good, Μωρέ more positive, implying decided wickedness. Shall be in danger of; *ἔνοχος ἔσται εἰς*. The change from the usual dative to the unique construction with *εἰς*, indicated by the Revised Version margin, "Greek, unto or into," is doubtless because our Lord no longer refers to the tribunal at which the punishment is ordered, but to the punishment itself into which the condemned man comes (cf. Winer, § xxxi. 5). Hell fire; Revised Version, *the hell of fire*; Revised Version margin, "Greek, Gehenna of fire" (*τὴν γέενναν τοῦ πυρός*). Gehenna is properly "the Valley of Hinnom" (Josh. xviii. 16*b*; Neh. xi. 30), or "of the son of Hinnom" (Josh. xv. 8; xvi. 18*a*; 2 Chron. xxviii. 3). It is probably the valley on the south-west of Jerusalem (see, however, W. F. Birch, in Palestine Exploration Fund Report, January, 1889, pp. 39, 42, who places it between the two parts of Jerusalem, identifying it with the Tyropœon Valley of Josephus, neglecting, however, to explain how so central a position is consistent with the "fire." In it was the spot where human sacrifices were offered to Moloch (cf. 2 Chron. xxviii. 3; and Rawlinson, on 2 Kings xxiii. 10), called the Topheth, "the place of horror" (*vide* especially Payne Smith, on Jer. vii. 31); and in it, presumably on the same place, were burnt, according to Jewish tradition (*vide* especially Kimchi, on Ps. xxvii. 13), the carcases of animals and other offal. There is no direct evidence that the bodies of criminals (as is often stated) were burnt there. But it seems probable that it was in this place that death by "burning," whether it was the later method of "burning" by a red-hot wire, or the earlier (Mishna, 'Sanhedr.,' vii. 2) of lighting faggots of wood round the condemned person, would be carried into effect. Thus both from the old associations of the valley, and from the then use made of it, the epithet "of fire" would be very naturally added. It seems probable that our Lord here referred primarily to "Gehenna" in this local sense (*vide supra*), but it is fair to notice that there is no other instance in the New Testament of this literal usage of the word. Elsewhere it is always in the metaphorical sense common in rabbinic writings of the place of final punishment which we usually call "hell."

Ver. 23.—Therefore. Seeing that the consequences of an angry spirit are so terrible. For there is no thought here of an unforgiving spirit spoiling the acceptance of the gift (*vide infra*). Our Lord is insisting that it is so important to lose no time in seeking reconciliation with a person whom one has injured, that even the very holiest action must be put off for it. If thou bring; Revised Version, *if . . . thou art offering*; *ἐὰν . . . προσφέρῃς* (similarly, *πρόσφερε*, ver. 24), the technical word coming some sixty times in Leviticus alone. Christ implies that the action has already begun. Thy gift; a general word for any sacrifice. To the altar. Since those to whom he spoke were still Jews, Christ illustrates his meaning by

Jewish practices. **A perverse literalism has found here a direct reference to the Eucharist.** For reasonable *adaptations* (cf. even in 'Didache,' § xiv.) of these two verses to this, see Waterland, 'Doctrine of the Eucharist,' ch. xiii. § 4 (pp. 359—362, Oxford, 1868). **And there rememberest, etc.** For the spirit of recollection may well culminate with the culminating action. Lightfoot ('Hor. Hebr.') shows that even the Jews taught such a postponement of the sacrifice if theft was remembered. He therefore thinks that the stress is on "ought" (τι): "For that which the *Jews* restrained only to pecuniary damages, Christ extends to all offences against our brother." But he overlooks the fact that, while the Jewish precept had reference to a sin (or even the neglect of some ceremonial rule, cf. Mishna, 'Pes.,' iii. 7) vitiating the offering, there is no thought of this here (*vide supra*). **Thy brother** (ver. 22, note). **Ought.** So from Tyndale downwards. Revised Version, *aught*, here and apparently always, after the spelling now preferred as marking the difference from the verb.

Ver. 24.—**First.** Joined in the Authorized Version and Revised Version to "be reconciled," and rightly, since the point is not "the unavoidable, surprising, nay, repellent removal of one's self from the temple" (Meyer), but reconciliation. **Be reconciled** (διαλλάγηθι); here only in the New Testament. There seems to be no essential difference between this and καταλλάσσω (*vide* Thayer).

Vers. 25, 26.—Parallel passage: Luke xii. 58, 59. The question of the relation of the two passages, as regards both language and original connexion, is exceedingly difficult. As to the former, the verbal differences seem to be such as would hardly have been made on purpose, and to be rather due to memory; yet the agreement is too minute to be the result of memory of a Gospel only oral. Perhaps memory of a document best satisfies the conditions. As to the original connexion of the verses, they, especially ver. 26, can hardly have been spoken twice. Most critics suppose that St. Luke gives them in their proper context; but if so, it is curious that two of his words, ὑπάγεις, ἀπήλλαχθαι, seem to recall our preceding ver. 24. One word might have been a mere coincidence, but hardly two. It is not likely that these words in ver. 24 were derived from Luke, for this supposes a double process in St. Matthew's mind, rejecting them from ver. 25 and placing them in ver. 24. It is more natural also to regard the first clause of Luke xii. 58, "As . . . him," as an expansion of the corresponding clause in our ver. 25 rather than this as a compression of that. This apparent reminiscence in Luke of what is given in our vers. 24 and 25*a* points to the connexion of vers. 24—26 in Matthew being original, and to it having been broken by Luke or by the framer of the source that he used.

A further stage in our Lord's warning. A man must not only seek reconciliation with the injured person (ver. 23), and that in preference to fulfilling the holiest service (ver. 24), but he must do so the more because of the danger of postponing reconciliation. It is noteworthy that our Lord in this verse does not define on whose side the cause of the quarrel lies.

Ver. 25.—**Agree with.** And that not with a merely formal reconciliation, but reconciliation based on a permanent kindly feeling towards him (ἴσθι εὐνοῶν). Professor Margoliouth suggests that this is a confirmation of what he thinks is the original text of Ecclus. xviii. 20, "Before judgment beg off" ('Inaugural Lect.,' p. 23: 1890). **Thine adversary.** Primarily the injured brother (*vide infra*). **Quickly.** For such is not the tendency of the human heart. **Whiles.** Delay not in making reconciliation while you have opportunity. Thayer compares Cant. i. 12. **Thou art.** On the indicative, cf. Winer, § xli. *b*, 3. 2, *a*, note (p. 371, trans. 1870). **In the way with him;** Revised Version, with the manuscripts, *with him in the way*. The right reading implies that the proximity of the persons may perhaps not last throughout "the way." "The way" is the road to the judge, as explained in Luke. But being on the road to him is here not presented as a possibility (Luke), but as a certainty. **For so, in fact, it is. Lest . . . the adversary** (ver. 26, note) **deliver thee.** Translating from the language of parable to that of fact, it is only if reconciliation has not been made, if the heart is still unforgiving and quarrelsome, that God the Judge will take notice of the offence. **And the judge . . . to the officer** (τῷ ὑπηρέτῃ); *i.e.* the officer whose duty it was to execute the judge's commands (cf. Lightfoot, 'Hor. Hebr.,' for illustrations). The expression here belongs to the figure; but in ch. xiii. 41 similar duties are predicated of the angels. If the figure was derived from the synagogue, the officer would doubtless be the *chazzan*, of which, indeed, ὑπηρέτης is the technical rendering (cf. Schürer, II. ii. p. 66). **And thou be cast** (καὶ βλη-

θήσῃ). The future indicative (still dependent on "lest") brings out the reality of the danger (cf. Bishop Lightfoot, on Col. ii. 8).

Ver. 26.—**Thou shalt by no means**, etc. A solemn statement of the unrelenting character of justice. The Romanists hold that the verse implies (1) that if payment can be made, release follows; (2) and that payment can be made. The first statement is probable; but as for the slightest hint of the second, it is wholly wanting. Christ affirms that non-reconciliation with a brother, if carried beyond that limit of time within which the quarrel can be made up, involves consequences in which the element of mercy will be entirely absent. The element of mercy can enter up to a certain point of time, but after that only justice. (On "pay," ἀποδῷς, see ch. vi. 4, note.) It will be observed that, in the above interpretation, ἀντίδικος has been consistently explained as a human adversary, for this seems to be the primary meaning here. But it should not be forgotten that, in the parallel passage in Luke, the reference is to God. Offences against man are there represented in their true character as offences against God, who is therefore depicted as the adversary in a lawsuit. That, from another point of view, he is also the Judge, matters not. Both conceptions of him are true, and can be kept quite distinct. It may be the case, indeed, that this reference of ἀντίδικος to God was present to St. Matthew's mind also when he recorded these words, and this would partly account for the terrible emphasis on ver. 26, the *pendant* to ver. 22. But even if the reference to God were present to St. Matthew's mind by way of application, it is not with him, as it is with St. Luke, the primary signification of the word. **Farthing.** The *quadrans*, the smallest Roman coin.

Vers. 27—30.—*The seventh commandment.* The verses occur in this form only here, but vers. 29 and 30 are found in ch. xviii. 8, 9 (parallel passage, Mark ix. 43—47), as illustrations of another subject (*vide infra*).

Ver. 27.—**By them of old time.** Omit, with the Revised Version (cf. ver. 21, note). **Thou shalt not** (Exod. xx. 14; Deut. v. 18).

Ver. 28.—**But I say** (ver. 22, note). The bare command forbidding an external action is insufficient. It must extend to the thought. Contrast Josephus ('Ant.,' xii. 9. 1), "The purposing to do a thing, without actually doing it, is not worthy of punishment." Generally, however, the sinfulness of wrong thoughts must have been acknowledged (cf. Ps. li. 10, and the tenth commandment; cf. late examples in Schöttgen). Hammond ('Pr. Cat.,' in Ford) says, "In the Law, the fastening of the eyes on an idol, considering the beauty of it, saith Maimonides, is forbidden (Lev. xix. 4), and not only the worship of it" (*vide* Maimonides, 'Hilk. Ab. Zar.,' ii. 2, by whom, however, the thought is, perhaps, rather condemned for what it leads to than *per se*; and similarly with Job xxxi. 1; Prov. vi. 25). **Whosoever**; Revised Version, *every one who* (ver. 22, note). **Looketh . . . to lust after** (πρὸς τὸ ἐπιθυμῆσαι). As πρὸς τό with the infinitive (*e.g.* ch. vi. 1), primarily denotes purpose; this may be equivalent to "looketh in order that he may lust, looketh to stimulate his lust" (cf. Meyer, Trench); but, as Weiss points out, this surely belongs to the refinement, not to the beginning of sin. Hence Nösgen suggests "looketh . . . lustfully" (cf. Jas. iv. 5). Probably this is one of those cases where, as Ellicott says on 1 Cor. ix. 18, πρὸς τό with the infinitive has "a shade of meaning that seems to lie between *purpose* and *result*, and even sometimes to approximate to the latter." At all events, it does not express, as εἰς τό would have expressed, the *immediate* purpose of the look (*vide* Ellicott, *loc. cit.*); cf. ch. vi. 1. **Her** (αὐτήν, B, D, etc.); accusative with ἐπιθυμεῖν here only in the New Testament. Perhaps the pronoun should be omitted, with ℵ.

Vers. 29, 30.—Also in ch. xviii. 8, 9 (parallel passage, Mark ix. 43—47); the chief differences being (1) that they are there adduced with reference to "offences" generally; (2) that the foot is mentioned, as well as the eye and the hand. It seems not improbable that this saying was spoken twice. The reason why our Lord did not mention the foot here may be either that that member is less immediately connected with sins of the flesh than the other two (cf. Wetstein, *in loc.*, "Averte oculum a vultu illecebroso: arce manum ab impudicis contrectationibus"), or, as seems more probable, that the eye and the hand represent the two sets of faculties receptive and active, and together express man's whole nature. The insertion of the foot in ch. xviii. 8, 9, only makes the illustration more definite. "The remark in ver. 29*f* treats of what is to be done by the subjects of the kingdom when, in spite of themselves, evil desires are aroused" (Weiss, 'Life,' ii. 149).

Ver. 29.—**Right.** Not in ch. xviii. and parallel passage. Inserted to enhance the preciousness of the members spoken of (cf. Zech. xi. 17; cf. ver. 39). **Offend thee**; Authorized Version, *do cause thee to offend*; Revised Version, *cause thee to stumble* (σκαν-

σκαλίζει σε). Perhaps the verb originally referred to the stick of a trap (*σκάνδαλον*, a Hellenistic word, apparently equivalent to *σκανδάληθρον*) striking the person's foot, and so catching him in the trap; but when found in literature (almost solely in the New Testament) it has apparently lost all connotation of the trap, and only means causing a person to stumble (for an analysis of its use in the New Testament, *vide* especially Cremer, *s.v.*). **Pluck it out, and cast it from thee.** The second clause shows the purely figurative character of the sentence. Our Lord commands (1) the removal of the means of "offence" out of the place of affection that it has long held; (2) the putting it away so thoroughly, both by the manner of the act and the distance placed between the "offence" and the person, that restoration is almost impossible. In both verbs the aorist brings out the decisiveness of the action. **For it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish.** It is better to lose one faculty, one sphere of usefulness, one part of those things which normally make a person complete, than that the person himself should be lost. Notice the sixfold personal pronoun in this one verse; "Our Lord grounds his precept of the most rigid and decisive *self-denial* on the considerations of the *truest self-interest*" (Alford). **Should be cast.** For to One thy whole person will become as abhorrent as the offending member ought in fact now to be to thee (*βάλε, βληθῇ*).

Ver. 30.—**Should be cast into hell;** Revised Version, *go into hell* (*εἰς γέενναν ἀπέλθῃ*). both word and order laying stress, not on the action of the Judge, but on thy departure, either from things of time and sense, or from his presence (ch. xxv. 46).

Vers. 31, 32.—*Divorce.*

Ver. 31.—Here only. **It hath been said** (*ἐρρέθη δέ*). This is the only one of the six examples to which our Lord does not prefix "ye have heard," and inserts *δέ*. Hence Lightfoot ('Hor. Hebr.') writes, "This particle hath this emphasis in this place, that it whispers a silent objection, which is answered in the following verse," *i.e.* Christ had said even a sinful look is too much; the lawyers said, "But the Law allows divorce, and therefore a married man can after all obtain the woman he desires." But this is strained. The shorter expression is here sufficient, because of the close connexion of this subject with the preceding. Hence, Revised Version, better, *it was said also.* It is, by the by, curious that the translators of the Authorized Version should have altered the rendering of *ἐρρέθη*, which they had given rightly in vers. 21, 27, and should have preferred the perfect here and in vers. 33, 38, 43. **Whosoever shall put away,** etc. The substance of Deut xxiv. 1, but leaving out all mention of cause for such putting away. This may be perhaps because our Lord is going to refer to this immediately, or because, in fact, the giving "a writing of divorcement" was now considered as alone of importance. **Let him give her;** Hebrew, *into her hand;* i.e. into her own possession (cf. Isa. l. 1; Jer. iii. 8). **A writing of divorcement.** See the translation of such a *gêt* in Lightfoot ('Hor. Hebr.').

Ver. 32.—(For full notes, cf. ch. xix. 9.) Parallel passages: Mark x. 12; Luke xvi. 18; apparently the context of Mark represents ch. xix. 1—8, and the context of Luke rather represents ch. v. 18. Notice here: (1) Matthew alone, in both places, gives the exception of fornication. (2) St. Paul refers in 1 Cor. vii. 10, 11 to this saying of our Lord's. (3) The laxity in this matter of the Hillel school of the Pharisees is well known. Their theory, indeed, sounds good, viz. that there should be perfect unity in the marriage state; but starting from this premiss they affirmed that if in any single respect the unity was not attained, divorce might follow. For examples, see Lightfoot ('Hor. Hebr.'). Our Lord upholds the school of Shammai. It is said that shameful laxity in divorce still exists among Oriental Jews. **Fornication.** The reference is to sin after marriage. Contrast Deut. xxii. 20, 21, where the husband's action is not thought of as *divorce.* The more general word (*πορνεία*) is used, because it lays more stress on the physical character of the sin than *μοιχεία* would have laid. **Causeth her to commit adultery;** Revised Version, *maketh her an adulteress,* since the right reading, *μοιχευθῆναι,* connotes being sinned against rather than sinning (Received Text, *μοιχᾶσθαι*). (For the thought, cf. Rom. vii. 3.) **And whosoever shall marry,** etc. Bracketed by Westcott and Hort, as omitted by certain 'Western' authorities (especially D and Old Latin manuscripts). (On the importance of the 'Western' group in cases of omission, *vide* Westcott and Hort, ii. §§ 240—242; cf. also ch. ix. 34, note.) The clause closely resembles Luke xvi. 18*b*. **Her that is divorced;** *i.e.* under these wrong conditions, as Revised Version, *her when put away,* even though *αὐτήν* is not expressed. This interpretation, notwithstanding Weiss's stigma of it as "ganz willkürlich," is surely only a plain deduction from the preceding clause. The fact that no such limitation is to be found in Luke xvi. 18 must not prejudice our judgment here.

Vers. 33—37.—*Oaths.* Matthew only; but cf. ch. xxiii. 16—22.

Ver. 33.—**By them of old time** (ver. 21, note). **Thou shalt not forswear thyself** (*οὐκ ἐπιορκήσεις*). These two words are the substance of Lev. xix. 12, which itself (cf. Rashi, *in loc.*) includes a reference to the third commandment. To them our Lord joins **but shalt perform**, etc., which is the substance of Deut. xxiii. 23 (cf. Numb. xxx. 2). (On our Lord's utterance representing the current form of teaching about oaths, cf. ver. 21, note.) This current teaching was the logical deduction from the statements of the Law, and yet the Law had a higher aim.

Ver. 34.—**Swear not at all** (cf. Jas. v. 12). Yet, as St. Augustine points out, St. Paul took oaths in his writings (2 Cor. i. 23; xi. 31); and our Lord himself did not refuse to answer when put upon his oath (ch. xxvi. 63, 64). He, that is to say, and St. Paul after him, accepted the fact that there are times when a solemn oath must be taken. How, then, can we explain this absolute prohibition here? In that our Lord is not here thinking at all of formal and solemn oaths, but of oaths as the outcome of impatience and exaggeration. The thoughtlessness of fervent asseveration is often betrayed into an oath. Such an oath, or even any asseveration that passes in spirit beyond "yea, yea," "nay, nay," has its origin *ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ*; cf. Chaucer, "Sweryng sodeynly without avysement is eek a gret syune" ('Parson's Tale,' § 'De Irâ'). Martensen, however ('Ethics, Individual,' § 100), takes the prohibition of oaths as formally unconditional and total, in accordance with the highest ideal of what man will hereafter be and require, and he sees the limitation, which he allows is to be given to these words, in the present conditions of human society. We have an ideal duty towards God, but we have also a practical duty to those among whom we live, and the present state of human affairs permits and necessitates oaths. Hence it was that even Christ submitted to them. **Neither by heaven**, etc. Our Lord further defines what he means by an oath. It does not mean only an expression in which God's Name is mentioned, but any expression appealing to any object at all, whether this be supraterrestrial, terrestrial, national, or personal. Although God's Name is often omitted in such cases, from a feeling of reverence, its omission does not prevent the asseveration being an oath. *Heaven*; Revised Version, *the heaven*; for the thought is clearly not the immaterial transcendental heaven, the abode of bliss, but the physical heaven (cf. ch. vi. 26, Revised Version). **Heaven . . . footstool.** Adapted from Isa. lxvi. 1, where it forms part of the glorious declaration that no material temple can contain God, that "the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands" as St. Stephen paraphrases it (Acts vii. 48). The great King is seated enthroned in the heaven, with his feet touching the earth.

Ver. 35.—**Nor by Jerusalem.** The Hebraistic *ἐν* is here exchanged for the less unclassical *εἰς*, the reason, perhaps, being that definite direction of one's thought towards Jerusalem was, as it seems, insisted upon by some. "Rabbi Judah saith, He that saith, By Jerusalem, saith nothing, unless with an intent purpose he shall vow towards Jerusalem" (Tosipht., 'Ned.,' i., in Lightfoot, 'Hor. Hebr.'). So Revised Version margin, *toward*. **For it is the city**, etc. (Ps. xlviii. 2).

Ver. 36.—**For thou canst not**, etc. As each of the other objects included a reference to God, so does also thy head. For even that recalls to mind the power of God, since every hair of it bears the stamp of his handiwork.

Ver. 37.—**Your communication.** Similarly, the Authorized Version in Eph. iv. 29, in archaic usage for "talk." **Yea, yea; Nay, nay.** Christ permits as far as the repetition of the asseveration. The adoption here by a few authorities of the phrase in Jas. v. 12 ("Let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay," *τὸ ναὶ ναί, κ.τ.λ.*) is unsuitable; for here the question is not of truthfulness, but of fervency in asseveration. **Whatsoever is more than these**; "that which is over and above these" (Rheims). There is a superfluity (*περισσόν*) in more fervent asseverations, which has its origin *ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ*. **Cometh of evil.** So the Revised Version margin, "as in ver. 39; vi. 13." Revised Version, *is of the evil one* (*vide* ch. vi. 13, note; and cf. 1 John iii. 12).

Vers. 38—48.—The two remaining examples of the current teaching of the Law are very closely connected together, and, in fact, our Lord's corrections of them are intermingled in Luke vi. 27—36. Yet the subjects are really distinct. In the first (vers. 38—42) our Lord speaks of the reception of injuries, in the second (vers. 43—48) of the treatment of those who do them.

Godet's remarks (in his summary of Luke vi. 27—45) on the use made by St. Luke of these examples are especially instructive. "These last two antitheses, which terminate in Matthew in the lofty thought (ver. 48) of man being elevated by love to the perfection of God, furnish Luke with the leading idea of the discourse as he presents it, namely, charity as the law of the new life."

Vers. 38—42.—*The reception of injuries.*

The Law inculcated that the injured should obtain from those who did the wrong exact compensation (on this being properly a command, not merely a permission, *vide* Mozley, 'Ruling Ideas,' etc., pp. 182, *sqq.*). Our Lord inculcates giving up of all insistance upon one's rights as an injured person, and entire submission to injuries, even as far as proffering the opportunity for fresh wrongs.

Ver. 38.—**An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.** No short phrase could more accurately describe the spirit of the Mosaic legislation. Offences against individuals were to be punished by the injured individual receiving back, as it were, the exact compensation from him who had injured him. While this was originally observed literally, it was in Mishnic times (and probably in the time of our Lord) softened to payment of money (*vide* Lightfoot, 'Hor. Hebr.'). The phrase comes three times in the Pentateuch (Exod. xxi. 24; Lev. xxiv. 20; Deut. xix. 21). Notice: (1) The LXX. has the accusative in each case, although only in the first does a verb precede. Probably the expression had already become proverbial in Greek even before the translation of the LXX. (2) The Hebrew of Deut. xix. 21 is slightly different from that of the other two passages, and as the preposition there used (ב) is not so necessarily rendered by ἀντί, that passage is perhaps the least likely of the three to have been in our Lord's mind now. It seems likely, however, that he was not thinking of any one of the three passages in particular. The words served him as a summary of the Law in this respect.

Ver. 39.—**But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee,** etc. The first clause comes here only; the second is found also in Luke vi. 29 (for the principle, cf. 1 Cor. vi. 7). We may notice that, while our Lord most perfectly observed the spirit of this command, he did not slavishly follow the letter of it (cf. John xviii. 22, 23). Nor did St. Paul (cf. Acts xvi. 35*ff*; xxii. 25; xxiii. 3; xxv. 9, 10). We must remember that, while he clothes his teaching with the form of concrete examples, these are only parabolic representations of principles eternal in themselves, but in practice to be modified according to each separate occasion. "This offering of the other cheek *may* be done outwardly; but only inwardly can it be always right" (Trench, 'Sermon on the Mount'). We must further remember the distinction brought out here by Luther between what the Christian has to do as a Christian, and what he has to do as, perhaps an official, member of the state. The Lord leaves to the state its own jurisdiction (ch. xxii. 21; *vide* Meyer). *That ye resist not;* Revised Version, *resist not*, thus avoiding all possibility of the English reader taking the words as a statement of fact. *Evil.* So the Revised Version margin; but Revised Version, *him that is evil* (cf. ver. 37; ch. vi. 13, note). The masculine here, in the sense of the wicked man who does the wrong, is clearly preferable; Wickliffe, "a yuel man." (For a very careful defence of Chrysostom's opinion that even here τῷ πονηρῷ refers to the devil and not to man, see Chase, 'The Lord's Prayer in the Early Church'). *Shall smite;* Revised Version, *smiteth.* The right reading gives the more vivid present. Ῥαπίζω comes in the New Testament here and ch. xxvi. 67 only. It is properly used of a stroke with a rod. (For "smiting on the cheeks," cf. the curious rendering of Hos. xi. 4 in the LXX; cf. also Isa. l. 6.) **Thee on thy right.** Matthew only. Although it is more natural that the left cheek would be hit first (Meyer), the right is named, since it is in common parlance held to be the worthier (cf. ver. 29). **Cheek.** Σιαγών, though properly *jaw*, is here equivalent to "cheek," as certainly in Cant. i. 10; v. 13. **Turn.** The action seen; Luke's "offer" regards the mental condition necessary for the action.

Ver. 40.—The parallel passage, Luke vi. 29*b*, gives the taking of the garments in the converse order. **And if any man will sue thee;** Revised Version, *and if any man would go to law with thee.* Notice that "will," "would" (τῷ θέλοντι), implies that the trial has not yet even begun. Do this even *before* it. **And take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also.** *Coat* (χιτών), equivalent to tunic, "shirt-like under-garment" (Meyer). *Cloke* (ἱμάτιον), equivalent to over-cloak, "mantle-like over-garment, toga, which also served for a covering by night, and might not therefore be retained as a pledge over night (Ex. xxii. 26)" (Meyer). This is put second, as being the more valuable. In Luke, where there is no mention of the law-court, the thought seems to be merely of the violent removal of the garments, taking them as they came. *Let him have* (ἄφες αὐτῷ). More positive than Luke's "withhold not" (μὴ κωλύσῃς).

Ver. 41.—Matthew only. **Shall compel thee to go;** Revised Version margin, "Gr. impress" (ἀγγαρεύσει). From the Persian. Hatch ('Essays,' p. 37) shows that while the classical usage strictly refers to the Persian system of mounted couriers (described in Herod., viii. 98; Xen., 'Cyr.,' viii. 6. 17), the post-classical usage refers to the later development of a system, not of postal service, but of the forced transport of military baggage. It thus indicates, not merely

forced attendance, but forced carrying. Hence it is used in ch. xxvii. 32 and Mark xv. 21 of Simon the Cyrenian, "who was pressed by the Roman soldiers who were escorting our Lord not merely to accompany them but also to carry a load." Thus here also the thought is doubtless that of being compelled to carry baggage. There may also be a reference, as Hatch suggests, to the oppressive conduct of the Roman soldiers (cf. Luke iii. 14). (For the spirit of our Lord's saying, *vide* also 'Aboth,' iii. 18 (Taylor), where the probable translation is, "Rabbi Ishmael said, Be pliant of disposition and *yielding to impressment.*") **A mile**; Revised Version, *one mile;* but see ch. viii. 19, note. A Roman mile of a thousand paces.

Ver. 42.—(Cf. Luke vi. 30, 34*a*, 35.) The connexion is as follows: Our Lord spoke first (ver. 39) of entire submission to injuries; then (ver. 40) of acceptance of loss of property; then (ver. 41) of acceptance of a burden imposed; here of acceptance of a demand for pecuniary assistance. This, in its turn, forms an easy transition to the subject of ver. 43, *sqq.* **Give to him that asketh thee**, etc. This verse has been often adduced by unbelievers to prove the incompatibility of our Lord's utterances with the conditions of modern society. Wrongly. Because our Lord is inculcating the proper spirit of Christian life, not giving rules to be literally carried out irrespective of circumstances. Hammond (*vide* Ford) points out that we have "a countermand" in 2 Thess. iii. 7, 10. (For the possibility of accounting for the verbal differences between this verse and Luke vi. 30 by supposing an Aramaic original, see Professor Marshall, in the *Expositor*, April, 1891, p. 287.)

Vers. 43—48.—*The treatment of those who injure us.* (Cf. *supra*, ver. 38.) Our Lord now turns from the reception of injuries to the treatment of those who injure us. We are not to injure them in return, nor merely to keep aloof from them, but to show them positive kindness. The Law, in the natural development of it current at the time, taught very differently.

Ver. 43.—Matthew only. **Ye have heard** (ver. 21, note). **Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.** The first clause is found in Lev. xix. 18, the second is the natural, and, from one point of view, legitimate, deduction from it. "The whole precept, as it stands, undoubtedly represents, and is a summary of, the sense of the Law" (Mozley, *vide infra*). The meaning of the words "neighbour" and "enemy" has been much discussed. In Leviticus, indeed, the meaning of "neighbour" is clear; it answers to "the children of thy people" in the preceding clause, *i.e.* it refers to members of the nation; all Israelites are termed "neighbours." The primary sense, therefore, of this whole precept is love to an Israelite, hatred to a non-Israelite (cf. Deut. xxv. 17—19). As such, the precept was of value in cementing the unity of the nation and preventing greater exposure to the evils, moral and religious, found outside it. But as quoted by our Lord, it has evidently a more private reference. He treats the precept as referring to personal friends (those who act in a neighbourly way) and enemies, and even this is, in some respects, a legitimate summary of the teaching of the Law, in so far as it forms another side of the law of retaliation. In days when public justice was weak much had to be left to the action of the individual, and he who was wronged was bid satisfy justice by retaliating on his enemy. That, however, it was not the only teaching of the Law is evident from Exod. xxiii. 4 (cf. Job xxxi. 29). But as regards both aspects of the precept the time had come for a change. The Jews only too gladly showed obedience to the second part of the precept, making themselves proverbial (cf. Tacitus, 'Hist.,' v. 5. 2; Juvenal, 'Sat.,' xiv. 103) for their more than incivility to Gentiles, and they seem to have also zealously carried it out towards their personal enemies (cf. Ps. cix.). On the whole subject, *vide* especially Mozley ('Ruling Ideas,' pp. 188—200), who, however, hardly allows enough weight to passages like Exod. xxiii. 4.

Ver. 44.—Parallel passage: Luke vi. 27, 28. **But I say unto you, Love your enemies.** Of all kinds, whether personal or opponents of you as Christians. **Bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you.** Rightly omitted by the Revised Version as interpolated from Luke. (For the thought, cf. 1 Cor. iv. 12; Rom. xii. 14.) **And pray.** In fullest contrast to the continual ill-wishing of the enemy. "They who can pray for their enemies can accomplish the rest" (Weiss, 'Life,' ii. 154). Thus to pray is to come very near to the spirit of Christ (cf. Luke xxiii. 34; Acts vii. 60). As a modern example: "Some persons had never had a particular place in my prayers, but for the injuries they have done to me" (Burkitt, 'Diary,' in Ford, on ver. 5). **For them that despitefully use you, and persecute you.** The words, "that despitefully use you and," are to be omitted, with the Revised Version, as in effect interpolated from Luke.

Ver. 45.—Parallel passage: Luke vi. 35, which is more full, but hardly so original in form. **That ye may be the children** (ὅπως

γένησθε υἱοί); *sons* (Revised Version); cf. ver. 9, note. The meaning of the clause is not certain. It may be: (1) Love to enemies is the means whereby you may become possessed of the full privileges involved in the nature of sons. These privileges are more than the mere participation in Messianic glory (Meyer), and are rather all the blessings present and future which belong to sonship. (2) Love, in order that on each occasion you may become in fact (*almost* our "show yourselves") sons of your Father, sons corresponding in ethical conduct to your position already received. **Your Father.** Not "the Father" (cf. ver. 16, note). **Which is in heaven**; for (ὅτι). The privileges generally, or the resemblance on each occasion, can only be obtained by behaviour similar to his, namely, kind treatment of those who injure you; for this is what he himself shows. **He maketh his sun to rise** (ἀνατέλλει). If we may lay stress on the Greek, our Lord expresses the popular notion of the sun ascending. It must, however, be remembered that the word he himself probably used was זרח in hiph. (ܐܰܙܪܺܚ, Peshito), which contains no thought of motion, but rather of appearance. **Sun . . . rain.** The two great sources of maintenance. **On the evil and on the good . . . on the just and on the unjust.** The first pair connotes, as it seems, the extreme of evil (ch. vi. 13, note) and good, in each case manifesting itself according to its opportunities; the second, the life and character as tried by the standard, especially the human standard, of just dealing. Notice how, by chiasm, the emphasis is laid on the ungodly alike at the beginning and at the end. Our Lord here brings out God's active love as seen in nature, nourishing and maintaining men, irrespective of the qualities of individuals and of their treatment of him and his laws. The thought is found elsewhere, *e.g.* in Seneca (*vide* Meyer), "Si deos imitaris, da et ingratis beneficia; nam et sceleratis sol oritur, et piratis patent maria" (cf. Bishop Lightfoot, on 'Philippians' ["St. Paul and Seneca," p. 281], for a collection of parallels to the sermon on the mount).

Ver. 46.—Vers. 46, 47; parallel passage: Luke vi. 32, 33. **For if,** etc. The principle of the Law, reciprocity—love your neighbour and him only—is in reality no better than the principle adopted by those who are renegades to true religion (οἱ τελῶναι), or by those who have no knowledge of it (οἱ ἐθνικοί). Such a principle brings with it no other corresponding effect (μισθός, ver. 12, note) than such as even these receive. You aim at more, the privileges belonging to the sons of God; therefore do more. **What reward have ye?** *i.e.* already entered in God's book of account (Winer, § xl. 2, *a*). **The publicans**; Revised Version margin, "That is, *collectors or renters of Roman taxes*: and so elsewhere." To this short description little need be added. The Roman system of taxation was to put up the country, or certain productions of the country, at auction, and to "sell" them to any who would undertake to pay the greatest amount of revenue from them (cf. also Josephus's account of the Egyptian method, B.C. 250, 'Ant.,' xii. 4. 4; and Sayce's article in the *Jewish Quarterly*, July, 1890, on a Jewish taxgatherer at Thebes, B.C. 140). This contract was in turn divided and subdivided, those who actually drew the money from the people being generally natives. It thus being the interest of every contractor and sub-contractor to squeeze as much as possible from those under him, the whole system was demoralizing to all engaged in it. In the case of Judæa it was especially so, as there was a strong feeling among religious Jews against the lawfulness of paying taxes to a Gentile ruler (cf. ch. xxii. 17, note). It is no wonder, therefore, that we find the native collectors (even of districts where the money raised went to Antipas's treasury, ch. ix. 9, note) classed with "harlots" (ch. xxi. 31), "sinners" (ch. ix. 11), the heathen (ver. 47; ch. xviii. 17). Yet out of these one was chosen to be among the twelve, and to write that Gospel which specially describes the relation of Jesus of Nazareth to the religious expectations of the nation.

Ver. 47.—**And if ye salute.** It seems almost a bathos after "love." But it expresses love publicly showing itself by kindly greeting. **Your brethren**; with whom you have the fellow-feeling of common origin—in this case not national, but spiritual (cf. ver. 22, note). **What do you more than others?** (τί περισσὸν ποιεῖτε;); Tyndale, "What singuler thynge doo ye?" **Do not even the publicans?** Revised Version, *the Gentiles?* with the manuscripts. "The form used (ἐθνικός) describes character rather than mere position" (Bishop Westcott, on 3 John 7); "hethen men" (Wickliffe). So; Revised Version, *the same*, with the manuscripts. Τὸ αὐτό, notwithstanding its occurrence in ver. 46 and parallel passage, Luke vi. 33, was altered to the commoner οὕτως ποιεῖν.

Ver. 48.—In Luke vi. 36, "Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful," we have certainly a reminiscence of the same saying, and, almost as certainly, from the smoothing away of difficulties, a less original form of it. **Be ye therefore perfect**; Revised Version, *ye therefore shall be perfect* (ἔσεσθε οὖν ὑμεῖς τέλειοι). The form is based on Deut. xviii. 13, τέλειος ἔσῃ. While the introduction of ὑμεῖς emphasizes the contrast between Christ's disciples and those who

followed the usual deduction from the Law, the position of ἔσεσθε (reversing that of Deuteronomy) shows that still greater emphasis is placed on their "perfection" as something to be attained. Also, while in the parallel passage of Luke the stress is upon the change that must take place (γίνεσθε) —unless, as is possible, it has the simple meaning "show yourselves" (cf. ver. 45, note)—in Matthew the possibility or even the certainty of attaining it is definitely stated. You shall make this your aim, and shall attain to it. *Therefore.* A deduction from the principle laid down in vers. 44—47. From the consideration of the example of your Father, and of the insufficiency of being like publicans and heathen. *Perfect* (τέλειοι). In the Gospels here and ch. xix. 21 only. The word denotes those who have attained the full development of innate powers, in contrast to those who are still in the undeveloped state—adults in contrast to children. Thus the thought here is—Ye shall be satisfied with, and shall attain to, no lower state than that of maturity. But what is it as to which they shall be mature? Surely not the whole Law as illustrated by all the examples since ver. 21; for vers. 31, 32 are excluded by the comparison with God immediately following. It must be the subject with which the sentence is closely connected, vers. 44—47 (cf. Meyer); love to others even though they have done you wrong. In this respect, viz. love to others, you shall admit, says our Lord, no lower ideal than that of maturity, even such maturity as is found in him who sends sun and rain on all alike. Some (Augustine, Trench) have seen in this a merely relative maturity, itself capable of further development; but the subject rather demands absolute and final maturity. This does not imply that man will ever have such fulness of love as the Father has, but that he will fully and completely attain to that measure of love to which he as a created being was intended to attain. It may, however, be in accordance with true exegesis to see, with Weiss, for such apparently is his meaning, also an indication of further teaching — the nature of the revelation made known by Christ. For whereas "the fundamental commandment" of the Old Testament, "Ye shall be holy; for I am holy" (Lev. xi. 44, 45), was the more negative thought of God's exaltation above the impurity of created beings, our Lord now puts forth "the positive conception of the Divine perfection, whose nature is all-embracing, self-sacrificing love. And in place of the God, for ever separated from his polluted people by his holiness, to whom they can only render themselves worthy of approach through the most anxious abstinence from all impurity, and by means of the statutes for purification contained in the Law, there is on the ground of this new revelation the Father in heaven, who stoops to his children in love, and so operates that they must and can be like him" (Weiss, 'Life,' ii. 156). The simple and straightforward meaning of the verse, however, is this—You shall take no lower standard in love to enemies than God shows to those who ill treat him, and you shall, in fact, attain to this standard. Upon this (for the limitation of the meaning to one point makes no real difference) there arises the question which has been of so much importance in all ages of the Church—What is the measure of attainment that is really possible for Christ's disciples upon earth? ought they not to expect to live perfect lives? But the text gives no warrant for such an assertion. No doubt it says that attainment to maturity—to perfection according to creaturely limits—is eventually possible. That is implied in ἔσεσθε (*vide supra*). But *when* this attainment can be made is not stated. Many will, indeed, affirm that, as our Lord is giving directions to his disciples concerning things in this life, the attainment also is affirmed to be possible in this life. But this by no means follows. Christ gives the command, and by the form of it implies that it shall be carried out to the full. But this is quite consistent with the conception of a gradually increasing development of love which, in fact will attain maturity, a state in which God's love has ever been; but not immediately and not before the final completion of all Christ's work in us. The words form, indeed, a promise as well as a command, but the absence of a statement of time forbids us to claim the verse as a warrant for asserting that the τελειότης referred to can be attained in this life. Trench ('Syn.,' § xxii.) explains the passage by saying that the adjective is used the first time in a relative, and the second time in an absolute, sense. But this does not seem as probable as the interpretation given above, according to which the adjective is in both cases used absolutely. His following words, however, deserve careful attention. "The Christian shall be 'perfect,' yet not in the sense in which some of the sects preach the doctrine of perfection, who, so soon as their words are looked into, are found either to mean nothing which they could not have expressed by a word less liable to misunderstanding; or to mean something which no man in this life shall attain, and which he who affirms he has attained is deceiving himself, or others, or both." Even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect; Revised Version, *as your heavenly Father is perfect*; so the manuscripts. The epithet, ὁ οὐράνιος, is wanting

in Luke, but Matthew wishes to lay stress on their Father's character and methods being different from those of an earthly father. Observe again not "*the* Father" but "your Father;" nerving them to fulfil the summons to likeness to him (cf. ver. 16).

## HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—16.—*The sermon on the mount. The first part of the sermon: the law of the kingdom of heaven.* I. THE BEATITUDES. 1. *The first Beatitude.* (1) Blessedness. It is a deeper word than "happiness." Short-sighted and unwise, we call men happy when the world goes well with them, when they are cheerful, good-natured, loved by relations and friends. We do not always call them blessed. That word, we feel instinctively, implies more heavenly affections, a deeper, holier joy. Blessedness is inward and abiding; outward prosperity cannot give it, nor can adversity take it away. It is like the depths of the ocean: the surface is changeful, sometimes calm and waveless, sometimes tossed hither and thither by the restless winds; while far and deep below there is ever the same changeless rest, silence, and peace unbroken and eternal. This deep meaning was felt by the heathen writers. The simplest form of the Greek word (μάκαρ) was used in old Greek poetry first of the gods—the blessed gods as opposed to mortal men—then of the dead who were supposed to dwell in "the islands of the blest" (compare the use of the German *selig* and the French *feu*, derived from *felix*). The collateral form μακάριος, sometimes used with the same higher reference, was not unfrequently degraded into a more worldly sense, the rich and the better educated; as people say "the better classes" now. The New Testament has rescued the word from this mistaken application, and filled it with a high and holy meaning. The world is wrong. Good fortune is not blessedness; blessedness is the gift of God; what he gives cannot be taken away by the chances and changes of this mortal life. Blessedness is not an outward ornament of life; it is a man's own, for God has given it; it is in the heart, wrought into the inner being; it is holy, spiritual, heavenly. It is the character, the privilege of the children of the kingdom, for they must bear the image of their King: "As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." He first exhibited the heavenly life upon earth; it had never been seen there before. The conception of that life is absolutely original; it had never entered into the thoughts of ancient poets or sages. It is altogether different from the portraitures of virtue drawn by the old heathen philosophers. The Lord Jesus is at once Example and Teacher. His life is the blessed life. He bids us learn of him; there, and there only, shall we find rest for our souls. This blessedness which is learned of Christ dieth not; it is the beginning of the blessedness of heaven. We must be blessed here to be blessed there; we must have the Beatitudes of the sermon first, then shall we have the Beatitude of the holy dead which die in the Lord. (2) The poor in spirit are blessed. Not necessarily, or always the poor in worldly means; nor, again, the poor in the endowments of the soul, in intellect, strength of will, elevation of character. This was the scoff of the Emperor Julian the Apostate; but, blessed be God, not only many men of rank and wealth, but also many of great natural gifts and highly cultivated minds, have learned of the Lord Jesus this first Beatitude. "With men this is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible." The seat of this evangelical poverty is the spirit. The spirit, when distinguished from the soul in the sacred writing, is that highest part of man's immaterial being, which was breathed into his nostrils by God; which enables him, alone of the animal creation, to feel after God, to form, more or less imperfectly, an idea of God; which is receptive of the Holy Spirit, and can, when illuminated by his gracious presence, abide in communion with God. The spirit of the true Christian is brought into an intimate relation with God. Such a one feels his own littleness, his own sinfulness, in the presence of the Almighty, the Most Holy. Led by the Spirit of God, he is brought near to Christ, and learns the grace of lowliness from him who, being in the form of God, made himself of no reputation, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death. Poverty of spirit comes first in the description of the blessed life. Lowliness is the beginning of holiness; we can make no real progress in the spiritual life without it. Christ was lowly in heart. He raised that word, which the world regarded as equivalent to mean or abject, to be the

name of a high Christian grace. Those who would be near to him, great in the kingdom of heaven, must be like their King, unaffectedly humble. They must lay aside earthly ambitions, they must be willing to take the lowest place, they must learn the difficult lesson, "In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves;" for this is the fixed, immutable law of the kingdom of heaven, "Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased, and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted." (3) The reason. "Theirs is the kingdom of heaven." The kingdom of grace is theirs now, in their heart. In their lowliness they have by God's grace put down self from the throne of their heart, and Christ reigneth there alone. They submit themselves to him in deep humility and reverence. The heart that is emptied of self is filled with Christ. The kingdom of glory is theirs by hope, by the sure promise of God. They are sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of the heavenly inheritance. The kingdom of heaven is theirs; for the law of that kingdom is written in their hearts, marking them as citizens of the heavenly country, loyal subjects of the heavenly King. 2. *The second Beatitude.* (1) "Blessed are they that mourn." (*a*) It seems a paradox. Sorrow and joy are opposed to one another; but the Lord says that there is a sorrow which is blessed. Life is full of sorrows. There is more sorrow in the world than joy, more pain than pleasure. Outward sorrows are blessed if they are meekly borne, in patience and in trustful faith. When the sorrow is recognized as a chastisement, it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness; when the pain is taken as a cross, it lifts the suffering Christian nearer to him who died upon the cross, who giveth peace. (*b*) But the connection seems to imply that the mourning of the text is spiritual mourning. The poverty of the first Beatitude is in the spirit; so must be the mourning of the second. Poverty in spirit leads to mourning—mourning for past sins and unworthiness, mourning for the slowness of our spiritual progress. He who is poor in spirit is in the kingdom of God and near to the King. He looks on him whom he has pierced, and mourns for him. He must mourn, in sympathy with the Saviour's sufferings, in sorrow for his own unworthiness of the Saviour's love, for his many sins against that great love, for his want of gratitude, for the coldness of his heart. The world runs heedlessly after pleasure, amusement. The Lord says, "Blessed are they that mourn." He himself was "a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." "Is it nothing to you," he seems to say, "all ye that pass by? Is there any sorrow like unto my sorrow?" Then we Christians, who live under the shadow of the cross, must learn the blessedness of mourning. "Godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation not to be repented of." Blessed are they who mourn with that godly sorrow. It worketh repentance, that deep and holy change of heart, that change out of the image of the earthy into the image of the heavenly, which is not to be repented of, which none who by God's grace have passed through it can ever regret, though it was wrought out in much sorrow and mourning; for it is unto salvation—a present salvation, salvation from sin now; and a future salvation—everlasting life with God in heaven. (2) The reason of their blessedness. "They shall be comforted." "They"—the word is emphatic. That comfort is not for all; it is for those who have mourned. "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes;" but they must have wept, there must have been tears. The mourning is spiritual, so is the comfort. Christ himself giveth comfort. He is the Christus Consolator; he was sent "to comfort all that mourn;" he was the Consolation of Israel for which the holy Simeon waited. "Come unto me," he saith, "all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." But there is "another Comforter," whom the Lord will send from the Father to abide for ever with his people—God the Holy Ghost. The first Christians walked in the comfort of the Holy Ghost (Acts ix. 31); we pray that we may evermore rejoice in the same holy comfort. He comforts the hearts of his chosen, for he strengthens them with all might in the inner man. He fills them with peace and joy in believing; the fruit of his Divine indwelling is love, joy, peace. They shall be comforted who sorrow after a godly sort; now, by the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit; hereafter, by the unclouded vision of the glory of God. 3. *The third Beatitude.* (1) "Blessed are the meek." What is meekness? According to Aristotle, the virtue which consists in the due regulation of the natural passion of anger is without a name; for meekness does not lie in the mean between the two opposite vices—it tends rather towards the defect. The meek man is not given to retaliate injuries, but rather to forgive; and it

is a slavish thing, he says, for a man to take insult calmly. Such was the teaching of the Greek philosopher. The Lord Jesus says, "Blessed are the meek." His life, his teaching, changed for ever the position of the gentler virtues. He was meek and lowly in heart. Christian meekness is of great price in the sight of God. We see what meekness is when we look at the life of Christ. It is, first, a willingness to take wrong patiently (see 1 Pet. ii. 19—25), and, secondly, gentleness in dealing with others. A meek man will not think overmuch of himself, his claims, his position, his dignity; he will not allow his temper to be ruffled by slights and provocation; he will not expect to be always treated with respect and reverence; he will do his duty in the station where God has set him gently, lovingly, seeking not honour from men, ambitious only to be well pleasing unto God. True meekness is a grace, one of the fruits of the Spirit. Natural meekness may be no better than timidity, shyness, weakness of character. It may, as Aristotle says, imply a want of sensibility, of quick perception; it may be dull, weak, abject. But true meekness is a strong thing. It is found sometimes in men who were naturally the reverse of meek, like the holy apostle St. John. It comes from the working of the Holy Spirit, which gives strength and energy to the character, while it disciplines it into gentleness and patience. Christian meekness may outwardly resemble its natural counterfeit; inwardly it is very different. It implies strength of purpose, holy courage, sustained perseverance in self-control. We see it in the character of the Lord Jesus Christ. We see in him a most lofty fortitude joined with the most tender gentleness in dealing with penitent sinners, the most wonderful meekness in the midst of insult and outrage. Meekness is hard to learn; but it is a necessary lesson for us, for it was characteristic of the Master, and he declares it blessed. (2) The reason. "They shall inherit the earth." It is a quotation from the thirty-seventh psalm; it sounds like the Old Testament. But the New Testament too presents here and there the "promise of the life that now is" (1 Tim. iv. 8). The Epistle to the Ephesians re-echoes the Old Testament promise to those who honour father and mother; and the Lord himself promises a hundredfold more in this time to those who are ready to forsake earthly things for his love. The meek shall inherit the earth. The quiet strength of Christian meekness will win its way where violence fails. Gentleness is a power in the world; it exerts a strange influence over rougher natures; it often comes to the front and gains a high place among men. And when this is not the case, it has a joy of its own—a deep inner contentment, a holy restfulness which gives a sweetness to this present life on earth. Such are the tendencies of meekness—tendencies which have not always their full scope, do not realize their full blessedness amid the selfishness, the hardness, the violence of the world. But "we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." There shall meekness have its perfect work, and win its perfect blessedness. 4. *The fourth Beatitude.* (1) "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness." (*a*) Righteousness here is equivalent to holiness—personal, spiritual holiness, holiness of heart and life. It is the sum of all Christian graces. But we have no righteousness of our own: "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." Christ is made unto us Righteousness: "This is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness." If only we are his, grafted once into the true Vine, abiding in him now, then his righteousness is ours, for he himself is ours. "My Beloved is mine, and I am his." (*b*) We must hunger and thirst after this righteousness. The desire of the Christian heart is righteousness; not simply happiness hereafter, but righteousness now. All men wish for happiness, present and future. The true Christian wish is for righteousness first; happiness will follow. "The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever." It is righteousness that the Christian soul desireth. And that desire must be like hunger and thirst; not a faint hesitating wish, but a strong longing desire—a desire that cannot be satisfied till it has attained its object. Hunger and thirst imply a previous void, a want. The desire of righteousness implies a sense of sin and weakness. There is a felt want in the soul, a craving, an aching void—a longing like that of David expressed in the fifty-first psalm; not the fear of punishment, but a longing after a clean heart—after the Holy Spirit of God. To hunger and thirst after righteousness is to hunger and thirst after Christ. He is our Example here as always. His meat was to do the will of him that sent him, and to

finish his work. He hungered for our souls, he thirsted for our salvation; and we must hunger and thirst after him, who is the Life of our souls, the true Bread that came down from heaven, whose flesh is meat indeed, whose blood is drink indeed, who alone can fill our restless craving hearts. "He that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." (2) The reason of their blessedness. "They shall be filled." For Christ desireth us; he longs to give himself to us, as he has given himself for us. "Behold," he says, "I stand at the door, and knock." He asks us only to open; he will enter in and sup with us, and we with him. We may hunger and thirst after many things, and never gain them; if we do gain them, they often become mere ashes in our mouth, vanity and vexation of spirit. But they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, after Christ, cannot fail to attain the object of that longing desire; for the word of Christ is pledged, "They shall be filled." And he hath all things who hath Christ. He needeth nothing more who hath chosen the good part, the one thing needful. "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." 5. *The fifth Beatitude.* (1) "Blessed are the merciful." "The Lord," St. James says (v. 11), "is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." It was pity, tender pity for humanity in its sin, its darkness, its misery, its hopelessness, which moved the Eternal Son to take upon him our human nature. In that human nature he had shown the sweet self-forgetting tenderness of his Divine compassion, as he moved among the sick and suffering of Galilee. His disciples must follow the example of the Master; they must be pitiful. It is the principle, the inner affection of pity, which is commended here. The pity which is blessed is like the sacred pity of Christ. It is wide in its range, coextensive with human sin and suffering. The Lord pitied not only the afflicted and the poor, but also the proud Pharisee, the cold-hearted Sadducee—that Jerusalem, self-satisfied and unbelieving, that would not seek shelter beneath the wings of his mercy. Human sin as well as human suffering moves the Christian heart with pity. Indignation against sin must ever be mingled with pity for the sinner. The thoughtless sinner who lives in wealth and luxury is an object of the Christian's pity as well as the sick and helpless poor. This holy pity lies deep in the heart. It expresses itself in intercessory prayer, in gentle words and looks, and, when it is possible, in acts of mercy. (2) The reason. "They shall obtain mercy." Mercy, in the well-known words of our great poet, is twice blessed; it blesses him that gives and him that takes. It is blessed in its own reflex action on the merciful soul, in the sweetness, the inner joy, which the exercise of mercy brings to the heart. But the Lord states another ground of its blessedness. The merciful shall obtain mercy. We all need the mercy of our God. What would the best of us be without his tender pity? We look back upon our past lives; we see a waste of sin, of hardness, of unloving ingratitude. God pitied us, God called us. We heard the voice of Jesus, "Come unto me." We came in awe, in contrition, in trembling hope; we found rest for our souls. He pitied us. We need that sacred pity still for our daily sins and shortcomings; and oh! we shall need it in the hour of death and in the day of judgment. It is pledged to the merciful: they shall obtain mercy; "they" (the word is emphatic)—they shall be pitied. Then the sense of our own sin and weakness, our own need of God's mercy, our hope of that mercy at the last, should quicken in our hearts the holy feelings of pity and sympathy with every form of distress and misery, and lead us to delight in deeds of mercy. 6. *The sixth Beatitude.* (1) "Blessed are the pure in heart." The Pharisees thought much of legal purity, of the Levitical distinctions between the clean and the unclean. The Lord Jesus insists on purity of heart. The pure heart is the clean heart, clean from taint of every kind, from everything that defileth. To eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man, as the Pharisees thought it did; but evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies, these evil things, whether only conceived in thought, or carried out in deed, these defile the man. The pure heart is clear, bright, transparently sincere; it seeks not to deceive. It has no hidden motives, no selfish aims underlying a fair outside; its aim is to be, not to seem. Especially the pure heart is clean from those corrupting thoughts, those foul imaginations, those unholy deeds, which the name unclean, impure, seems especially to designate. This one kind of defilement gains such a terrible hold upon the imagination, it so entirely corrupts the whole heart and

mind, it separates a soul from God so utterly, with such fearful rapidity, that it occurs first to our thoughts when we meditate on this Beatitude. The pure heart is clean, for in some measure even here it sees God. "The world seeth me no more," the Lord said, "but ye see me." It is that blessed vision, the vision of God, which keeps the heart of the Christian pure. For this purity is a Christian grace; it comes from the abiding presence of God the Holy Ghost, who purifies the heart in which he deigns to dwell. That presence cleanses, refines, illuminates; it shines through the dark places of the heart; it shows the plague-spots, and through confession, contrition, repentance, it cleanses them away. Then blessed are the pure and the purified; those who were once impure, unclean, but who, having confessed their sins, have found the truth of that most gracious promise, so full of sweetness to the penitent, "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Once they sat in darkness and the shadow of death, now they walk in the light; and if we walk in the blessed light of his presence, then "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin." It is cleansing us daily, hourly, if we are living in the faith of the cross, in the faith of the Son of God, "who loved me, and gave himself for me." How many souls, now at rest in the paradise of God, were once impure, unholy! But the constraining love of Christ drew them to himself; and they washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. There is a Fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness. It is open always. The impure, the sin-defiled, come daily. Not all of them, alas! but the penitent, the sorrowing—they wash, and are clean. (2) The reason. "They shall see God." They see him now by faith. Purity of heart cleanses the mental vision; the pure in heart see mysteries of grace, mysteries of love and holiness which are hidden from the eyes of the unclean. He manifests himself to those who keep his Word. But the promise opens out a more glorious vision. "When he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." They who hope to see him as he is, in his glory, must purify themselves; they must take the Saviour's spotless purity as their high example. The pure in heart shall see the King in his beauty; they, and they only. He is of purer eyes than to behold evil. The impure cannot bear his all-seeing, heart-searching glance. 7. *The seventh Beatitude.* (1) "Blessed are the peacemakers." God is the God of peace; the Messiah is the Prince of peace, his birth was welcomed with the angels' hymn, "Peace on earth." He is the great Peacemaker. He made peace through the blood of his cross. They that are his must follow his example. If they are truly his, they have his peace; it keepeth their hearts, it ruleth there. Those who have peace themselves are the best peacemakers. It is not an easy thing to be a peacemaker; it requires tact, wisdom, courage, love. There is so much party spirit of various kinds in every town or village, so much ill will, so much envy and jealousy, so many little feuds dividing men from men, that it is very hard to win the blessing of this seventh Beatitude. But it is one of the elements in the truly Christian character; we must practise it if we would be children of the kingdom. (2) The reason. (*a*) Peacemakers are happy in themselves. Which are the happiest—the cross-grained, the irritable, the conceited, always ready to take offence, perhaps even loving to stir up strife? or the gentle, the kindly, the affectionate, who love peace, who do all they can to make peace in their family, in their parish, among all their neighbours and friends; and that for Christ's sake, out of love for Christ, in humble imitation of Christ's example? "Blessed are the peacemakers." (*b*) But especially blessed in this—that "they shall be called the children of God." They shall be called his children, because they imitate his only begotten Son; because they keep the first of all the commandments, and the second, which is like unto it; because they bring forth the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace. Only those who are led by the Spirit are, in the deepest and holiest sense, the sons of God. 8. *The eighth Beatitude.* (1) "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake." Christ prophesied that his followers should suffer persecution. It came to pass as he had said. We know how, since the days of Stephen the first martyr, valiant Christian men and noble women too have again and again endured for Christ's sake the prison and the torture, the sword, the fire, the lion. They are blessed; they were persecuted for righteousness' sake; theirs is the kingdom of heaven. The offence of the cross has not ceased; there is persecution still. It exists still in many households, schools,

villages. The cold looks, the misrepresentations, the nicknames, the taunts, sometimes the ill-treatment of relations, fellow-servants, schoolfellows, fellow-workmen, are hard to bear. Holiness is not everywhere popular. The worldly feel it as a rebuke to themselves; they resent it; they sometimes persecute. And these modern forms of persecution are greater in extent, for they sometimes spread over a long period, and affect all the circumstances of life, and perhaps in some cases cause no less suffering than the acuter outbreaks in the old days of cruelty. "Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake," and because they belong to Christ; "for *my* sake," the Lord says in ver. 11. Such should rejoice. It is a high privilege to be counted worthy to suffer shame for his Name: great is their reward in heaven. (2) The reason. "Theirs is the kingdom of heaven." The Beatitudes begin with the kingdom; they end with the kingdom; they contain the law of the kingdom, they describe the character of its citizens. The children of the Beatitudes are the children of the kingdom. Only the poor in spirit can enter into it, and its highest places are reserved for those who have patiently suffered for Christ's sake, who have drunk of the cup that he drank of, and have been baptized with the baptism wherewith he was baptized.

II. THE DIGNITY OF THE CHILDREN OF THE KINGDOM. 1. *They are the salt of the earth.* They have salt in themselves. The salt is the grace of God (comp. Mark ix. 50 and Col. iv. 6); but those who have that salt in themselves are, in God's great condescension, called the salt of the earth. Salt preserves from corruption. The grace of God preserves his saints. They preserve the earth in which they live. They check the progress of corruption. Their purifying influence spreads more or less through the mass, which would otherwise fester and decay. Their prayers avert the sore judgments of God; ten righteous men might have saved the wicked Sodom. They must take heed not to lose the heavenly salt themselves; without it their usefulness is gone. The profession of religion without the power of the Spirit is dead and worthless. If that is lost, nothing else can supply its place. Forms, words, outward show, cannot fill the place of the Spirit. A Church without the Spirit, a Christian without the Spirit, is like the Church of Sardis: "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." 2. *They are the light of the world.* (1) The Lord Christ is the Light of the world. They who abide in him, the true Light, are themselves light. His light, burning within them, shines forth in their looks, their words, their actions, and illuminates the world around. Each true Christian is a centre of light, as he walks in the light and reflects its brightness. (2) The possession of that light makes them conspicuous, like a city set on a hill; they cannot be hid. "The fierce light that beats upon the throne" beats in a measure on all Christians, especially upon those who are set in the chief places of the Church. They are seen and known of all men. Their conduct is watched, narrowly scrutinized; their character in some sense is public property. Therefore (3) they must not hide the light. Their sloth, and, still more, their selfishness and worldliness, bring discredit on the gospel and check its progress. They must let their light shine before men, not making a display of their religion, their alms, and their prayers, not priding themselves, not vaunting the presence of the heavenly light, but allowing it to shine, as shine it will, if not hidden. "Far as a little candle sheds its beams, so shines a good deed in a naughty world." The candle of the Lord shines in a Christian's life; it sheds its soft and holy radiance all around. Men see its beauty and brightness. It draws others into the circle of its light and warmth. But (4) they must be careful not to seek their own glory. They may, they must sometimes, let men see their good works, but it must not be for the sake of human praise. The Christian's desire is to draw others, by the brightness of his example, to the true Light which gives him light. He desires that other men should glorify, not himself (he knows his sin and unworthiness), but his Father which is in heaven. He is strong who seeks only the glory of the Lord. His light will shine before men; not with the fitful gleams that are of the earth, but with the calm, steady, holy light which comes from heaven. Men will feel its warmth; they will recognize its truth, its reality. It shines with no uncertain, wavering glimmer. It will lead them to the Lord. Unreality betrays itself by word, look, tone. Real holiness makes itself felt; it is a power in the world. And herein is its depth, its strength: it seeks only the glory of the Lord, and that with steadfast, unwavering perseverance.

LESSONS 1. Blessedness is exceeding precious, deeper than all joys; it may be

ours. 2. The blessed life is very lovely; all admire, few only imitate. 3. Live the Christ-like life; so shall you share the Christian blessedness. 4. Quench not the Spirit; stir up the gift of God; so shall the holy light shine far and wide, and men will glorify the Lord.

Vers. 17—48.—*The second part of the sermon: the mount of the Beatitudes and Mount Sinai: the new Law and the old.* I. CHRIST THE FULFILLER OF THE LAW. 1. *He came not to destroy.* They must not misunderstand the purpose of his teaching. The Old Testament is not contrary to the New; both speak of Christ. The commandments are as binding now upon the Christian conscience as when they were first delivered amid the thunders of Mount Sinai. "We establish the Law," says the apostle of faith (Rom. iii. 31). "No Christian man is free from the obedience of the commandments which are called moral." The law of ceremonies and rites, indeed, is no longer binding (Eph. ii. 15; Col. ii. 16, etc.); but even those rites and ceremonies, though no longer in force, are full of deep meaning, and convey holy teaching to the Christian, for they speak, one and all, of Christ and his righteousness. 2. *He came to fulfil.* He fulfilled the righteousness of the Law. He exhibited it perfectly in his own most holy life. He fulfilled the types, the ritual teaching, the predictions of the prophets in his incarnation, in all the circumstances of his earthly life, his precious death and burial, his glorious resurrection and ascension. He fulfilled the doctrine of the Law, bringing out as he did the deep spiritual meaning of its teaching. "Christ is the End of the Law for righteousness to every one that believeth." 3. *The Old Testament in its spiritual meaning is of eternal obligation.* All must be fulfilled, even the minutest detail. Both Testaments come from the same God. The Christian, while he loves the New Testament with all his heart, must not depreciate the Old. The whole Word of God is holy and just and good. The teacher who is taught of God will declare to his flock the whole counsel of God. He who wilfully shuts his eyes to any part, though it may seem to him small and insignificant, shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven. Yet he shall enter therein if he has been faithful according to his light; for he has taught the truth, though he has not had grace and wisdom to discern its more delicate features.

II. RELATIONS BETWEEN THE NEW LAW AND THE OLD. 1. *The Spirit and the letter; Christ and the Pharisees.* Christians who neglect part of the Law of God shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but mere formalists shall not even enter therein. The righteousness of the Pharisees was outward, mechanical; the righteousness of Christianity is inward and spiritual. It includes obedience in things outward. These are the "least commandments" which a Christian may not dare to neglect or despise. But it is far wider in its range, far deeper in its power; its influence extends over the whole of human life in all its details and circumstances. It reaches deep into the heart, into its desires, motives, thoughts. Our righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees. They were students of the letter. They knew the Scriptures; their knowledge was most exact and minute; but it was outward only, knowledge of the letter. That knowledge is not to be despised; it is necessary, it is most interesting; but it is not enough. We must seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit of God to understand the spiritual meaning of his Word, to enter into it, to work it into our own heart and life. Again, the Pharisees "say and do not;" we must do. They did certain things, but they did them mechanically; we must work in faith and love. They thought to merit heaven by their works; we must recognize our utter unworthiness, and trust only in the merits of Christ. They sought the praise of men; we must seek only the praise which cometh from God. 2. *The first instance.* "Thou shalt not kill." (1) The traditional interpretation confined the application of the commandment to the actual crime of murder. The Lord shows that it extends to sinful anger. "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer;" he is a murderer in heart and will. In the sight of him who searcheth the hearts, the evil thought wilfully harboured and brooded on, the wicked wish, the unjust, wrathful word, is as guilty as the wicked deed. "I say unto you;" the Lord speaks with authority. He gave the Law at first on Mount Sinai; he interprets it now on the mount of the Beatitudes. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." "Blessed are the meek." (2) Two illustrations follow. (*a*) "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." We must not bring malice and

hatred into the temple of the Lord; we cannot worship aright while we cherish wrath in our heart. For he is love, and the unloving cannot serve him acceptably. He will not accept the offerings of those who live in strife. Malice and envy rob the gift of all its value. Forgiveness of injuries, sorrow for our own offences, the humble petition for pardon from any whom we may have offended, is a sacrifice well pleasing unto God. Without this the costliest gift is but a mockery, worthless and unprofitable. Then "first be reconciled to thy brother, then come and offer thy gift." St. Chrysostom well remarks, "Let even my service be interrupted (the Lord says in his condescension) that love may abide, since reconciliation to thy brother is an acceptable sacrifice." (*b*) We are all on our way to the judgment; we must appear before the Judge. Therefore we must seek forgiveness from those whom we have offended, and we must forgive those who have offended us while we are on our way during the journey of life. We pray, "Forgive, as we forgive." *Lex orandi lex credendi.* He doth not forgive the unforgiving, the unloving. For such there remaineth the prison. And can the uttermost farthing of the great debt be ever paid? Alas! we cannot pay the smallest fraction of it. By grace we are saved, and God's grace rests not upon the unloving; to such there is no promise of forgiveness. 3. *The second instance.* "Thou shalt not commit adultery." The traditional interpretation confined the commandment to the evil deed; the Lord extends it to the sinful thought. The unlawful desire, consented to and kept before the mind, is equally guilty with the unclean act. Our bodies are the members of Christ; to defile them is an outrage on the most holy Saviour. We are the temples of God the Holy Ghost; to bring unclean thoughts into that most sacred presence is a fearful sin, an awful sacrilege. Then strike at the beginnings of sin, the thought, the look; strike, and spare not. Such watchfulness may imply very strict and painful self-denial. Better to deny ourselves now than to be cast out at the last; better to pluck out the right eye, to cut off the right hand, than to be condemned at the last. "Blessed are the pure in heart." 4. *The third instance.* Divorce. The popular school, that of Hillel, allowed divorce "for every cause" (ch. xix. 3); the Lord allows it only "for the cause of fornication." What God hath joined together let not man put asunder. 5. *The fourth instance.* The law of oaths. The Jews, it seems, thought lightly of oaths which did not contain the sacred Name of God; they used such oaths constantly and heedlessly. Our Lord classes all oaths together, for all ultimately imply an appeal to God, and, like St. James (v. 12), forbids them all. But we must not "so expound one place of Scripture that it be repugnant to another," and passages like Heb. vi. 13—17 and vii. 21, where God is represented as swearing by himself; or ch. xxvi. 63, 64, where our Lord answers the adjuration of Caiaphas; or Rev. x. 6, where a mighty angel swears by him that liveth for ever and ever; or Rom. i. 9; 1 Cor. xv. 31; 2 Cor. i. 23; Gal. i. 20; and Phil. i. 8, in which St. Paul uses forms of solemn asseveration, prove that our Lord's prohibition applies only to rash, idle oaths, such as were common among the Jews ("Let your *speech* be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay"), not to those solemn occasions when an oath is required by the magistrate or by the law. 6. *The fifth instance.* The law of retaliation. "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." The words of the Law of Moses relate to punishments inflicted by a court of justice; the Jews probably understood them as permitting private revenge. Holy Scripture does not forbid the infliction of judicial punishment (comp. Rom. xiii. 4). It forbids the revengeful temper, and it forbids private revenge altogether. Our Lord says, "Resist not evil." To insist upon the literal meaning of these words would be to apply the method of the Pharisees to the interpretation of the New Testament; a literal obedience under all circumstances would destroy the very framework of society, and let loose all that is evil in human nature. But the Lord is laying down general principles. Cases will often arise in which the application of those principles must be modified by other rules of Holy Scripture. A literal obedience is possible much more frequently and to a much wider extent than our selfish hearts are willing to admit. But a literal obedience is not always possible; it would not be always right; it would sometimes do harm rather than good. The Lord himself, the gentlest and the meekest, expostulated with those who struck him wrongfully (John xviii. 23). Neither when he bids us, "Give to him that asketh thee," are his words to be taken literally, as commanding indiscriminate almsgiving. He himself gave not to the people who sought him at Capernaum, because they had eaten of the loaves and were filled (John vi. 26,

27); St. Paul would not have us give to the idle (2 Thess. iii. 10). We must understand our Lord's words as interpreted by his own example and by other parts of Holy Scripture. We must forgive injuries, we must resist not evil, we must give freely; but in all these things we must be guided by the wisdom which is from above. "Blessed are the merciful." 7. *The sixth instance.* "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," was the commandment of the Law. The Pharisees had added a false and wicked gloss, "Thou shalt hate thine enemy." (comp. Exod. xxiii. 4, 5; Prov. xxiv. 17; xxv. 21). The Lord bids us, "Love your enemies." It is easy to love those who love us; such love is mere natural affection. Grace teaches a deeper, a more difficult lesson. The nearer we draw to God, the more we shall learn to imitate his all-embracing love. The Lord is loving unto every man. Rain and sunshine preach charity and love to all. We must learn of him. If any curse, we must bless; we must pray for those who use us despitefully. So shall we be the children of our heavenly Father, like him in our poor measure, complete in the range of our love, dear to him, loving and beloved. The commandment is difficult, but the blessing is very great. He who gave the commandment, who pronounced the blessing, can teach us to obey.

LESSONS. 1. Search the Scriptures, all of them; not only the New Testament, but also the Old. 2. Be not content with the external knowledge of the Bible; seek that inner knowledge which only the Holy Ghost can teach. 3. Be gentle and loving, be reverent in word, hallow God's holy Name, hate all ungodly modes of speech. 4. Forgive as you hope for forgiveness; revenge belongeth unto God.

## HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 3—5.—*The secret of happiness.* Jesus begins his first great sermon with the word "blessed." His whole mission is a benediction. It is his object to encourage and cheer, not to repress and humiliate. 1. But he knows the secret of happiness too well to attempt to shed joy in any other way than through those channels by which, in the very constitution of things, God has appointed it to flow. There is a necessary connection between each Beatitude and the character blessed. The reward is not an extraneous gift, but a natural fruit, although it is by the generosity of God that the fruit is made to grow. 2. Moreover, it is to be noted that, although there is this necessary connection between character and happiness, there is more than one way to the goal. Joy is manifold, and different kinds of people may reach it by different roads. Therefore there is a plurality of Beatitudes. 3. A common tone pervades all the Beatitudes. They all depend on some excellency of character, and all the excellences are unpretentious and gentle. Together they suggest a new type of character, as distinct from the stern Jewish ideal as it is from free and superficial pagan notion of goodness. To a large extent the Beatitudes are facets from the character of Christ himself. He who enjoys all these blessings in his own person will be most like the great Teacher who revealed them. Let us consider the first three Beatitudes—

I. POVERTY OF SPIRIT. In the world wealth is increasingly favoured. But no golden key opens the gates of the kingdom of heaven. Christ's gospel is for the poor (ch. xi. 5), because it is for all. The poor in spirit, however, are not the same as those people whose earthly possessions are meagre. They are the people who are conscious of their own spiritual deficiency. They are the spiritually humble. Thus their disposition is the exact opposite of the pride of Pharisaism. The great, comprehensive blessing of the kingdom of heaven is for such souls. Christ had announced the coming of the kingdom in his earlier preaching. Now he shows who are to receive it. Humility, a sense of emptiness and helplessness,—this is just the condition in which to receive Christ and his kingdom.

II. MOURNING. The second Beatitude had a direct relation to the state of Israel in the days of Christ; that was a condition of moral and national decay. Some were indifferent, others proudly rebellious. For such people Christ had no blessing. But for those who deplored the evil of the times there was comfort in the gospel of Christ. 1. Christ brings consolation to those who mourn for sin by bringing forgiveness. 2. He comforts those who deplore the evils of society by introducing a hope of human

brotherhood. 3. He consoles those who weep for the dead by shedding light on the life beyond the tomb.

III. MEEKNESS. This is a peculiarly Christian grace, scorned by the pagan world. It does not mean the lack of energy and courage. The truly meek man is no coward. Strength of self-control is needed in order to bear an affront with patience. Jesus was never so strong as when "he was led as a lamb to the slaughter." Even Pilate was baffled by the calm strength of his meekness. Now our Lord promises a temporal reward to this grace. Heavenly blessings coveted by martyrs might be expected; but Jesus promises even the inheritance of the earth. 1. Ultimately this will come in the reign of Christ which his people are to share. 2. At present it is experienced in a capacity to make the best use of earthly things, by possessing one's soul in patience.—W. F. A.

Vers. 6—12.—*Five gates to happiness.* We have already looked at three gates to happiness. Let us now proceed to examine the five that still remain to us.

I. HUNGER AND THIRST AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS. 1. This is a desire for righteousness on its own account, and not for its rewards. It is very different from the merely selfish wish to escape from the penalty of sin. Righteousness is regarded as an end in itself. 2. This is a deep appetite, like hunger and thirst. The most primitive, the most universal, the most imperious appetites are the types of this desire. In our better moments does it not wake up in us with an inexpressible longing? If we could but be like Christ the sinless! 3. It is rewarded by its own satisfaction. These hungry and thirsty ones are to be filled. Nothing but the object of the appetite will appease its craving. 4. Righteousness is attainable in Christ. The Epistle to the Romans shows how this Beatitude is realized in experience.

II. MERCIFULNESS. The previous Beatitude referred to the interior life and the personal desires of individual souls. This Beatitude concerns an attitude towards other people. Perfect happiness is not possible without a right regard to the social relations of life. 1. It is a peculiarly Christian view of those relations to see them in the light of mercy. We are to think especially of kindness (1) to the helpless, (2) to the undeserving, (3) to those who have wronged us. This is just the Christ-spirit. 2. The reward of it is to be treated in a similar manner: (1) even by men whose gratitude is won; (2) especially by God, who cannot pardon the unforgiving, and who makes our forgiveness of others the standard of his forgiveness of us (ch. vi. 12).

III. PURITY OF HEART. We have reached the holy of holies, the inner sanctuary of the Christian life. God regards the state of the heart as of supreme importance. He does not consider that we can have clean hands if we do not possess a pure heart. While foul imaginations are welcomed and gross desires cherished, the whole life is degraded in the sight of God. But the purity of heart has a wonderful reward reserved for it alone—the vision of God. Pure Sir Galahad can see the holy grail which great Sir Launcelot was doomed by his sin to miss. Here, as elsewhere, there is an essential connection between the grace and the reward. Sin blinds the soul; purity is clear-eyed in the spiritual world. Moreover, it is only to the pure in heart that the vision of God can be a reward. The impure would but be scorched by it, and would cry on the rocks and hills to cover them from its awful presence.

IV. PEACEMAKING. We now come to an active grace. The Christian is not to shut himself up in monastic seclusion, indifferent to the evils of the world around him. He is to interfere for its betterment. Peace is the greatest interest of nations, brotherhood the greatest requisite of society. Happy are they who can bring about such things. The process is dangerous and likely to be misunderstood, for the peacemaker is often regarded as an enemy by both sides of the quarrel. His reward, however, is great—to be accounted one of God's sons; like the only begotten Son, who is the Prince of peacemakers. The fitness of the reward springs from the fact that the work is most God-like.

V. PERSECUTION. How far-reaching is the prophetic gaze of Christ to foresee persecution when in the flush of early popularity! How honest is he to foretell it! How serene is his contemplation of it! He knows that there is a great beyond. Already the heavenly treasures are stored up for those who may lose all for Christ's sake. Fidelity till death is rewarded with a crown of life after death (Rev. ii. 10).—W. F. A.

Vers. 13, 14.—*Salt and light.* Christ regards his people as the salt of the earth and as the light of the world. In both characters they have a mission to others. The Church exists for the sake of the world. She has a large vocation; the whole earth is the field of her work, and there she is to labour not for her own ends, but to benefit mankind. How grievous is the perversion of those who exactly reverse the position of Christ, and behave as though the world only existed for the benefit of the Church!

I. THE SALT. 1. *Its function.* The salt is to preserve that on which it is sprinkled from corrupting. (1) The world is in danger of sinking into corruption. Society is threatened with disintegration by the mutual opposition of conflicting classes. Domestic life is corroded by immorality and intemperance. "Naturalism" defiles art. Frivolous amusements tend to become unwholesome. Therefore a preserving and purifying agent is needed. (2) The world is worth preserving. Otherwise why salt it? Christ does not desire the destruction of civilization, but its preservation. Christianity is not nihilism. Politics, commerce, art, literature, are all worth keeping from corruption. 2. *Its action.* Salt is antiseptic. The Church is expected to be of the same character; not merely to be pure, but to purify. This is not confined to definite crusades against evil. The mere presence of good men and women in the world tends to keep it sound and healthy, by the silent influence of example. The old heathen world was rotting in vice when the Christians appeared and infused a new life of purity into society. We cannot calculate the advantage to the whole world of the presence in it to-day of pure-minded, earnest, unselfish, good men and women. A few such, like a little salt, have an immense influence in preserving a great mass of society. 3. *Its failure.* The salt may lose its savour. It may not have become corrupt. Yet as a negative thing it is then useless, and only fit to be cast away as so much dust. If the grace of God, if the spirit of Christ, if the Divine life, vanish from the Church, the corporation may still exist, but its mission will have ceased. For the sake of the world the spiritual vigour of the Church must be preserved. It will not do to be too conciliatory to society. The Church is salt, not sugar.

II. LIGHT. 1. *Its nature.* Light banishes night. It reveals our danger, shows our path, cheers our hearts, and refreshes our health. All these things are expected of Christian influence on the world. 2. *Its position.* A city on a hill; a lamp on its stand. Christians are not to be ashamed of their confession. It is the duty of the Church to be prominent, not for her own sake—for her own prestige—but to spread light on others. 3. *Its radiance.* The light streams out by means of good works. The world cares little for our words, but it has a sharp eye for our works. We want a new gospel for the present age, one written on the lives of Christians, that the world may see the reality of what we preach. 4. *Its object.* The glory of God. If this last point had not been added, it might have seemed as though the self-glorification were allowable. But our works are not to our own credit, because, if they are good, all the goodness in them comes from the grace of God. Therefore we glorify God in bearing fruit, by so living that his life shines out through our conduct.—W. F. A.

Vers. 17, 18.—*Christ's treatment of the Old Testament.* Here we see the attitude of our Lord towards the Old Testament. He did not come to destroy the ancient teaching, but to fulfil it. Christ's words show two positions—a negative and a positive.

I. THE OLD TESTAMENT HAS A PLACE IN THE CHRISTIAN ECONOMY. The grounds on which this is established are worthy of consideration. 1. *Its origin.* The Old Testament was inspired by God. It records his words spoken to Moses and the prophets. Words of God are not to be lightly set aside, however ancient they may be. 2. *Its truth.* Although it is only a preliminary revelation, it is not the less a real revelation. The truth it contains is partial, and represents an early stage in the development of Divine ideas among men; yet all truth has an eternal element in it which we may discover when we strip off the husk of its temporary form. 3. *Its moral character.* The Old Testament is a grand testimony to righteousness. We can never dispense with the Ten Commandments. The stern protests of the prophets against national sin stand good to-day as the utterances of an undying conscience. 4. *Its spiritual life.* It is difficult for a Christian to get beyond the devotional spirit of the Psalms. Private piety is revealed in the Old Testament so as to be the example and stimulus for all ages.

II. THE OLD TESTAMENT IS NOT A SUFFICIENT REVELATION. It was defective by

omission. It could not contain all truth, because when it was written the Jews were not capable of receiving all truth. Its limitations are those of an early stage of revelation. These are not reasons for condemning and repudiating the book. The child is not to be blamed because he is not a man. The adult man cannot afford to neglect the child even on his own account, for the child is a prophet from whom much may be learnt. Still, it cannot be denied that he lacks the man's larger wisdom and more enduring strength. The law of righteousness is not sufficient for us. It cannot create goodness. Its directions are formal and external. The deeper, more spiritual righteousness can only be realized when the Law is written on the heart, and this is done, as Jeremiah predicted, only under the new covenant (xxxi. 33).

III. CHRIST FILLS UP THE DEFICIENCIES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT REVELATION. In this sense he fulfils it. He does not only fulfil prophecy by doing what is therein predicted, but he makes the whole revelation of God perfect by filling up the lacunæ that appear in the Old Testament. 1. *By leading from the letter to the spirit.* The Law is not perfected till its inner meaning is discovered and its living spirit brought forth. 2. *By exhibiting in life what the Old Testament reveals in word.* The Law had never been perfectly kept till Christ came. Then he was absolutely faithful to it, and thus he satisfied its claims. 3. *By giving men power to keep the Law.* Not in the letter, which is superfluous, but in the spirit, which is essential. 4. *By including the inferior older revelation in his new and most perfect revelation.* The acorn disappears that the oak may be seen; but it is not destroyed, it is only developed, and its glorification is accomplished by the larger growth which abolishes its own peculiar form and structure.—W. F. A.

Ver. 20.—*The righteousness of the kingdom.* Antinomianism is unchristian. If Christianity is to be found in the teachings of Christ, Christianity does not relax the moral Law. On the contrary, it elevates and strengthens that Law. We cannot make a greater mistake than to suppose that the grace of Christ means a certain easy treatment of men, any diminution of duty, any release from the obligations of right. It is not a pardon of the past with indifference as regards the future. It is forgiveness as a foundation and preparation for a new and better life. More is expected of the Christian than of the Jew, of the convert than of the sinner.

I. IN WHAT RESPECTS THE CHRISTIAN RIGHTEOUSNESS IS TO BE SUPERIOR TO THAT OF THE SCRIBES AND THE PHARISEES. Israel was most famous for the holiness of her religion and the righteousness of her Law; the scribes were the trained teachers of the Law, skilled in making the most of it; the Pharisees were the professed examples of highest obedience to the Law. Yet Christ expects his disciples not only to be better than publicans and sinners; there is no hope for them unless their righteousness surpasses that of the official teachers and the professed saints of Judaism. Consider in what respects this is looked for. 1. *In reality.* The revered teachers and examples of Israel, as a class, were not good men at all. The teachers did not walk in the strict path they pointed out to others; the examples were but theatrical pretenders. Christ called them "hypocrites." But Christ is true and real. He expects a genuine righteousness. He will not endure the mockery of a character that professes what it does not perform. 2. *In depth.* The righteousness of Judaism, even when genuine, was too external. It consisted too much in deeds of the hands, too little in thoughts of the heart. But Christ looks for inward righteousness—the pure heart. He forbids hate as murder, and lust as adultery. 3. *In positiveness.* The Law dealt largely with negatives. Its refrain was, "Thou shalt not." The righteousness of later Judaism was chiefly a matter of restraints. This is always the case in a stiffened, formal system. But Christ expects a positive goodness, a spirit of living energy in religion—love and its outflowing activity of service.

II. WHY THE CHRISTIAN RIGHTEOUSNESS IS TO BE OF THIS HIGH CHARACTER. It may seem that Christ is binding a heavy yoke on the shoulders of his disciples. Is this consistent with his gracious promises and gospel invitations? Consider the reasons for such a requirement. 1. *The blessedness of righteousness.* This was clearly set forth in the Beatitudes. If it is good for a man to be righteous, it is no hardship that Christ should require a lofty standard; for this means a higher joy. 2. *The obligations of light.* Christ was a Light revealing a fuller righteousness, teaching it in his words,

illustrating it by his conduct. It is reasonable that he should expect more from those who enjoy the privilege of his light than from those who have not received it. We may forgive in the night a stumbling which is unpardonable in broad daylight. Christians are expected to be better than heathens, better even than Jews, because they know more of God's will and how to fulfil it. 3. *The encouragements of grace.* The Law cannot secure righteousness; the gospel can do this. Christ brings to us a God-made righteousness, and he gives us the power to be all that he expects of us (Rom. iii. 21, 22). His demand is only that we will not frustrate the working of his grace in us.—W. F. A.

Ver. 29.—*Plucking out the right eye.* The ideas of this verse are expressed in the strong language of Oriental imagery, and yet a moment's reflection will show us that the language is not a whit too strong, even if it is interpreted with strict literalness. If it came to a choice between plucking out an eye and death, every man who had courage enough to perform the hideous deed would at once choose it as the less terrible alternative. Every day hospital patients submit to frightful operations to save their lives or to relieve intolerable sufferings. But if to the thought of death we add the picture of the doom of the lost, the motives for choosing the lesser evil are immeasurably strengthened. Therefore to one who really believes the alternatives set forth by our Lord to be his, there should not be a thought of hesitation. Doubt as to the future, the overmastering influence of the present, or weakness of will, may restrain a person from doing what is really for his self-interest; but these things will not make it the less desirable. The difficulty, then, is not as to the truth of our Lord's words, but as to the application of them.

I. AN INNOCENT THING MAY BECOME A CAUSE OF STUMBLING. Christ does not require us to maim ourselves as an act of penance, or on any ascetic grounds. The eye is given to see with, and the hand to work with. Both are from God, and both are innocent in themselves. The body is not an evil thing, but it is meant to be the servant of the soul; as such it is an instrument "fearfully and wonderfully made." We do not honour God by dishonouring the body which he has bestowed upon us. But the body may become the tool of the tempter. It may be corrupted and perverted so as to be worse than the slave of sin, so as to be itself a perpetual temptation. Not only the body, but other things that belong to us, and are sent for our good, may become stumbling-blocks—*e.g.* wealth, power, friendship.

II. A STUMBLING-BLOCK IN THE WAY OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE MUST BE CAST ASIDE AT ANY COST. The question turns on our estimate of the great end of life. To frustrate that in deference to any present pleasure, or to escape from any present trouble, is to commit a great mistake. We are not now concerned with some slight inconvenience in the future. The thought is of complete shipwreck, of being thrown into perdition on account of the hindrance which it is very unpleasant for us to remove. So serious a danger does not admit of any consideration for the present annoyance involved in escaping it. The engineer will tunnel through mountains, blow up huge rocks, and bridge wide chasms to carry his line to its destination. Shall any hindrance be permitted to block the Christian's course to eternal life? As a matter of fact, self-mutilation is not the right method of avoiding temptation. If it were the sole method, it would be prudent to resort to it. But, as God has provided other ways, only a wild delusion will resort to this. Moreover, if lust is in the heart, it will not be destroyed by plucking out the eye. If hatred reigns within the enraged man, he is essentially a murderer, even after he has cut off the hand with which he was about to commit his awful crime. Still, whatever is most near to us and hinders our Christian life, must go—any friendship, though dear as the apple of the eye; any occupation, though profitable as the right hand.—W. F. A.

Vers. 38—42.—*Non-resistance.* The difficulty with this, as with similar passages in the teachings of our Lord, is to see how to carry out the precept in the fulness of the intention of the great Teacher. Are we to take it quite literally? If so, Count Tolstoi is right, and we have not yet begun to be Christian. Are we to take it metaphorically, or even as a hyperbolical expression? Then we shall be in great danger of watering it down to suit our own convenience. Plainly our Lord meant something very real. Moreover, this is no counsel of perfection for select saints. It is a general law of the

kingdom of heaven; it is a precept of that exalted righteousness exceeding the righteousness of scribes and Pharisees which Christ absolutely requires of all his people. How, then, is it to be interpreted?

I. THIS IS A LAW OF UNIVERSAL CHRISTIAN CONDUCT. Christ was not a Solon, drawing up a code of state laws. His precept was not made in any legislative assembly. He spoke to men who lived under the irresistible yoke of stern, just Roman government. But his words had no influence with that government. Thus, no doubt, they were primarily for private conduct. They did not concern the question of a state's duty in defending its coast from the invader, or protecting its citizens by police supervision from outrage. But attempts have been made to confine the obligations of our Lord's words to the individual relations which he was contemplating when he uttered them. The Sermon on the Mount, we are told, is for private Christian guidance only; it is not intended to regulate governments. Surely that is a dangerous narrowing of its functions. So long as the state is not Christian, Christian principles cannot be looked for in legislation; but as soon as the gospel has Christianized the state, Christian principles must appear in public policy. This was apparent in the criminal legislation of Constantine, the first Christian emperor of the Roman empire. It is a grossly unchristian thing for men in a free, self-governing country to think that motives of greed or revenge that are not permissible between man and man are allowable between nation and nation.

II. THIS LAW IS NOT INCONSISTENT WITH ORDER AND JUSTICE. To see that it is not, we must observe its exact application. 1. *It does not concern our defence of others*; it only touches our defence of our own rights. The government is bound to protect those committed to its charge, but it is not bound to avenge an affront offered to itself. The policeman is required to guard the victim of a brutal assault from violence, but he is not bound to avenge insults and wrongs directed against himself. 2. *The reference to the "lex talionis" evidently shows that the thought is of revenge.* Still, all resistance of evil seems to be forbidden. It is certainly difficult to see how the principle is to be applied in all cases. 3. *Nevertheless, we have sadly failed to carry out even its intelligible and more obvious demands.* Patience and calm endurance of wrong are not Anglo-Saxon characteristics, but they are Christian. Interpret Christ's precept (1) in the light of ver. 5; (2) in the light of his own behaviour under arrest; and (3) in connection with the next precept.—W. F. A.

Vers. 43—48.—*Loving one's enemy.* This is another instance of the way in which Christian righteousness is to exceed the righteousness of scribes and Pharisees. Let us consider the duty and the motives that urge it.

I. THE DUTY. 1. *Positive.* This carries us beyond patience under insult and non-resistance to injury. The previous passage insisted on those duties only. It was negative in character, forbidding a wrong course of conduct; therefore obedience to it would be purely passive. Now we come to a positive and active duty—to love and aid. 2. *Helpful.* Love is a subjective sentiment, but it cannot confine itself to the breast of the person who cherishes it. It must flow out in deeds of kindness. Here is the key to the precept in the previous paragraph. By itself it seems to be impossible to carry out so extraordinary a rule; or, if it were put in practice, it looks as though it might be quite subversive of society. But it must be followed by the conduct now recommended. Bare non-resistance will not be successful. It will only end in the extinction of right and the triumph of aggressive evil. But non-resistance, sustained by active love to our enemies, will assume a very different character. Love is a more powerful weapon than the sword. We are to "overcome evil with good" (Rom. xii. 21); to conquer our enemy by destroying his enmity, while we prove ourselves his friends. 3. *Prayerful.* Love is not sufficient to meet the hard heart of enmity. Only the gracious influences of the Spirit of God can do it. Therefore we are to pray for these. If we are wrongfully used, we may overcome our enemies by seeking for God to turn their hearts while we show them brotherly kindness.

II. ITS REASONABLENESS. This duty is so contrary to the ways of the world that it seems to be quite unnatural and unreasonable. But Christ shows that he has good grounds for demanding it of us. 1. *The example of our Father in heaven.* God is not only kind to the good. First, he shows infinite patience and forbearance. Then he goes beyond these passive excellences and manifests active beneficence in sending sunshine

and rain to all sorts and conditions of men. Thus he is impartial in his kindness. He does not regulate his favours by our deserts. The very constitution and course of nature reveal this large, indiscriminate beneficence of God. Yet God maintains order in the universe, and ultimately effects the triumph of the right. Therefore kindness to enemies is not unnatural; it is the very method of nature. It is not unreasonable; it accords with God's wise way of governing the universe. 2. *The obligations of Christianity.* The law of resentment represents a low stage of moral development. If religious people follow this law, they are no better than the irreligious—"the publicans;" if Christians follow it, they are no better than the heathen—"the Gentiles;" *i.e.* Christian love as such only appears when we begin to love those whom we should not love if we were not following Christ. We prove our religion, not in those good things in which we agree with the irreligious, but in those by means of which we surpass them. Meanwhile no lower standard can be allowed to the Christian; he must aim at nothing less than the Divine example of perfection.—W. F. A.

Vers. 1, 2.—*Teaching for the multitude.* We hold that the discourse to which these two verses in St. Matthew's Gospel are an introduction is one with that given in the sixth chapter of St. Luke's Gospel; and that although, judging from the closest context in both passages, it might at first be supposed that "these sayings of Jesus" were spoken to the lesser circle of his disciples exclusively, they were really spoken, if not from the very beginning, yet, as regards the large proportion of them, to the widest circle of his disciples, and even to "the multitudes" (ch. vii. 28; Luke vii. 1). The second Passover of our Lord was now past; and this discourse was not as near the beginning of his public life as its apparent early place in St. Matthew's Gospel would ordinarily lead one to infer. To remember its later place is to vindicate more clearly its seasonableness to the minds of the disciples and people, and its usefulness as another higher standard in the "teaching" of the world. In these two preliminary and introductory verses we may notice as, at all events, suggestions that lie on the surface, the following things.

I. IN THE BORN TEACHER OF MORALS, AND ESPECIALLY RELIGION, THE SIGHT OF "THE MULTITUDES" IN ITSELF A PROMPT AND STRONG IMPULSE. Trace the fact historically, that it is the *moral* gaze on "the people" that is the spring of this impulse; and that otherwise the ages have rather hedged up knowledge to the few; and that the world's greater teachers have been prone and glad to avert their *teaching*-thought when the multitudes have been thrust before their eye by any accident.

II. A TYPICAL INSTANCE OF A MORAL IMPULSE; PROMPT AND VERY STRONG, IT DOES NOT PAUSE AT THOUGHT, NOR EXHAUST ITSELF IN FEELING: IT IS PRACTICAL. Point out the illustration of this that is spoken in Christ's pursuit of *method*, and in his use of intermediate agents and in his measured calmness herein. But through and after all there is a sure outcome of action and something practical.

III. THE MOUNTAIN-PLATFORM A MORAL VANTAGE-GROUND. For it secured at the same time some apparently very various results and ends, each very desirable. 1. It cannot be denied that it fairly challenges the observation of earth and heaven. 2. But it does at the same time win much retirement from the noise of earth, and shall foster thought and high feeling rather than distract them. 3. It speaks the large sweep and outlook of moral and religious truth. 4. And at the same time the large room and welcome that the truth offers to all who will receive it. One may imagine at this point, in a literal sense, the position of Jesus himself, with all that his eye overlooked and surveyed each moment, and moral analogies will rise not slowly in the wake of the literal facts.

IV. A TYPICAL INSTANCE OF THE TRUE TRADITION, OF HEAVENLY WISDOM, HEAVENLY TEACHING, AND THE GREAT MASTER'S OWN WORK, INTO THE CHARGE OF MEN. 1. The work of Christ is to be carried on by the living instrumentality of living men, *imperfect* as they are sure to be, and far removed from the goodness, grace, power, and wisdom of the *Master*. 2. These men must be in real *character* disciples. 3. They must be progressing *learners* as well. 4. It must be of the things they themselves in very truth have learned of the great Teacher that they are to tell others. They must not only be, for instance, *hearers*, but must be of the *taught*, the successfully and humbly taught.

V. THE FINAL SUMMONS TO AN UNTAUGHT, LISTLESS WORLD TO GIVE EAR AND LISTEN. Jesus "opened his mouth and taught." 1. What an authoritative summons! 2. What an encouraging summons! 3. What a rewarding and comforting summons!—B.

Ver. 3.—*The blessedness that Christ pronounces.* Amid many ways in which the grand inheritance which Jesus designated by the word "blessedness" may be regarded, and its worth exhibited and its charm enhanced to our mental gaze, all too sluggish, we may now take the following course. This blessedness which Christ pronounces must be the more worthy of regard, in that—

I. IT IS NOT FLAUNTED IN PROMINENCE AND IN BRIGHTEST, LOUDEST COLOUR ON HIS FLAG.

II. IT FINDS A PLACE NEVERTHELESS AND IS EXHIBITED, BUT IS RARELY EXHIBITED, AND THEN NOT WITH ANY HERALD'S FLOURISH OF TRUMPETS, BUT WITH SUDDENNESS, WITH SCARCELY A NOTE OF PREPARATION; WITH APPEAL TO THOSE ONLY WHO HAVE EYES OPEN TO SEE.

III. IT IS PROMPTLY ASCERTAINED TO BE BASED ON AN UNUSUAL FOUNDATION, AND ONE UNUSUALLY DEEP. AMID OTHER BUILDINGS INNUMERABLE, IT IS BUILDED ON A ROCK.

IV. WHEN CONSIDERED IN ITSELF, IT IS DISCOVERED TO BE WROUGHT OUT OF DISPOSITION RATHER THAN BESTOWED UPON IT; THE ESSENTIAL AND SURE OUTCOME OF QUALITY AND OF HEART RATHER THAN BOON, PRIZE, OR REWARD CONFERRED UPON THEM BY ANY THEORY OF RECOMPENSE.

V. IT IS IN ITS ENDURANCE AS LASTING, FAR-SEEING, FAR-REACHING, AS IT IS IN ITS NATURE INTRINSIC. Show that these peculiarities of the blessedness that Jesus esteems are illustrated by all the instances following in vers. 3—11, etc.; and that they entitle it to be said firmly and emphatically that—

VI. IT IS THE "CHIEF GOOD," FOUND AT LAST AND FOUND SURELY; THE "CHIEF GOOD," NOT OF THE PHILOSOPHER'S QUEST MERELY, BUT OF THAT OF THE UNIVERSAL HUMAN HEART AND LIFE. "The chief good is the only motive of philosophical inquiry; but whatever confers *blessedness*, that is the chief good; therefore Jesus begins, '*Blessed are the poor in spirit*'" (Aug., 'De Civ. Dei,' xix. 1).—B.

Ver. 3.—*Poverty in spirit; and the clue to its blessedness.* It is to be remarked that every pronouncement of blessedness that here passes the lip of Jesus is accompanied by a "reason of the hope that is" in it. We shall, therefore, in each case notice (1) the brief descriptive title of those who are pronounced "blessed," and (2) the leading suggestion as to the source of their blessedness. Consider—

I. THIS DESCRIPTIVE TITLE OF CERTAIN CHARACTERS—THOSE WHO ARE "POOR IN SPIRIT"—WHO ARE THEY? Do we not long for Christ's own determination of his own descriptions in these cases? Probably with singular unity and distinctest outline he would convey to us just who his "poor in spirit" design—just what his poverty in spirit aims at. In each succeeding case (but especially in the present and *some* of the others) we seem to need to give marks more than one of the disposition we think to be intended, in order to approach the meaning of Christ, rather than feel that we are successfully hitting *the* mark, the one mark of his meaning. Failing, however, that coveted dictum interpretation, we can but make the most faithful use of our own resources. We shall be safe in saying most unhesitatingly that no commendation is intended of those whom we call in modern days the poor-spirited, nor of those who are poor in intellect, or imagination, or in the power of high aspiration, or poor in moral virtues and graces. But, on the other hand, those who answer to such a description as follows may be designated, viz. who own to the essence of humility, of docility (and so far forth of a species of deservingness, not likely to go unnoticed, unrewarded, of the great Giver of all), in that, whatever wealth of things of real greatness, goodness, as seen by the side of some others, they may possess, yet, *first*, they take no praise of it to themselves; *secondly*, are profoundly conscious that still they stand but in mere sight of the threshold of knowledge, power, grace; *thirdly*, are simply abased in the presence of him who is the living, moving Power—the King—in that same kingdom. To be "poor in spirit" is synonymous with being full-filled of a genuine *humility*. And there is no humility that has a chance of being as real, as genuine, as that which comes

of the largest knowledge and the largest grace. For it postulates the largest knowledge, for a man to have anything approaching an intelligent idea of his abyss of ignorance; and the largest grace, for a man to be at all competent to gauge his defect of goodness.

II. THE LEADING SUGGESTION OR CLUE AS TO THE SOURCE OF THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE POOR IN SPIRIT. In the few words of Jesus' lips, it is because these have "the freedom," not of earth's greatest city, but of "the kingdom of heaven." No artificial condition or qualification gives entrance to this kingdom, much less a continued sojourn in it, least of all to the glorious "freedom" of it. But a pure docility and a determined growingness give each and all of these, one after another. And such pure docility and unresting growing are led in by that unchallengeable angel, the angel of humility. There is no surer docility than that which comes in the wake of humility—nay, owes its life to her, as to a mother; cleverness and quickness of intelligence is no equivalent of docility. A practical commentary upon this very aspect of the subject at the treatment of Christ himself is indeed *not* withheld from us, but is given us in the parable of the "little child" (ch. xviii. 1—5; Mark ix. 33—37; Luke ix. 46—48). And to furnish ourselves with an impressive idea of the stress Christ lays, must lay, on docility, we need but to think of the place, the high place, that the universal Church feels to belong to those persuasively beseeching words of his, "Come to me . . . and *learn* of me." What words of Jesus have endeared themselves more to the whole Church of all the ages gone? To be "poor in spirit" is to have that condition prior to all others for belonging to the kingdom of heaven—the condition of receptivity unfeigned, of mind, heart, all the nature, unknown in its vastness. And the man who has that receptivity is already in divinest sympathy with the life of the "kingdom of heaven." For he can find his emptiness filled nowhere else, his capacity to receive satisfied nowhere else.—B.

Ver. 4.—*The blessedness of the mourner.* "Blessed are they that mourn," etc. Perhaps this Beatitude may be counted as the one that most amazed ears and minds, which were not a little amazed by each one in turn. How little real cheerfulness possessed the heart of the people among whom Jesus lived! There was a maddened, frivolous excitement on the one hand; on the other, a tamed-down and habitual dispiritedness. The heritage of the nation at this time was the misery and sense of degradation that came of many of the grossest forms of bodily disease, of the heart of religion eaten out, and of an oppressed and down-trodden political condition. And both—the ever-memorable, ever-dear invitation, "Come to me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden," and this Beatitude, "Blessed are they that mourn"—betray and bespeak in utter harmony with one another the prevailing tone and genius of the saddened nation. Nay, unless what Jesus now pronounces can be thoroughly maintained and made good, so suited is the word to the most patent aspects of the people's heart, that it might run the risk of seeming the refinement of a mocking flattery. But, whatever the people of the time thought and believed, or believed not, about this saying, nineteen centuries have fortified and still fortify its position. Even "the natural history" of the mourner, much more his spiritual history, passed in simplest review, will show that the saying of Jesus is not to take rank with the strained, unreal, arbitrary sayings of philosopher or quack, either optimist or pessimist, but is the saying of deep, abiding truth.

I. MOURNING EXPRESSES AT THE LOWEST ESTIMATE A HOPEFUL SUSCEPTIBILITY. Where tears are, there is some susceptibility, at all events. Fatal fever does not rage, and is not doing its irremediable worst. Pitiless heat, shut-up heavens, unyielding drought, have not scorched up irrecoverably the verdure of the heart. One tear in the eye tells of at least one spring in the heart, though it lie ever so concealed. Esau's deluge of tears testified that, though his birthright was irrecoverably lost, yet he himself was not so. The woman who washed the feet of Jesus with her tears had lost more, and more irrecoverably, than Esau lost, yet she herself was saved, and Jesus guaranteed it: "Thy faith hath saved thee: go in peace." Peter, at the fire of the judgment-hall, renounced his faith, his Lord, his hope; and was not his conscience seared and his soul branded for a lost soul? No, for he "went out and wept bitterly." But there was another who also denied Jesus. He was close by, and he too "went out," but not to weep; we read not of one tear. So, even so, on the lowest showing, the mourner is blessed.

II. THE TRUE THING MOURNING SPEAKS OF THE PROBATION OF EARTH. Violent grief, wailing, gnashing of teeth, are indeed revealed as characteristic of the place or state of future woe. But the true spirit of mourning, unknown in heaven, ungiven to hell, marks "the day of grace" that belongs to earth. It is one of the chiefest signs of earth's trial and education, and one of the chiefest symptoms of earth's hope. It subserves highest and most intrinsic uses—uses not the sequel of God's displeasure only, but the arguments of his most gracious love, till such time as "the former things have passed away, and God wipe away all tears from the eye." What mercy lies ambushed in mourning!

III. MOURNING IN ITS VARIOUS KINDS HAS ABSOLUTE AND VALUABLE USES. 1. There is the mourning of *sympathy*. The reaction of sympathy is of Divinest use. Whatever it gives, it takes inevitably more. It opens the whole fulness of the spiritual eye, enlarges the heart, gives liberty and free action to each faculty for love, and each limb for service. 2. There is the mourning of *pain*. Pain presses it forth, and it *expresses* pain. That very expression is relief. Even physical pain is a power in and throughout the whole world. It has a widely pervading usefulness, a deeply penetrating service, in this world's stages of spiritual growth and spiritual immaturity. The mourning of pain, for infancy, childhood, youth, strong age, and old age, we cannot tell what it has not been the means, directly or indirectly, of sparing to flesh, blood, mind; what fever of body and soul it has not averted, adding endurance to patience, vigour to energy, length of days to life itself. 3. There is the mourning of a *full heart*, whether the heart that is full of sorrow or of joy. How often is it the safety of the heart surcharged with grief, or likely to be overbalanced with joy! So Hagar wept. So Joseph wept when he heard of his father, "the old man, yet alive." So wept the exile patriots "by the rivers of Babylon." So the overjoyed father, whose prayer had successfully wrestled, and who with tears cried out, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." And so was Mary's mourning, as she stood "without at the sepulchre," transmuted into an ever-springing well of joy. 4. There is the mourning of *bereavement*. Of all the heart's mourning, irrespective of that toward God in penitence, there is none more deep, more keen, more pitifully bowed down. Even when we sorrow as those with a good hope, the poet's verse is most true—

> "Oh! 'tis the pang severest
> That human hearts can know,
> To lay what we hold dearest,
> Thus, thus the dust below."

Of this mourning, too, how truly it may be said, it is alike signally fruitless and fruitful—fruitless to reverse, or in the least to stay the unanswering and unanswerable will of God, but fruitful to bring heaven nearer! Of brother and child, of wife and sister, of friend and second self, once slipped from our touch, it only remains to be said, with dreadest conviction of the truth of it, "he" or "she shall not return to me." The most undoubting trust is demanded in the darkest conflict; the most unsuspecting love in the blankest heart. Clinging, unaltering attachment is wrapt in bleeding, writhing affection. But to no mourning has Jesus come more deliberately to assuage it, with none has he more touchingly sympathized, none in the days of his flesh which seemed more to stir him to his mightiest works. Yes, blessed is this mourner, for he is already "comforted," in that those he loves so well are, though vanished from his sight, where for the first time no mourning can affect *them*. No recall can disturb their secure bliss. 5. Beyond the natural history of mourning there is that spiritual history of it, that sacred service belonging to it, infinitely removed from all mere sentiment, unfeignedly acknowledged by the strongest man, the tenderest woman, the frailest child—the mourning of *penitence*. This has no *meritorious* worth. Nor does it derive any consecration from our being able to say it was shared by Jesus. But it was sanctioned by him, looked on with most gracious approval by him, commended by him, as surely as those very different shouts of triumph and loud hosannas that echoed to the skies when once he was journeying into the city of Jerusalem. Yet what a touching history belongs to the mourning of penitence! With what extraordinary experiences has it been allied! Upon what fears, darkness, struggles, anguish, has it at last followed with its infinite peace! What workings in the deepest unseen of the

heart has it betrayed! And what irresistible energy has it argued in that majestic friend of silent persuasiveness—God's Holy Spirit! 6. Once more, there is the mourning which may be called specially that of Christ—the mourning *over sinners, and because of sin.* He who had *no* sin for which to reproach himself is he who wept most freely over the sins of others. "He beheld the city, and wept over it." "He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, and wept." In proportion as any disciple of Christ attains resemblance to him, he will be marked by the same hatred of sin and its work, by the same grief over the sinner and his folly. Holy men of old, moved by God's Spirit, knew such grief. "I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved, because they kept not thy Word. . . . Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy Law." Our genuine mourning over sin will bring us into some faint resemblance, at least, to him of whom we thus sing—

"The Son of God in tears,
Angels with wonder see.
Be thou astonished, O my soul!
He shed those tears for thee."

IV. MOURNING HAS ITS PERIOD DIVINELY FIXED. There is this particular "comfort" attached to it—that, though painful at present, it is useful; and that when its main uses are gained, itself is lost in "comfort." To the believer in Christ mourning cannot be unalloyed, for he knows its present sacred advantages, and he believes its early termination. "Blessed are the mourners: for they shall be comforted." Comforted, indeed, *now* by many a sanctified use and fruit of affliction, and by many a sanctified suggestion, but most of all by *the* sanctified assurance that ere long, nay, right early, God shall abolish it, and shall "wipe away all tears from the eye." So it is no mere *end* to which mourning comes; it is not the mere extinction of nature; it is the doing of God's own kind hand, moved by his own kind heart. This Beatitude is good as a rainbow covenant between heaven and earth, for souls and their inner skies. Whether any Christian sorrow more or less, he may now, with this Beatitude of sorrow, "*rejoice* with joy unspeakable, and full of glory."—B.

Ver. 5.—*The blessedness of the meek.* This Beatitude asks at the outset to be distinguished from the first, that speaks of the "poor in spirit." It is a quotation from the far-seeing, even if dim-seeing, gospel of the Old Testament (Ps. xxxvii. 11). The promise attached to the Beatitude is one the special *habitat* of which is the page of the Old Testament. And this helps to guide us to the genius of the present passage. Meekness must be indeed a quality of the person; it must undoubtedly be in the most essential sense a *personal* quality. It is nowhere, unless it is deep down in a man's heart, and in genuine possession of it. Though this be so, however, it is here a virtue that *faces* less to the individual character and life than to the social, collective, national. Let a man be more than as meek as Moses, he and his individual solitary meekness would never make that conquest of the heritage of the earth which is here extolled and set up as a mark and a goal. Had, however, the chosen people been meek, true to meekness, continuously and growingly meek, meek subjects of the heavenly and theocratic rule, then dispossession would not have been their heritage of shame. A growing heritage of the earth would have been their glory and pride. Now, all this, unobtained by the Law of Moses and Sinai, with its commandments and the prophets, remains to *be* obtained. It is yet to be. The earth is to be inherited, and it is to be inherited by men whose conquest of it shall be, not by might, nor by power and pride, but by *meekness!* We may read, therefore, in this Beatitude—

I. CREATION'S CHARTER PROCLAIMED ANEW, OF MAN'S RIGHT IN THE EARTH.

II. DEEPER AND FAR MORE SIGNIFICANT INTIMATION OF THE REAL WAY IN WHICH THE CONQUEST OF THE EARTH SHOULD BE EFFECTED. The whole earth and mankind themselves, alike in their most scientific aspects and their moral aspects, are best understood, and certainly best mastered, by those methods of observation rather than of dictation, of induction rather than presuming speculation and hazardous conjecture, which the greatest, truest philosophers (like Lord Bacon) came at last to recognize and teach. This meekness is, even for the physical conquest of the earth and all things in it, the masterly meekness.

III. THE HIGHEST SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE DECLARED—THAT THE MEEKNESS THAT MINISTERS, THAT SERVES, THAT IS EVER READY TO MAKE ITSELF THE LEAST, IN PURSUIT OF THE HIGHEST WELFARE OF MEN, IS THAT FORCE WHICH MOST UNFAILINGLY WINS EVENTUALLY THE CHIEFEST PLACE, THE GREATEST HONOUR AND INFLUENCE, AND MOST ROYAL AND ENDURING EMPIRE. The Beatitude does not for a moment purport to say anything to the honour of the man who might possibly be lord of a million acres, but it does purport these two things at the lowest estimate—to honour the man who through meek obedience, diligence, industry, study, should out of actual poverty win for himself but a single acre; and, secondly, much more to honour the man who by the like qualities makes the earth more tenantable for its citizens, and its citizens longer-lived and happier tenants of it.

IV. A GRACIOUS AND UNFALTERING ASSURANCE FOR ALL THOSE WHO ARE MEEK IN THIS SENSE, THAT THEY ARE STUDYING TO GROW IN REAL HARMONY WITH THE WILL OF HEAVEN AND ITS LOVE, THAT IT IS FOR THEM TO FIND AT LAST THEIR LONG PRAYER DIVINELY AND MOST PRACTICALLY ANSWERED, AND GOD'S "KINGDOM COME, AND HIS WILL DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN." There is no sense truer than this in which the meek shall "inherit the earth."—B.

Ver. 6.—*The blessedness of those who hunger and thirst after righteousness.* "Blessed are they which do hunger . . . for they shall be filled." This Beatitude is, among all the others around it, as the spread banquet of religious meditation. It may have the just effect of surprising us, with a very unaccustomed hopefulness as to human nature. It challenges us to believe that there is left surviving still in us a germ and force of spiritual nature that *can* rise to appreciate that which is the highest of things that are holiest. It postulates the possibility, though it were only a possibility, of our attaining the disposition to feel in genuine, unfeigned sympathy with *it*, that *principle* of so lofty height; and so much so as to long with the longing of hunger and thirst *to* live, actually *live*, in practical harmony with it, and habitual exemplification of it. Such encouragement is not the illusion of vanity, or of self-sufficient exaltings of what man is or may be; it is the outcome of the knowledge, the gracious condescending love and power of that true Teacher, and the Lifter-up of our souls, who spoke the Beatitude—spoke it in that strange gathering and at that strange time of day. In what he said we may certainly repose the confidence of hope and of firmest faith. Let us ask—

I. WHAT IS THE THING HERE CALLED RIGHTEOUSNESS? The word may well be a study. It may well and most wisely be intended for a study. How much—a compressed volume in a word—must there be condensed in the quality, the disposition, the power, the great reality, be it what it may, which Christ here calls righteousness! It is the thing man failed of at the first, and spoiled fresh-born human nature. It is God's own undeviating rightness; the unfaltering love of that which he unfalteringly loves, and unfailing practice of that which he unfailingly practises. It is, indeed, the supreme ideal, but the most undoubted reality. It soars to highest thought, and to lowliest practice it stoops. It is "exceeding broad," but fine and penetrating as a "two-edged sword." God's Law, God's will, God's love, the moral projection of the heavenly kingdom on earth, how great, how wise, how generous, how omnipresent, filling all spaces whatsoever like the flowing tide to all the world, it must surely be! The *type of moral perfection* is that which constitutes the righteousness here spoken of, in which a perfect moral nature rests in satisfied blissful repose, and for which our imperfect moral condition should make us hunger and thirst. Whether the knowledge of that type is reached by us direct from the pattern in the heavens, and in the Divine Being himself; or whether we attain it with Divine help through a perpetual exalting of each and every germ and tendency and quality of goodness that our human nature has ever shown, is comparatively immaterial to inquire. We are persuaded of its existence, and we have some knowledge of its proportions, according to the greater advance or the backwardness of our own moral discernments. And though the image be all too broken, the reflection too uncertain and scattered, like that upon the surface of troubled waters, yet there is this strange fact to be noted, that while entirely lost in none, all perhaps have a completer notion and *scheme* of it than they, for the most part, care to own to. Such is its reality, its vitality, and its deep-cut graving on the heart!

II. WHAT ARE THE THINGS WHICH LIE INCLUDED IN THE DESCRIPTION OF "HUNGER-

ING AND THIRSTING" AFTER IT? 1. The unfeigned belief in that perfect thing called righteousness, and the acknowledgment of the principle that the righteousness of a perfect life should be still and always the object of endeavour, kept before the gaze of even fallen man. Even for him it is still the genuine ideal. Though we should never actually attain it here, the sight of it and the attempt to reach it will not be fruitless. These will be preservatives against dissipation. They will guard against despair. They will exert a constant practical elevating influence. They are the protest against a false creed, and the very pernicious creed, that we are not in any sense required to live to the same standard to which we were once created; and that as to attain it perfectly may be impossible, so it is nugatory to try, and matters less than nothing how little we try. Merely in this view of it, this Beatitude was a startling announcement and novelty for those, in their very degraded national state, whose ears first received it from those most gracious lips that first spoke it. Is it not for unnumbered millions still the same, and for us all far too much the same? 2. The genuine craving, continual craving, intense craving, of the soul after it. The unresting deep want, the unquenched aspiration so well known to the heart, must have exchanged other objects for this supreme one object. It is the gift of God. As such it justifies the asking of it, that it show the depth, determination, and lastingness of divinely implanted qualities. The desire of all the nature after righteousness must be at least strong and real *as* nature, for so it is called "hunger and thirst," the figurative language serving its purpose to the furthest extent possible, but none the less, as we well know, in *fact inadequate*, as figure should always be to fact. The spiritual appetite here shadowed forth must be, and when in its perfection has shown itself so many times, a far more powerful, commanding, consuming force than all mere natural appetite. It *has* borne the greatest strain, faced the greatest perils, dared all enemies, and "overcome the world," within and without. Yet nevertheless, in the quieter times of the world's course and our own individual history, it is pre-eminently entitled to ask time to grow, to find food, to gain strength and robustness, to learn its own high quality, and feel its own intrinsic force. For often the desire that feared itself and distrusted itself, that did not know whether it would live and could stand certain chill winds, has been rooting itself the more firmly, and has become the dominant holy passion of the soul. That which did not look quite like it at first *has become* the genuine, constant, and intense craving of the soul.

III. WHAT IS THE GROUND ON WHICH CHRIST PRONOUNCES THOSE BLESSED WHO HUNGER AND THIRST AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS? The ground which our Saviour assigns for the blessedness of such is that their desire shall not be mocked; shall not find itself empty, hollow, and such as must come to nothing; shall not find itself *unsatisfied*. They shall have, have enough, "be filled," but be filled without being sated! How many desires, how many hopes, how many objects of pursuit, how many worthy and even noble enterprises and high-pitched ambitions, fail of fruition; or, not entirely failing of fruition, yet fail of such satisfying and such being satisfied as will bring them up to the meaning of Christ when he says, "for *they* shall *be filled*"! It is an infinite loss that we court, that we incur, when we leave unsought, uncared for, the abiding, the satisfying, the unstinted abundance, for that which wastes, perishes in the using, and does not fill the infinite capacity of a human heart.—B.

Ver. 7.—*The Beatitude of mercy.* "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." The line of cleavage that obtains so clearly in the tables of the ten commandments, between those of our duties that look direct to God and those which in their first action regard fellow-men, has not an exact parallel in the ever-welcome table of the Beatitudes. The distinction is probably in the nature of things not so apparent. Ten commandments readily admit a distinctness of classification which the expansive force of living and ever-growing qualities of soul do in part resolutely refuse. These act more freely and on their own account, and intermingle where they will and where they can. If such qualities and virtues at first seem to turn the face more Godward, in that very act none can fail to see how it is all the more laid upon them to be operative, and powerfully so, towards man; and *vice versâ*. The distinction, nevertheless, *does* exist, and in some of the Beatitudes utters itself forth clearly. It is so with the one, fifth in order, now before us. Our mercifulness has no operation towards God, though it must

be that he observes with an ever-open eye whether we observe it, and how liberally or otherwise we observe it to others! He taught the petition and its very wording, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us." Consider—

I. THE OBJECTS OF THIS BEATITUDE. They are the "merciful," *i.e.* those who have mercy of heart; and if they have this, it must be that they will show and practise it. A man may have money in his pocket and not show it. He may have some skill, some knowledge, some talent, in his composition, and may not show them. But mercy is that which, to have it, is to show it and "do" it. So a man cannot be credited with the "forgiving" disposition unless he habitually practise forgiveness. Mercy in itself is (with Remigius, presbyter, and monk of Auxerre, A.D. 880) "to count another's misery or want one's own, and to be sad at all another's grief as at one's own." The spring of it lies perhaps far away, concealed certainly from general sight and from feeble sight, high up in the hills. Sympathy is its twin rill, and its ever-fresh, crystal, flowing tributary. Its stream now has somehow become deep and full, and circles the world around; for it has become a vital necessity for human-kind. Its compass extends from the freshest, youngest possibilities of the works of the sweetest charity, to the anguished, shamed, smarting sense of pity awakened by and for the worst of sinners. Point special attention to: 1. The grand Exemplar of this quality, the mercy of God in Jesus Christ. 2. The crying, awful, supreme need of it, as poured on a world by him; and as multiplying itself then by the myriad (however weak and small yet) genuine reproductions of its own spirit. 3. The wide, universal use of it—everywhere, in everything, in the home, the city, the Church, the nation, for the body and for the soul—where is there the variety or where the grouping of society which does not hang *precarious* on mercy and its works? 4. The deep degradation signified by the *absence* of it; and illustrated so patently, so lamentably, wherever in the world, on smaller or larger scale, the level of it is now lowest. Contrast the world of Christian mercy with all its imperfection, and every blot that lies upon it, and all its wayward inconsistency, *i.e.* at its worst, with the unchristian world, to which mercy is a stranger all but absolute. Mercy is indeed "mightiest in the mightiest;" but of the mightiest earth has not a pattern to show, unless mercy be there to give the solid strength and enduring framework. Only mercy has in it to find what can meet and bear the strain.

II. THE PROMISE ON WHICH THEIR BLESSEDNESS IS BASED. "They shall obtain mercy." This assurance is the justification and the original of that claim on behalf of mercy that it is "*twice* blessed," blessing him that gives as well as him that takes. Point forcible attention to the fact that here it is signified: 1. That "to obtain mercy" is indeed blessedness. Is it not *the* necessary deep foundation of all individual and all real blessedness? Quote and compare the beautiful and encouraging exhortation, "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy," as if to say that it is the first and last great effect of the throne of grace. 2. That as "God is not unrighteous to forget the work and labour of love" which is "showed toward *his* Name" when any "minister to the saints," so certainly he specially appraises *this* ministry, whether showed to the saints, or possibly yet more, when not shown to saints at all, viz. the ministry of mercifulness. 3. That the reward apparently set forth here, as the return of mercy for mercy, is no mere equivalent. Far otherwise; for, as Chrysostom says, "human mercy and Divine mercy cannot be put on an equality." The latter is "much more"—nay, is it not infinitely "much more"? The two *are* compared by the warrant of this very passage. But is it not only in one sense, important and significant indeed, but yet *limited*, that they are compared, viz. for the motive of them? *Intrinsically* are they not *incomparable*? The mercifulness of a human heart taught of God, touched by Jesus, is indeed the evidence of its parentage, and a most grateful one. But what mercy of human action can for a moment compare with that here in view when it is said, "for they shall obtain mercy"?

CONCLUSION. Let all lay to heart what, in the estimate of Jesus Christ, must be the place in the world, and in human life and all the compass of its social relations, for this grace of mercifulness that it should be enshrined in this elegant, chaste temple of the Beatitude, and fill one niche out of so sacred a nine!—B.

Ver. 8.—*The Beatitude of the pure in heart.* "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they

shall see God." If the foregoing Beatitude were one that turned its face principally to man, and looked as it were fixedly on him, yet with most undoubted aspect Godward, *this*, on the other hand, the eighth in order, must certainly be held (and all the more so by force of the latter clause of it) to place us face to face with God—how certainly, also, to the subsequent advantage of our fellow-man none can doubt. Simple as are the words of this Beatitude, the central word, that one on which the meaning of all hinges, may be rendered yet a little more expressively and unmistakably by the word "clean," which is the Authorized Version rendering ten times out of the twenty-eight times of its occurrence in the New Testament. Three other times is this "clean heart" spoken of, viz.: "The end of the commandment is charity out of a clean heart" (1 Tim. i. 5); "With them that call on the Lord out of a clean heart" (2 Tim. ii. 22); "Love one another with a clean heart fervently" (1 Pet. i. 22). And in addition twice is a "clean conscience" spoken of, viz.: "Holding the mystery of the faith in a clean conscience" (1 Tim. iii. 9); "God, whom I serve from my forefathers with a clean conscience" (2 Tim. i. 3). It is a "clean linen cloth" in which the sacred body is wrapped (ch. xxvii. 59); the "seven angels" are "clothed in clean and white linen" (Rev. xv. 6); the "Lamb's wife" is "arrayed in fine linen, clean and white" (Rev. xix. 8); and "the armies, which followed the Word of God," were "clothed in fine linen, white and clean" (Rev. xix. 14). If it were possible to hesitate as to what "the pure heart" of this Beatitude might mean, few could hesitate as to the chief meaning of a "clean" heart.

I. THE CLEAN IN HEART ARE THOSE WHOSE AFFECTIONS, THOUGHTS, WISHES, ARE CLEAN. David's prayer, "Create in me a clean heart, O God," is ever a most practical commentary on the too solemn, too dangerous subject. And St. Peter's earnest entreaty to those whom he counts even as "dearly beloved," that they "abstain from fleshly lusts, which *war against the soul*," is another. This unclean heart is described by the lips of Jesus Christ himself: "Out of it proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies" (ch. xv. 19). And the description is followed on by St. Paul, when he speaks of the "works of the flesh" (Gal. v. 19). Human affections, pure, clean, innocent (partial and imperfect and temporary though they be), lead on to the Divine and eternal; but human passions and the desires of the flesh are the worst foes to the spirit. Into the heart contaminated by entertaining such guests, higher and purer cannot, will not, come. It cannot be pronounced "blessed;" it cannot be "blessed." It has its own eyes indeed, but they are not eyes with which God can be seen. Purity of heart must mean first of all pure thoughts, pure desires, pure affections. Love of the visible, the near, the present, always takes advantage to *hinder* the love of God, but impure affections fail not to *destroy* it absolutely.

II. THE PURE IN HEART ARE THOSE WHOSE HIGHER JUDGMENT, BETTER FEELING, TRUER VISION, ARE NOT DISTURBED BY THAT ILLUSION OF SELF-INTEREST WHICH HAS SO BRITTLE, AND AT THE BEST SO BRIEF, A TENURE OF LIFE. The larger examples of the disastrous interferences of what for a while wears all the semblance of expedience, policy, self-interest, and even justifiable self-regard, speak distinctly for themselves when they occur. But the amazing, the incredible work of mischief, invisibly, sometimes unconsciously, rarely enough confessedly, piled up with the effect of crushing unsuspectedly all that is best in the individual heart, it would seem only the plunge into the eternal world can reveal, whether to others or to the victims themselves, whose name is legion. Souls could not have been *gambled* away more mercilessly or in more ruinous number than they have by these ways committed suicide. They have melted down like the snow, and vanished like phantom troops. The pure in heart know and abide by the right, though it be dressed in rags, and they have no fellowship with the plausible, though arrayed in purple. The pure in heart have an instinct, which holds them faithful adherents to that higher judgment, that better feeling, that truer vision of which the world thinks so little, and which it sells for a delusive nothing. A pure heart believes in it all, without a sidelong glance and without "looking back;" guides itself by what it knows to be the right, and brushes off sophistry as it would a detected traitor-friend. *That* heart is training to "see God."

III. THE PURE IN HEART ARE THOSE WHOSE HEART ANSWERS AS FAR AS POSSIBLE TO PURE MOTIVE ONLY. Motives are those hidden impulses and inducements of

individual actions which so soon usurp the authority of habitual guides of our conduct. Perhaps, to aid our feeble conception of a subject little within our grasp, we might imagine that our heart in its first form was just the scene and domain of feeling—feeling blessedly gentle like infants' breathing; blessedly innocent, that knew no evil; exquisitely sensitive, and—grateful, it knew not why nor to whom. In the midst of that calm scene the plant of thought grew up, inevitably coloured with colour's every tint *by* feeling. It was no clear thought of reason or of the intellect alone. It was warm with the warmth of human life, and with all its mystery of individual hope, wish, and inclinings. This peculiar domain of feeling and thought, the human *soul*, became the main place of the originating of *action*—the fruitful, too prolific seed-bed of all those deeds of the body for which, when we "all appear at the judgment-seat of Christ, we must receive . . . according to that done, whether good or bad." Now, that is a motive which determines feeling and thought to shape itself into action, and which *decides* its form. Whence those motives come (so multitudinous, so various, so mixed in their character), often enough the heart itself has lost the stern simplicity to know, and no earthly judge can safely pronounce. The complication has become what human skill cannot disentangle. Even the uncharitable and censorious world has, to a proverb, *professed* at any rate to renounce the judging of men's *motives*. None the less realities, yet are they fearful *ghostly* realities to summon before *our* bar, indeed! Grant all this, yet every one of us knows, if he will say it, whether those inducements of his actions within him are or are *not* honest, kind, useful, *right*, unpoisoned by absolute selfishness, fit to be brought to the light, good, holy—in a word, whether they are "*pure*," or prejudiced by every degree of the taintedness of *im*purity, from the least to the greatest. To set *this* house in order is indeed a task. To suffer, to harbour in it *no* ill motive, to encourage each better and higher motive, to keep a "clean conscience," the fairest flower and fruit of which is "charity" toward the motives of others, stern strictness toward our own, or humbly, earnestly to try and pray to do this, as far as it is not "impossible with man," is to have, or to approach toward having, the "pure heart," which begins even now to "see God."

CONCLUSION. Dwell upon the very encouraging light thrown on human nature, and on its future—that the vision of God is suggested as granted even here to a growing moral likeness to him, and a nearing moral sympathy with him; while every present and necessarily partial vision of him here is an earnest of the vision of full fruition to come. Partial though the clearest, brightest, best vision here confessedly is, yet is it not the deepest and purest bliss to be had? To this said the reputed Chrysostom of old, "So far as any one has rescued himself from evil, and works things that are good, so far does he *see* God, either hardly, or fully, or sometimes, or always, according to the capabilities of human nature."—B.

Ver. 9.—*The Beatitude of the peacemakers.* "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." This is the seventh in order of the Beatitudes. It is the first, however, which shows blessedness pronounced as alighting upon a person, not in the first instance for some personal quality, grace, or virtue, but for his works' sake in the interest of others, whether of the family, the world, or the Church. The distinction is manifest, but the difference is not very real. For any man to lay himself out to make peace between others, whether on larger or lesser scale; for any one to have the least likely success in doing so; for any one to have but the honest real desire to do so, postulates already his own disposition. For *certain* work, the gift, and even the honest fervent desire, argues the foundation-grace. And certainly not least so in exactly an instance like the present. As there are some graces and virtues (like patience, for instance) that come little, indeed, naturally or of preference or predilection to *any* one, so also there are some works, the first to be needed, very likely, but the last to be chosen of any one. And *this* is one of them. Thus are some men blessed for their works' sake in double sense. It may, then, be safely assumed that the man who volunteers for the peacemaker's work (1) loves peace himself from the heart; (2) has diligently sought to follow peace with all men; and (3) has, by God's grace, subdued the warring elements of his own heart, as far as might be, first. These are his best and true credentials for his work. The name of special honour and special love put by Jesus himself on the peacemaker pronounces at the same time the high

eulogium of his life upon that man's work. The peacemakers' added title is to be understood to be "the children of God." Notice, then—

I. HOW DEAR TO GOD PEACE ITSELF MUST BE. This is because there is a meaning in it, and a beauty and a joy in it, which no doubt we at present fail to comprehend. This is in keeping with some grand expressions in other portions of Scripture applied to peace, and positions of special honour in which it is placed; *e.g.* "the peace of God, which *passeth all understanding*;" "the God of love and peace;" "grace, mercy, and peace from God;" "the very God of peace;" "peace in heaven;" "peace be unto you;" "my peace I give unto you."

II. HOW NEAR THE CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE MAKING OF PEACE AND THE REMAKING OF THE FAMILY OF GOD ON EARTH. Note the names employed by Scripture to describe the people of God on earth, and how to each belongs by special right the claim of concord, harmony, *peace*; *e.g.* "the brotherhood," "the family," "the whole family in heaven and earth," "one fold," "my father's house," etc.; and again note, conversely, how all "enmity," "strife," "divisions," "fightings," and both works and words of "wrath," "unkindness," "malice," "falsehood," and those various ways that must wreck the very thought of *peace*, are particularly characterized as the works of the devil.

III. HOW PEACE IS IN THE STRICT SENSE A CONSEQUENCE, A RESULT; AND NOT MERELY A CONSEQUENCE IN THE LESS REAL SENSE OF A PRIZE, REWARD, OR FREE GIFT. Accordingly, the person who makes peace makes a great deal else. He has done a great deal underneath, preparatory and out of sight. All this is what *is* now really the work transpiring in the world—the work of Christ the great Peacemaker and of all his disciples, and those especially whose gift and grace are to promote the reign of peace! The underneath work is long; its fortunes appear very various—now ebbing, again on the flow; the elements concerned in the struggle are very numerous, very complex, very dark, very malignant. Of the actual present period, almost the world around, the things plain to sight are wounds, and the merciless laying open of them; difference, dissension, with opposition as the watchword, euphemistically described not seldom as "inquiry," and "examination into first principles," and "putting the things that are to the test." The peacemakers' work is not the slight healing over of a wound. It includes in it, comprehends under its sweet title, a task which, for the amount of the work it comprises, and for the character of it, makes it coincident with the task of a world's redemption—Christ's own task.

IV. HOW THE GRACIOUS, HOMELY, NATURAL FORM OF THE WORDING OF THIS BEATITUDE MARKS THE CONDESCENDING ACCEPTANCE ON THE PART OF THAT SAME MIGHTY SUFFERER, MIGHTY WORKER IN HIS MIGHTY TASK, OF EACH HUMBLEST CONTRIBUTION AND OFFERING TOWARDS ITS ACCOMPLISHMENT, WHICH MAY BE BROUGHT TO HIM BY THE WAY. The little miniature productions and pictures and homes and social scenes of "*peace*," in the places where yesterday all the reverse were found—the two lifelong enemies at one—the sadder strife of two fellow-disciples, who had fought under one banner, quenched like lovers' quarrels,—these are but trifles by the way, drops in the bucket, bloodless skirmishes in comparison of the conflict raging on the world's wider battle-field. But they are significant of the greater. The "peace" means an earnest of the larger victory; the love, and prayer, and pains, and pleading, perhaps, which have been blessed to bring it, have all been copied from the biography of the great Exemplar; and over these peacemakers, for their hearts' desire, for their endeavour of faith, for the loving copy, which with some success, not despised because it is the day of small things only, they have achieved, the word of blessedness is breathed, and to them is given the name of "the children of God."—B.

Ver. 10.—*The Beatitude of persecution.* "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." This eighth Beatitude joins hands with the first in that part which may be called the "*sanction*" of the Beatitude, *i.e.* its promise, or the authoritative assurance attached to it. It also may be looked upon as closing the number of the general Beatitudes; for we find that the only remaining one, the ninth, turns from the use of the third person to a gracious personal address to those who were the listening company: "Blessed are *ye*, when men shall revile you," etc. On the other hand, it is possible that the explanation of this lies in

the juxtaposition of these two Beatitudes, making one *by antithesis*, as suggested by the stricter rendering of the Revised Version, *e.g.*, "Blessed are they who have suffered persecution: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed (in like manner) are ye when . . . Rejoice . . . for great is *your* reward in heaven." Under any view, this present Beatitude may well be held to have been itself to a large degree a reminiscence. Persecution for righteousness' sake could be no absolute novelty for the time of the promulgating of Christ's religion, for the great Captain himself or for his apostles and first servants. None the less true, however, was it that a fresh force of goodness, and the greatest force that could be, must avail to stir up direr opposition on the part of the powers of darkness. The Beatitude stands like a repromulgation of one great law of suffering, with its attendant "great reward." And it had its special call at the time. Notice—

I. THE BOLD FORMULATING OF THIS GREAT HUMAN PRESENT FACT, VIZ. THAT RIGHTEOUSNESS SHALL DRAW UPON ITSELF THE WORLD'S PERSECUTION. The thing has of a truth been *known*; but it has been partly disguised, partly accounted for, by merely side issues, and as far as possible has been *minimized*, *e.g.* by methods (analogies to which are now not unfamiliar to us) such as this, that "it must be confessed there were faults on *both sides*;" or this, that the right side was not perfect; or this, that it was a shade too uncompromising, or unnecessarily trenchant and thereby gratuitously provocative; with much else. In all such instances the end has *not* sanctified the means, even though the end was as genuinely as it gave itself out to be, the desire to shield the fair fame of the right, which it might antecedently have been supposed *could* not get its votaries into harm's way. All these cobwebs and this shallow sophistry the unconcealing voice of the utterer of this Beatitude blows away. This world is not yet the *habitat* of righteousness. Righteousness is *not* yet so at home in it that all men are its friends, or anything like all, or anything like the majority. Envy, jealousy, dislike of standing reproof in the shape of that condemning contrast, which stands stationary as a statue, if silent as a statue, as well as such hatreds as come of the more active witnesses and zeal of righteousness—all these are sworn foes to it and its devout followers. "In the world ye shall have tribulation." "What glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye take it patiently? but if, when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, *this* is acceptable with God." The untoward fact has got its footing in the world and made its place here, and Righteousness does not on that account hide her face or lower her flag. She accepts it all as another task to do, another war to wage, another usurpation to overthrow. But there shall be no disguise about facts, nor shall the sufferer be left without help of promise, without fair consolation. Christ asks none to join his ranks ignorant of his claim, or without cautioning them to count the cost.

II. THE EQUALLY UNQUALIFIED CONDITIONING OF THE BEATITUDE THAT PROFFERS THE ANSWER TO THAT DISASTROUS FACT. The Beatitude is definitely for those who, through their fidelity to righteousness, become the objects of persecution. The scope of the Beatitude would be easily enlarged to the degree of latitudinarianism. It should easily become vague, and its value dissipated in a dubious comprehensiveness; or it might be made to put its most royal stamp on what should least deserve it. The two leading and determining words of the Beatitude are easily susceptible of being wrested from their just application. Righteousness must not be claimed to be a synonym with mere rightness, or what each and any individual may assert to be such by the so-called light of his "own conscience." It is, in point of fact, this very latitude that has been persecution's charter, and the plea for an incredible amount of cruelty and outpouring of blood, which still cries from the ground to Heaven! Righteousness must mean fidelity to moral right or law, or, as we might now more pronouncedly word it, to revealed spiritual law, and to the Revealer of it. It may be quite true that there *is* other very real rightness, very praiseworthy adherence to it, and very cruel persecution, incurred by and on account of that adherence. Only this is not what is here spoken of. Uncovenanted blessing shall alight on this, or blessings covenanted on other promises. Note also that the Beatitude did *not* in its day mean something more *exclusive* than already was; on the contrary, while something more clearly defined indeed, its grand point of view was so high that it was vastly larger and more comprehending. The Beatitude is for this very reason most catholic, because its promise is to the citizens of

the kingdom ever on the growth, the kingdom in which "dwelleth righteousness." Note also the caution necessary respecting the application of the word "persecution." It must not count in those occasions of suffering due to a variety of very mingled cause, which have really been largely the result of individual fault—perhaps as much so as of the *animus* of persecution and the persecutor. In corresponding manner, the work of great reformers has sometimes been grievously tarnished by the personal faults of the reformers. The clear significance of the closing verses of the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews guides us well in the discrimination required here.

CONCLUSION. Dwell again (as under first Beatitude) upon what lies in and under the pronouncement, "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." By *such* suffering men are, so to say, made baptized members of that kingdom. Because *they* are humbly in sympathy with *it*, they may throw themselves back upon all the sympathy it has to offer, and most effectually to *give* to them. And they are entitled to remember and to prize the faithful saying, "If we suffer with him, we shall also *reign* with him." And this is indeed the very essence and glory of all "*kingdom*."—B.

Vers. 11, 12.—*The Beatitude of suffering for the sake of Jesus.* "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." It cannot be denied that we have here before us a Beatitude, and one warm with life and comfort and love. It is, however, particularly addressed to the disciples present, face to face, with Jesus. As the foregoing Beatitude seemed to be in the mind of St. Peter (1 Pet. iii. 14), so his words, as written in the same Epistle (iv. 14), seem the very reminiscence of this ninth and closing Beatitude, which his ears had heard more than thirty years before. Notice how, by this kind, direct appeal, Christ betokens his forethought for those on whom should fall the first severity of trial, temptation, and suffering "for his sake." Notice—

I. THE THREE FORMS OF TRIAL PREDICTED FOR THE FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST. They are, reproach or railing; persecution; and "falsely saying every evil thing about them," *i.e.* all kind of slanderous abuse. Even so in all these respects "Christ suffered for us in the flesh." The parallel suggestions in the second, third, and fourth chapters of the First Epistle of St. Peter are frequent (ii. 12, 19—23; iii. 9, 13, 14, 16—18; iv. 12—19). They are great types of the wounds the world inflicts. They are very liable to be successful assailers of our peace and of our principles, of our temper and of our steadfast endurance. To be forewarned, in order to be forearmed, was never a wiser precaution to take, nor a more gracious one to give. As St. James says, "If any man offend not in *word*, the same is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body;" so in most manifest harmony must it be true, that if any man can silently, patiently, forgivingly stand against and withstand the sort of darts described above, he has not in vain learned of the Lord Jesus, whether of his word or his deed—that one perfect Man!

II. THE FIRST RECORDED USE ON THE PART OF JESUS CHRIST OF THAT SUPREME CLAIM OF HIS, WITH ALL ITS SPLENDID SIGNIFICANCE, "FOR MY SAKE." Note: 1. How sovereign this claim is! 2. How the more remarkable from the known "lowliness and meekness" of Jesus Christ! 3. How deeply imbued it is with faith in the force and fidelity of affection—what a condescending bond as between Jesus Christ and any man! And, once more: 4. How wonderfully it has shown itself equal to all whatsoever that it has been called to bear or to do! Granted that love is a strong principle in human nature, the mightiest of its forces, yet what surpassing strength, continuance, inseparableness have through Christ been made all its own, for all its service of him and for all his requirement of it! So still the gift from him has exceeded infinitely all the gift to him, though he speaks of those that are "reproached, persecuted falsely, evil spoken of, for his sake."

III. THE ENERGY OF JOY WHICH THE CASE JUSTIFIES AND WHICH CHRIST ENCOURAGES. How few things to be had on earth, or even to be begun on earth, do warrant such energy of joy; and how utterly averse the verdict of the world from this of Jesus Christ! But the grounds of this joy are real, and they look far, far on; they command a prospect bounded by no earthly horizon. And the bright joy and succeeding glad-

ness will do much to revive the soul, vexed, humbled, worn by the evil speech of the world. This contrast and the effect of it can hardly have been undesigned, in the merciful calculation of the Lord and Master of souls. Nor undesigned the combination of the joy, of "the glorious company of the apostles" with "the goodly fellowship of the prophets." For is not this the inspiriting outcome of the last sentence, "For so persecuted they the prophets, which were before you"? "Their reward great in heaven" had already been ascertained. And apostles now in their earliest training, putting on of the armour, and young fresh aspirations, emulate *their* historic renown, their everlasting reward.—B.

Vers. 13—16.—*The startling salutation.* The announcements of the Beatitudes were necessarily startling in their matter, even when considered as delivered simply generally, whether the world or any in it hear or forbear. They breathed a spirit and plainly laid down views with which those of the world were so utterly at variance. The estrangement was almost absolute, and amounted to the rigour of alienation. Notice, then, in these words—

I. THE ASSISTANCE THEY OFFER TO THE DISCIPLES TOWARDS REALIZING THEIR OWN RELATION IN PARTICULAR TO THESE BEATITUDES. If they are to be, in truth, disciples of Christ, it is *necessary* that *they* at least get a firm grip upon the principles underlying the Beatitudes. And it is a great assistance to this—how many significant analogies *we* know!—to have their own position, *i.e.* that awaiting them, placed so as to confront them at once. Great theoretic surprises are often converted most beneficently into startling personal and practical surprises. The theoretic surprise would end in nothing but vague dissipation of mind; the personal surprise startles into thought, duty, enterprise. And of such nature surely were these two descriptions of themselves addressed so unexpectedly to the disciples, viz. "Ye are the salt of the earth . . . ye are the light of the world." The value of the bracing effect of them cannot be overestimated.

II. THE ASSISTANCE THEY GAVE TO THE DISCIPLES TOWARDS COMPREHENDING THEIR OWN CALL. Of oral lessons, these must have been among the first; and in the nature of energizing, refreshing *salutations* to minds and lives that had never dreamed of what was in store for either the one or the other. Now must have dated the birth within them of some more adequate sense of the dread responsibility of that call. This awakening was not by the path of despairing, overawing, crushing convictions, but by the very contrary: (1) by the challenge of great truths; (2) by the incitements of grace, peace, honour, dignity, so soon as once they took the true idea of dignity, what it is; (3) the almost unfailing stirrings of consciousness of great, active work before them. How could they sleep, how could thought be dead, how heart or hand be slow, after the voice of such a salutation had gained entrance to their power to hear?

III. THE CROWNING ASSISTANCE THEY GAVE IN THE TWO FIGURES THEY USE. They are such very strong figures. They can't fall on listless ears. They can't fail of making their due impression. They well utter out their unambiguous significance to those disciples. They are of world-wide interpretation—"*salt*" for and of the earth, "*light*" for heaven and the whole procession of things created. The absolute plainness and boldness of these figures enhance immensely their likely usefulness, and go no little way to disarm them of one possible danger, viz. the danger, had they been more covert in their manner, of feeding self-importance, self-assertion, and vanity in those newly called disciples. St. Augustine well says, "Not he that suffers persecution is trodden underfoot of men, but he who through fear of persecution falls away."

IV. THE DISTINCT REFERENCE TO THE CARDINAL FACT THAT GOD WAS TO BE GLORIFIED IN ALL. The "light" of these men is to be the light of those who are "light in the Lord." Their light is to *shine;* it is not to be hidden; it is not to be obscure. Their light is to be the light and lustre that assuredly belong to "good works." These "good works" *are* to be now "seen of men," and in one certain sense they are to be done so that and in order that men may see them; but the end is to rest not *there*, and the glory is not to be reflected back on the disciples. The end is that "men may glorify" the Father, of whom the grace and power and light come that make "good works," and who himself is "all Light," and the "Giver of all light."—B.

Vers. 17—20.—*The veneration of Law and prophets.* The caution which Jesus Christ now addresses to his disciples was very probably owing to many things wont to be said, though not recorded, in the nature of hasty and often malevolent forecasts, of his likely tendency to innovations. How many things had been conjectured, and most vainly, respecting him "that should come"! And now that he *had* come, those who yielded but a hesitating and grudging assent to his Messiahship, in that very proportion were prepared to prejudice his character and work now by overdoing it, and anon by literally misrepresenting it and its genius. But even if considerations of this kind might be supposed not to have weight with Christ sufficient to dictate the present tenor of his discourse, there were deeper reasons for it, and those in harmony with the kind consideration he ever had for the thoughts which were transpiring in the minds of disciples "willing" enough, but "weak." Undoubtedly he had already just startled them with the unwonted character of "blessedness" he advocated and pronounced—"blessedness" not of the Law, and scarcely even of the prophets. It had been the lot of both of these to deal chiefly with the sterner aspects of righteousness. And the line of illustrations he was about now most trenchantly to pursue might naturally, to surprised and superficial thought, seem very like to a superseding and a setting at nought of the venerated ancient Law and old prophets. Hence the caution. In this caution, originally addressed to these men, we find perpetual value. Notice—

I. THE MOST COMFORTING ASSURANCE THAT GOD'S GOVERNMENT AND CONDUCT OF THE AFFAIRS OF THE WORLD DOES NOT CHANGE, EXCEPT BY GROWTH, BY DEVELOPMENT; OR BY THE "FILLING OUT" OF ALL THAT WHICH PERHAPS FIRST APPEARED IN SEED, OR IN EMBRYO, OR IN MERE SKETCH AND OUTLINE RESPECTIVELY.

II. THE STRONG ENCOURAGEMENT TO US TO HONOUR "THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS" (AND WHATSOEVER IN MODERN DAYS CORRESPONDS MORE OR LESS FULLY WITH THEM), IN WHAT MAY SEEM SOMETIMES UTTERLY OBSCURE, OR SOMETIMES OF VERY SMALL SIGNIFICANCE. To what marvellous issues did points in "the Law" that seemed, perhaps, merest ceremonial, superfluous ritual, develop! To what amazing issues did brief enigmatic sentences in "the prophets," which had all the sound of paradox, develop in the grand life of Jesus, in his surpassing works, and in the stupendous portents and facts of his cross, his grave, and his ascension into heaven! The "least of the commandments," whether found in one shape, in Law, or in another, in prophet, is owed our best obedience, and amply rewards it.

III. THE GREAT HONOUR PLACED ON WHAT MAY PERHAPS BE THE OFFERING OF BUT HUMBLE PRACTICE, AND YET HUMBLER TEACHING. Put the same thing in other words, viz. these—the honour attaching to the practice of very retired and obscure lives, the teaching of very humble lips. *Doing* may be said to be at any time the best part of "teaching." But the honour set on "teaching," as well as "doing," guards against such cases as that of Nicodemus. And it guards against *remissness* generally, and against that remissness which goes to the extent of hiding one's light under a bushel.

IV. THE METHOD, IN THE PRESENT INSTANCE, OF CHRIST'S TEACHING, VIZ. BY THE DIRECTEST FORCE OF COMPARISON. The allusion to the scribes and Pharisees and their defective righteousness speaks very plainly its own meaning. We may admit that this method was not at all an unknown one with our Lord, while we may be ready to feel confident that it was not a chosen one, and was an unwelcome one. It cannot necessarily authorize our imitation of it, except under the strictest limitations. But now it was the method of that one Being who only and who always is perfectly qualified, perfectly safe to use it aright. The "righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees" was not only condemnable as being one far more of letter than of spirit; it was of letter added to and miserably adulterated by their own traditions, and had nothing whatsoever of life-giving spirit in it. Nothing could so hopelessly shut out men from "the kingdom of heaven" on earth, *i.e.* from the Church, of which Christ was sketching the doctrine and discipline at this very time, previous to laying the firm foundations of it afterwards by his sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension. The scribes and Pharisees and all their posterity shut themselves out. They did not "enter in" themselves, and as far as possible prevented others.—B.

Vers. 21—26.—*The Christian type of a true fulfilling of the Law: Christ's first illustration.* Had the scribes and Pharisees not adulterated in many ways the Law,

their righteousness would still have been the observing of the letter of commandments of the old covenant. The greatness of the moral step in advance now promulgated by Christ is measured by the fact that he sets as a necessity before his freshest recruits, that they should see better and do better than the masters and veterans of that old covenant. This is, as St. Chrysostom says, the fit illustration of the "superior power of grace." Observe, then, how—

I. CHRIST TRACES TO ITS REAL GERM AND ORIGIN THE FOUL, OVERT CRIME OF MURDER. That is to say, it is: 1. Personal anger, *i.e.* anger with a person, that person necessarily a creature of God, and therefore one's own brother. Anger with sin, anger with a man's offence, and the mischief he and it may have done, and anger in the sense of self-defensive and instinctive momentary *resentment*, are not herein condemned. 2. Anger permitted to express itself in the shape of utter contempt for the person. Illustrate by comparison of contempt, disdain, mockery, and all this family, with sorrow, grief, pity, compassion. 3. Anger assuming energetic activity, neither suppressed and dying in its own ashes, *nor* (however mournful this) kept within the limits of a parched, arid atmosphere, where for less worthy reasons it nevertheless will extinguish itself; but finding fresh fuel and disastrous incentive in the shape of passion and passion's vocabulary.

II. CHRIST DIGNIFIES INFINITELY THE CONCORD OF BROTHERS ON EARTH BY LETTING US KNOW THAT HEAVEN TAKES SPECIAL NOTE RESPECTING IT, AND MAKES IT ITS OWN CAUSE. The gift to God cannot be laid on the altar, so that it shall be accepted, while upon that other altar, the altar of the offerer's heart, false fire burns. It cannot escape notice that the loved and beloved disciple's heart received this saying and treasured it to old age, and gave a most exemplary version of it, in its spirit, in his Epistle (1 John ii. 9—11; iii. 11, 14, 15; iv. 20, 21; v. 1, 2). How far, far away even the Christian elements and tributaries of human society and brotherhood are still from apprehending and practising what is here taught!

III. CHRIST GIVES US THE SUREST GUIDE TO MORAL REFORM, ONCE SEEN AND ACKNOWLEDGED; IT IS FOUND IN PROMPTNESS. The most merciless adversary a man ever had, whether only most exacting as regards debts due to him, or revengeful as well as exacting, is not to compare for mercilessness and exactingness with *that* adversary which each and any man has within himself, and which consists of his own worse self! That worse and lower self is our worst adversary. He equivocates, he extenuates, he procrastinates; he is grievously self-indulgent, slow to awake from sleep or sloth, self-partial to a proverb, and blind to all his own higher self's higher interest. Once let a just thought, a glimmering ray of light, a genuine conviction of duty, or an admonition from without, really heard, be his, and *this* is his hope, his safety, the earnest of his regeneration, that he "agree quickly."—B.

Vers. 27—32.—*Christ's second and third illustration of the Christian type of a true fulfilling of the Law.* After the illustration based on the letter of the sixth commandment, Christ takes the letter of the seventh as the basis of further illustration. Both of these commandments lend themselves so well for the instruction of the individual in the matter of the wide difference between the outer commandment and the spirit of it, that whoever will may learn that difference, and, learning it, become a true learner—a learner in the school of Christ. In this illustration individual feeling, impulse, character, are so sensitively and so subtilly touched, that perhaps none could penetrate more effectually or have better opportunity of far-reaching and lasting lessons. Notice that Christ teaches how, to the true conception of God's Law, it is necessary to remember that—

I. NOT ONLY BEFORE ALL AND EVERY ACTION OF SIN HE MAKES COUNT OF THE THOUGHT-SEED THAT GREW TO IT, AND NOT ONLY BEHIND ALL AND EVERY ACTION OF SIN HE MAKES COUNT OF MOTIVE, AND THE THOUGHT THAT WORKS AS MOTIVE THERETO, BUT ALSO THAT WITHOUT ANY ACTION WHATSOEVER, HE TAKES MOST SURE ACCOUNT OF THOUGHT, AS ITSELF MATTER AND SUBJECT OF SIN, WITH ITS QUALITIES AND ATTRIBUTES.

II. THE BODILY SENSE THAT MAY BE THE INLET, THE AWAKENER, AND FEEDER TO THOUGHT AND HEART, OF SIN OR OCCASION OF SIN, MUST BE DENIED, CLOSED, AND DESTROYED, RATHER THAN LEFT TO BE AN "OFFENCE" TO THE KEEPING OF THE LAW. THIS IS TO HONOUR GOD'S LAW.

III. THE BODILY POWER WHICH MAY HAVE THE SKILL AND CUNNING, AND ALL THAT MAY BE THE BEST TALENT OF THE PERSON GATHERED INTO IT, MUST IN LIKE MANNER BE DENIED, SUPPRESSED, DESTROYED, IF ANY PERVERSE BIAS POSSESSING IT MAKE IT PROVE AN "OFFENCE." THE SOVEREIGN VOICE OF THE COMMANDMENT IS THEN AGAINST IT.

IV. THE COURSE WHICH FAILS OF HONOURING THE LAW OF GOD TO ITS TRUE INTENTION, IS ONLY TOO SURE TO BETRAY ITS OWN FAULTINESS, IN INVOLVING MANIFOLD OTHER VIOLATION OF IT, AND THIS, TOO, ON THE PART OF OTHERS AS OF THE WRONG-DOER HIMSELF.—R.

Vers. 33—37.—*The true fulfilling of the Law: Christ's fourth illustration.* The consideration of this passage asks careful and fair understanding of the correct exposition of it (for which see also Exposition foregoing). Ver. 37 of itself, when strictly rendered, and the word "communication" replaced by "speech," or even "conversation," is sufficient to show that our Lord's pronouncements here do not refer either to solemn judicial occasions, or to those supremely solemn instances in which God is represented as "swearing by himself," or he himself is testified to or his first apostles, as using that sanction of asseveration called the oath. In like manner, due weight must be faithfully given to the four examples of the verbal swearing manifestly in vogue, and requiring particular denunciation. Whatever was the most unfavourable side of the oath, they had *this*. And they had the least of what was legitimate. They covered equivocation, promoted familiarity with what under any circumstances should be reserved for solemn occasion, and nourished the deeper distrust between man and man. Excepting, therefore, from condemnation what we have every reason to believe that Christ did not mean to include in condemnation, we have his most express discouragement of all frequent, ordinary, idle use of forms of swearing—nay, of *all* use of swearing, except such as specially safeguarded, is therein, and, other things being equal, to be regarded as *authorized*. We have the opportunity of a divinely suggested glimpse into the moral ethics of Christianity, and are invited to note of all swearing, that while it proceeds on the very showing, when between men, that it adds inducement to the faithful performance of the promise, and confidence to the calm trust of the person to whom the promise is made, in these *very* things it carries the reminder of its own discredit. And the way is paved for Christ's more excellent version. Notice—

I. SIMPLE ASSEVERATION OR DENIAL THE RULE OF CHRISTIAN LANGUAGE.

II. SIMPLE ASSEVERATION OR DENIAL THE BEST HONOUR TO THE CHARACTER OF THE LIP THAT SPEAKS.

III. SIMPLE ASSEVERATION OR DENIAL THE BEST CREDIT TO THE TRUSTFULNESS OF THE PERSON WHO HEARS.

IV. WHAT IS MORE THAN SIMPLE ASSEVERATION OR DENIAL MEANS "EVIL" IN THE ONE PARTY, OR IN THE OTHER, OR IN BOTH. IT PROCEEDS ON THE VERY SUSPICION OF EVIL PRESENT.—B.

Vers. 38—42.—*The Christian type of fulfilling of the Law: Christ's fifth illustration.* The precept or permission of the Law here instanced was not a precept or permission of revenge, but of equal justice. It was intended to operate, not to the encouragement, but to the discouragement, of revenge; and rather simply as the equitable admeasurer of just punishment and *restraint* of the more natural instinct of revenge. Christ, however, thus early forewarns his disciples of what his eye saw so clearly, his knowledge knew so well, that in this vicarious scene and state not so much even as even-handed justice was to be had, and that it was so dangerous to the seeker himself to seek it, that he had better, with a voluntary genuineness and a genuine voluntariness, sacrifice it. Christ teaches, therefore, here—

I. THAT THE HIGHER MORAL PERCEPTION OF THE TIME AND OF HIS DISCIPLE SHOULD BE PREPARED TO RECOGNIZE THE FACT THAT THE CONDITIONS OF THIS WORLD ARE NOT THOSE OF EXACT AND EVEN JUSTICE.

II. THAT THE DISASTROUS INNER CONSEQUENCES OF PUTTING ONE'S SELF INTO PERSONAL ANTAGONISM WITH ANOTHER ARE SUCH AS TO COUNSEL THE HIGH DUTY OF FOREGOING EVEN THE DEMAND FOR SUCH JUSTICE, AND OF NOT RESISTING THE EVIL PERSON.

III. THAT CORRESPONDING BENEFICENT CONSEQUENCES, FINDING A WAY TO WORK IN OTHERS AND IN THE WORLD, SHALL COUNSEL THE SAME COURSE.

IV. THAT THE CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO FORCE IS A WILLING SURRENDER OF THE PRESENT HOUR'S JUSTICE, AND PRESENT HOUR'S APPARENT SELF-INTEREST.

V. THAT THE CROWN AND PERFECTION OF THE CHRISTIAN DISPOSITION IS TO MEET "IN THE WAY" THE APPEAL OF THOSE WHO WOULD ASK, AND GIVE TO THEM; OF THOSE WHO WOULD BORROW, AND LEND TO THEM. THOUGH ALL APPREHENSION OF FORCE BE REMOVED FAR AWAY, THE CHRISTIAN HEART WILL NOT REBOUND TO THE DEMAND OF ITS RIGHTS, BUT WILL FEEL COMPASSION, SHOW COMPASSION, AND GIVE.—B.

Vers. 43—48.—*The perfect fulfilling of Law: Christ's sixth illustration.* This last illustration makes two advances upon even those foregoing. From the negative course, of not resisting evil, Christ proceeds to teach the high and moral principle of doing good for evil, positively and practically. Further, this illustration moves in that highest sphere where law merges in love. It finds its material in that law of love which comprehends the perfect fulfilling of law. The words of Chrysostom are well worth recording: "Note through what steps we have now ascended hither, and how Christ has set us here on the very pinnacle of virtue. The first step is, not to begin to do wrong to any; the second, that in avenging a wrong done to us we be content with retaliating equal; the third, to return nothing of what we have suffered; the fourth, to offer one's self to the endurance of evil; the fifth, to be ready to suffer even more evil than the oppressor desires to inflict; the sixth, not to hate him of whom we suffer such things; the seventh, to love him; the eighth, to do him good; the ninth, to pray for him. And because the command is great, the reward proposed is also great, namely, to be made like unto God." Consider in what is now enjoined by Christ.

I. THE PRINCIPLE IN ITSELF. 1. How frankly it addresses itself to the facts of human life! 2. How undisguisedly it acknowledges the damage of human nature! 3. How irresistibly it persuades of the not irredeemably lost original! It is as though tidings of it, and a reviving message from it, not seen for so long a time.

II. THE TYPE DISCARDED. The dead level of most ordinary human practice is all that can be said of it.

III. THE TYPE ADOPTED. It is the highest conceivable, and at the same time not discouraging in its tendency on that account, but most suggestive of gracious comfort for us, and of earnest effort on our part. It makes us children of "our Father who is in heaven." It looks like his perfectness, and leads onward and upward ever toward it.—B.

Vers. 3—12.—*Sermon on the mount:* 1. *The Beatitudes.* The subject of the sermon on the mount may be said to be the righteousness of the kingdom. To give all his hearers a clearer conception of this fundamental idea, our Lord speaks (1) of the citizens of the kingdom; (2) of the law of the kingdom; (3) of the life, the devotional and practical conduct of the kingdom. The citizens of the kingdom are first described, their *character* being indicated in the first paragraph, their *influence* being referred to in vers. 13—16. The passage containing the Beatitudes will best yield its meaning if we consider (1) that Christ offers blessedness; (2) in what this blessedness consists; (3) to whom it is imparted.

I. OUR LORD IS IN AGREEMENT WITH THE INSTINCT OF HUMAN NATURE, WHICH CRAVES HAPPINESS, AND SETS THIS AS THE ULTIMATE END, OR CHIEF GOOD. It is indeed almost a truism to call it so, because to say that a man is happy or blessed is just to say that no more need be done for him; that he has attained. Other things, such as wealth, power, knowledge, we seek as a means to some end beyond themselves; happiness we seek for its own sake, and not as a means to something beyond itself. A man does not seek to be happy in order that he may be rich; he seeks to be rich in order that he may be happy. And though this idea has been so much abused, and made the pretext for finding enjoyment in sensual and debasing pleasure, our Lord makes no scruple in giving the idea a foremost place in his teaching, and implying it throughout his whole scheme of human life. No one preaches self-sacrifice as our Lord does; no one goes the same length in requiring that we shall lay down life itself for others. But with what argument does he induce us to do so? By assuring us that he that loseth his life, the same

shall save it. In the very words which command absolute self-sacrifice, he respects the instinct for self-preservation. But to say that happiness is the chief good is quite a different thing from saying that we can find our way to happiness by choosing what promises to bring it us. This would require in us the power of looking at life as a whole, of weighing to-morrow with to-day, and giving no part of our nature a preference over other parts—a wisdom which we have not got. As with many other things, we most certainly attain when we cease to seek. The child does not grow to manhood by considering how he can grow, but by following his natural appetite for food. And to secure the great end of happiness there is also an appetite that guides us—the appetite for righteousness. It is not by asking—Will this or that conduce to my happiness? that we discover what we should do, but by asking ourselves—Is this right or wrong? Through neglect of this consideration many have been scandalized that so much should be said about rewards and punishments in the Bible. It is true that our Lord considers happiness the chief good, and promises it continually, but he never bids men make this their practical aim in life. On the contrary, in this very sermon, so full of reward and of promise of happiness, he lays down another law of conduct: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness." Happiness is found when righteousness is sought. Neither could the conduct enjoined by our Lord have been done from a self-seeking motive. No hope of reward could make a man *love* his enemies, or hunger and thirst for righteousness.

II. To describe the blessedness offered, OUR LORD MAKES USE OF PHRASES WITH WHICH THE PEOPLE WERE FAMILIAR AS DENOTING THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE KINGDOM, but which here start into new significance. The Comforter was one of the most familiar designations of the Messiah among those who waited for the consolation of Israel, and he says to them, "Blessed are ye that mourn: for ye shall be comforted." The inheritance of the land was looked for as an accompaniment of Messiah's reign, and he says, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." They were to be filled, not with corn and wine, but in a spiritual sense. But is the blessedness here described such as really answers our wants? Use our Lord's method, and contrast it with the blessedness which many in our own day look for. There are earnest men among us who hold the confident faith that if only the sources of mental and physical suffering were removed, there is no reason why every man should not enjoy the happiness which every one seeks. The sources of suffering are, they think, within human control, and though the conquest is grievously slow, yet every individual may derive deep and rational enjoyment from his efforts for the common advancement. But the blessedness of an advancing civilization offers no relief for the two most painful of human woes—separation from those we love, and bondage to evil desires. It has nothing to say of death or sin. *Will* the individual work for his race if there is no wider horizon than this world? Will any but those naturally virtuous abstain from sin, if all you can offer is that in some far-off age they may possibly benefit in an infinitesimal degree one or two individuals? The blessedness our Lord offers is of a very different kind. Look at one or two of the terms in which it is described: "Fulness of righteousness to those who hunger and thirst for it." It *is* a remarkable fact that, bad as we are, there should be in so many of us an insatiable craving for what is good. Through all conditions of men we find this craving to stand free from pollution, superior to infirmity. And this blessedness our Lord gives. Again, there is the intense persistent craving to see God, to be as sure that God is with us as if we saw him. With what gladness and steadfastness, with what strength and hope, with what confident self-sacrifice, should we face the world and its ills if we *knew* and *were sure* that a loving, mighty God was at our side! What is there in duty, what is there in self-devotion, that can be difficult for those who have seen God? The day, says our Lord, is coming when this shall be. "Be pure in heart," he says, "and you will know and see me. Be like me, and you shall look upon me." Such is the blessedness which Christ does not despair of bringing to the world. He reveals a kingdom "different from that we see, but not less real"—a kingdom in which there is to be found "satisfaction for all the wants the world fails to satisfy, and a remedy for the miseries it inflicts."

III. THIS BLESSEDNESS IS FOR INDIVIDUALS, AND ESPECIALLY FOR THE WEAK AND THE SUFFERING, FOR THOSE WHO HAVE FAILED IN THIS LIFE AND WHO FEEL THAT IT IS A POOR AND PITIABLE DECEPTION if there is nothing to compensate for the wrong and

misery they have suffered here, or to respond to the deepest longings of their nature. "Blessed," says our Lord, "are ye whom this world has not enriched and satisfied;" blessed are ye, because this emptiness leaves room for the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are ye that mourn," because for all sorrow there is a special Beatitude—a being drawn to the very heart of God, and a receiving of his special fatherly care. While our Lord bids his followers seek first the kingdom of God, while he assures them they must take up the cross and follow him, he at the same time certifies them of blessedness in the end. Sorrow, doubt, defeat, anguish of spirit, are what mark the course of thousands of his followers, but he calmly pronounces them blessed. No craving for righteousness, no natural impulse thwarted, no earthly hope renounced, no happiness postponed for others' sake, shall lose its reward. We have all learned that present pleasure and immediate gratification very frequently lead to permanent sorrow; we are here taught that present trouble and sorrow are often the direct path to permanent joy. How do we stand with regard to the Beatitudes? Can you bring yourself certainly under one or other of these categories? Many never reach happiness, because they neglect to seek it on those lines which our Lord here points out as leading to everlasting happiness.—D.

Vers. 13—16.—*Sermon on the mount: 2. Influence of Christians: salt and light.* Our Lord assured his disciples that very bad treatment in this life might only be the prelude to eternal happiness. He is in the position of a general who is launching his men on an enterprise which will try them to the utmost. So he not only affirms that they will be rewarded, but reminds them how much depends on them. If *you* faint, what hope is there for the world? He speaks of their relation to the world under two figures—salt and light.

I. Salt was often used as a symbol of anything, like itself, pungent. Wit was so called, and in Christian times a gracious tone in conversation; in each case because of their power of redeeming from insipidity. But salt is used to preserve from corruption; and though the figure which represents society as tending to rot and dissolve is a strong one, any one who knows the facts knows how thoroughly appropriate it was. Nor can it be said to be inapplicable to society or family life now, though Christianity has acted so far like salt that corruption is not so flagrantly obtrusive. But the point chiefly emphasized is that *they* were the salt. They were not to expect to get good so much as to do good. It is their calling to counterwork the corruption that is in the world. All those things that tend to the lowering of spiritual life are the objects on which they are to act, and if instead of this they yield to them, it is because the salt has lost its savour. If the very persons who are appointed and equipped to carry with them a health-giving influence are themselves prostrated by the evil infection, if disinfectants carry disease-germs, what shall avail us? "If the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is good for nothing," says our Lord, "but to be cast out, and trodden under foot of men." This also is a strong, severe figure. Plainly we are intended to infer that nothing is more contemptible than a Christian who does nothing to stay corruption. He is a soldier who wears the uniform of his regiment, but leaves the fighting to others; a physician who declines to visit the sick. It is of the very essence of the Christian that he makes some impression on the world. The terms of Christ's call are, "I have chosen you, and placed you, that you might bring forth fruit." Observe that this figure applies especially to beginnings of evil, and to our treatment of the young. Salt can prevent corruption; it cannot cure it. Consider to what the smallest germ of sin in a child may grow; to what extent our life may become corrupt if we neglect to keep the salt of Christian principle.

II. Another danger threatens the disciples of Christ. While some will give up Christian principle altogether when they find how seriously it brings them into antagonism with the world, others will try to hide it. They will continue Christians, but secretly. It is this timorous evasion of opportunities of confessing Christ that he aims at in the figure, "Ye are the light of the world." In this figure several things are implied, as: (1) that Christians are set for the illuminating of the world; (2) that what illuminates must itself be visible; (3) that it is as natural to genuine Christian principle to become visible as it is for light to shine. 1. Christians are set for the illumi-

nating of the world. Our Lord kindled the few men who accepted him as the Light of the world, and they in turn kindled others. He has trusted himself with his followers. He has left it to us to maintain the knowledge of him on the earth, and to hand on the light which all men need. Christians were not to retire and hide themselves, satisfied if they could keep their own souls alive. They were to enter into all the innocent relationships and engagements of life, and so use them as to show their light. All our connections with the world are candlesticks, from which the light may advantageously shine. Persecution itself is one. "Truth, like a torch, the more it's shook it shines." The parental relation is another candlestick. Natural talent may set a man on such an eminence that his light is shed over the land; but all men have some stand from which they can shine, if it is in them to shine. Not the candlestick makes so much difference as the light you put in it. Does any say, "How can I shine—a dull, torpid mass?" Yet not so torpid probably as never to try to influence your fellows in some way. And the dullest body may be a good reflector of light shed on it. The Christian's is not a self-kindled light. 2. The lesson more directly taught is, that whatever illuminates must itself be visible. If your conduct is to teach a better way to men, your conduct must be seen. Therefore are *works* here emphasized. Men cannot see your fine ideas, your noble purposes, your holy aspirations. Your thoughts about Christ, your faith in him, your tenderness of heart towards him, are as the oil in the lighthouse lamp. If no light is shown, shipwrecks will not be prevented. So it will not avail to prevent moral wrecks that you have felt anxious, devised ways of aiding, if you have done nothing. The man who is content to save his own soul, and is afraid to interfere with the wickedness around him, is not even saving his own soul. To the light hid under a bushel, or under a bed, one of two things will happen—it will either go out altogether, choked for want of air, or it will burn through its covering and find surprising expression for itself. For: 3. It is of the essence of Christian character to shine, to become visible. There is a kind of Christianity which burns high or low according to the company it is in. But the fact that it can be thus artificially manipulated, like a gas-jet, shows it is an artificial, and not a genuine, Christianity. If you are a Christian you have a law which covers your whole life, and a new spirit within you. Can a man have new fresh blood in his veins and that not show itself? Just as little can a man have the joy of Christ's love and the reviving energy of his Spirit in his heart, and these not be seen in his demeanour. This witnessing for Christ is not an optional matter. "The good tree will show the good fruit. It cannot go on bearing the old bad fruit out of modesty or a pretended shrinking from ostentation; it must reveal the righteousness of God within by the righteousness of God without, else it is a mockery." The practical object our Lord has in view is declared in the words, "Let your light thus shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." How does this agree with the injunction to hide your good works—not to let your right hand know what your left hand does? In this way. We are to avoid the two extremes of ostentation and timorous shrinking in our conduct; to abandon all affectation, all false delicacy, all pretended modesty and real fear, and live out with simplicity and fearlessness the Christian principle we know and accept. Observe that when our Lord specifies "good works" he does not exclude good words. Often it is a good work to speak the word wanted. And though it is often one of the most difficult of duties, it is certain that we are guilty if we neglect this mode of confessing Christ before men. To be backward in this is a sign that our own light is burning low.—D.

Vers. 17—48.—*Sermon on the mount: 3. Exceeding righteousness.* A teacher who compels the public to look at an unfamiliar truth, the reformer who introduces a new style of goodness, will be misinterpreted just in proportion to the advance he makes upon former ideas. Our Lord renounced explicitly, and with warmth, the goodness of the Pharisees, and the cry was at once raised against him as a destroyer of the Law, a libertine, a companion of loose people. He thus found himself called on publicly to repudiate the attitude towards the Law ascribed to him, and to explain with fulness, once for all, at the outset of his ministry, the righteousness he required and exhibited. "I am not come to destroy the Law and the prophets, but to fulfil." So far as regards his own character this explanation has long since become superfluous, but there is

danger lest the very knowledge that there is full and free pardon for sin should breed in his followers a demoralizing sense of security. They need to be reminded that for them, too, Christ came not to destroy the Law, but to give it higher and richer fulfilment. The importance our Lord attached to this explanation is marked by the abundance of detail with which he illustrates it. He recognized that the mere enouncement of a principle carries little weight to the ordinary mind. He therefore carries his principle all round practical life, and shows how it touches it at every part. Note a few particulars which are liable to misapprehension. Quite recently the subject of lending money on interest has been brought before the public, and from the letter of the teaching here, the case has been made out against it. But we must distinguish between those whose necessities compel them to seek loans, and those who do so for their own commercial convenience. In the one case to require interest is a cruelty; in the other it is only a justifiable business transaction to take our share of the profit we helped others to secure. Again, our Lord's prohibition of oaths has been taken in the letter by a large and highly respectable body of men. But it is to be borne in mind that so inveterate is the habit of falsehood among Orientals that nothing is believed unless it is attested with an oath. It is to this habit our Lord alludes. The habit of profane swearing among our uneducated classes arises mainly from a desire to give force to their conversation without sufficient knowledge of their mother tongue to make themselves intelligently emphatic. It betrays a consciousness, too, on the swearer's part that he is not to be believed on his bare word. All exaggeration in speech brings speedy retribution, for men learn to discount what we say. Simplicity of language lies very near truth in mind and heart. It is not a mere lesson in style, but in the deepest morality, when our Lord bids us cut off superlatives, and all loud, boisterous, exaggerated expressions, assuring us that whatever more than "Yea, yea; nay, nay," we indulge in, cometh of evil. Again, the critics of Christianity are fond of pointing to those precepts which enjoin non-resistance to evil, and asking why we do not keep them. And certainly nothing is more demoralizing than to do homage to one code of morals while we are practising another. And the earnest, simple-minded man, who seeks to lay on Christ's words the eternal foundations of character and conduct, will be apt to accept the gospel rule "crude, naked, entire as it is set down." He will see that here, if anywhere, lies the secret and power of religion, and that it is not for him to pick and choose, but to follow the example of Christ, even in that which is most peculiar and most difficult. And the man who tries thus literally to carry out its words will have the inward peace and the power among men which are the unfailing reward of integrity of heart, even though he may come to learn that there is a better way of fulfilling them; though he comes to see that even when precepts cannot be fulfilled in the letter, they may have an eminently serviceable function in pointing out the spirit we should cultivate. Our Lord himself, when smitten in a court professing to be of justice, protested against the indignity, and did not turn the other cheek. And there are cases where justice demands the punishment of the offender. What we must bear in mind is that the object of Christ's teaching was to introduce a higher morality than that of nature, and that what he demands is the complete repression of vindictive feeling. But he only understands these sayings of our Lord who does his own best to live into their spirit. The man who does so will not find it difficult to discriminate between those cases in which literal fulfilment is demanded and those in which he is to adopt the spirit and intention of the Master. These strongly worded precepts *have* served to turn men's minds strongly to the more peculiar parts of Christ's teaching, and have brought the spirit of them home to men's minds in a way that a prosaic code of instructions could not have done. Two characteristics of the righteousness required are prominent—it is an *exceeding* righteousness; and it is a righteousness springing out of *love*. Our Lord compares the righteousness he requires with that of the best-conducted class in the community, and affirms that, so far from destroying the Law, he demands a surpassing righteousness. There are two kinds of goodness Christians must surpass—the goodness of nature, and the goodness of external legal piety. The goodness of nature is often difficult to compete with. Some men seem so born as to leave grace little to do, and we feel that if the second birth make of us as much as the first birth has made of them, we should count ourselves renewed indeed. But we are not to be content with merely *rivalling* such men. Our Lord

asks, "What do ye *more?*" While we welcome every evidence that a germ of good is left in human nature, surviving even in some instances the stifling influence of vice, we should be at the same time prepared to show that the noblest natural character can be outdone by the least in the kingdom of heaven. With each of us remains a perpetual responsibility in this matter—the responsibility of wiping out the stain on the name of Christian, and of vindicating the reality of Christ's grace. "The regularities of constitutional goodness," the decencies that society requires, the affections which nature prompts,—these are the perfections, not of God, but of the publican. The man of the world asks no reward for exercising all these. If you do no more than this, where is your *exceeding* righteousness? Finally, your righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the Pharisee. The Pharisees had the pretty common ambition of being counted the religious men of their time. But they were not mere formalists; they were moral men, immensely zealous in their religion. What was lacking in them was a genuine root of goodness, which must at all times produce good fruit. There was wanting *love.* Their acts were good, but they themselves were evil. No amount of keeping a law can ever make a man good; it can only make him a Pharisee. Our Lord says, "Love, and do as you please. Be yourselves good, be like your Father in heaven; 'for except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter the kingdom of heaven.'"—D.

**Vers. 1, 2.**—*The preparation for a great sermon.* Christ magnified the Law, and honoured the sabbath. On the sabbath he wrought many of his miracles and uttered many of his parables. So, after spending the night in prayer, on the sabbath he delivered his sermon on the mount. The preparation for that discourse is the subject of the text. In order to a great sermon there should be—

I. A SUITABLE PLACE. 1. *Noble edifices have been raised by the piety of men.* (1) Even heathenism has its gorgeous temples—ancient; modern. (2) Wonderful cathedrals have been raised—in England; on the continent of Europe. (3) Solomon's temple must have exceeded all others in magnificence. The plan was Divine. The workmen were inspired. 2. *Here was a cathedral worthy of the occasion.* (1) The roofing. The blue dome so vast as to bound the range of sight. So wonderfully constitnted that wherever we go we are still in its very centre. (2) The pavement. It is set in mosaics of living foliage and flowers of ever-varying form and hue. Each tessellation will bear the microscope, and under its scrutiny discover inexhaustible beauties and glories. (3) The lighting. The sun is the one sufficient lamp. The electric light looks black upon its disc. The glories of the night are lost in its brightness. (4) The pulpit. The "mountain." Mountains had been chosen theatres of memorable events—Eden, Ararat, Horeb, Sinai, Hor, Nebo, Zion, Carmel. The New Testament also had its mountains—Tabor, Calvary, Olivet, Zion, this mount. (5) The consecration. Human consecrations have their uses. Sometimes their abuses to superstition. Divine consecration is essential. The whole earth was consecrated to preaching by the sermon on the mount. Open-air preaching has the highest sanction and encouragement.

II. A SUITABLE CONGREGATION. 1. *Here were multitudes.* (1) In actual presence. Not multitudes of mere units. Immortal men. Tremendous destinies. Glorious possibilities. (2) In representative presence. Each person was the centre of a vast influence. Each individual represented a social series. 2. *Multitudes with whom Jesus sympathized.* "Seeing the multitudes," etc. (1) He estimated their personal value as no one else could. He paid the enormous price of their redemption. (2) He estimated their representative value as no one else could. He saw the end from the beginning. (3) How profoundly should we sympathize with men! Our neighbour with whom we converse. The heathen—at home; abroad. 3. *Ever-increasing multitudes.* (1) That congregation included all the congregations of Christendom from that time to the present. The sentences of the sermon upon the mount have echoed from millions of pulpits to hundreds of millions of men. (2) How many hundreds of millions yet unborn are destined to hear the echoes of the sermon on the mount! 4. *Jesus teaches the world through his Churches.* (1) "His *disciples* came unto him, and he opened his mouth and taught *them.*" The disciples formed an inner circle. In the morning of this day, after the night of prayer, he had chosen from the large number of

his disciples his twelve apostles (cf. Mark iii. 13—19; Luke vi. 12—49). (2) He taught the outside multitude in parables. To his disciples apart he revealed the mysteries of the kingdom. (3) So it is still. "The natural man perceiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." We must become disciples of Jesus if we would learn the spiritual and saving truth of his doctrine.

III. A SUITABLE PREACHER. 1. *The sermon presupposes the preacher.* (1) Great preachers are not made in universities. Universities have their uses. Learning is of very great importance. He that despises learning is a fool. (2) God's ministers are raised up and qualified by himself. The "Lord of the harvest" finds his "labourers." He gives them the spiritual qualification needed for spiritual work. (3) His people should "pray" him. 2. *Christ was an incomparable Preacher.* (1) The promised Messiah. As such attested by prophecy. (2) Heralded by the Baptist. "All men accounted John that he was a prophet indeed." (3) Approved by heavenly signs. The wonders at his birth. The voice of the God of glory at his baptism. (4) Self-authenticated by miracles. Turning water into wine at Cana (John ii. 1—11). Driving the hucksters out of the temple at Jerusalem (John ii. 13—22). Working many wonders in Galilee (ch. iv. 12—24). 3. *He claims all attention.* (1) "When he was set," viz. according to the custom of the Jewish doctors. "Sitting" among the rabbins is synonymous with *teaching*. The assumption of that posture was a claim for respect. This claim sets forth the value of knowledge. No such knowledge as the knowledge of God. (2) "He opened his mouth and taught." "Man is the mouth of creation, Christ is the mouth of humanity" (Lange). (3) Here is an admirable case. He had perfect knowledge of man's ignorance and need. Also of heaven's secrets. His human intelligence was radiated by the Divine. (4) Here also is an idea of profusion. Teaching wells from his lips as from a fountain. It is gracious teaching. "Grace is *poured* upon his lips." Beatitudes stream forth.

Let us learn from the lips of Jesus. Search his Word. Invoke his Spirit.—J. A. M.

Vers. 3—5.—*The triumphs of humility.* The originality of Christ is evinced in these first sentences of his discourse. "Nothing," says David Hume, "carries a man through the world like a true, genuine, natural impudence." Sturdy qualities are approved by men of the world, and quiet virtues are despised. Christ places these in the forefront, and associates with them benedictions in a manner which astonishes the poets, philosophers, and sages of antiquity. Let us—

I. REVIEW THE QUALITIES HERE COMMENDED. 1. *Poverty of spirit.* (1) The "poor in spirit" are not the poor in *profession*. The monks routed by Henry VIII. had professed "perpetual poverty;" but many of them were both lusty in flesh and haughty in spirit. (2) Neither are they the poor in *circumstances*. Poverty, in the abstract, is no virtue. Many owe their poverty to stupidity; many to crime. (3) Neither are they the *poor-spirited*. The slaves of lust are moral cowards. "Conscience makes cowards of us all." (4) They are the *spiritually humble*. Those who are humbled before God by the sense of unworthiness. Those who value others rather than themselves. Those whose righteousness is Christ. Those who chafe not under providential reverses, but in everything give thanks (see Phil. iv. 11—13). 2. *Mournfulness.* (1) On account of *personal* sin. Who mourn not despairingly, as Judas, as lost souls. But with an eye to Christ (see Zech. xii. 10). (2) On account of sin *in others*. As Jesus wept over Jerusalem. In this we mourn with Christ, who, passing with pure human sympathies through a world of sinners, was a "Man of sorrows." (3) In *sympathy* with the mourning of others. With sinners in penitence. With saints in affliction (see Ps. cxxxvii. 1—6). 3. *Meekness.* (1) The meek are those who lovingly bow to the authority of God. Who in affliction bless him (see 2 Sam. xii. 22, 23). Who by prayer seek his guidance. (2) Those who are slow to *give* offence (Titus iii. 1, 2). Whose bearing to superiors is modest—to parents, masters, rulers. To inferiors condescending—to children, servants, the poor. Let your condescension be without affectation. (3) Those who are slow to *resent* offences. The negro boy was well instructed who, when asked, "Who are the meek?" replied, "Those who give soft answers to rough questions" (cf. Prov. xvi. 1; 1 Cor. xiii. 5—7; Jas. i. 19). Christian

meekness would soon end the scandal of Church squabbles. (4) Christ is our Model. Even Moses, "the meekest of [mere] men," was "angered at the waters of strife" (Ps. cvi. 32, 33).

II. MEDITATE UPON THEIR BLESSEDNESS. 1. *The kingdom of heaven is for the poor in spirit.* (1) It is theirs in *prospect.* They may be worsted in competition with the impudent in this earth; but they will have the advantage in the great future. (2) It is theirs in *possession.* "The kingdom of heaven *is within.*" The kingdoms of *this* world consist in "meat and drink." Of *that,* in "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." The meek will accept this kingdom, while the proud refuse it. The meek are accepted, while the proud are refused. (3) The spiritual experience of the meek is to the heaven of the future as the sod of infeoffment given into the hand of the heir of an estate. (4) Note: Meekness is put first, because self-denial is the first lesson of Christian discipleship (cf. ch. x. 38; xvi. 24; Luke xiv. 27). When we would build high, the foundation must be laid low. 2. *There is comfort for the mourner.* (1) For the penitent seeker the comfort of pardon. The Holy Spirit, as the Comforter, witnesses this to the heart. The "fruits of the Spirit" comfort his reflections. (2) For the afflicted saint the comfort of holy sympathy. The sympathy of Christ. Of his servants. (3) For the sympathetic spirit union with Christ.

"'Midst blessings infinite,
Be this the foremost, that my *heart* has bled!"

"It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting." (4) Heaven will be a place of comfort. It will compensate for suffering (cf. Luke xvi. 25). "Glorified together" with Christ. (5) Full of comfort is the assured hope of heaven (cf. 2 Cor. i. 5—7; 2 Thess. ii. 16, 17). 3. *The meek shall inherit the earth.* (1) They do now, in a remarkable manner, inherit it. For they make few enemies. Contentment gives them riches in the fewness of their wants. Providence is on their side (see Ps. lxxvi. 9). Look around. Who but the good rationally enjoys life here? (2) They shall more fully inherit it in the millennium (see Ps. xxxvii. 10, 11). Those who die without inheriting will be raised to inherit. Abraham (cf. ch. xxii. 31, 32; Heb. xi. 13—16). Daniel (see Dan. xii. 2, 13). The innocents (see Jer. xxxi. 15—17). So the Gentile children of Abraham's faith—the fellow-heirs of the believing Jews. (3) The meek shall inherit the new earth (2 Pet. iii. 13).

Let us qualify for this blessedness by cultivating the virtues that may claim it.—J. A. M.

Vers. 6, 7.—*Righteousness and mercy.* The cry of humanity is after happiness. Men seek it in all manner of avenues. They are commonly mortified and disappointed. In the text we may learn—

I. THAT IN RIGHTEOUSNESS ALONE IS SATISFACTION. 1. *The sphere of intellect is filled with God.* (1) He is the Origin of all things. They came out of nothing by his power. (2) He is the *End* of all things. They were made for his pleasure. In his pleasure they consist. (3) Science is miserably deficient when it ignores God. The Godward side is the nobler side of all things. (4) The pure knowledge of God is the crowning science. God is self-revealed. Herein is satisfaction; for there is nothing above or beyond. 2. *The sphere of affection is filled with God.* (1) Illicit affections are demoralizing. In demoralization there can be no satisfaction. Reason is insulted. Conscience is outraged. God is provoked. (2) Inordinate affections are demoralizing. A man comes to resemble that he loves. If he love supremely that which is inferior to himself, he is degraded. He may love his neighbour as himself. He may not love the world as his neighbour. (3) God alone may be supremely loved. The supreme love of God is what the Bible calls "perfect love." There is nothing above, nothing beyond. Herein our happiness is full. 3. *Righteousness secures the highest favour.* (1) No approval is comparable to that of God. It is founded in justice and truth. (2) The sense of that favour is the earnest of a magnificent reward. What resources are behind the favour of God! (3) In the sense of righteousness is the soul of contentment. It sends joy into affliction. It is the crown of martyrdom. Witness the face of Stephen, and the triumphing of his "noble army."

II. THAT RIGHTEOUSNESS MUST BE SOUGHT IN THE SPIRIT OF EARNESTNESS. 1. *God*

*is in earnest.* (1) This is evinced in his "unspeakable Gift." Had he given a world for us, there would have been millions of worlds left. He, the Maker of all worlds, gave himself for us. (2) It is evinced in the glories of heaven. He must love perfect righteousness with all the strength of his being. He is himself that righteousness. He must love his saints correspondingly in proportion to the measure of their righteousness. This viewed in Christ is great. Heaven is the expression of that love. (3) It is evinced in the horrors of perdition. Hell is no scarecrow. It is the antithesis of heaven. (4) By all these arguments we should "*hunger* and *thirst* after righteousness." 2. *Satan is in earnest.* (1) This is evinced in the number of his agents. They are numerous as swarms of flies. He is called *Beelzebub*, "lord of flies." (2) In the order in which he marshals them. "Legion" (cf. Rev. xvi. 13, 14). (3) In the variety of his "devices." His subtlety and ingenuity are surprising. (4) In his indomitable perseverance. If thwarted, he changes his front. He pursues us to the very gate of heaven. 3. *True repentance is earnest.* (1) Its earnestness is here likened to the strongest instincts of our physical nature. (2) What is the world to a man who is in the arms of death? To save his life, the mariner will throw overboard bales of richest treasure. So will the true penitent give up everything for the salvation of his soul. (3) His hunger and thirst are stimulated by his convictions. He is convinced that God is righteousness itself. Sin is seen to be hideous and odious.

III. THAT RIGHTEOUSNESS MUST BE SOUGHT IN THE SPIRIT OF MERCY. 1. *The righteousness of God cannot be compromised to his mercy.* (1) Time was when man had no need of mercy. He was created in innocency. But he transgressed the Law, and became obnoxious to judgment. Mercy can have no place until righteousness be vindicated. (2) Righteousness is vindicated in the vicarious sufferings of Christ. These sufferings therefore opened an avenue for mercy. (3) Righteousness must still be vindicated in the conditions of mercy. Repentance is therefore indispensable. In it the sinner confesses the righteousness of God. So is faith. In this the sinner renounces false righteousness. 2. Hence *the spirit of mercy is required in the suppliant.* (1) If we would be forgiven we must also forgive. This is insisted upon in the Lord's Prayer and in the comment which he added (see ch. vi. 14, 15). This is the moral of the parable of the debtors. (2) Beneficence is another form of mercy which is required by the beneficent God. The sinner must repent of his covetousness. The sinfulness of covetousness is not duly estimated. No sin is, in Scripture, more severely denounced (cf. Ps. x. 3; 1 Cor. v. 11; vi. 10; Eph. v. 3, 5). (3) Have you sought without success the righteousness of justification before God? Have you sought it in the spirit of earnestness? Have you sought it in the spirit of mercy? "He will have judgment without mercy that hath shown no mercy."—J. A. M.

Ver. 8.—*The vision of the pure.* Properly to understand this great subject it is necessary to consider—

I. THAT MAN IS ENDOWED WITH SPIRITUAL SENSES. 1. *The body is the material image of the soul.* (1) The Scriptures suggest this truth when they speak of the "natural man" and the "spiritual man;" of the "outward man" and the "inward man;" of the "hidden man of the heart" as opposed to the ostensible man of the body (1 Cor. ii. 14, 15; 2 Cor. iv. 16; 1 Pet. iii. 4). (2) It is involved in the doctrine of the image of God in man. Man is not an incorporeal but an incarnate spirit. After this definition, he is "in the image and after the similitudes of God." In these "similitudes" God revealed himself to man in corporeal human form. (3) If the spirit be the counterpart of the body, there must be spiritual to correspond to corporeal senses. 2. *We experience spiritual sensation.* (1) This is acknowledged in current language. We talk of *ideas*, or things *seen*, viz. in the mind. Of soul-perceptions we say, "I see," "I feel;" "He is a man of *taste*;" "His *scent* is keen." (2) These senses are generally recognized in Scripture (see Phil. i. 9, margin; also Heb. v. 14). They are *spiritual* senses whose function is to discriminate in *moral subjects.* (3) They are mentioned in detail. Thus: *Feeling* (Acts xvii. 27; Eph. iv. 19). *Tasting* (Ps. xxxiv. 8; Heb. vi. 4, 5; 1 Pet. ii. 3). *Smelling* (Ps. xlv. 8; Cant. i. 3; ch. xvi. 23; 2 Cor. ii. 14). *Hearing* (Isa. l. 4, 5; John x. 3, 4; xviii. 37). *Seeing* (Acts xxvi. 18; Eph. i. 18). (4) We experience them in dreaming when the mind imposes upon itself the spiritual for the corporeal sensations. This is imagination?

Just so. The faculty of imagination is the sensorium, or seat of the senses of the spirit.

II. THAT MORAL PURITY IS THE CONDITION OF THEIR HIGHEST EXERCISE. 1. *To the pure especially God reveals himself in his works.* (1) In his works his power, wisdom, and goodness may be "seen" even by the heathen (Rom. i. 20). (2) By the pure all this is invested with superior lustre. Things take complexion from the mental moods of the observer. The best mental mood in which to see God in nature is when the soul is lifted into the sunshine of his grace. (3) The child of God sees the hand of a Father in the works of God. "My Father made them all." 2. *To the pure exclusively God reveals himself by his Spirit.* (1) This revelation of God is that more especially intended here. (2) There is the personal manifestation of the Son of God (see John xiv. 15—23). This vision is peculiar to the spiritual. Philip did not truly see Jesus, though corporeally before him, until the eyes of his spirit were opened to see the Father in the Son—the Godhead in the manhood. (3) The world have no such vision of God. If they regard this doctrine as fanatical, this is just what Scripture leads us to expect from them (see 1 Cor. ii. 14, 15). "Eyes have they, but they see not; ears, but they hear not." 3. *Spiritual revelation is often vivid.* (1) The visions of the prophets were so. Whether they came in "dreams" or in "open vision." These were impressions made upon the senses of the soul. The "visions of God" were sometimes overwhelming (cf. Ezek. i. 28; Dan. x. 7, 8; Rev. i. 17). (2) They were so vivid as to be mistaken for corporeal impressions. Samuel thought that a sound came to his outward ear when God spoke into the ear of his soul. Eli was within the range of natural hearing, but heard not this voice (1 Sam. iii. 8). Peter, when his corporeal senses were addressed, familiar with the vividness of spiritual impressions, "thought he saw a vision" (Acts xii. 9). Paul, in his famous rapture, could not determine whether he was "in the body or out of the body"—whether his bodily or spiritual senses were addressed (1 Cor. xii. 1—4). 4. *We have now the philosophy of religious experience.* (1) What is the "witness of the Spirit" to a man's adoption into the family of God but an address made by the Spirit of God to the spirit of the believer? In such "spiritual revelations" we enjoy communion with God. (2) They are sometimes as vivid as were the visions of prophecy. Who has not heard narratives of such experiences from the children of God? (3) Let us seek earnestly that purity which qualifies us for this nobler spiritual vision. By complete self-consecration. By habits of faith. By habits of holy living.

III. THAT THE FUTURE OPENS PROSPECTS OF SUPERIOR SENSATION. 1. *In the experiences of the disembodied state.* (1) We are in this earth principally conversant with the material. It is so by our constitution. Angels are about us, but we see them not. The body acts as a veil to obstruct our spiritual vision. (2) But the veil is torn in death. When the veil of Christ's flesh was torn, the veil of the temple was torn. The most holy place then discovered was the type of heaven. (3) Then shall we see God as the angels do continually behold his face. The most holy place of the temple was the place of the Shechinah. (4) Then also shall we recover our friends. In the spiritual world spirits will take palpable shape. They will appear as embodied, and be identified through the correspondence which there is between the body and the mind. 2. *In the experiences of the resurrection-state.* (1) As these bodies are psychical or soulish, *i.e.* adapted to the companionship of the appetitive soul, so will the body of the resurrection be "spiritual," *i.e.* adapted to the companionship of the rational, contemplative spirit. (See the noble sermons of Bishop Ellicott, in his volume entitled, 'The Destiny of the Creature.') Being "spiritual," the body will no longer act as a veil to obstruct the freedom of spiritual sensation. (2) Corporeal sensation will be improved. Defects, effects of sin, will have no place. The powers of sensation will be enlarged. Vision may be telescopic and microscopic. Hearing may be telephonic and microphonic. We may experience compound sensation. We may at once see as well as hear sound. We may at once hear as well as see colour. (3) Corporeal and spiritual sensations will articulate. They do so now, in part; but then perfectly. What worlds of fresh experience, comparison, and reflection will be opened when we see together the material and spiritual complements of the great universe of God! (4) Divine revelations will then be grander. The new heavens and earth will open to us a materialism of richer harmonies. Added also to the discovery of spiritual natures, there will be the royal vision of God in a glorified Christ.

Let us wash in the fountain opened in the house of David, that we may be qualified for a blessedness that eye hath not seen.—J. A. M.

Ver. 9.—*Peacemaking.* The order in which the text follows the blessing upon the pure suggests the doctrine of James concerning the "wisdom that is from above," which is "*first* pure, *then* peaceable" (Jas. iii. 17). Christ is himself that Wisdom. Those in vital union with him are pure towards God, peaceable towards men.

I. THE CHRISTIAN SURVEYS A WORLD IN STRIFE. 1. *Every man's nature is convulsed.* (1) Irregular imaginations disorder the passions. For good or evil, the passions are moved by the fancy. It should be especially guarded. (2) Insurgent passion dethrones reason. The passions are then in anarchy. (3) The anarchy of the soul is propagated into the life. Under passion, as in drunkenness, men will commit crimes, which, when Reason recovers her seat, fill them with horror and shame. (4) What a scene of turbulence is presented in the aggregate mind of unregenerate humanity! 2. *Society writhes in contentions.* (1) A community of convulsed natures. Selfishness and waywardness will be prolific in jealousies and envies, in knaveries and vituperations, in resentments and violences. (2) Hence a political economy which cannot regenerate must be based upon the counterbalancing of vices. The peace so produced is artificial and imperfect. The effort to produce it often begets new strifes. (3) The selfishness and ambition of nations provoke fierce wars. The arts of civilization are pressed into this barbaric service. (4) What voices arise from the battle-fields of the world! 3. *Heaven and earth are in antagonism.* (1) Men are in rebellion against God. Some openly—the infidel, the libertine. Some covertly—the hypocrite, the ungodly. Passive resistance. (2) God is angry against men. Hence the anger of the elements. His retributions come in blights, pestilences, famines, wars, and in deaths in various frightful forms. (3) This contest does not cease in death. The rebel carries his nature with him into the spiritual world. There he meets the God of judgment. There he encounters the "wrath to come."

II. HE ENDEAVOURS TO COMPOSE THE STRIFE. 1. *By an example of peaceableness.* (1) The disposition of the Christian is peace-loving. He is considerate. He is long-suffering. He is forgiving. (2) His conversation is peaceable. He is conciliatory and yielding. He will sacrifice himself—anything but truth and righteousness. (3) Peace-doing is included in the idea of peacemaking. A doer of peace is one whose actions are good and useful. The Hebrew greeting, "Peace be unto thee," expressed the desire to promote welfare in general. 2. *By mediatory exertions.* (1) While others, as incendiaries, blow up the fires of discord and contention, the peacemaker finds the greatest pleasure in allaying animosities, quenching the flames of malignity, and promoting unity and concord among men. (2) The work of the peacemaker requires courage. For he has to take blows from both sides. 3. *By seeking the salvation of souls.* In this the root of the mischief is reached. (1) Thereby the strife with Heaven is ended. It is the reconciliation of the sinner to God. (2) Thereby the civil war in the soul is ended. It is the reconciliation of the conscience and the will. It is the reconciliation of the reason and the passions. (3) Thereby the conflict between man and his fellow is ended. It is the reconciliation of human interests.

III. HE REAPS A BLESSED REWARD. I. *He is recognized as the child of God.* (1) For he partakes of the nature of his Father. The God of the Bible is "the God of peace." Contrast with Mars. All the greater forces of nature are peaceful. There is rattle in the thunderstorm; but the force of that storm is not comparable to the silent power of the light, which covers the earth with verdure. How noiselessly do the worlds perform their stupendous revolutions! The earth rotates on its axis without friction at the rate of a thousand miles an hour. Her wings make no noise by which she is carried through space at the rate of a thousand miles a minute. (2) He partakes the nature of the Son. "The Prince of Peace." How silently, "without observation," does the kingdom of Christ come to the soul! In his millennial kingdom "his *rest* shall be glorious." (3) He partakes of the nature of the Spirit. "The Spirit of peace." Bringing peace, he is the Comforter. 2. *He inherits his Father's love.* (1) This idea is included in the blessedness of the peacemaker. The Father will love the child that bears his image. The Son of his love is the express Image of his substance. (2) Love implies solici-

tude. What resources are behind that solicitude! For guidance. For support. For defence.—J. A. M.

Vers. 10—12.—*The blessedness of persecution.* Between this subject and that presented in the verse preceding there is the relation of sequence.

I. VIRTUE PROVOKES THE RESENTMENT OF WICKEDNESS. 1. *This is exemplified in Christ.* (1) He was the incarnation of perfect virtue. Innocent without fault. The Truth itself. And he came to bless. (2) But how was he received by the wicked? They could not endure the rebukes of his purity. They were maddened by the rebukes of his goodness. Their mortified pride stirred their passions. They murdered him. (3) Yet he made peace in his death. Peace with God by vicarious sacrifice. Thus a way of mercy was opened for his murderers through his blood. Peace with men, subduing them by the Spirit of his love. (4) This is our pattern. 2. *It is exemplified in the Church.* (1) When it first appeared in the family of Adam. Cain slew Abel. Wherefore? "Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous" (1 John iii. 12). (2) When it appeared in the family of Abraham. Ishmael, born after the flesh, persecuted Isaac, born after the Spirit (Gal. iv. 29). (3) As it appears in the family of Jesus. The history of Abel is an allegory. So is that of Isaac. Persecution against the Christian Church was first organized by the Jewish antichrist. It was continued by the pagan Roman tyranny. Then appeared under Papal, Mohammedan, and infidel forms. 3. *It is exemplified in every saint.* (1) Our Lord taught his disciples to expect persecution. The text is his first clear intimation. Afterwards speaking of his *yoke* (ch. xi. 29). Then of his *cross* (ch. xvi. 24). Finally of *himself* (John xv. 18). (2) The suffering of persecution is in the Christian vocation. We are predestinated to be thus conformed to the image of the Son of God (cf. Rom. viii. 18—39; 1 Thess. iii. 3; 2 Tim. iii. 12). (3) It comes in various forms. The *reviling* tongue, insulting to the face. The *persecuting* hand. The *evil speech* uttered in your absence where you cannot contradict it. (4) Why do we not suffer more? Do we so coquette with the world that we can scarcely be distinguished from it? "The world will love its own." Do we faithfully witness for Christ? In the workshop. In the railway car. In the highway.

II. SUFFERING THUS ENTAILED SHOULD OCCASION JOY. 1. *Because associated with the noblest sympathies.* (1) It is "for righteousness' sake." Because of the hatred of our enemies to righteousness. By the Divine permission, because the temptation strengthens righteousness in the faithful (cf. Rom. v. 3; Jas. i. 2). Suffering for righteousness' sake should occasion joy for the opposite reason to that which should cause the felon grief and shame. To rejoice in adversity is the highest proof of Christian patience. (2) It is for Christ's sake. "For my sake." Love to a Person. Not simply to righteousness, but to its perfect impersonation. What a blessed honour to be counted worthy to suffer in his cause, and for him! The Lord dwells in us; and the virtues which provoke the resentment of wickedness are his. So are we persecuted for his sake; and he is persecuted in us. (3) Joy is not only a Christian feeling; it is a Christian duty (Phil. iv. 4). 2. *Because associated with the best company.* (1) With the *prophets.* "So persecuted they the prophets which were before you." Witness those of Ahab's reign. Jeremiah. Daniel. They suffered for the testimony of Jesus (see Acts vii. 52). (2) With the *apostles.* These were immediately addressed by our Lord as those who were to have the honour of suffering with the prophets. "Which were before you." The apostles were in a grand succession. But the words of Christ are not limited to them. (3) With the *martyrs.* Truly a "noble army." (4) Above all, with *Christ.* He was the greatest of the prophets. The grandest Apostle. The most illustrious Martyr. Infinitely more. There is even something vicarious in Christian suffering (cf. Phil. i. 29; Col. i. 24). 3. *Because associated with a great reward.* (1) There is the present blessedness of suffering in the best of causes. "Blessed are ye." We rejoice that righteousness is so dear to us that we are willing to suffer for its sake. And that we are counted worthy to suffer in the best company. (2) "Theirs is the kingdom of heaven." *Here:* in the principles of righteousness and the consequent favour of God, which are the very elements of heaven. *Hereafter:* the perfecting of this spiritual bliss. (3) The greatness of the reward here promised to those whose principles bear the test of persecution suggests the different degrees

of reward in the heavenly state. Fellowship with prophets and apostles in glory. Fellowship with Christ. "If we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."—J. A. M.

Vers. 13—16.—*Christian influence.* It was not to the outside multitude, but to his own disciples, that Jesus addressed these words. To these, more immediately, the whole sermon was preached (see vers. 1, 2). We have to consider Christians—

I. AS THE SALT OF THE EARTH. 1. *God's instruments for its purification.* (1) Salt is a symbol of *purity.* It is opposed to leaven, which, by its fermenting properties, hastens corruption; and is a symbol of impurity (cf. Lev. ii. 13; 1 Cor. v. 8). Christians are distinguished as "saints." (2) Christians are purifiers. By holy example. By zealous efforts. By fervent prayers. 2. *They impart relish to life.* (1) There is no relish to meat comparable to salt (cf. Job vi. 6; Ezra iv. 14). Hence "salary." (2) Christian influence is civilizing. Life where Christian influences are least felt is all but intolerable. Amongst the criminal classes. Amongst savage men. (3) Christian influence is regenerating (cf. Mark ix. 49, 50; Col. iv. 6; Eph. iv. 29). Regeneration is the higher civilization. 3. *They preserve the world from destruction.* (1) Salt has the property of preserving animal substance from decomposition. The people of the covenant are the people of the salt (see Numb. xviii. 19). (2) Sin is disintegrating. It destroyed the world in the deluge of water. It will provoke the deluge of fire. It is the destruction of nations. (3) The respite of the wicked is in the prayer of the righteous. For ten righteous' sake God would have spared Sodom (see also Ezek. xiv. 14, 20). 4. *In preserving they are preserved.* (1) Salt may lose its savour. Maundrell, in describing the *Valley of Salt*, says, "I broke a piece of that part which was exposed to the rain, sun, and air. Though it had the sparks and particles of salt, *yet it had perfectly lost its savour.* The inner part which was connected to the rock retained its savour, as I found by proof" ('Travels,' 5th edit., last page). So may the Christian lose his true life by yielding to evil influences (see Heb. vi. 4—6). (2) Salt without savour is useless as the timber of the vine. "Good for nothing." Obstruction to good by giving false views of religion. (3) Fit subjects for contempt. "Cast out," viz. from the Church. If not from the visible, certainly from the spiritual. *Trampled.* (4) Let loiterers be admonished.

II. AS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. 1. *They shine through union with Christ.* (1) Christ is the true "Light of the world" (see John viii. 12). Light was the first creation and emblem of the Word. In his "Logos state" he appeared in light. When the Word was made flesh the glory was there, but veiled (see John i. 14). (2) Christians, like planets, shine by reflection (cf. Eph. v. 8; see also Phil. ii. 15). The *moon*, which also shines by reflection, is the figure of the Church—the community of saints. (3) The Church enlightens the moral night of the world. 2. *They shine in union with the Church.* (1) This is suggested in the similes. The city on the hill probably alludes to Jerusalem, an emblem of the Church. The candlestick is a like simile (Rev. i. 20). (2) The light of Christian profession is most influential there. "Cannot be hid." Shines for the benefit of "all that are in the house." The family. The Church. The world. (3) Eccentric religionists are here rebuked. 3. *They shine in good works.* (1) Righteous works. Justice in judgment. Justice in dealings. (2) Beneficent works. For the bodies of men. For the souls of men. Kindness to inferior animals. (3) Consistent works. The eye of the world is keen to discern inconsistencies in professors of religion. Nobody notices the mud on the back of a sweep; but an ink-spot on a lady's muslin is matter for animadversion. 4. *They shine in noble motives.* (1) Not for self-glorification. "Works" are to be seen, not *self.* They are to be "seen," not *heard.* (2) For the glory of the Father in heaven. Unostentatious goodness is fit matter for praise to God (see Gal. i. 24). It is a motive for piety. Beautiful examples are powerful influences. 5. *They live in their shining.* (1) The light under a bushel will go out. The contained oxygen will be soon consumed. On the lamp-stand it will live. (2) Bushels will conceal and extinguish the light of life. Apathy: foolish virgins. Cowardice: Peter and the maid. Worldliness. Covetousness. Vanity.—J. A. M.

Vers. 17—20.—*The gospel of the Law.* The Jews of our Lord's day expected that Messiah would dignify the Law and verify the prophets. In this they were correct,

but they were utterly mistaken as to the manner in which these things were to take effect. The scribes and Pharisees, therefore, disputed the claims of Jesus to be the Christ because he reprobated the traditions of the elders, which they had strangely confounded with the Law; and because he did not establish a secular kingdom according to their misinterpretation of the prophets. Christ here vindicates himself against these errors. But—

I. How did Jesus fulfil the Law in its ordinances? 1. *Has he not released us from these?* (1) In the letter, certainly. This is clearly the doctrine of Paul (see Eph. ii. 14, 15; Col. ii. 14; Heb. ix. 10). (2) There is an end, then, to the obligation to offer animal sacrifices, to perform Levitical lustrations, to observe the ceremonial sabbaths, to submit to circumcision. (3) Jesus did not formally abolish these, but left them to dissolve of themselves. The synagogue became gradually converted into the Christian church. The sabbath of the seventh day became merged in that of the first. Gentiles coming into the Church led to altered views respecting circumcision, meats, and purifications. Secondary things are regulated by great principles. Luther struck at the root of all the errors of the apostasy by preaching justification by faith. 2. *He has released us by fulfilling them.* (1) He is the End of the Law. He stands forth as the all-comprehensive Sacrifice of the Law. As the one great High Priest, His baptism of the Spirit is the one great purification. (2) The ordinances of the Law, though now no longer followed, are read in their fuller meaning. The face of Moses shines again in the glory of the gospel. (3) The ordinances now fulfil the very end for which they were given. The Law was never intended to be against the promise. The perversity of men made it so. It was instituted to be a "schoolmaster to bring us to Christ." It serves that end better now than formerly.

II. How did Jesus fulfil the Law in its morals? 1. *By personal obedience to its requirements.* (1) In assuming our nature he was made under the Law (Gal. iv. 4). Innocent in his birth as Adam was in his creation. (2) He fulfilled all righteousness. That even of the dispensation of John (see ch. iii. 15). (3) He became obedient unto death. To the end of his trial. Vicariously. Therein he magnified the severity of the righteousness of the Law. 2. *By vindicating it in his teaching.* (1) The word מלא "to fulfil," among the rabbins, also signifies *to teach.* Does not Paul use the word *to fulfil* in the sense of *to teach* in Col. i. 25? (2) In his teaching Jesus vindicated the Law from the glosses of the elders. To the "jot and tittle" he maintained the integrity of the inspired Word against the traditions which would make it void. He required perfect obedience to the *least* commandment in order to admission into the expected "kingdom." (3) He asserted the Law even to the motives of the heart. This was against the elders who held that the thoughts of the heart were not sinful. So Kimchi, on Ps. lxvi. 18, contradicts the very letter thus: "He will not impute it to me for sin; for God does not look upon an evil thought as sin, unless against God or religion." (4) He declared that the evil of sin does not terminate in the act. It is entailed by transmission. It spreads by example. Who breaks the Law "teaches" others to break it. The sinner also advocates sin. He attempts to extenuate its enormity. (5) Jesus magnified the Law by showing its universality. The interest of the Gentiles in it was nothing new (see Gen. xii. 3). It was, however, for ages overlooked. Gentile believers and Jewish saints are declared to be fellow-heirs. 3. *By enabling his servants to fulfil it.* (1) They are justified in his blood. Freed from the curse of the Law through his vicarious suffering. (2) They are regenerated by his Spirit. Brought into sympathy with its holy precepts. (3) He puts his Holy Spirit within them. By this blessed Helper they "walk in his statutes and keep his judgments, and do them" (see Ezek. xxxvi. 25—27).

III. How did Jesus fulfil the prophets? 1. *The prophets were expositors of the Law.* (1) They brought out its spirit. (2) Their predictions were but amplifications of the Law-types. So the Law is said to prophesy with the prophets (see ch. xi. 13). (3) Jesus is the greatest of the prophets. He not only verified by fulfilment in himself many of their predictions, but enlarged upon the rest. His promises, threatenings, miracles, and parables were all prophecies. He, more than all his predecessors, opened the spirituality of the Law. 2. *Jesus vindicated the prophets from the scribes.* (1) The traditional theory of Messiah's kingdom was that it should be ostensible and secular. The Jews, therefore, hoped not only to be delivered from the Romans, but to rule the

Gentile world with a rod of iron. (2) This theory was a libel upon the prophets. It would encourage in the Jews the bad passions of pride, resentment, and cruelty. It would bring the Gentiles under oppression inconsistent with the prophetic anticipation of universal happiness. (3) Jesus made the kingdom spiritual and invisible; and its glory righteousness and mercy. 3. *Jesus vindicated the prophets from the Pharisees.* (1) He refused their righteousness. "Pharisee"—פרש, separate, "not as others." Pride. They "cleansed the outside." The righteousness of the kingdom is "truth in the *inward* parts." (2) He refused their beneficence. They were scrupulous in paying the tithes. They loved the praise of men. The beneficence of the kingdom seeks praise of God. (3) He refused their piety. They went up to pray, but there was no prayer in it. "I thank thee," etc. They fasted on Mondays and Thursdays with disfigured faces. The piety of the kingdom is rational and manly. (4) Sincerity is no substitute for truth. Many Pharisees are hypocrites. All were not so. Saul of Tarsus was sincere as a Pharisee (see Acts xxiii. 1; Phil. iii. 5, 6; 1 Tim. i. 13). Error as well as wilful sin stands in need of mercy.—J. A. M.

Vers. 21—26.—*The stringency of the gospel Law.* "Ye have *heard*," etc. The people generally were acquainted with the Law chiefly through the teaching of the scribes; but the scribes so mixed the traditions of the elders with the Word of inspiration, that it was needful that the Source of inspiration should speak again. "I say unto you."

I. HERE CHRIST OPENS THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE LAW. 1. *He does not release us from the letter.* (1) The precept against murder was "of old time." It originated in the judgment of God upon the first murderer. It took more definite shape as one of the Noachian precepts (Gen. ix. 5, 6). It reappeared as the sixth commandment in the Decalogue (Exod. xx. 13). (2) This Law has never been repealed. For suppose, as some contend, that the Decalogue was repealed along with the Levitical ordinances, it would still bind as a patriarchal institution. The reason of its enactment as a Noachian precept still holds, viz. "For in the image of God made he man." (3) Anyhow, it is here reimposed by the Lawgiver himself (cf. Isa. ii. 3; Luke xxiv. 47; Jas. ii. 8—13). Moses the "servant" yields to Christ the "Son" (Heb. iii. 5, 6). "I say unto you" significantly contrasts with the impersonal "It was said." We are "under the Law to Christ." 2. *He enjoins the Law in its spirit.* (1) The spirit of the old Law was ever in it (Rom. vii. 7; xiii. 9, 10). But the traditions of the elders explained this away. Law is made void when its spirit is lost (Mark vii. 13). (2) Anger is murder in the heart. The angry heart is as much in danger of the judgment of God as the murderous hand is of the municipal court (cf. 1 John iii. 15). The murderer in the heart is a *malignant* anger. (3) There is a generous anger of grief. This is a holy passion. It is a passion against sin. Our Lord himself felt it (Mark iii. 5). (4) There is a murder in the tongue. The "raca" is the expression of a malignant heart. Such was the bitter sarcasm of Michal (see 2 Sam. vi. 20). So likewise is the angry condemnation of the expression, "Thou fool!" 3. *He arms the Law with formidable sanctions.* (1) Here is no weakening of the ancient sanctions. The "judgment," or senate of twenty-three persons, is referred to, whose death-punishment was by the towel and sword. The "council," the Sanhedrin, or national court of seventy-two judges, is also referred to, whose death-punishment was by the still more shocking mode of stoning. (2) But here is mention also of the "much sorer punishment." Neither the municipal nor the national court of Israel could deal with the murderer in the heart. Yet is there a judgment and a council before which this criminal shall stand. (3) The doom of the transgressor of the spirit of the Law is the fire of Gehenna (see Isa. xxx. 33; Jer. vii. 31, 32). The venom of sin lies in its spirit. The heart is the character.

II. BUT HIS SYSTEM AFFORDS SPACE FOR REPENTANCE. 1. *There is the altar for the gift.* (1) The allusion here is to the altar of the ceremonial Law. Such an altar was that upon which the first family offered their gifts (cf. Gen. iv. 3—5; Heb. xi. 4). Such that upon which the Israelite presented his offerings. (2) Upon the great altar of Calvary God's great Gift, his Son, was offered for us. This was to the end that we may offer the same great Gift to God by faith. This is the best we can possibly offer. It is evermore acceptable. (3) But with this infinite burnt offering and sin sacrifice we must also offer ourselves (see Rom. xii. 1). Personal sacrifice includes personal

possessions and resources. 2. *The offerer must be repentant.* (1) Reconciled to his injured brother. Injured through the murderous temper. Through the murderous speech. Reconciled by confession of the fault. By seeking his forgiveness. (2) Reconciled to those who have injured him. God, in commanding us to love our enemies, forbids our hating even with cause for hatred. Resentful feeling must be banished. (3) "Leave there thy gift." Do not expect mercy from God until the reconciliation with men be sought. Leave it there as a pledge. The delay necessary to the reconciliation must not become the occasion for relinquishing the suit. Leave it there, sacred as it is, for the necessity of reconciliation is urgent. (4) "Then come," etc. Come with confidence. Christ will be accepted for your justification. You will be accepted for Christ's sake, in adoption.

III. HE WARNS THE SINNER AGAINST PROCRASTINATION. 1. *By the uncertainty of life.* "Agree with thine adversary *quickly*," for life is uncertain. 2. *By the transiency of opportunity.* (1) The great opportunity is passing away. "Whilst thou art in the way with him," viz. to the judgment or council, for the plaintiff apprehended the defendant. (2) So are the minor opportunities of incident transient. 3. *By the certainty of judgment.* (1) Every one we have injured is an adversary to us before God (cf. Deut. xxiv. 14, 15; Jas. v. 4, 5). (2) The implacable heart is before God an adversary to him that nourishes it. (3) The adversary brings the sinner to the bar. Our Judge surveys motives. He weighs evidence truly. His justice cannot be evaded. 4. *By the severity of retribution.* (1) The judge delivers the culprit to the officer. As holy angels are the convoy to the spirits of the just, so are fallen angels the officers of doom to the condemned. (2) The officer commits the criminal to the prison (see ch. xxv. 41; Jude 6; Rev. xx. 15). (3) The punishment is crushing. The endurance of Gehenna fire until the uttermost farthing is paid. When can a bankrupt pay all? "If we pay no share of our debt of obedience here, while in the way of probation, how can we do so when our evils are confirmed by continual impenitence, and the life of them is become the very principle of our existence?" (Bruce).—J. A. M.

Vers. 27—32.—*Purity.* In the preceding paragraph Jesus expounded the spirituality of the Law in ruling the passions; here he pursues the subject in respect to the appetites. The case of adultery is typical or representative of the series. Learn—

I. THAT THE LAW IS KEPT OR BROKEN IN THE HEART. 1. *Acts are good or evil as expressions of the heart.* (1) This was the reverse of the teaching of the elders. Especially so in the school of *Hillel.* Hence the Pharisees took the technical observance of the letter to be the fulfilling of the Law (see Luke xviii. 11). (2) But an act apart from the will would be automatic and mechanical. It would cease to be moral (see ch. xv. 19). (3) The *spirit*, therefore, is the *essence* of the Law. So David (see Ps. lxvi. 18). The ordinances respecting ceremonial uncleanness and their washings and bathings were designed to teach this. 2. *The senses are the instruments of the heart.* (1) The eye is an *inlet* to its wickedness. The appetite of Potiphar's wife was stirred by the comeliness of Joseph (see Gen. xxxix. 6). Samson was overcome by the vision of Delilah (Judg. xvi. 1; see also 2 Sam. xi. 2). (2) The eye is an *outlet* to its wickedness. Bad men look that they may lust. They lust in the look where further satisfaction cannot be attained. "Eyes full of adultery," etc. (2 Pet. ii. 14). Were time, place, and opportunity in their favour, the look would ripen into the deed. (3) The true sentinel will keep the gate of the citadel. So Job made a covenant with his eyes (Job xxxi. 1). He will be vigilant in prayer (see Ps. cxix. 37). (4) What applies to the eyes applies also to the other senses. There is adultery in unclean discourse. In wanton dalliances. In immodest dressing. "Jezebel painted her face and tired her head," etc. (2 Kings ix. 30). Sex is the spirit of the modern dance. "Men sin; but devils tempt to sin" (Henry). 3. *The Pharisee, ignoring the spirit, transgresses the letter of the Law.* (1) The original law of marriage admitted of divorce for the one offence of infidelity to the specific marriage covenant (Gen. ii. 24; Matt. xix. 3—8). Other causes there might be to justify *separation*, but not *divorce*. (2) Moses permitted divorce under other conditions (Deut. xxiv. 1). But this permission was hateful to God (see Mal. ii. 16). It was suffered by Moses because of the hardness of the people's hearts (ch. xix. 7, 8). Between laws of command and laws of permission there is an important distinction. (3) Taking advantage of the concession, divorces became common

on account of dislikes and caprices. Rabbi Akiba said, "If any man saw a woman handsomer than his own wife, he might put his wife away; because it is said in the Law, *If she find not favour in his eyes.*" Josephus, "not being pleased with his wife's manners, put her away." (4) Our Lord showed how this conduct operated against the Law. It made an adulteress of the divorced wife; for it treated her as though she had been such. It exposed her to the temptation to commit adultery. Bound by the law of her husband during his natural life, even did she marry another she would be an adulteress (see Rom. vii. 1—3). By parity of reasoning, whoever married her would be an adulterer. The proper husband is responsible as the cause of all these consequences (ver. 32; see also Ps. l. 18; 1 Cor. vii. 10, 11).

II. THAT THE HEART MUST BE PURIFIED AT ANY COST. 1. *Because the unclean heart is fit only for perdition.* (1) It can have no place in heaven. It would be there a monstrosity in the midst of symmetry. It would mar the harmony of purity. It would be out of sympathy with saints and angels. It would be an intolerable offence to the holy God. (2) Gehenna is prepared for the devil and his *agents*. A man goes to "his own place." His hell is in his heart. (3) In Gehenna there are also torments for the body. "Both soul and body." The body will be tormented in every part. The "eye." The "hand." The "whole body." 2. *Terror is the argument for the brutish.* (1) Fine sentiments have little influence with the lustful. The debauchee flings overboard all such when he tramples upon the sanctities of wife, family, home, and Church. Upon the principle that the garotter will respect the cat. (2) To the adulterer, therefore, our Lord preaches damnation. The true minister will follow this example. He can only keep a clean conscience by declaring the whole counsel of God (see Jude 22, 23). 3. *Resolute dealing is needful here.* (1) The offending eye and hand must go. No matter how dear the "eye"—the idol. No matter how useful the "hand"—the acquisition (cf. Gal. v. 24; Col. iii. 5). (2) Men, under surgical advice, will part with a limb or an organ to save life. So the sinner who hazards his soul for his idol must sacrifice his idol to save his soul. (3) To neglect the mortifying of a single member may prove the destruction of all the members. When one member sins, all the members sin with it and suffer the penalty. Better one perish in repentance than all perish in Gehenna. (4) Those duties which are most unpleasant are often most "profitable." God requires nothing from us that will not be to our advantage.—J. A. M.

Vers. 33—37.—*Profanity.* In the words before us our Lord brings out the very spirit of the third commandment. We have to distinguish—

I. THE SWEARING THAT IS NOT FORBIDDEN. This is of two kinds, viz. religious and civil—spiritual and judicial. 1. *Spiritual swearing.* (1) The Persons of the blessed Trinity are bound by a conditional oath to redeem and save mankind. This is the covenant of God, in which he swears by himself because he can swear by no greater (see Gen. xxii. 16; Ps. cv. 9; Luke i. 73; Heb. vi. 13, 14). (2) We have to enter into God's covenant in order to be saved. Swearing to God is, therefore, of the very essence of religion. (3) Hence this most solemn swearing is positively enjoined: "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God"—thy covenant God—"and shalt swear by his Name" (see Deut. vi. 13; x. 20; Jer. iv. 1, 2). This is in effect, "Thou shalt engage thyself in his covenant to have no God beside him." It implies that we bind ourselves to worship and serve him only. It means also that we take him for a Witness to all our actions. (4) Christ came not to destroy this Law, but to bind it more closely up by the cords of love. Hence, referring to these gospel times, God says, "I have sworn by myself; the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear" (see Isa. xlv. 23; lxv. 16). 2. *Judicial swearing.* (1) Swearing in this sense was prescribed in the Law. The "oath of the Lord" was imposed (see Exod. xxii. 11; Numb. v. 19). It does not appear that Hebrew witnesses were in the first instance sworn, but in matters of important testimony they might be adjured (see Lev. v. 1). (2) This our Lord does not forbid. It is being sworn rather than swearing. Jesus submitted to adjuration (see ch. xxvi. 63, 64). In Christian courts of law "an oath for confirmation" remains "the end of all strife" (Heb. vi. 16).

II. THE SWEARING FORBIDDEN IS THE PROFANE. 1. *False swearing is emphatically such.* (1) It is dreadful impiety towards God. It is taking the Name of God in *vain*.

So "hath not lifted up his soul unto *vanity*" is explained by "nor *sworn deceitfully*" (Ps. xxiv. 4). When God is called in as a Witness, as he is when vows are made to men, as well as when they are made expressly to God, these must be "performed unto the Lord" (cf. Eccles. v. 4, 5). (2) It is injustice to man. Few men will perjure themselves before a court but for dishonest design. In cursing evils are imprecated. In broken vows the imprecation returns upon the head of the swearer. 2. *Promissory vows are especially to be avoided.* (1) These are the oaths that may be "performed" particularized here. (2) Such oaths trifle with contingencies. The affirmation of a fact, with whatever solemnity, is comparatively simple, for truth is immutable. A promise pledging the future may fail through strength of temptation, through pressure of unlooked-for claims, through forgetfulness, through surprise. 3. *Habitual swearing is profane.* (1) This is an habitual breaking of the third commandment. The irreverent use of the Divine Names breeds a contempt of God which is fearful irreligion. (2) This sin, from its gratuitousness, is the more devilish. Being wanton it has no excuse. It is the unmistakable sign of a graceless heart. (3) "The Lord will not hold him guiltless." He will have to answer for this immediately to God.

III. EQUIVOCAL SWEARING IS PROFANE. 1. *The elders disputed this.* (1) They admitted that it is incumbent upon men to "perform unto the Lord their oaths." But they interpreted that only to be an oath in which the Name of the Lord was mentioned. (2) Thus Philo forbids men to swear by the Supreme Cause; but directs them, if necessary, to call to record the earth, sun, or heavens. So Maimonides, "If any man swear by heaven or by earth, yet this is not an oath." In 'Elle Schemoth Rabba' (sect. 44), "As heaven and earth shall pass away, so an oath taken by them shall pass away." This is a sample. (3) Hence the distinction which the Pharisees made between *serious* and *slighter* oaths. Kindred to this is the distinction between "mortal" and "venial" sins. The simplicity of truth knows no such differences. "He that committeth sin is of the devil." 2. *Our Lord insists upon it.* (1) He teaches that swearing "by heaven" is virtually swearing by God. For heaven is God's throne. It would be no heaven but for his presence. Swearing by heaven is staking a man's hope of heaven. (2) He teaches that swearing by the earth is virtually swearing by God. For it is his footstool, under his eye, subject to his providential rule (see Ps. xxiv. 1). His "footstool," viz. at which his mercy is supplicated. Swearing by the earth is staking a man's hope of mercy. (3) He teaches that swearing by Jerusalem is virtually swearing by God. For that which made Jerusalem to the Jew a matter of appeal was its sacredness as the place of the temple and Shechinah. It was "the city of the great King" (see Ps. xlvi. 4; xlviii. 2). The swearer here staked his interest in the kingdom of Messiah. (4) Swearing by the head, or "by the life of the head," as the rabbins phrased it, is still swearing by God. For so little power has a man over his head that he cannot change the colour of a hair. God's property in a man's head is infinitely more than the man's. God is in truth the Life and the Lifter-up of the head (Ps. iii. 3). (5) The principle underlying all this is that men should see God in everything. That the creature cannot be separate from the Creator. Therefore that calling any creature to witness is virtually calling God. All equivocal swearing is consequently profane. "The knave who kisses his nail instead of the book, thinking to release his false testimony from the crime of perjury, fearfully deceives his soul."

IV. TRUTH IS PERFECT IN SIMPLICITY. 1. *Christ therefore requires it in speech.* (1) Let it be yea or nay—simple affirmative, simple negative. And if greater solemnity be required, then let the yea or nay be emphatic. Emphasis was given in repetition by the Hebrews. Our Lord's emphasis was "Verily, verily." (2) But the yea must be yea. There must be no equivocation. There must be no deception. Even Homer says, "He whose words agree not with his private thoughts is as detestable to me as the gates of hell" ('Il.,' ix. 312). (3) Truth is best pledged in simplicity. A true man's word is his bond. A true man loves truth for its own sake. To require more than a word from such a man would be an insult to his honour. His self-respect will shrink from adding anything to his declaration. 2. *He attributes to evil what is added to simplicity.* (1) It comes from the evil in the nature of man. Oaths have their origin in man's propensity to deceive. They are encouraged by vanity. They tend to a contempt for sacred things. A common swearer is an habitual perjurer. He that swears will lie. He that lies will steal. (2) It comes from the evil one. Satan is

the father of lies. He is the father of liars—of perjurers—of profane swearers of every order.—J. A. M.

Vers. 38—42.—*Retaliation.* Of this we have here two sorts, viz. the retaliation of *kind* and that of *kindness.* These are not necessarily inconsistent. For Christ came not to destroy but to fulfil the Law. Properly understood, "Eye for eye and tooth for tooth" is the co-relative of "Do unto others as you would they should do unto you." We propose to view the *lex talionis*—

I. AS A DIRECTION TO THE MAGISTRATE. 1. *The spirit of its teaching to him is to minister judgment in equity.* (1) The law of retaliation was a question for the magistrate. Private vengeance has no sacred approbation (see Deut. xix. 16—21; Rom. xiii. 4). The scribes conceded to private revenge what the Law permitted to the magistrate as a civil penalty; but this was an evil perversion. (2) It would be an outrage upon equity were a magistrate to give the sentence of death for the destruction of an eye. Or, on the contrary, were he to assign a trifling exaction for a serious crime. The magistrate must not refuse justice to the poor; or favour the strong against the weak (cf. Luke xviii. 3). 2. *The doctrine of Christ strengthens his hands.* (1) The prohibitions of our Lord have reference to private resentments. They do not interfere with magisterial functions. The sermon on the mount was addressed to the disciples (see ver. 1). (2) The scribes, however, had interfered with them in sanctioning private revenges. And these revenges were often carried far beyond the limits of equity. (3) In absolutely forbidding private revenges Jesus restored the magistrate to the Law. In this he fulfilled the Law.

II. AS A PERMISSION TO THE INJURED. 1. *The Law did not impose retaliation.* (1) It simply made it competent to one who had suffered to exact from the person who caused his injury a corresponding or equivalent suffering. Except in cases of life and death, he might commute the exaction of "an eye for an eye" for a money satisfaction (Exod. xxi. 23—25). Or the sufferer might decline to prosecute. The Law was strictly permissive. (2) Hence it is evident that the precepts of Jesus do not destroy the Law. The spirit of the Law is not in favour of revenge. It is rather intended to limit and check it. 2. *The rule of Christ is against the spirit of revenge.* (1) "That ye resist not evil." In this Christ does not say that we may not *avoid* evil. He himself went from Judæa into Galilee to avoid the resentment of the Pharisees (John iv. 1—3). He instructed his disciples when persecution should arise against them in one city to pass on to another (ch. x. 23). (2) He does not say that we may not even *resist* it simply for our own security or for the security of others, within certain limitations (cf. John xviii. 23; Acts xvi. 37; xxii. 25; xxiii. 2, 3, 17; xxv. 10, 11). (3) The law of retaliation must be made consistent with the law of love. This is best secured by forgiveness. To prosecute a knave or a rowdy for his moral benefit might consist with love; but the motive might be misunderstood (cf. ch. xxvi. 52; Rom. xii. 17; 1 Cor. vi. 7; Gal. v. 22). (4) This is the gospel method. It embodies the spirit of the Law (cf. Prov. xx. 22; xxix. 25).

III. AS A MORAL TO THE WORLD. 1. *The end of Law is the public good.* (1) Licentiousness must be restrained or society must dissolve. Retaliation is sanctioned to restrain it. So for public reasons, without any feeling of resentment, a Christian might prosecute a knave or a rowdy. (2) Retaliation is sanctioned, moreover, to convey moral lessons to the conscience of the transgressor. In this view a Christian might prosecute an offender with benevolent intention. 2. *The public good is also the design of the gospel.* (1) It wins victory *by* patience. Conquering the resistance of a foe by the restraint of a stronger arm does not vanquish his spirit of resistance. The peaceful victory turns the foe into a friend. (2) It wins victory *in* patience. The patient sufferer has vanquished all the devils of pride, selfishness, and cruelty in his soul.

IV. AS AN INSTRUCTION TO THE CHRISTIAN. 1. *When he suffers bodily injury.* (1) This class of injury is represented in the case of the blow upon the cheek. Here is affront as well as injury (cf. 2 Cor. xi. 20). (2) It must be taken patiently. Jesus, though the Judge of Israel, when smitten, did not smite again (cf. Micah v. 1; John xviii. 23). (3) Submission, in rare cases of excessive brutality, may expose us to a repetition of the injury. If so, still bear it. "Turn the other cheek." (4) Generally the first forgiveness will prevent the second blow (Prov. xxv. 22). Note: It is the

return blow that makes the quarrel. 2. *When he suffers wrongs to property.* (1) This class of injuries is represented in the case of the coat. We may forfeit property through suits at law instituted by knaves who make no conscience of forgery and perjury (see Eccles. iii. 16; v. 8). (2) Suffer wrong rather than go to law. If the sufferance should lead to further greater loss—the loss of the cloke in addition to the coat—suffer it still. The cost of both may be less than the cost of litigation. The loss of both is less than the loss of the spirit of meekness. 3. *When he suffers outrages upon liberty.* (1) This class of injuries is represented in the case of the compulsion to go a mile. This also should be taken patiently. Go "twain" rather than contend. (2) History teaches that our liberties have been won by sufferings rather than by resistance. This is the very principle of the cross of Christ, by which we are liberated from the slavery of sin. So in the interests of liberty is the cross of patient self-denial to be taken up. 4. *Moreover, our beneficence must be active.* (1) We must be free to give. The request of the poor should be taken as an opportunity for the duty of almsgiving. We may see the hand of God in the hand of the poor. Who would refuse God? (2) We must be free to lend. Thereby we may relieve a present exigency. We should not "turn away" from or shun the poor whom we know to be needing our help. (3) But beneficence must be with discretion (Ps. cxii. 5), else the idle and worthless may carry away what should have been reserved for the worthy. All must be consistent with the claims of creditors, of family, and of the household of faith.—J. A. M.

Vers. 43—48.—*Perfection.* Here is an attainable perfection, for it comes to us as a promise as well as a command. But what is it?

I. IT CANNOT BE THE ABSOLUTE PERFECTION OF GOD. 1. *There is an infinite difference between God and man in their being.* (1) Man is originated. He had a beginning. His immortality had a starting-point. God's eternity had none. (2) Man lives a moment at a time. His immortality is an interminable succession of points. God lives an eternity at a time. "His being no succession knows." 2. *There is an infinite difference in their presence.* (1) The presence of man is limited. He occupies a few cubic feet of space. The presence of God is universal. (2) The presence of man is localized. If he would be elsewhere he must vacate his present place. God is perfectly present everywhere. When we say he is in heaven, we mean that he is there in every perfection of his nature. When we say he is here, we mean precisely the same. So in respect to every conceivable point in immensity. In the infinitude of these conceivable points he is simultaneously perfectly present. 3. *There is an infinite difference in their power.* (1) The power of man is limited. Circumscribed by the laws of God in nature. Circumscribed by the force of conflicting wills. The power of God is an irresistible will. (2) The power of man is formative. He can mould, he can combine, he can disjoin. He cannot create. He cannot destroy. God can create. He can reverse the act of creation. 4. *There is an infinite difference in their holiness.* (1) The holiness of God is necessary. It is simply the natural harmony of all his perfections. This harmony is the standard of holiness. Man has no natural holiness. His sinfulness is the discord of perverted attributes. His holiness is of grace, derived, dependent. (2) So might we proceed with all the attributes of God and man, so far as the former are made known to us, and the conclusion must be evermore that for man to become absolutely perfect as God is quite out of the question.

II. IF THE PERFECTION BE NOT ABSOLUTE, THEN IT MUST BE RELATIVE. As God is perfect in his relations to us, so must we be perfect in our corresponding relations to him. 1. *Our Father is perfect in his relation to us as Creator.* (1) How admirably are we fenced with bones, arranged as levers, curiously fitted into sockets and hinges! How surprising is our muscular structure, our nervous system, our organs of sense! How noble are our intellectual endowments! How wonderful are our affections, appetites, and passions! (2) As creatures do we render fully to God the homage of these powers? Has he our undivided hearts? Has he the best services of our brains? Has he the vigour of our nerve and muscle? 2. *Our Father is perfect in his relation to us as King.* (1) His providence in nature is beneficent. "His sun," "his rain." All creatures are *his.* "He maketh his sun to shine;" "He sendeth his rain." The forces of nature act under his control. His Word lets us into the secrets of his providence. (2) As subjects are we correspondingly perfect in relation to him? Do we

see him as the First Cause, ever active behind all second causes? Do we never neglect to seek him in the revelations of his Word? Do we loyally serve him in the conduct of our lives? 3. *Our Father is perfect in his relation to us as Saviour.* (1) He pitied us in our fall. "He maketh his sun to shine on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the *unjust*." He stooped to lift us up. He comforts us with his favour. He cheers us with hopes of heaven. (2) Have we repented of our sin? Accepted his mercy? Are we full of gratitude? Full of loving-kindness to our fellows? Full of the spirit of sacrifice?

III. THE PERFECTION ENJOINED IS CHRISTIAN. 1. *This is set forth in the term "your Father."* (1) Seldom, in the Old Testament, do we find God spoken of under this endearing title. It is his most constant title in the New. (2) There is a reason of fitness in this. The spirit of the Law was not that of a son, but of a servant. It was "the spirit of bondage to fear." The Law was given amid the roar of flame, the hissing of storms, the rattle and crash of thunder, the clang of the trumpet, and the shaking of the very earth. (3) The gospel changes all this (see Gal. iv. 1—7). 2. *The standard of Christian perfection is higher.* (1) Superior relations bring loftier claims. Hence the gospel law is broader and deeper, more comprehensive, more spiritual. (2) It shows: (*a*) Murder in the heart and lip (vers. 21—26). (*b*) Adultery in the heart and eye (vers. 27—32). Profanity in Pharisaic sophisms (vers. 33—37). (*c*) Revenge in resistance (vers. 38—42). (*d*) Heathenism in conventional Judaism (text). 3. *Love is the badge of Christian discipleship.* (1) Discipleships in general have their distinguishing marks. Hindu spots and strings. Monkish tonsure. Opinions. (2) So the Christian (see John xiii. 34, 35). The end of the commandment is love. Love is the means to the end. (3) But in what sense is this commandment (John xiii. 34, 35) *new*? It is not new in *principle*, for nature teaches it. It is distinctly taught in the Mosaic Law (see Lev. xix. 18). It is new in its *measure*. Moses says we are to love our neighbour *as* ourselves. Jesus says we are to love our brother *better* than ourselves. So he loved us (cf. Phil. ii. 17; Col. i. 24; 1 John iii. 16).—J. A. M.

Ver. 2.—*The new Preacher.* "He opened his mouth, and taught them." Our Lord was both a Teacher and a Preacher. The teacher aims at instruction; he seeks to arouse the activity of his scholars' minds. The preacher aims at persuasion, and seeks to arouse into activity the moral nature. The teacher will prefer the interlocutory method; the preacher will prefer the lengthened and systematic address. The so-called sermon on the mount is the full outline, giving the chief points of a continuous address, whose subject is—"A new idea of righteousness." No doubt our Lord had previously spoken in the synagogues, and to small audiences in the houses, but then he would adopt the conversational style. Matthew leads us to think that the pressure of the people led our Lord to adopt the open-air preaching, which became a characteristic feature of his ministry. At once he was recognized as a new preacher, with a new *theme*, a new *style*, and a new *power*.

I. THE NEW THEME. There is the virtually new and the actually new. That which has long been covered over and lost seems new when it is restored to its place again. The spiritual truths of Mosaism had long been hidden under a mass of rabbinical opinions amd ceremonies. Christ brought those spiritual truths and claims into power and prominence again. He took up the much-debated question, "What is righteousness? and how is it to be obtained?" The ruling theme of this first discourse is righteousness; and our Lord makes it a new thing, by sweeping away the rabbinical idea that righteousness is a *routine*. He shows that it is (1) character, and (2) conduct inspired and toned by character.

II. THE NEW STYLE. The prevailing style was a series of petty quibbles and minute discussions, over which men were ever ready to quarrel, but which never touched the heart of truth. Christ's style was plain, searching, spiritual; it made appeal to the best and deepest in men, and woke into power the best and deepest by the appeal. Christ dealt with men as *spiritual* beings.

III. THE NEW POWER. We respond at once to a speaker of power, who has full command of his subject and of himself. We approve of the "accent of conviction," and that our Lord had. There is self-assertion, but it is the self-assertion of the commissioned Prophet of God.—R. T.

Vers. 3—9.—*The benediction of good character.* The word "blessed" is taken from *beati*, which is used in the Vulgate. By it our Lord indicates what will be especially esteemed, and receive special honour, in his new kingdom. To see our Lord's point we should observe what the Pharisaic teachers of his day were proclaiming. According to them, God's blessing rested upon minute acts of obedience; upon precision in keeping every detail of a series of elaborate, man-made rules. The teaching of the day was surface-teaching. God's blessing rested on good conduct, but it was not *moral* conduct; it was conduct regarded ecclesiastically, reckoned by wearisome amplification of Mosaic rites and rules. (Of this illustration may be given from some of the rabbinical sabbath laws.)

I. GOD'S BLESSING RESTS ON CHARACTER. This is the revelation brought by Christ. This is the point of his teaching. This is the essence of his mission. According to the Pharisees a man need not be a *good man* to be an accepted man with God. They were not themselves "good men," and yet they never for a moment doubted their own acceptance. Now, in this our Lord did but revive the work of the prophets, who were sent to teach men that God gave his blessing to moral righteousness, and not to mere ritualistic obedience (see Isa. i.). It is usual to contrast the subjects of the Beatitudes with the strong, active virtues that were prized by paganism, which meant "valour" when it spoke of "virtue." But that can hardly be our Lord's contrast. We must seek for the prevailing ideas of the people to whom he spake; and then we find the contrast is between goodness as *conduct*, and goodness as *character* inspiring conduct.

II. CHARACTER DEPENDS ON STATES OF MIND. It will be noticed that our Lord deals with character in its fountains rather than in its expressions. He commends the "poor *in spirit*." Five states of mind are presented as the bases of character on which God's benedictions can rest. 1. Humility. 2. Penitence. 3. Meekness. 4. Mercifulness. 5. Purity. Let these be the rootages of character in a man, we can be quite sure what its flowerings, in all the relations of life, will be. Test the Pharisee by these five tests, and his goodness of mere conduct is exposed.

III. CHARACTERS WILL BE SURE TO DECIDE CONDUCT. This was our Lord's constant teaching. "Make the tree good, and the fruit will come right." Character is to conduct as the life is to the body. There is health in the body when there is purity and vigour in the life.—R. T.

Ver. 6.—*The Divine reward of the spiritually minded.* St. Paul uses this word, "To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." But there is a polemical, controversial, doctrinal force in his use, which we are not just now needing. Dr. Bushnell has a very striking sermon on "The Efficiency of the Passive Virtues" ('New Life,' p. 280); but that is not precisely our Lord's point here, though they are "passive virtues" which he commends. They who "hunger and thirst after righteousness" are they who have a strong sense of God, who estimate themselves in his light, and so discover that their one supreme need is *righteousness*; and it must be righteousness according to God's idea.

I. MAN HAS A SPIRITUAL NATURE, AND SPIRITUAL NEEDS. "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." "Man was made for God, and can find no rest till he finds rest in him." Two things tend to crush down the spiritual nature, and silence the cry of the spiritual needs. 1. Excessive concern for the body. 2. Excessive demands of religious routine. The first is always doing its mischievous work; the second has its evil influence at times. It was doing an almost fatal work in the times of Christ.

II. HIS MANHOOD DEPENDS ON DUE ATTENTION TO THEM. "Man doth not live by bread alone." His soul-hunger is of far greater importance than his body-hunger. Illustrate, that man is not a true, full man who, by reason of the absorption of his powers in business, has no response to the worlds of thought or of art. So the man is not a true, full man who makes no attempt to satisfy the hunger of his soul for *righteousness*.

III. FOSTER THE SOUL'S LONGINGS FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND THEY WILL GROW INTO SANCTIFYING PASSIONS. They will become the supreme purpose of life. They will put character—judged according to the Divine standard—in its proper place, and that

is the first place. The man who "seeks first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness," is not made unworldly, but he does learn how to sanctify all worldly relations.

IV. THERE IS ALWAYS THE CERTAINTY OF THEIR SUPPLY. "They shall be filled." God the Spirit responds to the cry of spirits. God the eternal Righteousness is gracious in dealing with all who would be "righteous as he is righteous."—R. T.

Vers. 13—16.—*The influence of sanctified characters.* The righteousness which Christ commends will exert in the world a most gracious moral influence. It will season, as the salt does; it will illuminate and quicken, as the light does. "Salt seasons things, causing things to taste savoury, which otherwise would be no way pleasant, or wholesome, or good for the body." "Our Lord applies to his disciples the stronger word "light," *i.e.* essential light, rather than any which signifies merely a light-bearer. They are not only to reflect or transmit this light, but to become themselves "lights." The believer is not a mere reflector, in himself dead and dark, receiving and emitting rays; he is a new seat and centre of spiritual life." As Christ was pleased to use the two figures of the "salt" and the "light" as illustrative of sanctified character, we may consider the suggestions which the two figures have in common.

I. BOTH "SALT" AND "LIGHT" ARE SILENTLY WORKING FORCES. Neither makes any noise. The one works away at the arresting of corrupting processes, the other works away at the quickening and invigorating of life, but neither seeks to draw any attention to itself, or has any open boasting to make. And the silent forces are usually the mightiest. This is an essential peculiarity of Christian character. It has no voice. It cannot brag. It works, it exerts its influence, but it says nothing about it. Illustrate the power of Florence Nightingale in the Crimean hospitals, or of Mrs. Fry in the English prisons. Truly wonderful is the sanctifying power of silent goodness.

II. BOTH "SALT" AND "LIGHT" ARE INTERIOR-WORKING FORCES. This is, at first sight, more evidently true of "salt" than of "light." You must put salt *into* things, and hide it in them. But the light cannot do its full work until it can get *inside* things. Its surface-work is its least work. It is warmth *in* things. It is quickening *in* things. And so the influences of Christian character work *within* men, in thought, and motive, and feeling, and resolve. The *good* have their spheres of influence in the souls of their fellows. They feel a power they may not confess they feel.

III. BOTH "SALT" AND "LIGHT" ARE PERSISTENTLY WORKING FORCES. They keep on as long as there is sphere for their activity. This is the most important element of power in established Christian character.—R. T.

Ver. 14.—*The missionary power of Christ's disciples.* "Ye are the light of the *world*." Christ's disciples are *light-bearers* rather than light. Christ is, properly speaking, the Light; and Christ's disciples carry that light, in what they are, and what they do, and what they say.

I. CHRIST THE LIGHT. It was a dark world indeed when the light rose and streamed forth from Bethlehem (see ch. iv. 16; Luke ii. 32; John i. 4, 5; 2 Cor. iv. 6). 1. *Light reveals darkness.* Illustrate effect of opening a window in a foul, dark dungeon. We use the expression, "I saw myself a sinner." The gospel light makes so impressive heathen darkness. Illustrate by heathen customs: Malagasy sprinkling the people; Chinese paper-money sent to the dead. 2. Light quickens any life there may be in the darkness. Illustrate by poem, "The ivy in a dungeon grew," etc. There are some germs of truth, even in dark heathen systems, and these the light of Christ is sure to quicken.

II. THE WORLD THE SPHERE. A whole world lies in the darkness. A whole world is grasped in the Divine love. But we still need to learn the lesson of the descending sheet that was taught to St. Peter. Notice how unlimited the sphere of the natural light is. It is impartial; it is universal. It visits poor and rich. It tints alike the flowers of the palace garden and of the garret window in the dingy city street. As day shines over city, village, plain, and hill, over land and over sea, so would Christ, the Day, shine over all the world, bringing life and hope and salvation everywhere.

III. MEN THE LIGHT-BEARERS. Easterns did not use tables and chairs. They sat upon the floor; and therefore tall lamp-stands were required, in order that the light might be diffused over all the room. So God would have us be his atmosphere to carry his sunbeam; his candlestick, his lamp-stand, to lift up his light, so that all men might be brought unto him. There has been great difficulty in the way of securing the division of the electric light. But Christ, the Light, can be so divided that each of us can carry forth, and hold up, its full blaze. As lamp-stands, we can hold Christ the Light up, by (1) Christly living; (2) by loving commendations; (3) by active efforts; and (4) by the sympathy that strengthens all other light-bearers.—R. T.

Ver. 17.—*The true relations of the old and the new.* "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." "As a Teacher, our Lord came to fill up what was lacking, to develop hints and germs of truth, to turn rules into principles." Phillips Brooks says, "When Jesus came into the world to establish the perfect religion, he found here an imperfect faith. How should he treat this partial, this imperfect faith, which was already on the ground? He might do either of two things. He might sweep it away, and begin entirely anew, or he might take this imperfect faith and fill it out to completeness. He might destroy or he might fulfil. With the most deliberate wisdom he chose one method and rejected the other." A distinction may be pointed out between man's idea of the relations of the old and the new, and God's idea.

I. MAN'S OLD MAY BE REPLACED. He does not build a new house as a development of the old one; he takes the old one down and puts the new in its place. And this is illustrative of man's methods in all his spheres of education and science and religion. Man reforms by destroying. The iconoclast begins our better days. The scientific teacher first destroys the theories of his predecessors. For man there is a constant succession of something like absolute new beginnings, because there is no guaranteed truth in *man's old.* (It will be seen that, though this is a large and general truth, it must be taken with some careful qualifications. We should only go so far as to say, "Man's old *may* be removed and replaced.")

II. GOD'S OLD MUST BE FULFILLED. It can never be destroyed, because it is a step in a series, a piece of a plan, a process in a growth. It is not only true for the time, it is true for all time, but getting expression in adaptation to a particular time. Illustrate by the fruit fulfilling the seed. The seed remains in the fruit, finding there its developed form, or its fulfilment. Show that it is not precise to say that our Lord's new teaching replaced Mosaism, or even absorbed Mosaism. It developed it, realized it, fulfilled it, fruited it. Christianity is the spirituality of the Mosaism liberated from the chrysalis of formal commands, and set free to show itself as the beautiful winged thing that it is. God's *new* is always his glorified *old.*—R. T.

Ver. 20.—*The better types of righteousness.* "Shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees." How one righteousness can be thought of as *exceeding* another does not at once appear. We may apprehend it, if we duly consider this distinction. Heart-righteousness must, in every age, be the same thing; but practical righteousness, finding expression in conduct and relations, does go by an ascending scale, and does vary in different ages and nations.

I. A RIGHTEOUSNESS MAY BE ESTIMATED BY THE SPACE IT COVERS. A ritual religion, such as formal Mosaism was, covers a precise and limited area. Its righteousness could be clearly defined. It bore relation to the prescribed acts of homage and worship; and even if it concerned itself with man's private life and relations, its sphere was only conduct; it consisted in formal obedience to specified rules. This is illustrated in the confidence of righteousness expressed by the young rich ruler, when he said, "All these have I kept from my youth up." The space his righteousness covered was very limited. Within its limits Mosaic righteousness stiffened until it became a mere ceremonialism, which could be kept up along with personal indulgence, and immorality. Men could honour God with their acts, and disgrace him by their lives. And then the Jehovah-prophets were sent, to awaken a moral life, and reveal the true sphere of righteousness. Still, a righteousness may be estimated according to the limits of its sphere. The Christ-righteousness demands the entire life and relations. Right every day and everywhere.

II. A RIGHTEOUSNESS MAY BE ESTIMATED BY THE DEPTH TO WHICH IT GOES. "They that worship the Father must worship him in spirit and in truth." In this line set, in strong contrast, the righteousness of a characteristic Pharisee and the righteousness of a characteristic Christian. Granted that both are equally diligent in worship and outward obedience, what do we find if we go below the surface? Cain and Abel were alike "righteous" in bringing their thank-offering; but what a difference down deep, in motive and feeling! David and Solomon were both "righteous" in attending to Jehovah's temple; but what a difference down deep, in motive and feeling! Christ's righteousness is the highest type; it begins within and flows through all the life and relations.—R. T.

Vers. 22, 23.—*The Christian idea of brotherhood.* Our Lord illustrated the application of the new Christian principles to various spheres and relations. Or to state more precisely his point, he showed how the regenerate character would put a new tone on all the life-associations. In a general way, the Christian light is to shine freely all abroad. In a particular way, the Christian influence is to affect a man's first sphere, the sphere of human relationships, represented by the term "brotherhood." From the Christian point of view, our human brother is our second self, and we are to "love our neighbour *as ourself*."

I. THE MAINTENANCE OF THE BROTHERHOOD IS ESSENTIAL TO PIETY. This is illustrated in vers. 23, 24. Worship cannot be acceptable to God, when offered by men who are out of brotherly relations. The offering to God is not acceptable as offering, but as the expression of the man, the declaration of his mind and heart, which God accepts in the offering. He must put his mind and heart right towards his brother, or God will never accept it as right towards him. The unforgiving never worship God aright. "If we love not our brother whom we have seen, how can we love God whom we have not seen;" "He who loveth God should love his brother also."

II. THE MAINTENANCE OF THE BROTHERHOOD RESTS WITH THE CHRISTIAN. That is Christ's point. It is his mission to culture and ennoble his disciples by putting them under the pressure of serious responsibilities. And this is one of them. However aggravating our brother may be, we, as Christians, are bound to keep up the brotherhood. If there are yieldings to be done, we must do them. The Christian can never excuse himself by saying, "My brother will not be reconciled to me." He must be; and the Christian must not rest until he is. The burden of right relations rests on *him*.

III. THE MAINTENANCE OF THE BROTHERHOOD MAY INVOLVE SELF-RESTRAINTS AND DISABILITIES. This is one of the great spheres of Christian self-denial and self-sacrifice. Every true Christian will be willing to suffer rather than break the brotherhood.—R. T.

Ver. 28.—*Cherished evil feeling is sin before God.* It is not possible to deal, in a general audience, with the precise subject introduced in this text; but it is possible to treat it as illustrating the searching character of God's Law, which goes in behind all acts of sin, and recognizes the states of mind and feeling out of which acts of sin would surely come if opportunity offered. "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart." And yet we have to make a very precise distinction. It is not the evil that *comes into* our heart which Christ declares to be sin; it is the evil that *is cherished* in our heart. In the cherishing lies the sin, because that cherishing is as truly the *act of the will*, the act of the personality, as any overt act of transgression could be.

I. TEMPTATION IS NOT SIN. Illustrate by the threefold temptation of our Lord. To have those thoughts suggested to his mind was in no sense sin. We may say, he could not help their coming. They were presented from without. Bodily passion may present to us temptation; the presence of others may become force of temptation; circumstances may prove temptations; evil spirits may suggest temptations; but we must see clearly that temptation is outside our true selves. "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust;" something he *has*, not something he is. An old divine quaintly says, "If Satan comes up to my door, I cannot help

it; if he lifts the latch and walks in, I cannot help it. But if I offer him a chair, and begin with him a parley, I put myself altogether in the wrong."

II. SIN DEPENDS ON MAN'S WAY OF DEALING WITH THE TEMPTATION. It bears no relations to a man's will until the man exercises his will upon it. And that will may refuse a parley or may admit a parley. That will may reject the temptation or may cherish the temptation. Sin comes with the cherishing. The possibilities of man's dealing with temptation are shown to us in the threefold triumph won by the Lord Jesus Christ over temptation when in the wilderness.—R. T.

Ver. 29.—*Self-discipline.* Plumptre suggests the proper way in which to treat these strong figures of speech. "The bold severity of the phrase excludes a literal interpretation. The seat of the evil lies in the will, not in the organ of sense or action, and the removal of the instrument might leave the inward taint unpurified. What is meant is, that any sense, when it ministers to sin, is an evil and not a good, the loss of which would be the truest gain." Pursuits and pleasures, innocent enough in themselves, may bring temptation and involve us in sin. There should be resolute dealing with them, so as to ensure that they are held in safe and wise bonds of self-restraint.

I. SELF-DISCIPLINE MAY TAKE EXTRAVAGANT FORMS. It does whenever the body is regarded as in itself an evil thing. Then the supreme work of life seems to be the humiliation of the body, and the silencing of its demands. This extravagance is illustrated by the hermits; by such action as that of St. Simeon Stylites; by the orders of monks and nuns; by the self-mortification of wearing hair-shirts or sharp crosses next the skin; or submitting to prolonged fasting, etc. It is said that the holy Henry Martyn yielded to this extravagance, and tried to mortify the flesh by walking about with stones in his shoes. The abuse of a thing should never prevent our making a right and good use of it. (See also the self-discipline system of Buddhists.)

II. SELF-DISCIPLINE SHOULD TAKE REASONABLE FORMS. There is quite room enough for stern, strong dealing within wise limitations. A man is not required to ruin his health by his self-discipline; because the soul needs a sound and healthy body through which to gain its full expression. It may be shown that Christian self-discipline should (1) keep within reasonable spheres; (2) use reasonable methods; and (3) seek to attain only reasonable results. Men form an unnatural conception of the Christian requirement, and think to attain *eminent* piety. This leads them into extravagances. If we had worthy conceptions of what *piety* is, its attainment—without adding any idea of *eminent*—would seem the all-sufficing effort of a life.—R. T.

Ver. 38.—*The mildness of Mosaism.* "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." This is supposed to represent the *severity* of Mosaism. But its proper estimate depends on the contrast in which it is set. Contrast it with Christ's doctrines of self-denial in order to serve others, and of non-resistance of evil, and it seems severe. But contrast it with the previous, and the widely prevailing doctrines of early days, and its mildness will at once come to view. Illustrate that the primary idea of man is—kill the man who does you any wrong. It is the sign of good order, wise government, worthier estimate of life, and a milder tone, when money payments, and restoration of equivalents, take the place of the revengeful demand for life. The tendency of civilization to require a more moderate, restrained, and reformative dealing with wrong-doers, may be observed in all ages; and it should be applied to the Mosaic civilization, as a distinct advance on the social systems of that day. But it should be borne in mind that our Lord is dealing with the private offences of disciples, and not with public offences against law. The expression of the regenerate character in the ordinary associations of life is his theme. And he is dealing, not with the Mosaic *lex talionis*, but with the common and vulgar idea of *revenging offences*, which sought to gain support by making an undesigned application of the Mosaic Law. Christian disciples must not *avenge themselves.*

I. OBSERVE THE CIRCUMSCRIBED AREA OF THIS RULE. It is safe when officially applied in a court of justice. The wrong-doer can reasonably be made to replace his wrong. It is unsafe when applied, under personal feeling, in private life. Then it

may be but an expression of revenge; and revenge is altogether unworthy of the Christian. The mildness of Mosaism is shown in its making revenge to become official action.

II. OBSERVE THE FIGURATIVE CHARACTER OF THIS RULE. There is no satisfaction for a noble person in making an enemy suffer exactly as he made him suffer. The terms are figures for the reasonable demand of restoration of the mischief done.—R. T.

Ver. 48.—*Our standard of perfection.* "Even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Though fittingly employed at the close of this chapter, the word "perfect" is more immediately connected with the last few verses. Dealing with that strange inference of the Pharisees, that because we are commanded to love our neighbours, we are therefore required to hate our enemies, Christ presents the true idea of love, the perfect conception of love. He demands such a love as can make what is opposite to it, as well as what is akin to it, its object. The apostles teach that perfection is the idea, the *aim*, to be kept in the *soul* of the Christian, there to work as a perpetual inspiration to the seeking of perfection in the *life* and *conduct*. St. Paul presents the distinction between full-grown men and little children. The full-grown men are the perfect; they have reached the fulness, the standard, of Christian manhood. A man "perfect" is one who has attained his moral end, the standard according to which he was made; one in whom every Christian grace has reached its ripeness and maturity.

I. CHRISTIANITY PRESENTS A PERFECT STANDARD OF HUMANITY. Christ is the realized thought of God, when he designed the being man. The Christ is to be so set before men, that they may get from his story the idea of a perfect human being. We may be able to form an idea of perfect virtue, perfect duty, perfect purity. What we wholly fail to conceive is *a perfect man*. That must be shown us, revealed to us. And when we see him, behold he is "God manifest in the flesh." For, after all, God himself is the standard perfection; and it is only because we see him in Christ that we are satisfied with Christ.

II. THE CHRISTIAN STANDARD OF THE PERFECT IS THE NOBLEST INSPIRATION TO MAN. To be like God is the sublimest human possibility. We know what being like God means when we look on Christ. He has at once revealed our distance from the "perfect;" for we are not like him. He inspires us to seek after the perfect; for we may be "made like unto him in all things."—R. T.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER VI.

Vers. 1—18.—*The relation of our Lord and his disciples to the religion of the day (continued); vide* ch. v. 17, note. (*b*) Our Lord turns from cases which could be directly deduced from the Law to those which belonged only to recognized religious duty. Of these he instances three: alms (vers. 2—4), prayer (vers. 5—8, 9—15), fasting (vers. 16—18). It is, indeed, true that the performance of these duties on special occasions was implied in the Pentateuch (Deut. xxvi. 12—15); but there are no regulations concerning their observance in ordinary and daily life. These were matters of custom and tradition; to this the Law, in its original aim and method, did not extend. There was therefore the more need for the Law to be supplemented by the instructions of the Jewish leaders. These our Lord does not reject, but only corrects.

Ver. 1.—Matthew only. **Take heed;** προσέχετε [δέ] (Westcott and Hort). If "but" is genuine, as is on the whole more probable, our Lord places this warning in close relation to the preceding charge. Aim at "perfection," but beware of mere show. Rather you must consider the estimate that will be formed of you by your Father which is in heaven. **That ye do not your alms;** Revised Version, *your righteousness* (so the manuscripts). Although one of the Hebrew words for "righteousness" (צדקה) was used especially for the righteousness of almsgiving (cf. Deut. vi. 25, LXX.; and 'Psalms of Solomon,' ix. 6, where see Professor Ryle's and Mr. James's note), yet it is improbable that τὴν δικαιοσύνην should here be rendered "alms," because (1) it has this meaning nowhere else in the New Testament; (2) the word for "alms" (ἐλεημοσύνη) comes in the next verse; (3) the emphatic position of τὴν

δικαιοσύνην ὑμῶν (μὴ ποιεῖν), in contrast to ποιῆς ἐλεημοσύνην (ver. 2), points to it being a collective expression of which the various parts are mentioned in the following verses. The form also of the sentence, "when," etc., at the head of each of the other subjects, (vers. 5, 16) shows that these are co-ordinated with ver. 2. *Your;* in contrast to that of the typical Jews. The limitation implied in ὑμῶν gives a more partial and probably more external meaning to "righteousness" (cf. Ezek. xviii. 22, 24) than is to be seen in the corresponding phrase in 1 John ii. 29; iii. 7. **To be seen of them** (πρὸς τὸ θεαθῆναι αὐτοῖς). Having for your final purpose (cf. Ellicott on 1 Cor. ix. 18) to be gazed at by them (cf. ch. xxiii. 5; Acts i. 11; and T.R. of Acts viii. 18; cf. *supra*, ch. v. 28). **Otherwise** (Winer, § lxv. 3. *c*). **Ye have no reward** (ch. v. 12, note). **Of your Father;** Authorized Version margin and Revised Version, *with;* the thought being not that it is given by him, but that it is laid up with him (παρὰ τῷ Πατρὶ ὑμῶν). Perhaps, however, the preposition rather means "in the judgment of" (cf. 1 Pet. ii. 4). *Your Father* (ch. v. 16, note). Notice the frequent repetition of the phrase in this context (ch. v. 48; vi. 4, 6, 8, 15, 18 *bis*).

Vers. 2—4.—*Almsgiving.* Matthew only.

Ver. 2.—**Therefore.** A deduction from the general principle laid down in ver. 1. **When thou doest alms** (ποιῆς ἐλεημοσύνην). The exact phrase comes here and ver. 3 only. In Luke xi. 41 and xii. 33 (δότε) alms are considered rather as a gift; in Acts ix. 36; x. 2; xxiv. 17 (ἐλεημοσύνας), rather as to their separate occasions and materials; here quite generally but rather as an action, a work. **Do not sound a trumpet** (μὴ σαλπίσῃς). Probably a purely metaphorical expression (cf. our "He is his own trumpeter"). Edersheim, 'Temple,' etc., p. 27 (cf. Schöttgen) sees rather in it an ironical allusion to the form and name of the treasure-chests in the court of the women. "The Lord, making use of the word 'trumpet,' describes the conduct of those who, in their almsgiving, sought glory from men as 'sounding a trumpet' before them—that is, carrying before them, as it were, in full display one of these trumpet-shaped alms-boxes (literally called in the Talmud, 'trumpets'), and, as it were, sounding it." This interpretation would have been less fanciful if the substantive had been used instead of the verb. Others (*e.g.* Calvin, Bengel) have taken it of a literal trumpet; but of this practice there is no evidence whatever. "I have not found, although I have sought for it much and seriously, even the least mention of a trumpet in almsgiving" (J. Lightfoot, 'Hor. Hebr.'). **Before thee;** part of the metaphor, since one holds a trumpet up to one's mouth. **As the hypocrites do.** The comma after "do" in the ordinary text of the Authorized Version (not in Scrivener) connects "do not sound a trumpet before thee" with "in the synagogues," etc., and more readily suggests the literal interpretation of "trumpet" to the English reader. *The hypocrites* (οἱ ὑποκριταί). In Attic usage the word means those who play a part upon the stage. Hence, by an easy transition to the moral sphere, "hypocrisy" became used in later Greek of "the assumption of a part which masked [men's] genuine feelings, and made them appear otherwise than they were" (cf. Bishop Lightfoot, on Gal. ii. 13). Persons who assumed this part would indeed often be identical with οἱ ἀσεβεῖς, οἱ παράνομοι, and the term ὑποκριταί may sometimes be used as synonymous with these (an extension of language which would be the more easy as the Hebrew word for "hypocrite" (חנף) implies not so much hypocrisy as pollution by sin); but there seems no need (contrast Hatch, 'Essays,' p. 91) to see any other connotation in the New Testament than "hypocrite." To wilfully and continuously attempt to produce a false impression—especially in religion—is, after all, a mark of extreme distance from the truth-loving God. **In the synagogues and in the streets** (ver. 5, note). **That they may have glory of men** (ὅπως δοξασθῶσιν); instead of this glory being given to God (ch. v. 16). The thought, however, of the word is rather of the glory given than of their welcome reception of it (δόξαν λαμβάνειν, John v. 44; contrast Luke iv. 15). **Verily** (ch. v. 18, note). **They have;** Revised Version, *they have received* (ἀπέχουσιν). The force of the preposition is "*correspondence*, i.e. of the contents to the capacity, of the possession to the desire, etc., so that it denotes the *full* complement" (Bishop Lightfoot, on Phil. iv. 18). That which fully corresponds to their desires and their rightful expectation they have to the full. They therefore have (ἔχουσι) no other reward left for them to receive (ver. 1). Schöttgen gives several examples of Jewish sayings about men receiving their reward in this life only (cf. Ign., 'Polyc.,' § 5, "If a man boast [of his chastity], he is lost").

Ver. 3.—**But when thou;** "thou" emphatic. **Let not thy left hand know,** etc. So little effect should thy kind action have upon thy memory. There should be no self-consciousness in it.

Ver. 4.—**And thy Father which seeth in secret** (comp. ver. 6, note). **Himself.** Revised Version omits, with the manuscripts. **Shall reward thee;** Revised Version, *shall recompense thee* (ἀποδώσει σοι). Shall give to thee in full measure corresponding to the contents of that which is really due (cf. Isa.

lxv. 6, 7, LXX.). When this "recompense" shall be given is not stated. If, as is probable, our Lord is thinking of the "reward" of ver. 1 and ch. v. 12, it would naturally be given at the judgment-day. **Openly.** Revised Version omits, with the manuscripts; similarly vers. 6, 18. The interpolation was probably made not only because of the contrast suggested by "in secret," but also to indicate more precisely the time when God would do this.

Vers. 5—15.—*Prayer.*

Vers. 5—8.—Matthew only.

Ver. 5.—**And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be,** etc.; Revised Version, plural. Ver. 5 is addressed to the disciples generally, ver. 6 to them individually. (For the future, cf. ch. v. 48, note.) **As the hypocrites are** (ver. 2, note). The 'Didache,' § viii., following this passage, says, "Neither pray ye as the hypocrites," referring, like our Lord, to practices affected chiefly by the Pharisees. **For they love** (ὅτι φιλοῦσι). Not to be translated "they are wont." Our Lord points out the cause of this their custom. It was not that the synagogue was more convenient (he is, of course, thinking of their private prayers), or that they were accidentally overtaken by the prayer-hour when in the street, but their innate love of display made them choose these places "that they may be seen of men" (cf. ver. 16, and contrast ver. 2). **To pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets;** *to stand and pray,* etc. (Revised Version), giving, however, slightly more emphasis on "stand" than its position warrants. The emphasis is really on the place, not on the posture, which was only what was usual among Jews (cf. Mark xi. 25; Luke xviii. 11, 13). There is no thought of taking up their position, standing still (σταθέντες, Acts v. 20; cf. Luke xviii. 11, 40). (For the practice here condemned by our Lord, cf. Lightfoot, 'Hor. Hebr.,' "R. Jochanan said, I saw R. Jannai standing and praying in the streets of Tsippor, and going four cubits, and then praying the Additionary Prayer.") **They have,** etc. (ver. 2, note).

Ver. 6.—**But thou** (emphatic) **when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray,** etc. An adaptation of Isa. xxvi. 20 (cf. also 2 Kings iv. 33). The prophet's language describing the action befitting a time of terror is used by our Lord to express what ought to be the normal practice of each of his followers. Observe that the widow of one of the sons of the prophets so acted when she was about to receive the miraculous supply of oil (2 Kings iv. 4, 5). *Closet;* Revised Version, *inner chamber,* more readily suggesting the passage in Isaiah to the English reader. **To thy Father which is in secret.** Not "which seeth in secret," as in the next clause. The thought here may be partly that to be unseen of men is a help to communion with him who is also unseen by them, but especially that the manner of your actions ought to resemble that of your Father's, who is himself unseen and works unseen. **And thy Father which seeth in secret.** You will be no loser, since his eyes pass by nothing, however well concealed it be from the eyes of men. **Shall reward thee openly** (ver. 4, notes).

Ver. 7.—**But when ye pray** (προσευχόμενοι δέ). The Revised Version, *and in praying,* shows that our Lord is only continuing the subject, and not turning to a new one, as in vers. 2, 5, 16. But while he has thus far thought of prayer as an external act, he now speaks of the substance of the prayers offered, the δέ indicating a transition to another aspect of the same subject. **Use not vain repetitions;** "Babble not much" (Tyndale). The word used (μὴ βατταλογήσητε) is probably onomatopœic of stuttering. The Peshito employs here the same root (ܒܛܠܓ) as for μογιλάλος, Mark vii. 32 (ܐܛܠ). But from the primary sense of stuttering, βατταλογεῖν naturally passed to that of babbling in senseless repetitions. **As the heathen do** (οἱ ἐθνικοί, *Gentiles,* Revised Version; ch. v. 47, note). Thinking that the virtue lies in the mere utterance of the words. Even the Jews came perilously near this in their abundant use of synonyms and synonymous expressions in their prayers (cf. Lightfoot, 'Hor. Hebr.'). Perhaps it was this fact that assisted the introduction of the reading "hypocrites" in B and the Old Syriac. **For they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.** In the continuance (ἐν) of their external action lies their hope of being fully heard (εἰσακουσθήσονται).

Ver. 8.—**Be not ye therefore like.** Revised Version omits "ye," as the emphatic personal pronoun is not expressed. The connexion of thought is—Seeing you are expected to shun heathen error (Meyer), do not allow yourselves to reproduce heathen practices. By observing these you would be taking a definite way of becoming like (passive, or rather middle, δμοιωθῆτε) those who ordinarily practise them. **For;** *i.e.* you stand on a different footing altogether from the heathen; you are intimately related to One above, who knows your wants, even before you express them to him. **Your Father;** Revised Version margin, "some ancient authorities read *God your Father.*" So ℵ*, B, sah. (ὁ Θεός is bracketed by West-

cott and Hort). The insertion is at first sight suspicious, but as there is no trace of such an addition in vers. 1, 4, 6, 14, 18 (in ver. 32 only ℵ*), it is hard to see why it should have been interpolated here. Its omission, on the other hand, is easily accounted for by its absence in those passages. The internal evidence, therefore, corroborates the strong external evidence of ℵ*, B. Our Lord here said "God" to emphasize the majesty and power of "your Father." **Knoweth**; *i.e.* intuitively (*οἶδεν*); cf. ver. 32.

Vers. 9—13.—*The pattern of prayer.* Parallel passage: Luke xi. 2—4. For most suggestive remarks on the Lord's Prayer, both generally and in its greater difficulties of detail, compare by all means Chase, 'The Lord's Prayer in the Early Church:' (Cambridge Texts and Studies).

Observe: (1) If the prayer had already been given by the Lord in the sermon on the mount, "one of his disciples" would hardly afterwards have asked him to teach them to pray, as John also taught his disciples (Luke xi. 1). It is much more easy, therefore, to consider that the original occasion of its utterance is recorded by St. Luke, and that it therefore did not belong to the sermon on the mount as that discourse was originally delivered.

(2) A question that admits of a more doubtful answer is whether the more original form of the prayer is found in Matthew or in Luke. It will be remembered that in the true text of his Gospel, the latter does not record the words, "Which art in heaven," "Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth," "But deliver us from evil," besides reading "day by day" instead of "this day," "sins" instead of "debts," and "for we ourselves also forgive every one that is indebted to us" instead of "as we also have forgiven our debtors." Most writers suppose St. Matthew's form to be the original, and St. Luke's to be only a shortened form. In favour of this are the considerations that (*a*) St. Matthew's words, "Forgive us our debts," represent an older, because parabolic, form of expression than the apparently interpretative "Forgive us our sins" in St. Luke. (*b*) St. Matthew's words, "as we also," seem to be expanded into "for we ourselves also," in St. Luke. (*c*) St. Luke's "day by day" occurs elsewhere in the New Testament only in his writings (Luke xix. 47; Acts xvii. 11), so that it is likely to be his own phrase, and therefore less original than St. Matthew's "this day" (cf. Weiss, 'Matthäus-Ev.,' and Page, *Expositor*, III. vii. 436). On the other hand, the words, "Which art in heaven," are so characteristic of St. Matthew (ch. x. 32, 33; cf. xii. 50; xv. 13; xviii. 10, 14, 19, 35; xxiii. 9), and especially of the sermon on the mount (ch. v. 16; vi. 1; vii. 11, 21; cf. v. 45, 48; vi. 14, 26, 32), that it seems more natural to suppose that this clause at least was added by him or by the authors of his sources to the original form, rather than that it was omitted by St. Luke. In connexion with this it may be pointed out how easy it was for our Lord to say only "Father" (Luke xi. 2) immediately after his own prayer to him (Luke xi. 1).

Taking everything into consideration, it seems reasonable to arrive at two conclusions. First, that the form in Luke presents, *as a whole*, the more primitive and original instruction of the Lord, and that that given in Matthew presents the Lord's words as fully developed, partly perhaps by himself directly, partly by his indirect guidance of Christian usage. St. Matthew's Gospel would thus at once both show the effect and be the cause of the preference for the longer form in liturgical use. Secondly, and more exactly, that both the evangelists record the prayer after it had passed through some development in different parts of the Church, St. Matthew giving it a generally later stage, but preserving one or two clauses in an earlier and better form.

Ver. 9.—**After this manner therefore.** *Therefore*; in contrast to the heathen practice, and in the full confidence which you have in your almighty Father's intuitive knowledge of your needs. *After this manner* (*οὕτως*). Not "in these words;" but he will most closely imitate the manner who most often reminds himself of it by using the words. **Pray ye.** "Ye" emphatic—ye my disciples; ye the children of such a Father. **Our Father.** In English we just lack the power to keep, with a plural possessive pronoun (contrast "father mine"), the order of Christ's words (*Πάτερ ἡμῶν*) which other languages possess (*Pater noster*; *Vater unser*). Christ places in the very forefront the primary importance of the recognition of spiritual relationship to God. There is no direct thought here of God as the All-Father in the modern and often deistic sense. Yet it is affirmed elsewhere in Scripture (Acts xvii.

28; cf. Luke xv. 21), and spiritual relationship is perhaps only possible because of the natural relationship (cf. ch. v. 16, note). *Our.* Though the prayer is here given with special reference to praying alone (ver. 6), the believer is to be reminded at once that he is joined by spiritual relationship to many others who have the same needs, etc., as himself. **Which art in heaven** (*ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς*). Added in this fuller form of the prayer (*vide supra*), on the one hand to definitely exclude the application of the words however mediately to any human teacher (cf. ch. xxiii. 9), and on the other to remind those who pray of the awful majesty of him whom they address. "They are a *Sursum corda;* they remind us that now we have lifted up our hearts from earth and things earthly to another and a higher world" (Trench, 'Sermon on the Mount'). **Hallowed be thy name.** The first of the three prayers for the furtherance of God's cause. Their parallelism is seen much more clearly in the Greek than in the English order of the words. *Thy name.* We look on a name almost as an accidental appendage by which a person is designated, but in its true idea it is the designation of a person which exactly answers to his nature and qualities. Hence the full Name of God is properly that description of him which embraces all that he really is. As, however, the term "name" implies that it is expressed, it must, when it is used of God, be limited to that portion of his nature and qualities which can be expressed in human terms, because it has been already made known to us. The "name" of God, here and elsewhere in the Bible, therefore, does not mean God in his essence, but rather that manifestation of himself which he has been pleased to give, whether partial and preparatory as under the old covenant (cf. Gen. iv. 26 [xvi. 13]; xxxii. 29; Exod. vi. 3; xxxiv. 5), or final as under the new (cf. John xvii. 6); or again (to take another division found in Exell's 'Biblical Illustrator,' *in loo.*) the manifestation of himself through nature, through inspired words, through the Incarnation. Compared with the Glory (*δόξα*) "the Name expresses the revelation as it is apprehended and used by man. Man is called by the Name, and employs it. The Glory expresses rather the manifestation of the Divine as Divine, as a partial disclosure of the Divine Majesty not directly intelligible by man (comp. Ex. xxxiii. 18, ff.)" (Bishop Westcott, 'Add. Note' on 3 John 7). *Hallowed be.* *Ἁγιασθήτω* cannot here, as sometimes (Rev. xxii. 11; cf. John xvii. 17; 1 Thess. v. 23), mean "be made holy," for this God's manifestation of himself already is; but "be counted holy," *i.e.* in human judgment. The prayer is that God's manifestation of himself may be acknowledged and revered as the one supreme standard of truth and the one means of knowing God and approaching him; cf. 1 Pet. iii. 15, where "*ἁγιάζω* obviously means 'set apart, enshrined as the object of supreme, absolute reverence, as free from all defilement and possessed of all excellence'" (Johnstone, *in loo.*); cf. also Isa. xxix. 23. The same thought appears to have been the basis of the early Western alternative petition (Marcion's or Tertullian's, *vide* Westcott and Hort, 'App.,' Luke xi. 2) for the gift of the Holy Spirit; *i.e.* the address to the Father was followed by a prayer for purification by the Holy Spirit preparatory to the prayer, "Thy kingdom come." A man must accept God's manifestation of himself before he can take part in the spread of the kingdom. Gregory of Nyssa (*vide* Westcott and Hort, *loc. cit.*, and Resch, 'Agrapha,' p. 398) says distinctly, "Let thy Holy Spirit come upon us and purify us;" but he *substitutes* this prayer for the words, "Thy kingdom come." (For the support afforded by this to the theory that the Lord's Prayer circulated in a varying form, cf. Chase, *loc. cit.*) Gregory's petition, as affecting only humanity, is less comprehensive than that found in our Gospels.

Ver. 10.—**Thy kingdom come.** Let there come the full establishment of thy realm. The prayer passes from the personal acceptance in the heart of God's revelation of himself to the consequent result. The clause has a much wider meaning than the development and spread of the Church, or even the personal return of Christ at the second advent. It speaks of that which shall be the issue of both this and that, the final and perfect establishment of God's realm, in which all men will do him willing service, and all habits and customs, individual and social, will be such as he approves of (*vide* Introduction, p. xxv.). Dr. C. Taylor ('Sayings,' etc., Exc. v.) points out that the coming of the kingdom and the sanctifying of the Name are brought together in Zech. xiv. 9; Weiss, 'Life,' ii. 349, with many others, says that our Lord probably adapted the frequent Jewish prayer for the coming of the kingdom of Messiah. **Thy will be done.** Let thy will come into complete existence (*γενηθήτω*; cf. "Let there be light," Gen. i. 3, LXX.). The thought is not merely God's will realized in this or that action, whether performed or endured by us (cf. ch. xxvi. 42; Acts xxi. 14), but God's will as a whole coming into full being. God's will is always in ideal until it is accomplished in act. The connexion of the clause with what has gone before is therefore this—the acceptance of God's manifestation of himself leads to the establishment of his realm, and this to the realization of his will, which until then is only ideal (cf. ch. v. 18, note, end).

If this be all the meaning of the words, they express, in fact, only the ultimate result of the consummation prayed for in the preceding clause (hence this portion of the prayer was in itself complete without our present words; cf. Luke xi. 2); but since it is so far a distinct thought that it would not immediately suggest itself, it has a worthy place in the fuller form of the prayer. Possibly, however, more may be intended. The full establishment of the kingdom may be only a part of his loving will, which may, for all we know, have countless other things in view. The highest prayer that we can make in the furtherance of God's cause is that his gracious purpose, his will (whatever it may include) may be fully brought about. **In earth, as it is in heaven**; *as in heaven, so on earth* (Revised Version). Probably the words are to be joined to only the immediately preceding clause. In heaven God's will is already realized; not yet on earth, where sin has entered.

Ver. 11.—**Give us this day our daily bread** (*τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δὸς ἡμῖν σήμερον*). Here begin the petitions for our personal needs. The first is for earthly food, the means of maintaining our earthly life. For "in order to serve God it is first of all necessary that we live" (Godet, on Luke). *Give us.* The order in the Greek emphasizes, not God's grace in giving, but the thing asked for. *This day.* Parallel passage: Luke xi. 3, "day by day (*τὸ καθ' ἡμέραν*)." The thought suggested there, of continuance in the supply, is seen also in the verb (*δίδου*). *Daily* (*ἐπιούσιον*); and so Luke (compare especially the classical appendix in Bishop Lightfoot's 'Revision,' etc., pp. 195, etc., and Chase, *loc. cit.*). It will be sufficient to do little more than indicate the chief lines of proposed derivations and interpretations of this *ἅπαξ λεγόμενον*. (1) *Ἐπὶ-οὐσία* (*a*) physical, "for subsistence," "sufficient or necessary to sustain us;" (*b*) spiritual, "for our essential being" (cf. Jerome's rendering with a literalism that recalls the rabbis, *super-substantialem*. (2) *Ἐπὶ-εἰμί* "to be," "bread which is ready at hand or suffices" (similarly Delitzsch, in Thayer, *s.v.*). The chief and fatal objection to both (1) and (2) is that the form would be *ἐπούσιος* (cf. especially Lightfoot, *loc. cit.*, p. 201). (3) *Ἐπι-εἶμι*, "to come;" (*a*) with direct reference to "bread"—our "successive," "continual," "ever-coming" bread (so the Old Syriac, and partly the Egyptian versions), that which comes as each supply is required; the prayer then meaning, "Our bread as it is needed give us to-day" (so apparently Dr. Taylor, 'Sayings,' etc., p. 140); (*b*) derived mediately from *ἐπιοῦσα sc. ἡμέρα* (cf. Acts xvi. 11; xx. 15; xxi. 18), "bread for the coming day," *i.e.* the same day, if the prayer be said in the morning; the next day if it be said in the evening (so Bishop Lightfoot). Between (3) (*a*) and (3) (*b*) it is very difficult to decide. Against (*a*) is the fact that it is hard to say why the common form *ἐπόντα* would not have served; against (*b*), while the use of the word is perfectly consistent with casting all care upon God for to-morrow (ch. vi. 34), there still remains the fact that there is some tautology in saying, "Our bread for the coming day give us to-day," or even the formula in the parallel passage in Luke, "Our bread for the coming day give us day by day." On the whole, perhaps (3) (*a*) presents the least difficulties. *Bread.* It is very doubtful if to use this petition of spiritual food is anything more than a legitimate application (made, indeed, as early as the 'Didache,' § x.) of words which in themselves refer only to material food (see further Chase, *loc. cit.*).

Ver. 12.—**And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.** *Forgive;* a change in God's relation to us and our sins. No plea is urged, for the atonement had not yet been made. *Our debts* (*τὰ ὀφειλήματα ἡμῶν*) parallel passage in Luke, *τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν*). It is probable that Matthew took one meaning, perhaps the more primary, and Luke another, perhaps the more secondary (cf. Gesenius, 'Thes.,' *s.v.* חוב, and Professor Marshall, *Expositor*, IV. iii. 281), of the original Aramaic word (חובא); but, as "debtors" comes in the next clause, it seems reasonable to suppose that Matthew represents the sense in which our Lord intended the word to be understood. Luke may have avoided it as too strongly Hebraic a metaphor, even though he does use *ὀφειλέται* of men in relation to God (xiii. 4). The 'Didache,' viii., gives the singular, *ὀφειλήν* (cf. *infra*, ch. xviii. 32), which Dr. Taylor ('Lectures,' p. 62) thinks is preferable. The singular, especially with "debtors" following, would very naturally be corrupted to the plural. Sins are termed "debts," as not rendering to God his due (ch. xxii. 21; cf. xxv. 27). *As we;* Revised Version, *as we also* (*ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς*). In the same way as we have—a comparison of fact, not of proportion (cf. ch. viii. 13; xviii. 33). (For the thought, cf. Ecclus. xxviii. 2.) Luke's "for we ourselves also" (*καὶ γὰρ αὐτοί*) lays more stress on our forgiving others being a *reason* for God forgiving us. *Forgive;* Revised Version, *have forgiven*, in the past (aorist). Luke's present is of the habit. *Our debtors.* Luke individualizes (*παντὶ ὀφείλοντι ἡμῖν*).

Ver. 13.—**And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.** Luke omits the second half. *And lead us not* (*καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς*); *and bring us not* (Revised Version), for *εἰσφέρω* thinks rather of the issue (cf. Luke v. 18, 19; xii. 11) than of the personal guidance. This first clause is a

prayer against being brought into the fulness and awfulness of temptation (cf. ch. xxvi. 41; parallel passages: Mark xiv. 38; Luke xxii. 46). As such it cannot, indeed, always be granted, since in exceptional cases this may be part of the permission given to the prince of this world. So it was in our Lord's case (cf. ch. xxvi. 41, and context). The words are a cry issuing from a deep sense of our personal weakness against the powers of evil. *Into temptation;* i.e. spiritual. External trials, *e.g.* persecution, may be included, but only in so far as they are the occasion of real temptation to the soul. *But.* Do not bring us into the full force of temptation, but, instead, rescue us now and at any other time from the attack of the evil one (*vide infra*). Thus this clause is more than a merely positive form of the preceding. It is a prayer against even the slightest attacks of the enemy *when they are made. Deliver us* (ῥῦσαι ἡμᾶς). The thought is not merely preserve (σώζειν, τηρεῖν) or even guard (φρουρεῖν, φυλάσσειν) from possible or impending danger, but "rescue" from it when it confronts us. *From.* If we may press the contrast to Col. i. 13 (ἐρύσατο . . . ἐκ), ἀπὸ suggests that the child of God is no longer actually in the power (1 John v. 19) of the evil one, but has been already delivered thence. The peril is, as it were, something outside him (compare, however, Chase, *loc. cit.*). *Evil.* So also the Revised Version margin; but *the evil one* (Revised Version). In itself τοῦ πονηροῦ might, of course, be either neuter or masculine, but in view of (*a*) ch. xiii. 19, (*b*) the many passages in the New Testament where the expression is either certainly or probably masculine; *e.g.* 1 John ii. 13, 14; v. 18, 19; John xvii. 15; 2 Thess. iii. 3; (*c*) the many allusions to the masculine reference of this petition shown by Bishop Lightfoot ('Revision,' etc., edit. 1891) and Mr. Chase (*loc. cit.*) to exist in early Christian literature—there seems little doubt that the Revised Version is right. Chase (*loc. cit.*) shows that the primary notion of both πονηρός, and its Hebrew equivalent רַע, is not malignity (Trench), but worthlessness, essential badness. **For thine is the kingdom,** etc. Omitted in the Revised Version on overwhelming authority (*e.g.* ℵ, B, D, Z, Old Latin, Memphitic, "all Greek commentators on the Lord's Prayer except Chrysostom and his followers," Westcott and Hort, 'App., *q.v.*). In the 'Didachè,' §§ viii., ix., x., however, we find our doxology with very little other variation than the omission of "the kingdom," this itself being explained in the two latter sections by the immediately preceding mention of the kingdom. Similar omissions of one or more of the three terms, "kingdom," "power," "glory," are found in the Old Syriac, an "African" text of the Old Latin, and the Thebaic. "It was probably derived ultimately from 1 Chron. xxix. 11 (Heb.), but, it may be, through the medium of some contemporary Jewish usage: the people's response to prayers in the temple is said to have been 'Blessed be the name of the glory of his kingdom for ever and ever'" (Westcott and Hort, *loc. cit.*). Indeed, it was so usual for doxologies of one kind or another to be added by the Jews to prayers, that, though we cannot for one moment accept the words here as genuine, we must consider it very doubtful if the Lord's Prayer was ever used in Jewish circles without a doxology, or that our Lord, as Man, ever intended it to be so used (cf. further, Taylor, 'Lectures,' p. 64). At all events, the feeling of the Christian Church in using the doxology is fully justified by its contents; for it places us more emphatically than ever in a right relation to God. By our praise to him it induces in us the remembrance that it is to God's *kingdom* that we belong, having him for King and Source of law; that it is by God's *power* that we live on earth and stand freed from Satan's grasp; that it is for the furtherance of God's *glory* that all has been done for us, all wrought in us, all these petitions are now made and all our hopes and aims are directed. Hereafter, as Bengel says, the whole prayer will be doxology: "Hallowed be the Name of our God. His kingdom has come; his will is done. He has forgiven us our sins. He has brought our temptation to an end; He has delivered us from the evil one. His is the kingdom and the power and the glory for ever. Amen."

Vers. 14, 15.—**For if ye forgive men their trespasses,** etc. Matthew only. To insert the reason for having said, in the Lord's Prayer, "as we forgive our debtors," emphasizes the necessity of such forgiveness (cf. also ch. xviii. 21, *sqq.*; Mark xi. 25; Ecclus. xxviii. 2—4). *Trespasses;* παραπτώματα, not ὀφειλήματα (ver. 12). Our Lord uses a word which would forbid any limitation to pecuniary matters. *Their trespasses.* Omitted by Tischendorf, and bracketed by Westcott and Hort (cf. their 'Introd.,' p. 176). The omission more sharply contrasts "men" and "your Father."

Vers. 16—18.—Matthew only.

Ver. 16.—*Fasting.* The third in the series of recognized religious duties (ver. 1, note). (On the prominence given to fasting, see 'Psalms of Solomon,' iii. 9, with Ryle's and James's note, and Schürer, II. ii. 118; cf. ch. ix. 14.) Observe (1) Christ does not abolish it, but regulates it; (2) yet fasting is mentioned much less often in the true text of the New Testament than in that which,

developed contemporaneously with ecclesiasticism, became the Received Text. **Be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance.** The Revised Version, by inserting a comma between "not" and "as," shows that the true emphasis of the warning lies, not on resemblance to the hypocrites themselves, but on being of a sad countenance, as in fact also the hypocrites were. *The hypocrites* (ver. 2, note; cf. also 'Didache,' § viii., "But let not your fasts be with the hypocrites," where, however, the thought is rather of hypocrites as representing the Pharisaic, the typically Jewish party). The early Jewish Christians are bidden in the 'Didache' to avoid the fasting-days chosen by the Jews. *Be not.* Our Lord does not forbid even this sad countenance if it be, so to speak, natural; but do not, because you fast, therefore purposely become so (*μὴ γίνεσθε*), *i.e.* in sign of your supposed sorrow for sin (cf. Ecclus. xix. 26). *Of a sad countenance* (*σκυθρωποί*); gloomy, especially in knitting the brows. In Dan. i. 10 (Theodotion) used of merely physically bad looks (cf. 'Test. XII. Patr.,' § 4, of the look of a man whose liver is out of order). In the New Testament elsewhere only Luke xxiv. 17, "And they stood still, looking sad," Revised Version (cf. Gen. xl. 7; Ecclus. xxv. 23). **For they disfigure.** The play on the words (*ἀφανίζουσιν . . . ὅπως φανῶσιν*, hardly to be reproduced in English, "They *disfigure* . . . that they may *figure* before men as fasting") points to the Gospel having been originally composed in Greek (see Introduction, p. xiii.). It is curious that *ἀφανίζω* comes elsewhere in Matthew only in vers. 19, 20, while in the whole of the New Testament it only comes twice besides: Acts xiii. 41 (from the LXX.) and Jas. iv. 14 (*ἀφανισμός*, Heb. viii. 13). As ver. 19 is peculiar to Matthew, and ver. 20 is a corollary to it though in part found also in Luke xii. 33, the whole passage vers. 16—20 is probably either due to the author of the First Gospel or else derived by him from some one source. In this connexion it may be noticed that *κρυφαῖος* comes in the New Testament only in ver. 18 (twice). Physical disfigurement, common in many nations as a sign of grief, such as tearing or marking the flesh, is not to be thought of, since this was forbidden (Lev. xix. 28; Deut. xiv. 1). Ἀφανίζειν, too, has no such connotation, but rather hiding out of sight, hence causing to vanish, destroy (ver. 19); here, in the sense of giving a strange, unpleasant appearance, *e.g.* by ashes, or by not washing, or even by covering part of the face or the head (cf. Ezek. xxiv. 17; 2 Sam. xv. 30; Esth. vi. 12). **That they may appear unto men to fast;** Revised Version, *that they may be seen*, etc.; *i.e.* not the mere appearance, as though there were appearance only, but the being seen as fasting—conspicuousness, not mere semblance. Hence *νηστεύοντες* is expressed (contrast ver. 5), since while in ver. 5 not the praying but the piety that induced it is to be made apparent, here it is the very fact itself of fasting, which, except for these external signs, might escape human notice. **They have** (ver. 2, note).

Ver. 17.—**But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face.** If both these were, among the Jews, done daily, Christ's command would mean—make no external sign of fasting; dress and appear as usual. But as anointing, at least, cannot be proved to have been a daily habit (though expressly forbidden during the stricter kinds of fasts, see Schürer, II. ii. 212), especially with the mixed classes whom our Lord was addressing, and as it was with the ancients rather a symbol of special joy, it is safer to take it in this sense here. Thus our Lord will mean—so far from appearing sad, let your appearance be that of special joy and gladness. "By the symbols of joy and gladness he bade us be joyful and glad when we fast" (Photius, in Suicer, i. 186).

Ver. 18.—**Which is in secret** (*τῷ ἐν τῷ κρυφαίῳ*); ver. 6, note. **Shall reward thee openly** (ver. 4, note).

Ver. 19—ch. vii. 12.—(3) *General principles regarding the relation of the disciples to wealth and to men.*

Vers. 19—34.—(1) The principle of regarding God alone in our religious actions is also to be maintained in the relation that we hold to *wealth* in the broadest sense. Vers. 19—21: seek true wealth, because earthly wealth, though gathered, may be rendered useless by earth's chances. Vers. 22, 23: further, because it is the single eye that receives the light. Ver. 24: in fact divided service is impossible. Vers. 25—34: place God first, and he will provide.

Vers. 19—21.—Ver. 19 comes here only, but vers. 20, 21 have much in common with Luke xii. 33, 34. They are there in the middle of a long discourse (vers. 22—53), which immediately follows the parable of the rich fool, itself spoken on the occasion when a man wished his brother to divide the inheritance with him. There seems no reason to believe that that discourse is at all necessarily in historical position, and that our verses belong originally to it and to its occasion rather than to the present place in Matthew.

Ver. 19.—**Lay not up . . . but lay up**

(ver. 20). **Lay up treasure** indeed, but in the right place (cf. a still more striking case in John vi. 27); observe that in both cases it is "for yourselves." Lightfoot ('Hor. Hebr.,' on ver. 1) quotes an interesting Haggada from Talm. Jer., 'Peah,' 15*b* (equivalent to Talm. Bab., 'Baba Bathra,' 11*a*), in which "Monobazes, the king," when blamed for giving so much to the poor, defends himself at length: "My fathers laid up their wealth on earth; I lay up mine in heaven," etc. But our Lord here does not mean to limit his reference to almsgiving. He thinks of all that has been mentioned since ch. v. 3 (cf. Weiss) as affording means of heavenly wealth. **Upon earth**; *upon the earth* (Revised Version). Our Lord here wishes to emphasize the locality as such (ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς); in ver. 20 rather the nature and quality of the locality (ἐν οὐρανῷ). **Where moth** (cf. Jas. v. 2, 3; Isa. li. 8, especially LXX.). Either directly or by its larvæ, whether the treasure be clothes or food. **Or rust.** Any power that eats, or corrodes, or wastes (βρῶσις). **Doth corrupt**; Revised Version, *doth consume.* "Corrupt" "has now a moral significance, which does not in any degree appertain to the Greek" (Humphry). Ἀφανίζει (ver. 16, note) is here used of the complete change in the appearance or even of the complete destruction caused by these slow but sure enemies of earthly wealth. **And where thieves.** Before, physical or non-responsible agents; here, human beings. **Break through** (διορύσσουσιν); "dig through" (cf. ch. xxiv. 43; Luke xii. 39; cf. Job xxiv. 16, LXX.). Where the houses are so frequently made of mud or sun-burnt bricks, this would be comparatively easy.

Ver. 20.—**But lay up** (ver. 19, note).

Ver. 21.—**For where.** A further reason for laying up treasures in heaven: wherever they are they have a positive effect on the soul. **Your treasure**; *thy* (Revised Version). The singular was altered by the copyists so as to correspond with the plural found in the earlier part of the utterance and in the undisputed text of Luke. But our Lord loves to speak to each soul individually. **Your heart** (ch. v. 8, note).

Vers. 22, 23.—**The light of the body is the eye,** etc. Parallel passage: Luke xi. 34—36, where it immediately follows the illustration of putting a lamp under the bushel (ch. v. 15). The excessive difficulty of Luke's ver. 36 points to Luke having preserved on the whole the more original form of the saying; but it seems quite impossible to say which is its more original position. It suits the context quite as well in Matthew as in Luke, while the mere verbal similarity of λύχνος may have caused it to be placed in Luke after his ver. 33 (cf. ver. 21, *infra*, note). *The light of the body; the lamp* (Revised Version); ὁ λύχνος (ch. v. 15, note). The thought of the power which treasure has of attracting the heart forms the transition to the need of a pure and steady "eye" heavenwards. The bodily eye is taken as the symbol of the outlooking power of the soul, not the soul—the inner man—itself, but its outlooking power. As the body is illuminated by the eye, *i.e.* as by the eye the bodily constitution learns its environment, and naturally, almost automatically, tends to accommodate itself to it, so is it with the gaze of the soul. If this be upon the things of this world, the soul perceives, and tends to accommodate itself to, the things of this world; if upon things in heaven, it perceives, and tends to accommodate itself to, the things in heaven. The Authorized Version "light" is, therefore, imperfect, for the gaze of the soul is not "light" (φῶς), but a "lamp" (λύχνος). As the bodily eye is not itself light, but only an instrument for receiving and imparting light, so in the mere gaze of the soul there is no inherent light, but it is the means of receiving and imparting light to the soul. **If therefore thine eye be single.** The word "single" (ἁπλοῦς) presents some difficulty. (1) If it meant "undivided," it would doubtless continue the illustration of the lamp, with an undivided as contrasted with a divided wick, but it has no such meaning. (2) It states the opposite, not to divisions, but to folds (*vide* Trench, 'Syn.,' § lvi.); it is "single" as opposed to "plicate," and therefore can hardly contain any direct reference to the lamp. Its meaning rather appears to be purely metaphorical, and the word seems to be applied directly to the functions of the eye in relation to the body. If the eye be "single" and (to use another but related metaphor) straightforward in its working, then the body receives through it the light that it ought to receive. So is it with the gaze of the soul in its effect on the inner man. (3) Perhaps, however, ἁπλοῦς is here used in the sense of non-compound (cf. Plato, 'Rep.,' 547. E); in this case free from any foreign substance to bar the light from passing through it (cf. ch. vii. 3, and Basil, 'De Spiritu Sancto,' ix. § 23, *sqq.*). **Thy whole body shall be full of light** (φωτεινὸν ἔσται). Well-lighted in itself, and bright in appearance to others (cf. νεφέλη φωτινή, ch. xvii. 5). The word chosen seems to indicate, not merely that the body is, through the eye, lighted, but also that it itself becomes in measure, like the eye, full of light for others. All one's powers become illumined with the Divine light, and the illumination shines through. **But if thine eye be evil,** etc. *Evil* (πονηρός); ver. 13, note. Vitiated, worthless. As an eye that does not fulfil its natural function, so is that gaze

of the soul which is directed only earthward. To limit this, with Lightfoot ('Hor. Hebr.'), to covetousness (cf. also Hatch, 'Essays,' p. 81), is far too partial an interpretation. Such an earthward and selfish gaze of the soul may often issue in selfishness as regards money (cf. ch. xx. 15), but the full meaning of the phrase includes very much more. **Thy whole body shall be full of darkness.** What the heart craves to see it sees; but in this case, not light makes its entrance, but darkness, which, as in the case of the light, permeates the frame. **If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness;** rather, *is darkness;* the change here to the indicative (εἰ . . . ἐστίν) indicating that the last preceding clause is assumed as fact. *The light that is in thee.* Our Lord does not say, "the light that comes through the eye," for he means more than this, viz. that the very information, so to speak, brought first by the outlook of the soul, comes into us and remains in us. He assumes that this, which ought to be light, is darkness. **How great is that darkness!** *i.e. the darkness* (Revised Version) just spoken of, which comes through the eye. So, probably, Luke xi. 35. If the gaze which should bring light brings only darkness, how terrible in its nature and effects must that darkness be! It is, however, possible to understand our Lord to refer in this verse to the natural darkness of the soul before it looks out of itself. In this case the thought is—you need a fixed gaze heavenwards; if your gaze is not heavenwards, it brings darkness instead of light; how black, then, must be the natural darkness! (cf. especially Trench, 'Sermon on the Mount'). It will be noticed that in these verses darkness, though scientifically only negative—the absence of light—is here represented as positive, because it is the symbol of sin and evil.

Ver. 24.—**No man can serve two masters,** etc. In Luke xvi. 13 the saying is found almost word for word immediately after the parable of the unjust steward. As the word "mammon" comes twice in that parable, but nowhere else in the New Testament, it is probable that its occurrence caused the insertion of this saying in that place (cf. ver. 22, note). *No man can serve two masters.* The thought is still of earnestness of purpose and singleness of heart. Our Lord here speaks of the impossibility of such divided service as he has been warning his disciples against attempting. No man *can* give due service to two masters. For, apart from the extent of the claim of each master—total bond-service (δουλεύειν)—thorough service of two masters is incompatible with the effects produced upon the servant himself. The result of service is to incline him towards the one master and against the other. Notice how our Lord continues his plan of setting forth the moral effect of modes of thought or action upon the agents themselves (cf. Rom. vi. 16). **For either he will hate the one** (τὸν ἕνα), **and love the other.** Because human nature is such that it must attach itself to one of two principles. "Cor hominis neque ita vacuum esse potest, ut non serviat *aut* Deo *aut* creaturæ: neque simul duobus servire" (Bengel). **Or else he will hold to the one** (ἢ ἑνὸς ἀνθέξεται). The Revised Version omits "the." The stress here is on "one—not both." *Hold to;* in steadfast application (cf. Ellicott, on Titus i. 9). **Ye cannot serve God and mammon;** "Ye moun not serve god and richesse" (Wickliffe). A repetition of the statement of the impossibility of serving two masters, but more than a repetition, for it is enforced by defining who the masters are. *Mammon.* The change in the Revised Version from a capital to a small *m* has probably been made to prevent "mammon" being understood as the proper name of some god. The derivation of the word (μαμωνᾶς, ממונא) is very doubtful. The most probable suggestion is that it is formed from the stem of מנה, and is equivalent to that which is apportioned or counted (cf. Levy, 'Neuheb. Worterb.,' *s.v.*; Edersheim, 'Life,' ii. p. 269). Hence its well-known meaning of property, wealth, especially money. Observe that our Lord does not here contrast God and Satan; he is emphasizing the thought which he has been adducing since ver. 19, viz. the relation that his disciples must hold to things of earth, which are summed up by him under the term "mammon" as with us under the term "wealth." Observe also that it is not the possession of wealth that he condemns, but the serving it, making it an object of thought and pursuit. Gathering it and using it in the service of and according to the will of God is not serving mammon (cf. Weiss, 'Matthäus-Ev.').

Vers. 25—34.—These verses, with the exception of the last, which should perhaps hardly be included, are very similar to the parallel passage, Luke xii. 22—32. It seems probable that in the differences Luke preserves the more original form (cf. the notes on the separate verses, *infra*). What their original position was is another question. Their immediate sequence in Luke to the parable of the rich fool is no doubt perfectly natural, and is accepted by most commentators as original; but the connexion with the context here is so close that, especially with the probabilities of the case in vers. 22, 23, and ver. 24, St. Matthew

may, after all, have recorded them in their original place.

Our Lord says in these verses, "Dare to follow out this warning that I have given you about double service into your daily life. Do not give way to anxiety about the things of life, but look up to God in steady gaze of faith; he will provide." Or, more in detail—If God has given you life, shall he not add the food and the clothing (ver. 25)? Anxiety about the support of your life is needless (witness the birds, ver. 26) and powerless (witness the limit of a man's life, ver. 27); while as for clothing, it is equally needless (witness the flowers, ver. 28) and comparatively powerless (witness Solomon's own case, ver. 29). Remember your relation to God (ver. 30). Therefore do not give way to the least anxiety about these things (ver. 31), because this is to fall to the level of the Gentiles, and also because God, whose children you are, knows your needs (ver. 32). But make his cause, without and within, your great object, and all your needs shall be supplied (ver. 33). Therefore be not at all anxious, bear the burden of each day only as each day comes round (ver. 34).

Ver. 25.—**Therefore** (διὰ τοῦτο). Because of this fact last mentioned, the impossibility of dividing your service. Cease to be anxious about things of this life, for anxiety about these is a mark of your attempting this impossibility. **I say unto you.** Though the absence of the personal pronoun (unlike ch. v. 22, etc.) shows that he is not here contrasting himself with them or with others, yet he still emphasizes his authority. **Take no thought**; Revised Version, *be not anxious* (μὴ μεριμνᾶτε). The translation of the Authorized Version, which was quite correct in its day (cf. also 1 Sam. ix. 5), is now archaic, and therefore often misunderstood. For the popular derivation of μεριμνάω ("division," "distraction"), cf. 1 Cor. vii. 33, "But he that is married is anxious for (μεριμνᾷ) the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and is divided (μεμέρισται)." Observe that forethought in earthly matters was practised by our Lord himself (John xii. 6). **For your life** (τῇ ψυχῇ ὑμῶν). In the Gospels ψυχή is the immaterial part of man, his personality as we should say, which survives death (ch. x. 28), and is the chief object of a man's care (ch. x. 39, where see note). **What ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink.** Although the second clause is omitted by ℵ and a few chiefly "Western" authorities, it is probably genuine, especially as there is no trace of it in Luke (but cf. Westcott and Hort, 'Introd.,' p. 176). **Is not the life more than meat?** *i.e.* you possess the greater, shall there not be given to you the less? Humphry compares ch. xxiii. 17. *Meat;* Revised Version, *the food* (τῆς τροφῆς); *i.e.* the Revised Version (1) changes "meat" to its modern equivalent, (2) defines with the Greek the food as that which is necessary for the body. Similarly before "raiment."

Ver. 26.—Parallel passage: Luke xii. 24. The less general term, "ravens" (even though these are "of all the birds of Jerusalem decidedly the most characteristic and conspicuous," Tristram, 'Land of Israel,' p. 187), and the change of construction apparent in "which have no store-chamber nor barn," point to St. Luke having preserved the more original form of the saying. So also does the presence in Matthew of the Matthean phrase "heavenly." On the other hand, Matthew's "consider" (ver. 28, *vide* next note) is perhaps more original. **Behold** (ἐμβλέψατε). Look on, use your natural eyes. In ver. 28 "consider" (καταμάθετε), learn thoroughly. Our Lord, in the present verse, bids us use the powers we possess; in ver. 28 he bids us learn the lessons that we can find round us. Luke has in both places the vaguer term κατανοήσατε, "fix your mind on." **The fowls of the air**; Revised Version, *the birds of the heaven* (so ch. viii. 20; xiii. 32); a Hebraism. For the thought, cf. Job xxxviii. 41; Ps. cxlvii. 9; cf. also Mishna, 'Kidd.,' iv. 14, "Rabbi Simeon ben Eliezer used to say, Hast thou ever seen beast or bird that had a trade? Yet are they fed without anxiety." **For**; *that* (Revised Version); what you will see if you will look. **They sow not, etc.** They carry out as regards their food none of those operations which imply forethought in the past or for the future. **Yet**; *and* (Revised Version). Also what you will see. **Your heavenly Father** (ch. v. 16, note). **Are ye not much better than they?** *of much more value* (Revised Version). The thought is of value in God's eyes (cf. ch. x. 31; xii. 12), as men and as his children, not of any superiority in moral attainment.

Ver. 27.—Luke xii. 25 almost verbally. While ver. 26 insisted on the needlessness of anxiety, since, though birds show it not, they are provided for, ver. 27 insists on its uselessness, since after all it can effect so little. You wish to lengthen your life by it if only to a trifling extent; but you cannot do so. **Which of you by taking thought** (ver. 25, note) **can add one cubit?** "Hic videtur similitudo petita esse a stadio, quod erat trecentorum cubitorum: ἡλικία est cursus vitæ" (Wetstein). **Unto his stature.**

So even the Revised Version; but the Revised Version margin "age," and so most modern commentators (cf. the rendering preferred by the American Committee, "the measure of his life"). "Age" (1) is so much nearer the immediate subject, preservation of life, (2) is so much more frequent an object of anxious care, (3) gives so much more suitable a meaning to "cubit," a most trifling addition (Luke xii. 26), that it is, without any doubt, the true meaning of ἡλικία (cf. John ix. 21—23; Heb. xi. 11; cf. Ps. xxxix. 5).

Ver. 28.—Parallel passage: Luke xii. 26, 27. Luke's is longer and seemingly more original. But in the absence of external evidence, it must always be a matter of opinion whether Matthew has compressed the longer form of the words, or *vice versâ*. **And why take ye thought for raiment?** In vers. 25—27 our Lord had spoken of food; in vers. 28—30 he speaks of dress. He insists on the needlessness (ver. 28) and on the comparative uselessness (ver. 29) of anxiety about it, since even the king who had the greatest opportunities could not vie in clothing with a single lily. Flowers have this glorious clothing (ver. 30), though they are so perishable: much more shall you be clothed. **Consider** (ver. 26, note). **The lilies** (τὰ κρίνα). Though there are many kinds of lilies in Palestine, and some of brilliant colouring (particularly the purple and white Hûleh lily found round Nazareth), yet none of them grows in such abundance as to give the tone to the colouring of the flowers generally. It seems, therefore, probable that the word is employed loosely. So, perhaps, in the LXX. of Exod. xxv. 31, 33, 34, and other passages, where it represents the "flowers" (פְּרָחִים) on the candlestick. It appears, too, that שׁוֹשַׁנָּה ("lily," Authorized Version in Canticles) is also used by the Arabs of any bright flower. If a single species is to be thought of, Canon Tristram would prefer the *Anemone coronaria* of our gardens, which is "the most gorgeously painted, the most conspicuous in spring, and the most universally spread of all the floral treasures of the Holy Land" ('Natural History of the Bible,' p. 464, edit. 1877). **Of the field.** Matthew only in this phrase (but cf. ver. 30, note). Its insertion emphasizes the spontaneity of origin, the absence of cultivation, the "waste" as not grown for the comfort or pleasure of man. **How they grow.** Professor Drummond's beautiful remarks upon this verse ('Natural Law,' etc.) do not belong to exegesis, but to homily, for the stress of our Lord's words lies on "grow," not on "how;" he is thinking of the fact, not the manner of their growth. **They toil not;** to produce the raw material. **Neither do they spin;** to manufacture it when produced. "Illud virorum est, qui agrum colunt; hoc mulierum domisedarum" (Wetstein).

Ver. 29.—Luke xii. 27*b* almost verbally. **Even Solomon . . . was not.** The Greek lays still more stress: "not even Solomon." **Arrayed.** The idea of splendour, which in modern usage is often attached to "array," is wanting in περιεβάλετο. The simple rendering in Wickliffe, "was covered" (Vulgate, *coopertus est*), is less misleading. And so in ver. 31. Perhaps (*vide* Carr) the middle voice has its full reflexive meaning: Solomon with all his efforts failed. **Like one of these.** Even one, much less like all taken together. "*Horum*, demonstrativum" (Bengel).

Ver. 30.—Luke xii. 28 with slight differences. Luke's rather harder phraseology is in favour of it being the more original form. **Wherefore;** *but* (Revised Version). The Authorized Version is too strong for the simple δέ. **If God so clothe.** The insertion by the Revised Version of "doth" brings out the thought of the indicative mood and of the ever-presence of the action. Observe with the processes and the agencies in the development of these colours our Lord's advice has nothing to do; origin, development, and result are all Divine. **The grass** (τὸν χόρτον). Possibly literally the grass among which the lilies grow (Weiss, 'Matthäus-Ev.'), but probably the herbage (Gen. i. 11; cf. also probably Isa. xl. 6, 7; 1 Pet. i. 24), including that of which special mention has been made—the lilies. **Of the field** (ver. 28, note). Luke's ἐν ἀγρῷ lays even more stress on the place in which it receives this glory. **Which to-day is;** rather, *though to-day it is* (σήμερον ὄντα). **And to-morrow is cast;** before our very eyes (βαλλόμενον). **Into the oven.** Not the fixed but the portable oven (εἰς κλίβανον), "a large jar made of clay, about three feet high, and widening towards the bottom . . . heated with dry twigs and grass" (Smith's 'Dict.'); cf. also Carr for a description of the Indian method of making *chupatties*. **Shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?** Ὀλιγόπιστοι, except in the parallel passage of Luke, comes in Matthew alone in the New Testament (ch. viii. 26; xiv. 31; xvi. 8), in each case referring to want of faith under the pressure of earthly trials. It is the New Testament expression of Prov. xxiv. 10.

Ver. 31.—Luke xii. 29 has the difficult phrase, "Neither be ye of doubtful mind." **Therefore take no thought** (μὴ οὖν μεριμνήσητε). The shade of difference here and ver. 34 from ver. 25 cannot be expressed in an English translation. In ver. 25 a state of anxiety, here and ver. 34 one anxious thought, is forbidden.

Ver. 32.—Parallel passage: Luke xii. 30

Save in reading "but" instead of the second "for," Luke's seems the more original. (**For after all these things do the Gentiles seek;**) **for your heavenly Father knoweth,** etc. The Revised Version removes the marks of parenthesis. *For . . . for;* these are probably co-ordinate, and adduce two reasons for our not being for one moment anxious about earthly things: (1) it is like the heathen (cf. the thought of ch. v. 47); (2) your Father knows your need of them. *Heavenly* (ch. v. 16, note). *Knoweth* (ver. 8, note).

Ver. 33.—Parallel passage: Luke xii. 31, which is shorter. **But;** *i.e.* in contrast to such seeking as he has just spoken of. Our Lord at length gives a distinct promise that if God's cause is made the first aim, all the necessaries of life shall be provided. **Seek ye first.** The difference between ζητεῖν here and ἐπιζητεῖν in ver. 32 seems to be only that the latter points out more clearly the direction of the search. *First.* If the search for earthly things be put into a secondary place, it may be allowable. **The kingdom of God, and his righteousness;** *his kingdom and his righteousness* (Revised Version). "Of God" must almost certainly be omitted with ℵ (B); cf. Westcott and Hort, 'App.' The first phrase represents rather the external, the second the internal aim. Seek ye the spread and accomplishment of God's kingdom; seek ye personal conformity to his standard of righteousness. Both thoughts are of fundamental importance for this "sermon" (*kingdom*, cf. ch. v. 3, 10, 19, 20; vi. 10; *righteousness*, especially ch. v. 17—20), which treats essentially of the way in which the subjects of the Divine *kingdom* should regard the Divine *righteousness* and conform to it. **And all these things shall be added unto you;** cf. the apocryphal saying of our Lord, repeated by Origen (Clem. Alex.), "Jesus said to his disciples, *Ask great things, and the small shall be added to you; and ask heavenly things, and the earthly shall be added to you*" (Westcott, 'Introd.,' App. C; Resch, 'Agrapha,' p. 230, etc.; cf. also 1 Kings iii. 11—14; Mark x. 29, 30; 1 Tim. iv. 8).

Ver. 34.—**Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.** Matthew only. Luke's conclusion to this section ("Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom") is perhaps more closely connected with the preceding verse, and also grander as dwelling upon God's side; but Matthew's is more practical, dealing with the subject from man's side. Christ says, "Because all needful things shall be added, do not have one anxious thought for the future, even for what is coming on the very next day." Such anxiety shows a want of common sense, for each day brings its own burden of anxiety for itself. Christ here seems to allow anxiety for each day *as it comes round.* "But," he says, "put off your to-morrow's anxiety until to-morrow." If this be done, the greater part of all our anxiety is put aside at once, and, for the rest of it, the principle will apply to each hour as well as to each day (cf. Bengel). The Christian will ever try to follow the inspired advice of St. Paul (Phil. iv. 6) and St. Peter (1 Pet. v. 7). *The morrow shall take thought for;* "be anxious" as *supra. The things of itself; for itself* (Revised Version); αὑτῆς. The unique construction of the genitive after μεριμνάω led to the insertion of τά by the copyists (cf. 1 Cor. vii. 32—34). *Sufficient unto the day,* etc.; Tyndale, "For the day present hath ever enough of his own trouble." *Sufficient* (ch. x. 25, note).

## HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—18.—*The third part of the sermon: the danger of unreality.* I. THE FIRST EXAMPLE: ALMSGIVING. 1. *The spiritual estimate of actions.* The Christian's righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees. They did their righteousness, their good works, before men, to be seen of them. It must not be so with us. Indeed, we are bidden to let our light shine before men. A holy life hath a persuasive eloquence, more persuasive far than holy words; it must not be hidden; its influence is far too precious to be lost. Men must see the fair deeds which spring from holiness, and so be led to glorify the most holy God, from whose grace and presence all holiness comes. Good works must sometimes be done before men. This is not the thing condemned, but the unworthy motive, "to be seen of them." As Chrysostom says, "You may do good deeds before men, and yet seek not human praise; you may do them in secret, and yet in your heart wish that they may become known to gain that praise." This earthly motive poisons the life of the soul; it destroys all the beauty of good deeds. Nay, good deeds are not good when they are done for the sake of display; their goodness is only outside show; it has no depth, no reality. For every moral action

has its two parts, the outward and the inward. We see the outward only. That may seem to be good; but it is a mere falsehood unless it springs from worthy motives. The real action is the inward part, the inner choice of the will. It is the motive that gives colour, character, spiritual meaning to the act, that determines the spiritual value of the action. If the motive is holy, the act is holy and beautiful in the sight of God, though it may be the gift of two mites, which make a farthing. If the motive is low and selfish, the outward action, though to men it may seem magnificent, heroic, is spiritually worthless; it hath no reward of our Father which is in heaven. 2. *The false motive.* Unreality is hypocrisy; it is acting. The hypocrite acts a part before men; he assumes a character which is not really his. He gives alms in the streets; he wishes to be seen. He does not in his heart pity the afflicted; he is not merciful; he does not really care to do good. His one desire is to win the praise of men; he forgets that God seeth the heart. In the synagogue, in the church, he gives for the poor, for the work of the Church; but even there, in the house of God, he forgets the presence of the all-seeing God; he thinks only of the many eyes that see his outward act, not of the One that sees its inward meaning and estimates its true value. Such men have their reward, the Saviour says; they have it to the full, they have it all in this world. What they looked for was the praise of men. They do not always get it; even men sometimes see through the hypocrite, and feel the hollowness of his life. But if they get it, it is all they get. God has no reward for them; they did not care for that praise which cometh only from him; they sought it not, and they have it not. 3. *The true motive.* The glory of God. The Christian gives out of love—love to God and love to man; he seeks not glory of men. He gives in all simplicity, in the singleness of his heart. He does not dwell in self-complacency on his good deeds, his self-denials; he rather hides them, as far as may be, from the sight of men. For he lives in faith, and faith is the evidence of things not seen; he lives in the presence of the unseen God; he seeks above all things to be well pleasing to him. Our Father seeth in secret; it is an awful thought. He sees the real meaning of our life, of all our words and deeds. It is vain to act a part before him. The hypocrite's mask will not conceal the littleness, the meanness of his soul. God seeth in secret; he will reward those who live in the faith of that unseen presence, and try in secret, in the secret thoughts and motives of the heart, to live as he would have them to live, in holy love, in deep humility, in quiet obedience. He will reward them openly. The word "openly" may be of doubtful authority here; but we know that the reward will be conferred in the sight of men and nations. All nations will be gathered before the King when he cometh in his glory, and all his holy angels with him. He will reward them. Eternal life is a gift—the gift of God; it comes from his free and generous bounty, unearned and undeserved. It is wholly incommensurate in its exceeding blessedness with the poor unworthy services which the best of men can render to the Lord. But in his love and condescension he accepts them as done unto himself, and calls his gracious gift—that gift which is above price, passing all that heart can conceive—a reward for our mean and humble offerings.

II. THE SECOND EXAMPLE: PRAYER. 1. *The false prayer.* The prayer of the hypocrite is no true prayer; it is only acting; it goes no deeper than the lips. Men may hear it; it reaches not the ear of God. The sound of many voices goes up from the crowded church; they are alike in the perception of men. God can distinguish them; he knows which is meant for his ear only, and which, though the sacred Name is used, is addressed really to the congregation, and not to God. The hypocrites have their reward. They sought to be heard of men; they are heard. They sought not to be heard of God; God heareth them not. 2. *The true prayer.* (1) "Enter into thy closet, shut the door." It is not the place, Chrysostom says, that God regards, but the heart and the motive. Enter into thy closet; it profits not unless God is with thee there. Shut the door; it profits not if worldly thoughts can enter. You may find a closet in the densest crowd, if you hush your heart into the solemn consciousness of the presence of the God that heareth prayer. (2) "Pray to thy Father." In true prayer the world is shut out of the heart; the Christian is alone with God, *solus cum solo*; he puts himself solemnly into the presence of God when he begins his devotions; his great effort throughout is to realize that Divine presence, and to keep distracting thoughts away. True prayer requires the exercise of all our highest faculties—thought, feeling, desire,

love. True prayer requires the continual help of the Holy Spirit of God. Pray to thy Father, not to the world; not to catch the ear of men, but only to God. Thou art speaking; he is listening; he heareth, if the prayer is really said to him. Other motives, the thought of men, the desire of human praise, destroy the value of the prayer, empty it of its meaning; it is lost, dissipated among earthly things; it reaches not the ear of God. (3) "Use not vain repetitions." The Lord repeated the same words of prayer thrice in his great agony. The repetition is not condemned, but the multitude of words without thought; the idea that much speaking in itself, apart from spiritual earnestness, ensures a favourable answer. Much speaking is not always much praying. There may be more prayer in a moment of intense supplication than in hours of mere talk; more real prayer in the silent uplifting of the heart to God than in the loudest cries. The priests of Baal cried from morning until evening, "O Baal, hear us!" but there was neither voice nor any to answer, nor any that regarded. Hannah prayed in silence; her voice was not heard, but her prayer reached the mercy-seat. The penitent thief lifted up one earnest prayer in his mortal agony; the prayer was answered, and his soul was saved. There is no need of much speaking to give God information of our state and our necessities; he knows what is for our good better than we know ourselves. What is necessary is the hungering and thirsting after righteousness, the intense single-hearted desire of pardon and acceptance with God.

III. THE LORD'S PRAYER. The Lord Jesus gives us a model for our prayers—a prayer very different from the vain repetitions, the much speaking, against which he has been warning us; but, though short and simple, comprehensive and complete. It expresses every possible desire of the instructed Christian; all that we need to ask, whether for the greater glory of God, for ourselves, or for others. He has taught us what we should pray for; we know it, we learned it long ago; we have said it daily from our childhood. It is easy to learn the sacred words, but, alas! hard to pray them. The Spirit helpeth our infirmities; he maketh intercession for us, with us, in us. He is the great Teacher; he, only he, can teach the great, holy, blessed, difficult art of true acceptable prayer. May he teach us, of his infinite mercy! 1. *The address.* (1) "Our Father." We Christians are taught to approach God as our Father. That form of address is not common in the Old Testament Scriptures; it occurs here and there incidentally. But now we have received the adoption of sons; the Lord Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, gives unto those that are his power to become the sons of God. "I ascend," he said, "to my Father and your Father:" his Father, indeed, in a far deeper and more mysterious sense, but yet our Father too; for God hath knit together his elect in the mystical body of Christ, and, being made one with Christ, the Eternal Son, they too are sons of God. "Through him we have access by one Spirit unto the Father." He bids us say, "Father," our Father. God is our Father by creation; he made us; he sustains us; all that we are and have is his. He is our Father by adoption: "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." He is our Father, if we be Christians in heart and in truth, by a yet holier bond: "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." We come to him, we say, "Father." The word implies a great fulness of most blessed meaning. It tells of love, tender care, wisdom, power, on the one side; on the other, of confiding affection, reverence, trustfulness, obedience, undoubting faith. Our Father—*our*; that little word is full of meaning; it tells us that we are all one in Christ Jesus, all equal in the sight of God. There must be no envy, strife, party spirit, in our hearts, least of all in the hour of prayer; for we are one in Christ. One is our Father, even God; and all we are brethren. Earthly distinctions do not reach into the sphere of religion. "The rich and poor meet together; the Lord is the Maker of them all." We come to God not merely as individuals, but as members of a great community, a fellowship, a Church. In the hour of prayer we think not only of ourselves; we pray for others—relations, friends, neighbours, all who are of the household of faith, all the children of the one great Father. The Lord's Prayer teaches in its opening clause the duty of intercession. (2) "Which art in heaven." "Be not rash with thy mouth," saith the Preacher (Eccles. v. 2), "and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few." The child gives reverence to its earthly father; our Father is in heaven, and we are here below.

We must hush our hearts into solemn reverence when we come before him in prayer. He is the great and awful God; the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain him. But yet he is our Father; he is very near to us, listening to the words of humble prayer, ready to help and save. We come before him with mingled feelings—love, awe, humility, penitence, blending into one full utterance of adoration. 2. *The first petition.* "Hallowed be thy Name." As yet we ask nothing for ourselves; we think only of God. Prayer lifts us out of self, out of the narrow range of selfish thoughts, feelings, hopes, into that communion with God which is the very life of the soul. God will be "all in all" in the regeneration; the highest end of prayer is to raise us nearer and nearer to that blessed consummation, that he may become even now "all in all" to us. This petition, "Hallowed be thy Name," stands first in the Lord's Prayer, as if to teach us that we must come before God with reverence and godly fear. There can be no true prayer without reverence, without a deep sense of God's awful holiness and our utter unworthiness. Therefore we begin by asking God to give us grace to feel the holiness of his great Name, that we may never fall into the sin of taking his Name in vain, but may always regard it as most sacred, and pronounce it with solemn reverence. The Name of God in Scripture language means all that can be known of God—God as he has revealed himself to us (comp. John xvii. 6, "I have manifested thy Name unto the men which thou gavest me"). We see him not yet face to face, as he is. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son hath declared all that we can know of him, all that we need to know for our salvation. "Hallowed be thy Name." The seraphim cry, "Holy, holy, holy!" The four living creatures in heaven rest not day and night, saying, "Holy, holy, holy!" Christ bids his Church on earth to take up the angels' song. In the striking words of Stier, "The 'Holy, holy, holy!' of the highest heavens fills not yet all lands and all hearts." We pray that it may be so. We pray that his great Name may be hallowed in ourselves; that we may walk before him always in lowly obedience, that we may come before him in prayer with solemn, awful reverence, and yet with childlike love. We pray that it may be hallowed not in ourselves only, but in the hearts of others also. May all men feel the power of the holiness of the Lord God of hosts, and so be led to worship him in spirit and in truth! It is only by sanctifying the Lord God in our hearts (1 Pet. iii. 15) that we can pray that prayer aright, that we can learn that "Holy, holy, holy!" which we hope one day to chant in heaven. 3. *The second petition.* "Thy kingdom come." The kingdom of God is: (1) The Messianic kingdom, the Church of Christ, the net that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind. The prayer is a missionary prayer. We pray that God may enlarge the borders of his Church; that the heathen may be gathered in; that the stone cut out without hands may, according to his Word, speedily become a mountain and fill the whole earth. (2) The kingdom of grace in the heart. The kingdom of God is "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." We pray that our hearts may become the kingdom of God; that self may be dethroned; that the Lord may reign within us; that all our thoughts, wishes, motives, may, by the blessed influence of his Holy Spirit, be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. (3) The kingdom of glory. "Lord, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom." The kingdoms of this world must become the kingdoms of God and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever, King of kings, and Lord of lords. We pray (with awe, it must be; but yet, if we are his, with hope and trustfulness) that it may please him, of his gracious goodness, shortly to accomplish the number of his elect, and to hasten his kingdom. That kingdom must come, we know; but oh! may it please him first to make our hearts wholly his, and to spread the knowledge of his blessed gospel through all the dark places of the earth! 4. *The third petition.* (1) "Thy will be done." This is indeed the Lord's prayer—his prayer in a double sense; he taught it, and he prayed it. It is the deepest, holiest prayer of all prayers; the hardest prayer to learn, but full of blessed peace to those who by his grace have learned it. (*a*) "This is the will of God, even your sanctification." We pray that God's will may be done within us; that we may have grace and power to work out our own salvation, by his Spirit working in us both to will and to do. God's will is that we should be holy. "Be ye holy, for I am holy." We pray that that gracious will of God may have its full range, its perfect work; that our wills, rebellious and wayward as they are, may be subdued and chastened into conformity with the holy will of God. (*b*) May God's will be done

by us as we walk before him in the path of holy obedience. He has given us each a work to do; let us see that we do it. Faith without works is dead; the life of sanctification within the heart must bring forth the fruits of holy living. (c) God's will is better than our will; he knows better than we what is for our real good. We must pray the prayer of resignation, "Thy will be done." It is very hard sometimes to pray that prayer when troubles come thick upon us, when we are afflicted with pain and sickness, when those whom we have very dearly loved are taken from us. In those times of great sorrow we must think of the Lord as he knelt that awful night in the garden, when his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground. We may ask, as he did, for relief: "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." But, if we have learned of him, we shall always add those holy words of his, "Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." There is no peace like the great peace of entire resignation. (2) The standard. "In earth, as it is in heaven." There the holy angels ever do the blessed will of God; they do it perfectly, they do it cheerfully, without self-denial, without painful effort. There is no place in heaven for a will opposed to the Divine will. The presence of such a will would be a contradiction to the everlasting harmony, a note of discord in the angelic song. It is not so here. Our wills are distorted by inherited corruption, by our own consent to sin. Hence the need of daily self-denial. The sinless, instinctive obedience of the holy angels is above our reach; but it is the model proposed to us for our imitation. Our Father is in heaven; there they do his will. Our citizenship is there; our treasure, our heart, should be there; we must try to live the heavenly life on earth. How would a holy angel live if he were set in our position, among our surroundings? As he would live, so we should strive to live. It is our high calling; nothing short of this ought to satisfy us; it is what we pray for daily. We should ever be looking upwards, striving to live, as each day passes by, more nearly as we pray. 5. *The fourth petition.* Hitherto we have spoken only of God, now we speak of our own wants. The prayers already uttered are three, and yet one. The first lifts our thoughts to the heavenly Father; the second, to the kingdom which is given to the eternal Son; the third, to the Holy Spirit, by whose help alone we sinful men can do the holy will of God. The prayers are three, and yet one; all meet in the first clause of the angelic hymn, "Glory be to God on high." Now for the first time we speak of ourselves, of our own daily needs. "Give us this day our daily bread." It is a prayer of faith, of trustfulness, of contentment. He is the Lord of the harvest; the increase of the earth cometh from him; it rests with him to give or to withhold; we own it in our daily prayer. We trust him; he is our Father; he knows that we have need of these things; his blessed Son bids us ask. We ask for the supply of our earthly needs in trustfulness, but in submission, remembering the last petition, "Thy will be done." He encourages us to ask, but only for what is needful—our daily bread. We ask for it each day as it passes; it is enough for us; we learn contentment from our prayers. *Our* daily bread, we say; we pray for others, not only for ourselves; our prayer binds us to feed the hungry. But man doth not live by bread alone. We ask not only for common food when we say the prayer which Christ himself hath taught us. We ask, if we are his indeed, for the living Bread—himself, the Food of the soul, which if a man receive he shall never hunger. We need that Food every day, every hour; without it the spiritual life must pine away and die. 6. *The fifth petition.* (1) "Forgive us our debts." We owe a debt to God, each one of us—a great debt; it has been accumulating day after day, year after year; it is like the vast sum, the ten thousand talents, which the servant owed in the parable. Like him, we have nothing to pay. But if we have learned to say, "Our Father," if we have arisen from the life of sin and carelessness and gone to our Father, we know that he will forgive. "When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." They are precious words. Our Father sees the first symptoms of repentance; he goes forth to meet the penitent; he embraces him with the arms of his mercy. (2) "As we forgive our debtors." We cannot really believe in the forgiving love of God unless we find a shadow of it in our own hearts; if we forgive not, if we are hard, stern, unforgiving, we can have no sense of forgiveness. If we forgive others, it is an evidence of our own forgiveness. "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much." The much love proves that she is forgiven; but

the soul that hath not love hath no forgiveness. The Lord shows the importance of this law of love by returning again to it. It is the one clause of the prayer which he enforces by an additional warning. God will not forgive the unforgiving; such men turn the prayer which the Lord himself has taught us into a curse upon themselves. We must learn of him who said, "Father, forgive them," the blessed lesson of forgiveness; we must learn it for our soul's salvation, for "he that loveth not his brother abideth in death." 7. *The sixth petition.* "Lead us not into temptation." God, we believe, so putteth away the sins of those who truly repent that he remembereth them no more. He cleanseth from all unrighteousness those who confess their sins. We have made our confession now; we have asked for forgiveness; we have pledged ourselves to lead a life of Christian love, to forgive those who have offended us. But still the Lord bids us pray, "Lead us not into temptation, deliver us from evil." The strife with sin will not be ended while we remain in the flesh. We need the grace of God every day, we shall need it to the end. God tempteth no man; he solicits no man to sinful compliance; that is the work of Satan. But God doth prove us; he doth suffer his people to be disciplined with many trials for the more confirmation of their faith. His providence ordereth all things both in heaven and earth; we ask him so to order the circumstances of our lives as not to suffer us to be tempted above that we are able. It is a prayer of humility. We know our weakness; we mistrust ourselves; we fear the power of the tempter. This prayer should teach us never to expose ourselves to temptations unnecessarily. We must not run into that danger against which we pray. It should teach us not to judge our brethren hastily; God only knows the power of the temptations which beset them. 8. *The seventh petition.* It is deeper, more wide-reaching than the sixth. Temptations from without would not endanger us if there were not evil in our hearts. We ask to be delivered from it. "Draw us away from the evil," we say (as the words literally mean), quite away from it; away from evil of every kind, away from the power of the evil one, away from the defiling contact with evil in the world, away from the snares of those sins which do so easily beset us. Evil is all around us. The evil one is always alluring us with his accursed temptations. The world is very evil; it lieth in wickedness—perhaps, rather, in the evil one, in the sphere of his activity, his influence (1 John v. 19). Our own heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; our will is weak and corrupted. There is need of a power greater than our own to draw us away from the dominion of the strong man armed; there is need of a mighty counteracting attraction to draw us away from the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. That power is the grace of God; his is the kingdom and the power. That attraction is the love of Christ, the constraining influence of the cross. "Draw me, we will run after thee." This prayer pledges us to follow the drawing of God, to enter into the Lord's battle against the devil, the world, and the flesh. We pray daily to be delivered from evil; we must strive against it, fighting the good fight of faith; or the words of prayer, though they are the holy words of the Lord Jesus Christ himself, will not avail to help us. 9. *The doxology.* We may be compelled by the stern laws of criticism to omit it from the text; but we shall never omit it from our prayers. If it is a liturgical addition, it was made by holy men, men full of the Holy Ghost. It is a precious ending to a precious prayer. The address and the doxology bind the seven petitions together into one perfect prayer. All flow out of the address. He is our Father; he will hear the cry of his children. All rise in faith to the doxology. His is the kingdom and the power and the glory. The kingdom is his. He is King of kings. His kingdom will come in his own good time; then shall his Name be hallowed, and his will be done in earth as it is now in heaven. His is the power. He can give us what is needful for our bodies; he can feed us with the bread of life; he can take away our sins and give us the victory over temptation, and save us from every form of evil. His is the glory. Here is our hope of glory, Christ in us; for he saith, "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them." In the last words of the Lord's Prayer we echo the first words of the angelic anthem with which his birth was hailed. His is the kingdom and the power and the glory, and that for ever. Here is our hope of everlasting life. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away. His saints shall reign with him. We say our "Amen;" it is the response of the believer. May God the Holy Ghost make that "amen" the true

expression of the inner assent of our hearts, teaching us to pray this holy prayer in the full assurance of faith!

IV. THE THIRD EXAMPLE: FASTING. 1. *The fast which the Lord hath chosen.* The Pharisee in the parable pleads his fasting twice in the week as a merit before God. The hypocrites made a show of their self-denials. What they really sought was the reputation of righteousness, the praise of men. They might possibly gain it; it was all that they could gain. 2. *The true fast.* The Lord classes fasting, as a religious exercise, with almsgiving and prayer. He gives similar rules for its due observance; he promises the like reward. What is necessary is reality; everything that savours of affectation must be banished. Our Father seeth in secret. The whole of our religious life must be referred to him; our business is with him, with him only. What men think of us matters little; his judgment is of momentous importance. The Christian rule is, "Live unto the Lord," seeking only to please him, referring the whole life of thought and action only to him. He will reward those who give, who pray, who fast, as in his sight, thinking only of him who seeth in secret.

LESSONS. 1. Above all things be real. "All things are naked and opened to the eyes of him with whom we have to do." 2. Learn of the Lord the sacred words of prayer. Meditate upon them; make them your own—words to take with you. 3. Pray to God the Holy Ghost to teach you to pray them, making them the voice of your heart. 4. Deny yourselves. There is a blessing for those who fast in faith and in simplicity.

Vers. 19—34.—*The fourth part of the sermon: self-consecration.* I. THE WHOLE MAN MUST BE GIVEN TO GOD. 1. *The heart.* God asks for it. "Give me thy heart," he says to each of us. The heart will be where the treasure is. Where is our treasure, our chief good, the object of our strongest desires? If it is on earth, it will fail us at the last. "I must leave all this! I must leave all this!" was the sad cry of the great French statesman, Cardinal Mazarin, when, stricken already by the hand of death, he took his last view of the treasures of art, the costly adornments of his earthly home. God bids us trust our precious things to him. He is able to keep that which we have committed unto him against that day. He asks it for our sake; it is safe in his keeping. Then lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven—the treasure of holy thoughts, holy aspirations, holy deeds. Above all, let Christ himself be the Treasure, the dearest Possession of our hearts, the Joy of our souls. Earthly treasures are but as dross to those who win Christ, the heavenly Treasure. If our treasure is heavenly, our heart will become heavenly too—filled with heavenly affections, heavenly hopes; and this hope maketh not ashamed. 2. *The intellect.* The eye receives the light of the sun. If it is blinded, all is dark; if it is diseased, the image presented to the mind is no longer clear, distinct, single, but confused, distorted, double. The intellect is the eye of the soul; but earthly affections distort and pervert it. If the heart is set on low, carnal objects, the intellect cannot discern clearly things high and heavenly; it cannot receive the light of the Sun of Righteousness; its vision is obscure, darkened. And if the intellect cannot see with a single eye the blessedness of religion, still more, if it becomes dark, how great must be the darkness of the whole soul! The consecrated heart enlightens the intellect; for God dwelleth in the heart that is given to him, and his presence is the light of the soul.

II. THE GIFT MUST BE ENTIRE, THE SURRENDER COMPLETE. 1. *The two masters.* "God spake these words, and said; I am the Lord thy God: thou shalt have none other gods but me." It was the first of the commandments of Mount Sinai; the Lord repeats it from the Mount of the Beatitudes. There are two masters who divide the allegiance of mankind. Some serve the living and true God; some serve mammon—riches, earthly things. No man can serve both; it is impossible. The heart cannot be divided between the two; its chiefest affection must be set on one great centre. The true Master cannot be despised; he may be hated. Those who set their love on mammon will end in hating God. "The friendship of the world is enmity with God." He who clings to God, the heavenly Treasure, will despise the good things of this world. There is nothing upon earth that he desireth in comparison with God. To serve mammon is to desert the true God, to set up an idol in the heart. Covetousness, Holy Scripture tells us, is idolatry. There is no escape from this solemn, this awful, alternative—God or mammon, Jehovah or Baal, heaven or the world. There is no

middle way, no compromise. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with *all* thine heart;" "Love not the world." 2. *The one Master: his loving care for his servants.* (1) Those who serve him must not be divided in mind; they must not allow over-anxiety concerning their earthly needs to distract their heart. They have been taught to address God as their Father; they must trust his fatherly love, his gracious providence. It is over-anxiety, not carefulness, that Christ forbids; he does not commend the thoughtless and careless. Holy Scripture bids Christian men to "work with quietness, and eat their own bread;" it condemns those who provide not for their own, and specially for those of their own house. What Christ forbids is distracting anxiety for the future. We must do our duty in the present and leave the future to God, trusting him with loving faith. The body, the life, come from him. He made the body; he breathed into the nostrils the breath of life. He who gave the greater will give the less; he will give the things needful for that human life which is his gift. (2) Examples of his care. (*a*) The fowls of the air. The Lord of nature, he by whom the worlds were made, directs us to the study of nature: "Behold the fowls," "Consider the lilies." He loved to contemplate the works of God, and to draw from them lessons of holy, heavenly wisdom. The vine, the fig tree, the corn-land, the sheep of the pasture, the fishes of the sea, supplied subjects for his parables. He has sanctified the love of nature, and elevated it by his own example. Doubtless in his early life he had watched the countless birds in the clear skies of Palestine, from the soaring eagle to the humble sparrow. He watched them not in vain; he draws lessons of holy trustfulness from their free, wild life. "They sow not, neither do they reap; your heavenly Father feedeth them"—*your* Father. He is not the Father of the irrational creature in the same holy, blessed sense in which he bids us call him "our Father." Yet he careth for the birds of the air; how much more doth he care for us, his children by adoption and grace! Therefore let us trust him. We cannot by the most anxious thought add to our lives a cubit's length, a day or an hour. Let us imitate the birds of the air in their happy, bright contentment, in their freedom from distracting care. (*b*) The lilies of the field. God has shown his love not only in providing for our actual needs by flocks and herds and harvests. He has clothed the earth with beauty; mountain and valley, sunlit seas and waving woods and gleaming rivers, bear witness to the goodness of the Lord. "God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good." The sin of man has marred the primeval loveliness of creation. But there are yet traces of that first beauty left. The flowers of the fields are relics of Eden's bowers—

> "As pure, as fragrant, and as fair
> As when they crowned the sunshine hours
> Of happy wanderers there."

The Lord gazed on the wealth of gorgeous flowers that deck the hills of Galilee in the spring; they were very fair in his sight; more delicately beautiful, more radiant in their bright colours, than any work of human art or skill. He draws a holy lesson from them: "They toil not, neither do they spin;" but God clothes them with beauty. He bids us learn the happy secret of their calm loveliness. He bids us trust in God with quiet faith; he will give us food and raiment who feeds the ravens when they cry, and adorns the lilies of the field with brilliant colour. 3. *We must trust him.* He knoweth our needs; he bids us ask him for our daily bread; he listens to our prayer. His children must not be like the heathen. They have far higher privileges; they must live a higher life. The heathen seek eagerly after the good things of this world; Christians must "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness"—that kingdom of grace in the heart, which is "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." That must be the first and paramount object of the Christian's hope and earnest effort; the glad submission of his whole heart, with all its fears and hopes, all its joys and sorrows, all its desires and all its thoughts, to the heavenly King, who would make that heart his dwelling-place, reigning there with undivided sovereignty. Seek that first, above all things else—above riches, honour, comfort, ease, even above the love of those who are nearest and dearest. Seek that first, seek it of God with unresting, unwearied energy of supplication; and for other things trust his love. He bids us ask him for our daily bread, not to be over-anxious for the morrow. We must not allow dis-

tracting fears for the morrow to interfere with the calm performance of the duties of the day. Each day has its burden, its difficulties, its temptations; each day, too, brings its help from God, its grace, its mercies, to his children. "Take therefore no thought for the morrow. . . . Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof." Give your whole energy, all your thoughts, to the work of the day, the duty which is present: "Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." Do not allow the day to be darkened, and its work to be marred, by gloomy forebodings of possible troubles in the future. They may never come; we may pass away before they come; if they should come, God will give his people strength and wisdom. Do your duty; and then leave the future in his hands, to whom alone the future is known; who has promised to make "all things work together for good to them that love him."

LESSONS. 1. "Lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven." 2. Make no compromises; give the whole heart to God. 3. God careth for his children; trust in him, be not over-anxious. 4. The present is yours; the future is God's. Do your duty, and trust.

## HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

**Ver. 1.**—*Ostentatious religion.* Having spoken of the duties of everyday social life, our Lord now passes on to deal with specifically religious actions—almsgiving, prayer, fasting. One thing he condemns in regard to all of these actions, viz. ostentation. His great requirement is sincerity, and, with this, simplicity and humility.

I. THE CHARACTER OF OSTENTATIOUS RELIGION. It is a theatrical performance, carried through before the eyes of men and in order to secure their admiration. In so far as it is ostentatious it does not aim at the service of God at all. Attention is not given to his will and approval. The lower sphere is all that is thought of. 1. *Ostentatious charity.* This was largely practised in the days of Christ, so that the very word "righteousness" came to be narrowed down to the meaning of almsgiving. But it is still prevalent. A person gives not to help the needy or to honour God, but to gain a reputation for generosity. His name must figure in the subscription list. If he were to have no public acknowledgment of his charity, he would withdraw his contributions. Why is it that some people will give more when they "subscribe" than when they put an offering in a "collection" for the very same object? 2. *Ostentatious prayer.* We do not observe the Oriental practice of praying out in the streets. But great attention to public services with neglect of private devotion is of the same character. Or if when at church there is the utmost decorum of behaviour with bent knee and bowed head, while the mind is not in the worship but wandering after idle fancies, this is a show and a sham. 3. *Ostentatious self-denial.* There are numerous opportunities for self-denial in ways invisible to man. If, therefore, a person passes these by and studies his own comfort in private, while he makes a show of fasting in public, he proclaims himself an "actor;" he is but playing a part. His self-denial is self-display, for his own glory, and therefore no real self-denial at all.

II. THE FAILURE OF OSTENTATIOUS RELIGION. 1. *Its inutility.* It has its reward in the admiration of beholders. The hypocrite is praised—till he is found out. Nevertheless, he really fails. For if religion means anything, it means the soul's relations with God. But if in all this foolish display the thought of God is lost, the supposed worshipper is not worshipping. Praying so as to be seen of men, he forgets the one Being whom it is his supreme duty to please. 2. *Its positive wickedness.* The conduct of the ostentatious worshipper is odious in the sight of God. (1) It is false. Pretending to be what it is not, claiming admiration for a charity, a piety, and a self-denial that do not really exist. (2) It is selfish. Worship should be the surrender of self to God. But this show of worship is all for the sake of self. (3) It is worldly. The admiration of men is cultivated, but there is no thought of a higher Witness. A purely temporal, earthly gain is all that such a religion can contemplate. (4) It is an insult to God. What can be more awfully impious than to prostitute the soul's great privilege of communion with God so as to make it a mere decoration of personal vanity? This is rank hypocrisy, of all things the most hateful in the sight of God.—W. F. A.

**Ver. 6.**—*Secret prayer.* These words are not intended to discourage the practice of

public worship. The contrast they afford to the ostentatious worship of the Pharisees makes it clear that our Lord is not alluding to the general prayers of a congregation. For with the synagogue he associates the street corner (ver. 5), thus showing that he is thinking of a man's personal devotions throughout, although in the case of the Pharisee these are made indecently public, and therefore do not deserve the name "private" which is usually attached to them in contrast with what is called the "public" worship of the Church. The secret prayer in private is commended to us.

I. THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PRAYER. Jesus is very explicit in regard to these details, although his object is simply to obtain reality and spirituality of worship, because we are largely influenced by the scenes among which we live. The private chamber and the closed door are necessary for the devotion which Christ approves of. 1. *Unostentatiousness.* This is readily secured. We cannot think of winning the applause of men when we have shut out all observers. Yet even here the danger may return if we let it be known that we resort to seclusion for prayer. Therefore the very act of retirement should be kept private. 2. *Freedom from distraction.* The noise and glare of the world are withdrawn, and we are left alone with God. This need not be in a room. Christ found it on the mountain. 3. *A personal approach to God.* Each soul must seek God separately. There is a loneliness of personality, a deep seclusion of the interior life. We do not really pray until we open this up to God.

II. THE OBJECT OF THE PRAYER. The end is not secured by the mere act of going into seclusion. We may carry the world into our chamber; and we shall do so if the world is in our hearts. We may not meet God there; and we shall not find him if he is "not in all our thoughts." The accessories are but favourable conditions. Still, we need the spiritual effort of devotion, which is to draw near to our Father—the highest act of human experience. When that is truly attained, the accessories cease to be very important. We may find the soul's secret chamber in the heart of a crowd, while walking through the busy street, or while rushing over the country in a railway carriage full of fellow-travellers, if we can withdraw our minds into inwardness of thought, into the seclusion of private meditation; we have but to shut to the door of observation, and we are alone with God. But this is only possible in proportion as our worship is a really spiritual approach to God. We have just to consider what worship is—not a performance, but a communion.

III. THE RESULT OF THE PRAYER. 1. *Observed by God.* He sees in secret. He sees the secret hollowness, vanity, falsehood, and blasphemy that lie behind the decorous worship of ostentation. He also sees the prayer that is but a thought.

> "Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
> Uttered or unexpressed;
> The motion of a hidden fire
> That trembles in the breast.
>
> Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
> The falling of a tear;
> The upward glancing of an eye,
> When none but God is near."

2. *Rewarded by God.* The reward of prayer is to hear and answer it. We are not to expect to be paid for our goodness in being unostentatious. It is enough that God meets us in secret prayer, that he condescends to respond and to visit our chamber, transforming it into a temple. That *is* the reward.—W. F. A.

Vers. 9—15.—*The Lord's Prayer.* This is the model prayer. It is not simply one form of prayer intended to supersede all others, or to take its place among prayers of a different character. It is the type and pattern of all prayer. "After this manner therefore pray ye." Let us note its leading characteristics.

I. IN FORM IT IS BRIEF, CLEAR, AND SIMPLE. This is offered in contrast to the vain repetitions of the heathen. It is not the length of a prayer, but the reality of it, that finds acceptance with God. He does not need to be urged with piteous entreaties, the frantic shrieks, leaping, and gashing with knives that the dervishes of Baal resorted to. He is close at hand; he is always ready to hear; he knows what we need. Some prayers are sermons preached to God. We have neither to inform God as though he

were ignorant, nor to persuade him as though he were reluctant to help. We have simply to make him the confidant of our hearts' desires.

II. IT IS ADDRESSED TO THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD. The "Pater noster" has its key-note struck in its two opening words. 1. *God's fatherly nature.* The character of our prayer depends on our conception of God. Christ delighted to set before us the picture of God as our Father. Here is the basis of faith. All confidence is justified by this great fact. 2. *Our relation to God.* He is not merely the "All-Father." He is "our Father;" this personal appropriation of God is necessary for the most real prayer.

III. IT HONOURS THE HOLINESS OF GOD. God loathes adulation, but he accepts adoration. High-sounding titles and elaborate ascriptions of praise mar the simplicity of genuine worship. It is enough to address God as "our Father." Still we must remember that he is in heaven. The familiarity of love must not forget the reverence due to holiness. The essence of prayer is worship.

IV. IT SEEKS THE GLORY OF GOD. Thoughts of God come first—that his Name may be treated with reverence; that his kingdom may come, his will be done. Many prayers are too narrow, selfish, and worldly. The model prayer fills our minds and hearts with large thoughts of God and his kingdom. If we have the Christian spirit in us, these thoughts will lie very near to our hearts; if that spirit is developed and enlarged, they will be predominant, so that we shall more eagerly wish for the coming of the kingdom and the doing of God's will than for the satisfaction of our personal desires. But, alas! few of us have reached that standard.

V. IT TRUSTS GOD'S DAILY CARE. Now we come down to the personal prayer. It begins with a most simple, universal want—daily bread. 1. *Bodily food.* This comes from God, who makes the corn grow, and finds us the providential means of a livelihood. Christ recognizes the need of common earthly things; God supplies them. 2. *Necessaries.* Merely "bread." 3. *The moment's need.* "Daily" bread. We can leave the morrow.

VI. IT CONFESSES SIN AND ASKS FORGIVENESS. This is of universal application. The saint must confess sin as well as the sinner. This is of daily necessity. We sin daily. But this recognizes God's forgiving grace—to cover all sin. Yet it is conditioned by our forgiving spirit.

VII. IT CRAVES DELIVERANCE FROM EVIL. If possible we would be spared temptation. If we must be tempted, we pray to be saved from the power of the evil one. Our Father is our great Deliverer. In view of darkest dangers we cry for his saving help.—W. F. A.

Vers. 19—21.—*The two treasuries.* The earthly and the heavenly treasuries are first compared together, and then the reason is given for preferring the latter.

I. THE EARTHLY TREASURY. 1. *Its locality.* A treasury on earth. The thought is of the accumulation of material wealth. This may be of the choicest kind—works of art, gold, and jewels. Still, it is all earthly, and it does not imply any share in heavenly things, any portion in the unseen world. 2. *Its imperfection.* Even while its treasures remain in it they may be spoiled. The moth devours the Babylonish garment; the rust corrodes the bright steel and tarnishes the polished silver. Shares depreciate in value while we hold the scrip. Worse than all this, the value to us of earthly treasure may be corrupted; because we may toil successfully for wealth, and yet when we have got it we may discover to our dismay that we have lost the capacity to enjoy it. 3. *Its insecurity.* What cannot be spoiled by insect or atmosphere may be stolen. Without waiting for the slow action of rust and moth, riches may take themselves wings and flee away. The thief may dig through the mud-built house (see Job xxiv. 16); the skilled burglar may break open the iron safe; the trusted banker may abscond with the stock that is lodged with him. At last the great thief death will rob us of all our earthly store by one irresistible stroke.

II. THE HEAVENLY TREASURY. 1. *Its nature.* What is this heaven in which we are to store our treasures? Heaven is not an astronomical locality, nor is it simply the abode of the blessed dead; it is wherever God's presence is manifested and enjoyed. Therefore to lay up treasure in heaven is to store it with God; to have our possessions in him; to entrust our all to him; to know that when we go to God we shall find our wealth. 2. *Its riches.* The nature of the treasury determines the sort of wealth that

is to be stored in it. Possessions of land cannot be kept in a cash-box; works of art must not be stowed away in a wine-cellar. If heaven is our treasury, only heavenly riches can be collected there. It will not do for us to reckon our property by gold or any material things, for heaven has no room for such sordid wealth. The "unsearchable riches of Christ" are there—faith and love, pardon and peace, life and gladness, purity and power. 3. *Its security.* This heavenly treasury is safe. No corruption can breathe in the pure atmosphere of heaven; no thief can break open its mighty gates; death is powerless to enter its realm of eternal life. Nothing can destroy or rob us of our spiritual possessions in Christ.

III. THE GROUNDS OF CHOICE. Enough reason for preferring the heavenly treasury might be found in the great contrast between its security and the deceptive insecurity of all earthly treasuries. But Christ introduces a much higher consideration. "Where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also." Therefore if the treasury is on earth, the heart will dwell in this lower region; but if the treasury is in heaven, the heart will soar to the heights of God. Our thoughts, our very selves, dwell with what we prize most highly. Here is a greater danger than that of the disappointment of loss—viz. that of the permanent degradation of a low affection. The chief reason for choosing heavenly treasures is that we may not set our affections on things of the earth, that we may have our thoughts and desires drawn up to what is heavenly. Thus only shall we escape from the sordid mind that gloats over sordid treasures, and win the pure and heavenly mind that aims at highest good.—W. F. A.

Vers. 22, 23.—*Simplicity of conscience.* The illustration seems to be this—We see only through our eyes. All the light that the body enjoys comes through that pair of delicate organs. Thus, as the means of bringing light to us, our eyes are our lamps. Now, if the two eyes are confused so that they see double, they distort our vision. They must form a single image between them for us to be able to see clearly. If worse should happen, and our eyes should be blinded, all the blaze of noon can bring no light to us. This is the physical analogue; let us now look at its spiritual counterpart.

I. CONSCIENCE IS THE EYE OF THE SOUL. It is to our spiritual nature what the organ of vision is to the bodily structure. It is the avenue through which light enters. A man without a conscience could know no spiritual truth. He might understand a multitude of facts about religion. The history of Israel and the biography of Jesus Christ might be very familiar to him. Doctrines of theology might be studied by him as systems of philosophy or theories of science are studied. But the knowledge thus acquired would not be spiritual. God would be hidden; the way of life would remain undiscovered. Righteousness and sin, faith and redemption, would be but names for abstract ideas; and the conception of these ideas would not help practically. But God speaks in the conscience. There his Spirit touches our spirit. There he impresses us with the force of moral distinctions, and draws us on to the better life.

II. CONSCIENCE NEEDS TO BE SIMPLE IN ORDER THAT IT MAY BE CLEAR. It is possible for the inward vision to see double. This will not happen so much when we seem to have a conflict of duties as when we confuse the very idea of duty with lower considerations. If we act conscientiously even when perplexed by a diversity of claims, we cannot make a very great mistake. But the terrible confusion arises when Conscience is not permitted to speak by herself; when she is interrupted by a babel of clamorous voices speaking out of self-interest, insisting on worldly maxims, and assuming wisdom and pleading policy. These interruptions are fatal to a sound decision. Conscience must be cleared of all accessories. We must look straight to one point. The one question for conscience is—What is right? It is absolutely necessary to keep this question simple by separating it from every other consideration.

III. THE PERVERSION OF CONSCIENCE IS THE GREATEST SPIRITUAL DARKNESS. He is in the dark who turns from the light; but far greater is the darkness of a blind man who cannot see in the light; and darkest of all is the mistake of one so deluded and demented as to take night for day, darkness for light, so that he follows darkness as a guide. It is bad to disregard conscience. Still, conscience remains, a warning beacon that cannot be utterly quenched, and we are aware that we are going without its guidance. Far worse is it to pervert the conscience. Better face a dark coast than the false lights of wreckers; better have no compass than one that will not point to the

north; better be without a pilot than be steered by a pirate. The scribes and Pharisees darkened conscience with casuistry; Jesuits have been accused of doing the same; but our own hearts are our greatest deceivers. "Keep conscience as the noontide clear."—W. F. A.

Ver. 24.—*The two masters.* Christ here passes from the consideration of thoughts and desires to the large world of action. His rule of life touches us all round. It begins with the heart—the inner chamber, the sanctuary. It also applies to the life, the work, the scenes of daily life in the world. Now, we are carried out to this busy world to consider the principles that rule our conduct there.

I. WE MUST HAVE A MASTER. This is assumed. Christ considers two forms of service. He does not contemplate the absolute freedom in which we are our own masters. We profess to be free, and claim to rule our own conduct; but that is only because the chains are gilded, or because the silken threads are invisible, because our obedience to our chosen master has become a second nature, *i.e.* because we serve from love and not from constraint. But all true service is heart-service; it springs from love; it is given willingly; and therefore it does not perceive the yoke of servitude. Yet he who escapes from the service of God as an irksome burden, irksome because his heart is not in the service, will certainly fall into the clutches of some other master—mammon, sin, evil habit, lust, fashion, etc.—all of them being but representatives of the great usurper.

II. WE HAVE A CHOICE OF TWO MASTERS. 1. *God.* It is not enough to think of God as our Benefactor; we must remember that he claims our service. This is implied by his Fatherhood, because a father expects obedience on the part of his children. Now, it is not to be denied that the service of God is a very difficult service. It involves the renunciation of sin and the practice of self-denial. It requires absolute submission of the will in interior desire as well as in visible work. In our own strength it is impossible (Josh. xxiv. 19). But God gives strength equal to the task. The reward of his service is immeasurable, not only in subsequent wages, but in the present joy of serving so good a God, delighting to do his will (Ps. xl. 8). 2. *Mammon.* One form of low service. The unworthy service may assume other forms. But this is most prevalent and tempting. It is seen in the race for wealth, in the greed of covetousness, in the slavery of material pleasures and earthly desires. It is degrading to the soul, and it ends in weariness, disgust, and bitter disappointment (ver. 19).

III. WE CAN SERVE BUT ONE MASTER. This is not a question of simple inconsistency and incongruity; it is a matter of absolute impossibility. Christ does not say, "Ye ought not;" he says, "Ye cannot." There can be but one true service rendered by our real selves. Yet nothing is more common than the foolish attempt to achieve the impossible. The result is the miserable failure of a distracted life. The man who would serve two masters has no success or joy in either pursuit. When trying to serve mammon, he is haunted by a disturbing conscience that restrains him from going as far as he would, and vexes him with muttered reproaches. When endeavouring to serve God, he is invaded by a host of foolish fancies and worldly anxieties. He cannot give himself to the worship and service of God, and therefore these things are a weariness of the flesh. Thus he fails, and is miserable whatever he does. The secret of happiness is whole-heartedness. There is no joy on earth like the deep and satisfying gladness of a complete surrender to God as our one Lord and Master. Happily the principle is a safeguard for the true servant of God. The service of God excludes the service of mammon, and so keeps us safe.—W. F. A.

Vers. 25—30.—*Christ's remedy for anxiety.* Having touched upon the active ministry of life, our Lord at once proceeds to treat its besetting trouble with an amplitude of illustration which shows how important he considered it to be.

I. THE NATURE OF THE EVIL. We are misled by the word "thought," which has dropped one of its old meanings since the Authorized Version of the New Testament was issued. Christ is not depreciating an intellectual exercise, much less is he encouraging improvidence. What he really says is, "Be not anxious for your life." 1. *The evil is in vexatious anxiety.* If, after we have done all that is in our power, we fret ourselves with presentiments of possible mischief; or if, in the midst of our work, we let care

about its issue take possession of our minds, we make the mistake our Lord deprecates. 2. *The evil is concerned with bodily needs.* The life, the food, the raiment. The idea is of being absorbed with deep concern for these temporal and external things. 3. *The evil prevents concern for our higher interests and duties.* Here is its greatest condemnation, not simply that it pains us, but that it injures us. Jesus does not advise freedom from anxiety merely on its own account, that we may have the satisfaction of being at peace. He sees that worldly anxiety fills the mind and heart, and so keeps out thoughts of the great purpose of life. "The cares of this world" are tares that choke the Word. "The life is more than the food." We are to cast aside anxiety about food and clothes, that we may be free to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness."

II. THE CURE OF THE EVIL. All deplore it; but few see how to conquer it. Some even regard the words of Christ as applicable only to an idyllic state of society—possible among the flowers and sunshine of Galilee in those old dreamy days, but quite impracticable in the busy, crowded West of to-day. Let us see if there are not permanent lessons in this teaching of our Lord. 1. *The spirit of nature.* Our Lord was preaching on a mountain, with flowers at his feet and birds above his head. His illustrations lay close at hand; but his choice of them was evidently suited to his object. He touches on the beauty and fresh life of nature, so that his very language is soothing. It carries us quite away from the fret and fever of life. If we would spend more time in considering the lilies we should be calmed and refreshed. Wordsworth re-echoes this wholesome lesson. 2. *The analogy of the lower world.* God cares for the grass that is enamelled with flowers in the spring, then scorched by the sun and burnt as fuel in the summer. He feeds the wild birds. Nature is wonderfully adjusted in its mutual ministries so as to support its most fragile creatures. If we can "live according to nature" we shall be provided for. This does not mean becoming savages—who are not in a state of nature at all. It means observing the laws of nature, as flowers and birds are bound to do, but as men do not. 3. *The revelation of our Father's care.* He knows our need. He does not despise it, or suppose that we can face it with Stoical indifference. Therefore we can entrust it to him. Faith is the great antidote to care. 4. *The call to higher duty.* It is wrong to waste our lives in anxiety. It is incumbent on us to give ourselves to the service of God. When we do this we shall find it easier to trust God. Then the evil may come; but we need not snatch at it prematurely. It can wait for its day, and when that arrives we shall find that as our day is so our strength will be.—W. F. A.

Vers. 1—4.—*As to the duty of giving alms.* The matter of the discourse of our Lord proceeds from his illustration of the hitherto unpractised and unnoticed spiritual significance, depth, and far-reachingness of the Law, to admonitions which must ever be so sure to be needed—of simplicity of motive and purity of heart in our works of "righteousness," or, as perhaps we should more naturally describe them in modern phrase, of religion. It must be noted that the Received Version reads mistakenly, in ver. 1, "alms" instead of "righteousness." This last word, recalling our thought to ver. 20, easily keeps for us unbroken the thread of Christ's discourse. The more specific of these admonitions as to our religious actions are three in number, and concern the duty of giving alms (vers. 1—4), of praying (vers. 5—15), and of fasting (vers. 16—18). Notice—

I. THAT THE PRINCIPLE CONTAINED IN THE INJUNCTION CHRIST HERE UTTERS IS NOT THAT HIS DISCIPLES SHOULD ARTIFICIALLY AND UNNATURALLY SMOTHER AND COVER UP IN DARKNESS EVERY ACT OF CHARITY. 1. This would be to the derogation of a previous and important injunction of this very discourse, that they should "so let their light shine before men that," as a *consequence*, "they *might see* their *good works*, and glorify their Father in heaven." 2. The present injunction is explicitly *worded* to the effect that such good works as almsgiving are not to be done *for the purpose* of being seen of men, and thereby winning a most superficial glory of them.

II. THE INJUNCTION IS THAT THE WORKS OF CHARITY SHOULD TRAVEL SO DIRECT FROM THE HEART TO THE OBJECT OF THEM THAT THEY SHOULD IN NO WISE CONTEMPLATE ANY OUTER OBSERVATION, AND SHOULD, SO FAR FROM THIS, EVEN ELUDE THAT OF THE LEFT HAND WHEN DONE BY THE RIGHT HAND.

III. THAT ANYTHING SHORT OF THIS, ANY ADMIXTURE OF SECRET, UNSAFE, UNHEALTHY, CRAVING FOR HUMAN NOTICE AND PRAISE, IS OF A DISENABLING SORT, AND PRECLUDES THE CONTINUAL DEW OF THE DIVINE APPROVAL AND REWARD.

IV. THAT NEVERTHELESS OUR WORKS OF CHARITY ARE FREE AND OPEN—NAY, RATHER, ARE EVEN TO BE ENCOURAGED TO SUBMIT THEMSELVES—TO THE INSPECTION OF THE ONE CLEAR, CALM, UNERRING, AND UNHARMING GAZE OF THE DIVINE EYE, AND THERE HAVE THEIR REWARD.—B.

Vers. 5—8.—*As to the duty of prayer.* As, in those duties of religion which take the shape of charitable action towards man, the first law of all is that they be rendered with purity of motive and with directness of aim, free from self-consciousness and free from consciousness, either morbid or calculated upon, of the gaze of others, so certainly in that duty (identical at the same time with highest privilege) which marks the intelligent personal approach of men to God, viz. their approach in prayer, is it necessary—

I. THAT IT BE PERFORMED WITHOUT ANY OSTENTATION OF SANCTITY BEFORE MEN.

II. THAT IT BE ADDRESSED TO GOD WITH UNDIVIDED HOMAGE, UNDISTRACTED THOUGHT.

III. THAT IT CONSIST OF PETITIONS OF KNOWN AND DISTINCT MEANING, NOT VAGUE, NOT REPETITIOUS, NOT MULTIPLIED FOR MUCH SPEAKING'S SAKE ONLY.

IV. THAT WE REMEMBER THAT IT IS NOT EITHER TO TELL GOD WHAT HE DOES NOT ALREADY KNOW, OR TO DICTATE OR SUGGEST TO HIM WHAT TO DO OR WHAT TO GIVE; BUT TO CONFESS TO HIM THAT WE DO KNOW AND FEEL OUR OWN NEEDS, TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT WE KNOW HE ONLY CAN SUPPLY THEM, AND TO SUBMIT THE TIME AND THE CHOICE OF THE WAY TO DO SO, TO HIM AND HIS ALL-SOVEREIGN WISDOM.—B.

Ver. 9.—*As to the manner of prayer.* The occasion was one in which our Lord knew that the teaching of his lips would be best brought home to the mind by an example to illustrate his meaning. What a sequel that example of prayer has itself had! and what fruitfulness it has had in teaching the "manner of prayer"! This "manner" taught by our Lord gives us first a name, or title, by which to address God in prayer. In this notice—

I. THE GRACIOUS AUTHORITY IT GIVES TO THE CREATURE, AS SOON AS HE TURNS HIS HEART IN PRAYER TO GOD, TO CLAIM THE RELATIONSHIP OF GOD TO HIM AS THAT OF FATHER. In whatever way this relationship of God to man might be argued from the nature of things (Ps. ciii. 13), or inferable from indirect permission in the teaching of God's favoured and chosen people since Abraham (Isa. lxiii. 16), it is certain that, previously to this teaching of Christ himself, we read no direct authorization whatsoever of it. It is the gift of this prayer, therefore, that with this title we come "boldly to the throne of grace."

II. THE LOVING AND HOPEFUL TONE OF SUPPLIANCY IT AUSPICIOUSLY AVAILS TO AWAKEN. The spirit of demand, the temper of dictation, the mutterings of discontent, the murmurings of impatience, are all held in willing, sure, sweet abeyance, when on bended knees we say, "Our Father." "How," we say rightly, "will he not give to his sons, to whom first he has given this greatest gift, that they should be, and be called, sons!" And, again, how shall not we desire, in practice as in prayer, to comfort ourselves in harmony with our new-given relationship—the Divine "adoption of sons"!

III. THE HEALTHFUL, INSPIRITING, UNLIMITED, CATHOLICITY WHICH THE TWO WORDS "OUR FATHER" BETOKEN AND AUGUR. It speaks in all innocent trustfulness, instinctive *expectation*, grateful expanded prospect, of the vast family, of an ever-swelling brotherhood, of the one Father's many-mansioned house. It strikes the key-note of the music of universal charity.

IV. THE ELEVATED LEVEL TO WHICH OUR CONCEPTIONS OF THE DIVINE RELATIONSHIP ARE SO SILENTLY AND, AS IT WERE, SO UNSUSPECTINGLY DRAWN UP—THE FATHER IN HEAVEN. How helpful to our hope and confidence, how salutary to our modesty and patience, how dignifying to all our spiritual tone and aspiration, to remember that this *Father* is in heaven, while as yet we are at heaven's footstool—the earth!—B.

Ver. 9 (end of verse).—*The first petition.* The sentence in which this is contained cannot mean that God's own holiness can be added to or its sanctity improved; but

that we "give thanks at the remembrance" of it; pause to observe the very highest conceivable rendering of the fifth commandment; and help to teach others to pay all most solemn homage to his Name.

I. THE PETITION IS AN INSTANCE AND EXPRESSION OF A MOST SIGNIFICANT ACT OF OUR REGENERATE NATURE, AKIN TO ITS VERY HIGHEST REACHES OF ACHIEVEMENT, WHEN, IRRESPECTIVE OF EVERYTHING ELSE, WE DESIRE THAT FIRST OF ALL GOD'S HOLY NAME BE HELD SACRED AND BE GLORIFIED.

II. THE PETITION PURPORTS THE EXALTATION, IN MEN'S REVERENT REGARD, OF THAT NAME, SO GREAT, ADDRESSED AND APPEALED TO IN PRAYER. The petition beautifully embraces the deep wish that that Name may be ever growing in adored sacredness in the silent heart of the individual petitioner first, as well as further in and through all creation.

III. THE PETITION MANIFESTLY POSTULATES SUCH SYMPATHY, HOWEVER ELEMENTARY, WITH THE HOLY NATURE OF THE FATHER, THAT ITS FULFILLING CANNOT FAIL TO BE ALSO A SURE FULFILLING OF GOOD TO HIM WHO PRAYS IT. It evidently proceeds on the ready and willing acknowledgment of the fact that the perfect holiness of the Father in heaven is the condition and the essential that lies at the very root of the welfare of the man who is praying, and of the vast universe.—B.

Ver. 10 (first part).—*The second petition.* The words of this brief petition pray that the kingdom of God may come in this world. And it would sufficiently satisfy the requirements of the words to understand them to pray for the further *growth* and more perfect *developing* and advance of the kingdom and the principles of it. So far also as the word "kingdom" might be considered equivalent to "rule," that rule had always been a reality and a very patent fact in the world. But in the light of the preaching of John the Baptist, and of the preaching entrusted to the twelve and the seventy disciples in Christ's commission, it is probable that the petition in this prayer describes the final and perfect form of God's kingdom, as growing out of the truth of Christ, in all its entirety, rooted in his incarnation, vital in the efficacy of his cross and blood, and triumphantly evidenced in his resurrection, ascension, and sending of the Holy Ghost. For a kingdom, a new kingdom, a reign of "abundance of peace," and of every most distinguished type of blessing, the favoured but degenerate nation had now long been looking with very mistakenly directed vision; while the truer and the really devout of them had been earnestly longing and waiting for it—not, indeed, much better informed in their mind, but very much better disposed in their heart. These, therefore, *were to* some real degree disposed to understand Christ's kingdom, differently conditioned as even to *them* it was compared with their expectations. And now the petition is enthroned that purports this—*May the kingdom of God in Christ come!* Dwell on—

I. THE SPIRITUAL CHARACTER OF THIS KINGDOM. Explain what is really meant by a *spiritual character*, illustrating this by: 1. The wonders of the way in which the kingdom was founded on earth. 2. The methods by which it gains and holds its own. 3. The objects which it seeks both near at hand and ultimately.

II. THE SPIRITUAL FORCES WHICH GIVE IMPULSE TO THIS KINGDOM AND WHICH RULE IT, AS MANIFEST AS THEY ARE INVISIBLE. Give here leading illustrations of the mighty Presence of the Holy Spirit working at the same time with human servants, but himself unchallengeably the mainspring.

III. THE CATHOLICITY OF THIS KINGDOM. Point out the implications of this fact. Show the enormously strong, growing indications, or evidences, or already concluded proofs of it.—B.

Ver. 10 (latter part).—*The third petition.* Beautifully does Chrysostom note how, in this petition, following closely upon "Thy kingdom come," Jesus would "bid us, before we come to heaven, make this earth into heaven." Dwell, in this simplest petition, on the following simplest but greatest and most significant facts. If the will of God is done on earth as it is done in heaven, so—

I. IT WILL IT BE DONE BY ALL. It *is* done by all in heaven, and the very form of this petition is not worded for the individual, but for all the wide, the various, the saddened but the beautiful world.

II. IT WILL BE DONE WITH THE FULLEST CONSENT OF THE HEART, AND WITH THE UNITED, UNDISTRACTED CONSENT OF ALL THE POWERS.

III. IT WILL BE DONE WITH AN EVER-GROWINGLY SYMPATHETIC UNDERSTANDING OF IT. It is beyond us to say that God's will is done even in heaven with (or much less for the mere reason of) a perfect understanding of it. Nay, some of its value may result there, as here, from its being both accepted and "done" in spite of its *not* being understood. But how much of our understanding of it *is* blocked by weak sympathy with it, or by absence of sympathy with it; and surely *these* obstacles will be gone, or ever be giving way! The clearness of sight and of understanding that a perfect sympathy gives, as compared with fitful and imperfect sympathies, must be all gain to the doing of God's will on earth as in heaven.

IV. IT WILL BE DONE WITHOUT THAT BITTER PAIN, THAT WORST WEARINESS, THAT COME OF VAIN ENDEAVOUR AND EFFORT SO OFTEN FAILURE. Such descriptions, or even such mere glimpses, as are given to us in Scripture of the worship or the work in heaven are ravishing indeed to meditate. To these we can never absolutely attain "in earth." To them, nevertheless, we may ever be approximating. The petition teaches us this; and, as offered by countless millions of lips, generation after generation, it is gradually and blessedly leading on to this.—B.

Ver. 11.—*The fourth petition.* Introduce by a few remarks on the sublime simplicity of the petitions of this prayer, typified in none better perhaps than in this. Give also simple explanation of the word rendered here "daily," to the effect that it does not repeat the meaning contained in "this day," but designates rather the natural requirement of any one, and the *portion* needful and allotted to him by parental care and love. Then the petition may be vivified, and a grateful realizing of its significance and beauty may be helped by speaking of it as—

I. THE HUMBLE PRAYER OF CREATURE-NEED. Instance comparisons of the dependence of *all* life, (1) inanimate; (2) animate and conscious; (3) animate, conscious, and intelligent; and show how fatal the fault when to these great facts of nature that of religious devoutness is not found added (Ps. civ. 27, 28; cxlv. 15, 16). The very sense of creature-need may be comfort, and help lead us to think on whom that need is permitted and invited to draw. How different our youth's presumptuous challenge of responsibility from the craving after relief from that very thing in maturer life, mellower character, and declining age!

II. THE HAPPY PRAYER OF CHILD-DEPENDENCE. The youngest child unconsciously depends for its portion every day upon its parents. And it becomes so natural to it that it knows not a doubt or fear for the same as years go on, till with the springing up of thought and the teaching of goodness and wisdom it becomes an effort to acknowledge its child-dependence and the grace that supplies it. *That* effort is healthful and useful. The very beginning of this prayer warrants us in this petition to ask, as the asking of the dependence that gives the child its claim, and a claim in its *character* something in advance of that which it utters as a creature.

III. THE TRUSTFUL PRAYER OF NECESSITY INDEED, YET UNANXIOUS NECESSITY. When the portion that the day wants has changed from milk to bread, and from milk and bread to wine and strong meat, there are yet other imperious forms of necessity that it takes. In one known word, there is "strength equal to the day" wanted. Various is the day, very various such days! The strength of healing, of pity, of pardon, of gracious and unusual intervention, is wanted; and is to be prayed for, and may be even begged for; but *then* most successfully when from the calm, deep heart of trustful unanxiety (Ps. xxxvii., *passim*).—B.

Ver. 12.—*The fifth petition.* It is to be pointed out that the Gospel version of the Lord's Prayer uses here in this petition the words "debts" and "debtors;" while, in what may be regarded as a parallel passage (Luke xi. 4), the prayer reads, "Forgive us our *sins*, as we forgive our debtors." It might, possibly, and not altogether unplausibly, be held that this last form of the words designs to avoid bringing into near comparison the dread reality we call sin against God, with our sins (though still justly so called) against one another. At any rate, the version may suggest profitably the thought. Vast also and indeed immeasurable the difference between what we owe to God and

what any one can owe to us; still these facts more naturally both fall under the description of "debts." Again, though the words "debts" and "debtors" are virtually commented upon by the "trespasses" of ver. 14, it is not impossible that they suggest the sequence of this petition upon the one preceding it. We have just prayed, "Give us this day," etc. What debts, indeed, God's daily innumerable givings, as Creator to all creation, as Father to all his family, entail upon them! These are not less to be thought of because they partake so much of a *moral* character, and are so analogous to those which children owe to their earthly parents. Though parents must give for the sake of the life of those to whom they give, their claim upon the gratitude, obedience, devotion, of their offspring is indefeasible, and the high, solemn sanctions of that claim in Scripture are second to none. Dwell on the consideration of—

I. THE EXISTENCE OF THIS GREAT THING, THIS GREAT FACT, IN THE WORLD—"FORGIVENESS:" WHAT DOES IT MARK? 1. It is a convincing proof of a moral element present in the world's social structure. 2. It is a convincing proof that that moral element is not of the nature of a level, stern, logical justice by itself, without elasticity, without any possible method of compensation, without any provision of remedy, in the event of incursions of error, accident, fault. 3. The outward practice of forgiveness (leaving out of question any cultivating of the spirit of forgiving) is found an absolute necessity for carrying on the community of social life. 4. The three foregoing particulars may be viewed as a strong supporting argument of the species of analogy, justifying the article of the apostolic Creed, that says, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins." And they may be viewed so yet the more in the light of the second clause of the petition now before us, "*as we* forgive our debtors."

II. THE WIDE RANGE THROUGH WHICH PRAYERS FOR GOD'S FORGIVENESS NEED TO BE OFFERED. 1. For debts in the matter of mercies innumerable and priceless, of which so little account has been made, and for which so little fruitful return has been shown. 2. For our debts in the matter of innumerable faults—faults of omission and of carelessness. 3. For our debts in the solemn matter of what can be described as nothing less than *sin* against God; and which we must know to be such by reason, by conscience, by education, by the education further of his revealed Word, and by the most explicit and most tender revelation of his love in Christ Jesus. 4. For all the debts of all that vast family of which we are a part, and for which our "prayers and intercessions" are permitted and invited.

III. THE EXCEEDINGLY SOLEMN FORM UNDER WHICH WE ARE TAUGHT TO ENTREAT GOD'S FORGIVENESS OF OUR SINS, VIZ. "AFTER THE MANNER" OF OUR OWN FORGIVENESS OF OUR BROTHER. The thrilling suggestions of warning that lie plain to every gaze in these words of prayer fitted to our lips by Jesus, emphasized in vers. 14, 15, and so often repeated by us, are only equalled by the matchless condescension of them.—B.

Ver. 13 (first part).—*The sixth petition.* Point out that the word "lead" is not an exactly correct rendering, and but for long use would be pretty certainly a somewhat misleading one. The plain meaning of the petition is that we may be spared the conflict and the danger and the pain of temptation, so far as may be accordant with Divine wisdom and the Divine will. Hence a very old version renders "carry," and the Revised Version renders "bring;" and for this may be substituted such other words as "put," or "place." Though indeed circumstances, as we call them (and God certainly uses not unfrequently the ministry of circumstance), may be largely described as partaking of the nature of *leading*, yet the last intended implication of the petition is that God would, by unconscious *leading*, betray us into temptation, so that we should be more liable to fall by it. Consider—

I. THE NATURE OF THE THING CALLED TEMPTATION. 1. It is not the word rightly used, unless the person is free to choose, to do, or to refuse to do. 2. It is not the word rightly used, unless the thing that tempts is for some reason *evil*—evil not necessarily in itself, but for us at the time being. 3. It involves our facing what is either intrinsically evil, or in this sense evil; wishing or being inclined to wish or liable to wish it; and finally either mastering and banishing the wish, *or yielding to it*, and turning it into action.

II. THE OBJECTS OF TEMPTATION. 1. To reveal to the nature of an inquiring, intelligent being what forces there are without him, for good or for bad, in this world.

2. To reveal to that nature the forces that are *within* it also; and to waken its knowledge as much of their difference in kind as of their existence.

III. THE USES OF TEMPTATION. 1. To challenge, determine, fix the tone and direction of the character of any and every person. 2. To strengthen greatly, by decision and by exercise, goodness, if temptation is resisted and mastered; or if the opposite, at any rate to acquaint the sufferer with what is going on in his life.

IV. THE JUSTIFICATION OF PRAYING AGAINST THE ORDEAL OF TEMPTATION. 1. Such praying expresses a very permissible, just, modest distrust of self. It expresses the opposite of self-confidence. 2. It expresses a just and natural dread of being worsted of our worst enemy. 3. It expresses a justifiable shrinking from the conflict, and the pain of being tempted, even if we are not victims to the danger of it. That "the cup may pass away" we know is a lawful and even hallowed prayer, *if* coupled with submission still to the Divine will, and with the resolute drinking of it if it be still held to our lips. Such praying may be regarded as the fit response also to the most gracious utterances of all the ages; *e.g.* "Like as a father pitieth his children . . . for he knoweth our frame, and remembereth that we are dust."—B.

Ver. 13 (latter part).—*The seventh petition.* This latter clause of what might be viewed almost as one petition, though expressed in the shape of two antithetic parts, confirms what may be called the common-sense interpretation of the words, "Lead us not into temptation." All the matter of temptation is evil. The evil that is without, its material; the evil that is within, its occasion and fearful purchase. The attraction of what is good, and any readiness within us to yield to that attraction, we do not designate temptation. But now the petition, "Lead us not into temptation," all the material of which is evil, is pronouncedly followed by this other, "But deliver us," *i.e.* draw us away, rescue us, save us, "from evil," or from the evil one, in every form and in every degree. The petition is, therefore, certainly not mere repetition of the former, nor the former put in somewhat different shape, but it is substantial addition to it. Notice, then, that the prayer—

I. BREATHES THE EARNEST DESIRE TO BE DELIVERED FROM THE WHOLE BODY OF EVIL. That which was ever round us; that which is ever too likely to be within us, though dormant, perhaps; that which might still invade our peace and safety. We need to be set free from that which has in past time, and perhaps long, dominated us.

II. EXPRESSES THE CONVICTION THAT THE FINAL, COMPREHENSIVE THING TO BE DESIRED IS TO BE DRAWN BY DIVINE POWER FROM EVIL. We need to be both (1) weaned from the love of it and all native inclination to it, so far as it takes any shape, by virtue of which we may wish for the time to cast in our lot with it; and (2) rescued and, if need be, *snatched* from its tyrannical hold and merciless thraldom. The significance of the position of this petition, last of all, so placed by Christ himself, well deserves notice and enforcing.

III. RECOGNIZES AND RECORDS OUR CREED THAT EVIL HAS ITS MASTER; AND THAT WE KNOW WHO THAT MASTER ALONE IS; OUR DEPENDENCE ON HIM, AND OUR INDEBTEDNESS TO HIM. To him we rightly carry our solemn, suffering, last appeal against it, whether the fault of it be more or less chargeable on ourselves. A short life, which nevertheless dragged even its very briefness, its "days few and evil," as though tedious time needed to be "killed," may have witnessed a careless indifference to evil on our part; again, an utter misestimate of its nature, malignity, mass of resistance; again, a mere defiant attitude towards it; again, a self-confident assurance of our own power over it, when only we should choose to rise to the occasion, and put forth that supposed power; and once again, after many a shameful fall, as the natural reaction, a crouching, craven, crushed, despairing dread of it! The humbling tale of these self-condemning transformations, and of the innumerable by-victories of evil, own to one safe outcome, one only! It is this—put into our lips by Jesus himself—the sad, intensely earnest, all-trusting, last appeal against it, addressed to that Master of it, before whom itself has ever quailed, "Deliver us from evil."—B.

Vers. 16—18.—*The manner of fasting.* As, of the three specific admonitions regarding our personal religious exercises, the first on "*the manner of almsgiving*," and the second on "*the manner of praying*," have had their gracious treatment; so now

the third follows, on "*the manner of fasting.*" We have not here any express injunction to fast, nor had we any to give alms or to pray. In each case the prefatory words are in the same form, "when thou doest thine alms;" "when thou prayest;" and now, "when ye fast." However, not only is there not one disparaging word uttered at the expense of fasting, but directions are given for the right observance of it; and, above all, it is to be noted that it is ranked with the two ever undisputed duties and virtues of the Christian life, viz. charitableness and prayer.

I. THE OSTENTATION OF SANCTITY IS STRUCK AT. No two things could less agree, no two extremes less conceivably for one moment meet. 1. The very origin and reason of fasting disallow display; for its design is to search out and reckon with certain discreditable, subtle tendencies and temptations to sin, ever too actively working in the body, and through the lower appetites of our nature, and unfailingly warring against the soul—hindrances to religious life, the poison of devotion. Of the genuine, solemn attempt to sap the strength of such enemies within as these, who could dare to take opportunity to make parade? And if the solemnity of that attempt be nothing but an occasion of seeking the praise of men, and itself an "art of deceit," *what* can measure the guilt of the vanity of that "hypocrite"? The spiritual vanity, and yet more the spiritual pride, that sows itself in the spare soil of fasting, only then good if spare, is too sure, by the surest Nemesis, to grow a crop, briar, bramble, thistle, malignant in their fertility. 2. The meagre littleness of human sanctity, at its best, disallows display under any conditions. Nothing so certainly proves to demonstration that littleness as any proffer of ostentation on the part of it. Sanctity can only grow in the prevailing sense and overshadowing conviction of that Divine holiness from which exclusively it comes, and by the side of which it is meantime ever reduced to a drop in the ocean. "Fasting," said one of old, "should show you, but not you your fasting." And again, "Christ says not, 'Be not sad,' but 'Make not yourselves sad of countenance.'" And, once more, "If he who fasts, and makes himself of a sad countenance, is a hypocrite, how much worse he who does not fast, yet assumes a fictitious sadness of face as a token of fasting!"

II. THE NATURAL METHODS, OF HONEST MOTIVE AND OF DEEP RELIGIOUS DESIRE, HELD UP FOR IMITATION. The unconsciousness of daily habit is recommended by Christ for the outward appearance of the man most deeply convinced of the need of strenuous measures to cope with spiritual danger within. The sable garb and habit may well be left unstudied, unaffected, unput on, because of the sabler penitential habit of the heart. No "artifice of deceit" is anything but out of place and out of season, except it be that most skilled artifice of all, to make the least show of self, and over self's own sacreder self to throw the concealing veil of voluntary retiringness. The man who fasts as a Christian and for Christian purpose is not to proclaim it by word or by sign, nor is he to proclaim it at all. If in the light of his life it proclaims itself by his own light, he is *then* free from the responsibility of the disclosure, and it will be found that he is the very last to know of that disclosure.

III. THE EVER-OBSERVING EYE, WHICH MEN MAY RIGHTLY OBSERVE. Having guarded against all possible variety of danger that may arise from men's notice, or our own supposition of it, consciousness of it, or craving for it, our one legitimate desire and "*contrivance*" in the matter should be that nothing divert, distract, or disturb the singleness of eye that should feed its gaze on God—himself secret from the world, accepting and receiving us secret from the world. Where singleness of eye and simplicity of heart and transparency of motive are so indistinguishable from one another, one look aside from God, one moment relish for human praise, one listening for report of self, will dispel the holiness, and the holy fruit of any spiritual exercise. It is to the eye that is as unseen as it sees, as kind as it is searching, as searching as it is all-seeing and everywhere seeing, that the one safe appeal of our eye is to be directed, for guidance here, for encouraging approval here, and for its final unerring award.—B.

Vers. 19—21.—*The treasure laid up on earth.* It is most unimportant, in meditating on the succeeding portions of this wonderful discourse of our Lord, to insist on tracing some imagined connection between them. If on the surface it be plain, or if by careful examination it *becomes* plain, let us love to notice it, and to learn its continual contribution to the instructiveness and beauty of the teaching. Otherwise there is no

incumbent necessity or advantage in stringing such pearls as these, at any rate. With this proviso, it is possible to suggest that there *is* a connection to be traced, not fanciful, between what we have here and the foregoing eighteen verses—that whereas the solemn refrain of each of the three examples which they comprise has been that no heritage of human praise be sought, but only that surest intrinsic reward, the approving eye of him who seeth in secret, *now* the subject launches out into the open; he who speaks, lovingly admonishes all, at all times, under all conditions, whether they give alms, or pray, or fast, "or *whatsoever they do*," to take heed and beware, not only of the lust of human praise—one particular shape of earthly treasure—but of seeking or storing in any sort the unsafe treasures of earth. The ground now rested upon for this admonition is, in one general word, the untrustworthiness of treasures laid up on earth. But this untrustworthiness has deepening shadows and a deepening suspicion as it is deeper looked into. The *place*, indeed, Jesus Christ says, of treasure laid up upon earth lays it open to suspicion, and to more than suspicion, to condemnation, in the matter of a right and wise investment. For of such treasure it is to be said that—

I. IT IS INSECURE. By the perfection of figurative language, in brevity, force, and clearness, this insecurity is set forth by the operation of: 1. *Rust;* an agent so silent, so constant, so natural, so certain, that nothing seems wanting to perfect the figure, for all that wide sweep of earthly wealth which iron, the king of metals, may be held to typify. 2. *The moth;* the stealthy destroyer of all the vesture and texture by which, again, another such wide stretch of earthly wealth is typified; but not only so, such a wide field of human vanity of wealth displayed. 3. *The thief;* who the more precious and less destroyable what remains may be, so much the more eagerly and skilfully compasses the grasping of it. So earthly treasure is cumulatively insecure by its unconscious and inanimate enemy, by its unconscious but animate enemy, and by its very conscious and very animate enemy.

II. IT IS TEMPORARY, EVEN WHEN AT THE SECUREST. If it is laid up on earth, it is bound to be left down on earth. The whole wide world of men all always have known that earth is not their abiding country; that if *they* are to be always, it is just the opposite of fact that they are *to* be always on earth; and that if the *earth*, in a sense, "abideth for ever," its fleeting generations the very opposite.

III. IT IS LOWERING INSTEAD OF ELEVATING, IMPOVERISHING INSTEAD OF ENRICHING, EVEN WHEN LEAST "TEMPORARY," AND EVEN WHEN MOST "SECURE." This is not said of a right use of earthly advantages, a use that does not abuse. But neither is it this at which Christ aims when he says, "Lay not up treasure on earth." No; the "*for*" which Christ uses here so emphatically, and the most weighty clause which it leads in, tells his most significant meaning. A treasure laid up on earth chains the heart with it to earth; "for" wherever the treasure is the heart is; whatever the treasure is, it is fashioning the heart to it. "What folly to store your treasure in the place you *must* soon leave!" What folly to have as treasure that which enslaves but never ennobles! What folly to have as treasure that which condemns thought never to think high, and which dooms affection's growth to be opposite of lasting in any upward direction, and, so far as its downward direction goes, the deeper its roots, the deeper its torments! Human nature and character only then rise, grow, purify, and are blessed as the heart of man rises and becomes purer, till its upward tendency is secured and its sanctification safe.—B.

Vers. 22, 23.—*The lamp of the body.* Make a few introductory remarks on the brevity, the force of suggestion, and the depth of significance of these words of Jesus Christ. Explain that "the *light* of the body" should be rendered "the *lamp* of the body;" and that the word is distinct from the last word of the verse, rightly rendered "light." From the inattention that arises from so great familiarity with one of the grandest wonders of our life, both bodily and intelligent, strive to win this gracious illustration of Christ, and seek to secure solemn heedfulness to it. Consider—

I. A MARVELLOUS WORK OF GOD—THE BODY FULL OF LIGHT—HOW HE DOES IT. The living lamp, the eye, lets light into "the whole body," and even pours light into it. The mysterious susceptibility and energy of the brain receive and distribute it, and that brain acts accordingly. It is *so* that the body, or rather the man, is said to have *sight*. Sight avails for two things: 1. To admit a wide variety of impression and

knowledge. 2. To initiate, and direct, and conduct, a wide variety of intelligent action. The body, which otherwise would be only an opaque mass of living, throbbing energy, but groping because of darkness, losing the right way, missing aim and vainly beating the air, wasting terribly the vital force it had, becomes by that "lamp" all suddenly, as it were, endowed with capability. It is a capability of the higher sort—based on immense contributions of knowledge, and not on mere addition of physical strength. It is perhaps impossible to make any well-founded comparisons among the works of God, and it approaches irreverence to attempt it; but among them all, when we think fixedly of it, where can we find one more to amaze us, and more to be admired for the way it is obtained and the results it obtains, than "the body full of light"?

II. A MARVELLOUS WOE OF MAN—THE BODY ALL DARK—AND HOW HE COMES WITH IT SO. The body is "all dark" when the lamp that God made for it or meant for it is not there or is not alight. And this may be so, whereas it never was there, the man being born blind; or whereas it was once there and alight, yet some "accident" has put it out and destroyed it; or whereas it was once there and alight, yet disease, and perhaps disease that was more or less the direct consequence of sin and vice, had put it out and destroyed it. In each and all of these cases what suggestion of serious thought and solemn wonder or searching inquiry there is!

III. A MARVELLOUSLY AGGRAVATED FORM OF THIS HUMAN WOE—WHAT AND WHENCE IT IS. This is when the lamp is there, and when it is lighted, *but* its light is contradictory, confusing, bewildering, and worse than any ordinary darkness. It is a distemper of the eye, that falsifies all incoming impressions, misleads and misdirects all outgoing action. The result may be termed "darkness," but only because it is *not* light, and of *this* darkness it must be added, "*how great*" it is! Or, as there *is* present the lamp, and as there *is* in action the eye, the result may for one briefest moment be termed "light," but only the very next moment to incur the comment and criticism of the unerring Discerner and Judge of all things: "If therefore the very light that is in thee be darkness, *how great* is that darkness!"

IV. A MARVELLOUS PORTRAIT AND TYPE—OF THE MIND—TAKEN FROM THE BODY. Reason, instinct, conscience, the instruction of revelation, the highest possible instruction, that of *the Spirit*, each and all are the lamp and light of the mind. But what are they when they are not each severally "single;" when they are made "evil;" when error adulterates truth; when impurity, and self-seeking, and self-confidence, and undocility, and resistance of holy motions, and the doing of despite to the Spirit;—when one or more or all of these baulk or block the straight, steady advance and operating of the good and true and holy? If error prostitutes truth, and an evil spirit usurps the seat of the good Spirit, then the state of that man, in whom scenes of mischief and disaster such as these have their way, is worse than if he had *not* reason or conscience, and had been left unvisited of Divine instruction and Divine importunity.—B.

Ver. 24.—*Singleness of service.* To the most suggestive instruction and warning respecting singleness of eye follows now the subject, an evident sequel, of singleness of devotion. The most perfect perception and intelligence are certainly no guarantee of devotion of service, loyal and unswerving; but if there be the ready mind and honest disposition to this, then the sight, clear and quick, and perception unerring, will be most tributary to that service. The vainest waste of effort, the most prodigal dissipation of energy, must be the reward of the man who does not see with a perfect sight *this*—that he cannot "serve two masters." Lead in the great lessons belonging to this language of our Lord by generally and lightly dwelling upon the meditation of—

I. HOW PERVADING AND PENETRATING A FACT OF HUMAN LIFE SERVICE IS; THAT IT VINDICATES ITSELF AS NOTHING LESS THAN A LAW OF HUMAN NATURE, INEVITABLE, USEFUL, HONOURABLE; AND THAT ITS VARIOUSNESS, DRAWING WITHIN ITS BENEFICENT RANGE EVERY AGE AND EVERY MANNER OF INTEREST, IS MOST NOTABLE.

II. HOW SERVICE IS BOUND UP IN THE VERY NAME, THE NATURE, AND HIGHEST ASPECTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF WHAT MEN CALL RELIGION.

III. HOW, THEN, IT MUST BE THE GREATEST OUTRAGE ON REASON, RIGHT, CONSCIENCE, AND THE SOUL SO TO SERVE AS TO UNDO WITH THE ONE HAND WHAT IS DONE

WITH THE OTHER; AND THAT THIS IT IS, WITH THE MOST CHARITABLE CONSTRUCTION, TO ESSAY TO "SERVE TWO MASTERS."

IV. BUT, LASTLY, HOW (WHEN A LITTLE MORE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED) THAT OUTRAGE IS ONE WHICH MEANS VERY TREASON IN THE HEART ITSELF. IT MEANS NOT WASTE ONLY NOR FOLLY ONLY, BUT INFIDELITY; AND THE SETTING AT NOUGHT OF ALL PROMISE AND ENGAGEMENT OF THE HEART TO THE "FIRST AND GREAT COMMANDMENT."—B.

Vers. 25—34.—*The condemnation of the toil of the world.* These ten verses form one section and cover one subject. Its connection with that of the foregoing verse is pronounced. "Therefore," because of this, "I say unto you." We are not in any doubt as to it, and the fact guides us to the understanding of the principle that forms the basis of the section. Notice here four ways in which this section may be exhibited.

I. THE CONDESCENSION—AN UNDIVIDED SERVICE IS CLAIMED; BUT IT IS MET BY THE OFFER OF AN UNDIVIDED TRUSTINGNESS TO BE REPOSED AND TO BE REWARDED.

II. SIN'S NATIVE DOOM OF TOIL LIFTED OFF BY THE INVITING GOSPEL OF TRUSTING DEPENDENCE; IT IS THE GOSPEL OF A LEGITIMATELY AUTHORIZED DEPENDENCE; AND OF ONE GUARDED FROM SLOTH.

III. THE ABJECT SLAVERY OF AN UNREASONABLE TOIL SUPERSEDED BY THE SWEET FREEDOM OF CHILDREN'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THEIR FATHER.

IV. THE LOYAL SEEKING AND FOLLOWING OF THE SOVEREIGN GOOD FOR LIFE AND HEART, THE SUREST EARNEST OF ALL OTHER THINGS FINDING THEIR PLACE; AND OF TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW BEING PROVIDED FOR.—B.

Vers. 1—18.—*Sermon on the mount:* 4. *Ostentatious religion.* After indicating the righteousness which admits to the kingdom of heaven, our Lord proceeds to warn against a flaw that vitiates the goodness of many religious people, and to illustrate it in connection with three chief characteristics of the religious life of those days—almsgiving, prayer, and fasting.

I. ALMSGIVING has been recognized as one of the first duties by most religions. Under the Jewish Law the poor were well provided for. It was probably in connection with the receptacles for alms in the women's court of the temple that ostentatious liberality was most frequently indulged in. "Sounding a trumpet" is not to be taken literally, but is only a figure implying that when you do a charity you are not to make a noise about it, but do it so quietly that your own left hand may not know what your right hand is doing, not even letting it dwell much before your own mind, much less craving for acknowledgment from others. We are not beyond the danger of giving, either that we may not be outdone by others, or because our love of applause is stronger than our love of money, and we think it a good use of it if by giving it away we can purchase the good will of our acquaintances.

II. IN CONNECTION WITH PRAYER THERE WAS MUCH ROOM FOR OSTENTATION IN THE JEWISH RELIGION. As the Mohammedan of the present day spreads his prayer-carpet wherever the hour of prayer overtakes him, so the Jew was called on three times a day to pray towards the temple. In every town the synagogues were open at the hour of prayer, and there were also places of prayer, chiefly on the banks of the rivers, that the necessary ablutions might be made on the spot. The Pharisee often allowed himself to be surprised by the hour of prayer in the public square. Ostentation implies insincerity, and insincerity begets vain repetition. Our Lord sets this down as a specially heathen trait, and it is one which abundantly characterizes their practice to this day. But his warning against long prayers and vain repetitions applies to all affectation of continuance in prayer merely because it is the custom and is expected; and to that which arises from indifference and from a want of some clear definite object of desire which we can ask for in plain, simple terms.

For the correction of these faults our Lord gives us an example of simple brief prayer, and also adds the assurance that no elaborate explanations are required, because *before we pray* our heavenly Father knoweth the things we have need of. He does not shape his answer with only our petition for his guidance, but, knowing before we do what we have need of, he gives us that good gift which we only vaguely conceive. This may suggest the thought—Why pray at all? Does not even the earthly parent

consider and seek his child's good without waiting to be asked? Is it otherwise with God? But we are commanded to pray, and this of itself is sufficient justification. Also it is natural—the great mass of men having prayed without command. This, if not a justification of the practice, shows we should see clearly before refusing to fall in with it. Moreover, it is by coming in practical contact with his father's ideas that a child learns to know his father and himself; and the father often keeps back a gift till the uttered request of the child shows he is ripe for it. So by measuring our desires at each step of our life with the will of God, we learn to know him and ourselves, and through the things of this life are brought into true relation with things eternal. The form of prayer which our Lord here gives, he gives chiefly as a model. To argue from it that he meant us to use forms of prayer is inconsequent. They have their uses—in private to suggest and stimulate; in public to provide for uniformity and seemliness of worship. But when they are used to the extinction or discouragement of unwritten prayer they do harm in private and in public. The practice of private prayer here inculcated is one of the most difficult duties we have to attempt in life. It is often at this point the battle is lost or won. None of the deeper elements of character can grow without much prayer and converse with God. There are some virtues which can be produced by strength of will, but those which spring from the deeper root of reverence, penitence, tender and solemn feeling, can only grow in the retired and peaceful atmosphere of God's presence. Prayer is the door opened for God into the whole life of man, and to shut him out here is to shut him out wholly. Our Lord himself could not sustain his life without prayer; it is vain, therefore, for us to expect to do so. But, though all this is recognized, private prayer decays. If we can use in the world only that power for good which we receive from God, and if prayer is the gauge of this power, it will register an almost infinitesimal strength. We grudge to our intercourse with God either the time or the consideration we give to any communication that concerns our business or our friendship. And this means that duties that are seen of men we do, but such as are only seen of our Father, who "seeth in secret," we neglect. It means that we are practically atheists, and do not believe there *is* a Father who sees in secret. The general scope of the passage is a warning against *hypocrisy*. The hypocrite who is so intentionally is rare. The hypocrisy which is common is that which is unconscious, and in which the hypocrite is himself deceived. He seeks the praise of men more than the praise of God; but he is not himself aware of it. This makes it a fault most difficult to eradicate. But to such men there can be no religion; human judgment is the highest they seek to be approved by. It is their supreme. Even in the religious world men are liable to put the expectations of their co-religionists above the judgment of God. They fear to rebel lest they be considered as falling away from religion. Such persons, as our Lord says, have their reward. They earn the reputation of sanctity by sacrificing the real possession of it. Is it another reward that awaits you? Are you conscious that God, who sees in secret, has laid up in his remembrance many true prayers, many holy desires, many earnest searchings of heart that he has seen in you? Nothing but learning to live in his presence will deliver us from falseness and self-deceit and from courting the favour of men.—D.

Vers. 19—34.—*Sermon on the mount:* 5. *Thought for the morrow.* There has been set before us a righteousness, perfect in its outward expression and in its root, and if now we ask—How are we to attain this? we are told—By loving it. That is the only way. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Your likings are the eyes of your inner man; if they are rightly placed your whole life will be right. Just as a man has an organ to guide him in the physical world, so he has an organ for his guiding in the moral and spiritual world. If the eye is sound, the whole body is full of light, that is, every member receives through the eye all the light it requires. But if the eye be unsound, no other organ can play its part. It is vain for you to give the blind man more light; it is not more light but other eyes he needs. And so, says our Lord, it is vain to profess that your heart is where in fact you see no treasure at all. Rather humbly own that you do not see as you ought, and seek to have your vision cleared by him "who came into this world that they that see not might see." In the remainder of the passage our Lord addresses himself to those who, though not drawn by the attractiveness of the heavenly treasure, yet wish to have it along with the

earthly. He had seen how the fear of poverty influenced men, and seeks, by a variety of arguments, to root out undue thought for the morrow.

I. IF GOD GIVES YOU LIFE, HE WILL ALSO GIVE YOU SUITABLE FOOD AND CLOTHING. The greater gift implies the less. The heavenly Father who could produce so marvellous a work as the body, and who could originate life, has certainly power for the common, everyday achievement of providing you with food and clothing.

II. YOU ARE MORE VALUABLE IN GOD'S ESTIMATION THAN THE LOWER ANIMALS, and, if even they are well provided for, much more will you be cared for. The strength of the argument lies in two points. First, we are better equipped for providing against the future than the birds are, and should therefore be more free from care. No doubt their cheerfulness arises from ignorance, but our ability to look forward is abused if it only makes us despondent and fearful. Second, it is your heavenly Father who feeds them. The other creatures are only a kind of step-children. And if God delights in the happiness of myriads of creatures who cannot know and thank him, is it justifiable that we should in any circumstances question his desire to bless us? Clearly this amounts to an assertion of the doctrine of special or particular providence, and there is no one who may not from our Lord's words draw encouragement to expect providential care and intervention.

III. UNDUE SOLICITUDE ABOUT THE FUTURE DOES NO GOOD. "Which of you *by taking thought* can add one cubit to his stature?" There is a legitimate and necessary consideration of the future with which our Lord has no quarrel. Reckless improvidence is a fault no less than over-providence. The taking thought which our Lord rebukes is a vain inoperative brooding over possible disasters—a brooding to which the mind returns for the very reason that nothing is effected by it; were anything effected by it, it would cease.

IV. EACH DAY HAS SUFFICIENT BURDEN OF ITS OWN. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." If the evil that should be met to-day is not to lie over and follow on into to-morrow, then your whole strength is needed for immediate duty. You must adopt the great military rule if you are to be successful; you must break up your life into small portions, and conquer in detail. The best preparation for to-morrow is to do the duty of to-day. This is a great practical rule which, if followed, eases life of most of its burden. For what causes anxiety is commonly something that has not happened, which belongs to to-morrow rather than to to-day. Are you sufficient for the duty of to-day? Then be satisfied, and leave to-morrow till it comes. Learn to live one day at a time.

But all these considerations only serve to lead up to the great precept, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." All men would be willing to make the kingdom of God the second thing, but each man would like to choose his own first thing. Every man has some first object, it may be life, or honour, self-respect, or a pure conscience which he would rather preserve than anything else. But the demand here made is no more than saying we are moral creatures, made in God's image; and morality, if not supreme, is not morality. To put it in the second place is to annul it. Further, we all admire the men who have conspicuously practised this precept; who have shown themselves superior to the world, that they might be free to find the truth or to relieve the miseries of their fellow-men. Such men have shown us how independent of the world a man of free spirit can be, and how he can give himself to the highest work of man as freely and effectively here and now as in any conceivable world. Greatness of character in this respect is nothing else than greatness of love. Practically this precept is in most cases reversed. We *must* secure food and raiment; we shall welcome righteousness afterwards. The earthly is the essential, the heavenly the supplementary. Our earthly interests are so pressing, we must in the first place put them on a satisfactory basis, and we do not recognize the highest conceivable morality as that which can alone put our business on a satisfactory footing. But righteousness is not to be postponed to anything else; and if the spirit of Christ cannot be carried into the forms which business has taken, these forms must go. Those who would postpone the kingdom of heaven to other interests should consider whether it is likely that, after they shall have lived for the world for a few years longer, they will be more inclined than now to seek the kingdom of God.—**D.**

Vers. 1—4.—*Almsgiving.* Underlying this subject is that of social inequality. Without the latter there would be no necessity and therefore no opportunity for almsgiving. Poverty is not an unmitigated evil. Affluence is not an unmixed good.

I. SOCIAL INEQUALITY IS A BENEFICENT ARRANGEMENT. 1. *It aids the progress of civilization.* (1) Civilization lies in the development of the resources of nature. Such developments are embodied in arts and sciences. (2) Stimulus is necessary to this progress. Man in his original purity and elevation might, for sheer love of science and art, develop the resources of nature; but in his fallen state his tendencies are savageward. When the spontaneity of the soil is overtaxed by the increase of population, then comes the alternative of labour or exterminating war. (3) Under Christian influence labour is preferred to war. Here social inequality comes in. For industry will be rewarded with plenty, while idleness has to suffer privation. Civilization meanwhile is advanced by industry. The continued growth of population stimulates inventiveness. This reaps its rewards and gives employment to labour. New elements of social inequality now come in, and the arts and sciences are further advanced. 2. *It educates the moral qualities.* (1) Social virtues are called forth. If no labouring class existed, no class could be exempt from toil. The rich, therefore, are indebted to the poor for their ease and honour. Were there no poor there could be no rich. Gratitude and equity alike require that the rich should treat the poor with consideration. Hence what is given to the poor is said to be their *due* (see Prov. iii. 27). (2) The poor, in like manner, are bound to treat their employers with respectful gratitude for finding for them remunerative employment. (3) We are herein reminded of our duties to our Maker. We could have no conception of our dependence upon God but for our experience of dependence upon the things he has made. The mutual dependence of the social classes brings this lesson more forcibly home. The beast and devil in our fallen nature are restrained by the sense of our responsibility to God. (4) Scope is afforded for the exercise of Christian graces. Patience is tested and educated. Opportunity is afforded for beneficence. Thought is raised to the contemplation of the suffering and love of Christ. 3. *Poverty is not without advantages.* (1) The poor are comparatively free from artificial wants and cares. They can relish plain and wholesome food. They are relieved from the cares of fashion. They are free from the anxiety of keeping wealth, which is much greater than that of getting it. Of all poverty the artificial is the deepest. (2) The poor are free from the temptations of affluence. To the indulgence of self. To the forgetfulness of God. Let no man murmur at his lot. (3) The poor are not so mean as they seem. The possession of human nature is vastly grander than the possession of estates. To be a man is greater than to be a monarch. Christ did not refuse to become a man, though he refused to be made a king. The purest aristocracy is that in which manhood is honoured by virtue. This bluest of all blue blood may be acquired by the poorest.

II. BENEFICENCE SHOULD BE WITHOUT OSTENTATION. 1. *Otherwise it will encourage hypocrisy.* (1) Obviously it will encourage this in the *almsgiver.* His very object is to gain the applause of men. He seeks this by an affectation of piety towards God. (2) It will encourage it likewise in the *recipient.* There is fearful hypocrisy in ostentatious poverty. Vagabonds moving compassion by feigning fits, wounds, mutilations, lameness, etc. These public hypocrites are the people who catch the charity of ostentation. They hear the sound of the Pharisee's trumpet. They trumpet the Pharisee that he may have his reward. (3) True beneficence will search out this hypocrisy and expose it, so that the worthy poor may not be cheated by it. It will seek out the worthy poor who suffer in seclusion. To do this may entail trouble, but the steward of wealth should make it his business to disburse faithfully his Lord's money. 2. *Unostentatious charity will encourage industry.* (1) God helps those who help themselves. We should imitate God in helping the industrious. Charity should find employment for the needy. It may be "business" to buy in the cheapest market, but this is not the rule of charity. (2) In helping a poor man in his trade, his self-respect is not wounded as it must be by an ostentatious charity. We should remember that every poor man is another one's self. 3. *Charity should seek its rewards from God.* (1) In condemning ostentation modesty is enjoined. Barely being "seen" while doing good is a circumstance purely indifferent. To be seen so as to glorify God is positively good (cf. ch. v. 16; x. 32, 33). To be seen that we may be admired and honoured of

men is the offence. For God, not man, is the Source of reward. (2) "Let not thy left hand know," etc. So do good things as to be, as little as possible, conscious of it yourself. Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone. So the godly shine, though to themselves their shining is unseen. (3) To the truly charitable God is a Rewarder. The pocket of poverty is a safe bank, for God is the Banker. He converts paper into gold—returns spiritual value for material gifts (cf. Prov. xi. 24; xix. 17; 1 Tim. vi. 17—19). (4) The burden of hoarded property is heavy upon the pillow of death. God will confront the miser in the judgment (cf. Luke xvi. 9; Jas. v. 1—4).

LESSONS. Avoid monopoly. Spend not upon the rich. Be your own executor.—J. A. M.

Vers. 5—8.—*Prayer.* The duty of prayer is assumed. To be without prayer is to be without religion. "Behold, he prayeth," is another way of saying, "He has become a Christian" (Acts ix. 11). Prayer is the language and homage of dependence. The idea is that of coming to God for a blessing with a vow (προσεύχῃ, from πρός, "with," and εὐχή, "a vow"), viz. to fulfil the conditions upon which his blessings are promised. The elements of acceptable prayer are—

I. SINCERITY. 1. *The prayer of the hypocrite is deception.* (1) He deceives his fellow. His object is to be seen of men to pray. But his piety to God is but a semblance. God sees no prayer in it. The men who credit the hypocrite with piety are deceived. (2) He deceives himself. He gets what he seeks, viz. the praise of men. But what is it? It is inconsiderate. It is fickle. It is short-lived. And vain as it is, it is not deserved. 2. *The prayer of the hypocrite is idolatry.* (1) The true God is not worshipped. The hypocrite's prayer is a slight upon him. His praise is not even sought. (2) In seeking the praise of men, the hypocrite, like other idolaters, makes his god in his own image. His prayer is to men. They are his idols. (3) In seeking the praise of men, the hypocrite worships himself. He sees himself in his idol. Idolatry is an inverted self-worship. 3. *The true man's prayer is true.* (1) He prays to God as his Father. He has kindredness of nature to the God of truth. To be seen of men is not in his calculation. (2) He seeks the commendation of his God. This is to him the one thing infinitely desirable.

II. SIMPLICITY. The expedients of hypocrisy are avoided. 1. *As to posture.* (1) Standing is not, in itself, a posture unsuitable to prayer (cf. Neh. ix. 4; Mark xi. 25; Luke xviii. 11—13). The change of posture from kneeling to standing may be found helpful to the spirit of prayer. (2) Standing "to be seen of men" is quite another thing. Kneeling, if this be its purpose, is equally reprehensible. (3) The spirit may kneel to God in humility, or stand before him in ready obedience, when the body is otherwise engaged. 2. *As to place.* (1) The "synagogue" was the proper place for public prayer. Note: In public worship we should avoid whatever might tend to make our personal devotion remarkable. (2) The synagogue was not the place for private devotions. The custom of opening churches for private worshippers tends to encourage hypocrisy. (3) The "corners of the streets" where the people were in concourse were favourable to ostentation. The hypocrites "loved to pray" *there.* They did not love to *pray.* (4) Secret prayer should be in secret. The true God is himself in secret. In secret he is sought and found. God *seeth* in secret (cf. John i. 48; Acts ix. 11). By secret prayer we give God the glory of universal presence. The true man may find a closet in the busy throng. The closet is in the heart. There we may shut the door against the world, the flesh, and the devil. Secret prayer should be in retirement to avoid (*a*) ostentation, (*b*) distraction. Isaac went into the field (Gen. xxiv. 63); Christ went up into a mountain; Peter found a closet on the housetop. 3. *As to manner.* (1) Long prayers are sometimes proper (cf. 1 Kings xviii. 26; Luke vi. 12; Acts xix. 34). But in this case the virtue does not lie in their length. (2) Long prayers are to be avoided as tending to weary, and therefore to distract the suppliant (cf. Job ix. 14; Eccles. v. 2; Hos. xiv. 2). (3) They are to be avoided as encouraging vain repetitions. To repeat words without meaning is especially vain. Repetitions suppose ignorance or inattention on the part of God. They are heathenish (see 1 Kings xviii. 26, 36). True prayer is not the language of the lip, but of the heart. (4) Those who would not be "as the hypocrites" in action and manner must not be "as the hypocrites" in spirit and temper.

III. FAITH. 1. *Prayer gives no information to God.* (1) "Thy Father seeth in secret." God reads all hearts. (2) "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of." God knows his own resources. (3) He knoweth "before ye ask him." "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning." 2. *Prayer is enjoined to help us to feel our need.* (1) God requires the sense of their need in suppliants for their own sake, viz. that they may value the blessings they may receive. (2) Prayer is admirably suited to awaken and deepen this sense of need. (3) By the sense of our need we "make known our requests to God" (Phil. iv. 6). 3. *It is also enjoined to encourage our faith in God.* (1) We come to God as our "Father." He is our Father by creation. By covenant. (2) He has the heart and resources of a Father. What merit is there in our prayers? Yet such is the heart of kindness of our Father that he places them amongst our services. "Thy Father which seeth in secret shall *recompense* thee." (3) He is our heavenly Father. So his rewards contrast with those received from men by the hypocrite. While the hypocrite in gaining the praises of men "has received his reward," and has no more to expect, the true man will evermore continue to receive his rewards from the everlasting Father. That eye of God which is formidable to the hypocrite is bliss to the sincere and true.—J. A. M.

Vers. 9, 10.—*The Lord's Prayer* (part 1). In the Gospel of Luke this prayer is given in still briefer form. The occasion there was that the disciples, after the Lord had prayed, said to him, "Lord teach us to pray, even as John also taught his disciples. And he said unto them, When ye pray, *say*." Here, however, "*After this manner* pray ye." The use of *forms* is sanctioned; so is *extemporary* prayer. Better a "*form* of sound words" than no family worship. Consider—

I. THE ADDRESS TO GOD. 1. *It is a great truth that God is our Father.* (1) He is the Creator, not the Father, of his other works. Ethers; minerals; vegetables; animals. No kindredness of nature to God in these. (2) He is the "Father of spirits." Every attribute of the human spirit is the image of a corresponding Divine attribute. Intellects; affections. (3) Even the body of man was made after the similitude of the Lord (cf. Gen. i. 26; ii. 7). The body is the material image of the soul. When God revealed himself to man, his similitude was the appearance of a man (see Ezek. i. 26—28). 2. *This Divine title is proper to the gospel dispensation.* (1) It is a notable fact that the title "Father" seldom occurs in Old Testament Scripture. Nowhere is God there invoked as a Father. (2) There is a reason of propriety. The spirit of the Law was *fear*. The Law was given amidst horrors and alarms. Its rites imposed an oppressive burden. (3) It is also a notable fact that the title "Father" is of frequent occurrence in the New Testament. It is the familiar title in Christian invocation. The Lord's Prayer is the model for all Christian prayer. (4) There is also a reason of propriety here. The spirit of the gospel is love. It is the spirit of sonship and liberty. This is all embodied in the mystery of the incarnation of the proper Son of God (see Gal. iv. 1—7). 3. *Note the plural,* OUR *Father.* (1) The use of the singular is very sweet. It is suited sometimes to the closet. Sometimes to ejaculatory prayer. (2) The plural recognizes the common Fatherhood of God. So the common brotherhood of man. Its use should cure war, strikes, domestic feuds. (3) It recognizes brotherhood in Christ. He is every man's Brother (cf. Gen. ix. 5). The family of God is named after him (cf. Eph. iii. 14, 15). (4) In its common use all the sons of God pray for each. This is better than each praying exclusively for himself. Better for *each*, better for *all*. 4. *Note the place of his residence.* (1) God is in the mechanical heavens. He moves the spheres. He give the tides. So the seasons. The elements are his servants. His miracles evince his presence in nature. His providence in nature is constant. So he can make nature respond to prayer. (2) He is in the supernal heaven. The heaven of heavens. The third heaven. The palace of angels. The place of vision. (3) He that rules all heavens is our Father! What an honour! How superior should we be to the meanness of sin!

II. THE ASCRIPTION OF PRAISE. 1. *The Name of God stands for himself.* (1) It represents his nature (cf. Exod. xxxiii. 18, 19; xxxiv. 5—7). (2) It is his Word. Christ is the Revealer of the Father (cf. Exod. xxiii 20, 21; Isa. lii. 5; John i. 18; viii. 19; 1 Tim. vi. 1; Titus ii. 5). 2. *To hallow is to revere God's Name.* (1) "Father" is a title in which reverence, as well as love, is claimed. So it was under-

stood by the sons of the prophets. So by Joash King of Israel (cf. 2 Kings ii. 12; vi. 21; xiii. 14). (2) Cheerful obedience is the true reverence of love (see ch. xxiii. 9). (3) To hallow the Name of the Father is to honour the Father in the Son (cf. John v. 22, 23; 1 John ii. 23). 3. *The Name of the Father should be everywhere revered.* (1) It is revered in heaven (cf. ver. 10; Isa. vi. 1—3; Rev. iv. 8—11). (2) But is it so revered on earth? In the sanctuary it is revered. The Church is the kingdom of heaven upon earth. But in the world the sacred Name is horribly blasphemed. (3) The blessed day is coming when the glory of the Lord will fill the earth as now it fills the heavens. Pray for this. Strive for this.—J. A. M.

Vers. 10, 11.—*The Lord's Prayer* (part 2). The verses before us contain three of the seven petitions of this model prayer. These are—

I. THAT THE KINGDOM OF GOD MIGHT COME. 1. *God's absolute empire is in his arm.* (1) It was there before the creation. From everlasting. Essentially. (2) Millions of possible universes now slumber in that arm. 2. *The kingdom coming is the gospel in triumph.* (1) The kingdom came in the advent of the King. It was manifested in his mighty works of wisdom and love. The essence of sovereignty resides in laws. The gospel laws are immutable wisdom and love. They are the laws of heaven, and therefore the voice of the sovereignty of heaven. (2) The kingdom comes *spiritually* when the gospel triumphs in the believer. When it informs his mind. When it directs his will. When it captivates his affections. When it rules his life. (3) It will come *visibly.* The fifth monarchy of Daniel describes the coming kingdom (see Dan. ii. 44; vii. 26, 27). In this kingdom the Lord from heaven will bring with him the angels of heaven. It will be the kingdom of the first resurrection (Rev. xx.). In it the Redeemer will be "King of kings, and Lord of lords;" for his saints will then be "kings and priests unto God." 3. *We should pray for the coming of Christ in his kingdom.* (1) Visibly. Righteousness will then replace oppression and distraction. Peace will replace violence and war. Joy will replace misery and sorrow. (2) Spiritually. The suppliant should seek himself to become an epitome of heaven. Loyalty to Christ the King. No rebel in the soul. Perfect love.

II. THAT THE WILL OF GOD MIGHT BE DONE. 1. *In the heavens it is perfectly done.* (1) In the *mechanical* heavens. The stellar heaven. The atmospheric heaven. (2) In the *angelic* heaven. The ear of angelic obedience is sensitive. The wing of angelic obedience is swift. "They go and return like a flash of lightning." (3) There is no prayer here that the will of God may be done in heaven or in the heavens. The way in which it is done there is taken as a pattern for us. 2. *The will of God is man's highest wisdom.* (1) Necessarily so, for it is the wisdom of God. See its expressions in nature. Uses; adaptations; balancings. (2) See its expressions in the gospel. Design; means to the end. (3) We have it in the example of Christ (see ch. vii. 21; xii. 50). Therefore choose religion (cf. Josh. xxiv. 15; 1 Thess. v. 18). (4) The will of love pledges help. We cannot trust ourselves to fulfil God's Law. We may trust the help of his Spirit.

III. THAT WE MAY BE NOURISHED IN HIS SERVICE. 1. *Bread stands for the necessaries of life.* (1) Ἄρτον, like לחם, expresses all these (cf. Gen. xlix. 20). (2) Things necessary for the life of the body. Food. Coverings, viz. raiment and habitation. "Our bread." This is a prayer for remunerative labour (cf. Gen. iii. 19; 1 Thess. iv. 11, 12; 2 Thess. iii. 10). What we eat without labour is not *our own* bread. (3) Things necessary for the life of the Spirit. *Nourishment.* From the Word—in the ordinances. *Protection.* From the wrath of God. From the power of evil. 2. *This is the language of pilgrims.* (1) "This day." Life is a day. (2) "Daily bread." The manna was gathered daily. So is our spiritual as well as our natural food. Supply us with profitable subjects for thought—affection. These are the food of the mind. God gives angels what to think and love. (3) God is the Giver and the Gift. The Lord himself is the Bread. Still he cometh down from heaven. (4) Take no anxious thought for the morrow. As to the temporal supply. As to the spiritual. We do not receive the grace for dying until we are called to die. We should now be most solicitous about the grace to live. God knows our need. His resources are ample. His heart is good.—J. A. M.

Vers. 12—15.—*The Lord's Prayer* (part 3). Having considered three of the seven petitions of this wonderful prayer, we come to consider those remaining, which have reference to the forgiveness of evil and deliverance from the evil one.

I. THE FORGIVENESS OF EVIL. 1. *We need this.* (1) For we inherit depravity with its guilt. God deals with individuals as belonging to a race. We *are* our brothers' keepers. We are responsible for our children. So are we responsible for our fathers. The individual is not lost in the public conscience. Directors of joint-stock companies should remember this. (2) For sins of personal rebellion. From our youth up. Ever since we have professed to be Christians. (3) For service imperfectly rendered. Imperfect obedience does not meet the requirements of a Law which, like the Lawgiver, is perfect. Has our conduct before men been faultless? Has our spirit before God been faultless? 2. *It is conditionally promised.* (1) "Forgive us our debts, *as we*——" The Bible knows nothing of unconditional mercy. Man is ever treated by God as a moral agent. (2) The atonement of Christ is a condition of mercy. "Our debts," equivalent to "trespasses" (ver. 14), equivalent to "sins" (Luke xi. 4). Sin contracts a debt to be paid in suffering. If we shelter not in the vicarious suffering of Christ, we must still suffer in person for the satisfaction of the Law of God. (3) Repentance also is a condition of mercy. Note: A condition not of merit, yet of necessity. We cannot receive the atonement without it. The hearty reception of the atonement is the perfecting of repentance. (4) There is no mercy for the unmerciful. "Forgive us *as we also have* forgiven." Not that our forgiving merits God's forgiveness. Here it is *as in earth so in heaven* (see vers. 14, 15). Confer also the parable of the debtors (ch. xviii. 35). The ten thousand talents are equivalent to £2,400,000; while the one hundred pence are equivalent to £3 10s. Can the sinner ever pay all his debt to God? He asks eternal vengeance on himself who, with an implacable heart, prays this prayer.

II. DEFENCE AGAINST THE EVIL ONE. 1. *Lead us not into temptation.* (1) God is not the Author of temptation (see Jas. i. 13). Note: Temptation is ever in our way. (2) This is an entreaty that God should not abandon us in temptation. So to abandon us would be to deliver us over to Satan (cf. Acts xxvi. 18; 1 Cor. v. 5; 2 Tim. iv. 18). (3) This prayer implies that we should have such diffidence of our own strength as to lead us to deprecate any severe trial of our fidelity. We should not covet martyrdom, lest in the trial we should fail. (4) The spirit of this prayer will restrain us from rushing into circumstances of exposure to temptation. It is wanting in those who make haste to be rich (see 1 Tim. vi. 9). This passion leads to business gambling. To lotteries. Raffling at Church bazaars gives a sacred sanction to some of the worst evils of the world. The spirit of this prayer is wanting in those who coquette with the world in any of its evils. 2. *Deliver us from the evil one.* (1) Then is Satan ubiquitous? For this petition ascends simultaneously from millions scattered over the world. In his emissaries he is, as the British monarch is representatively in all our colonial dependencies and in all foreign courts. (2) Satan's representatives are "legion." His hosts are marshalled under his generalship. What a call to us for vigilance! (3) God alone can curb the power of Satan. The power of Satan was sufficient to delay Gabriel for one and twenty days. To triumph over Satan Gabriel needed the help of Michael, *i.e.* of Christ (see Dan. x. 6, 13). Foolish is the man that would at his own charges engage in a warfare with such an antagonist. Foolish is the man who holds out in rebellion against the Conqueror of Satan. (4) To be delivered from the evil one is equivalent to the hallowing of the Name of God. The petitions of this prayer, first and last, are wondrously interdependent.—J. A. M.

Vers. 16—18.—*Fasting.* This is nowhere in the gospel enjoined as a duty. It is, like the profession of the Nazarite, left to individual freedom. The service of freedom is the service of love (cf. Luke ii. 37; Acts x. 30; xiii. 3). The spirit of the fast is in the heart (cf. Ps. xxxv. 13; Isa. lviii. 5—7). The usefulness of fasting is recognized in the directions here given as to the manner of its use. It is useful as a means to dispose us to the fulfilment of duties enjoined. Note—

I. THAT THE PIETY OF OSTENTATION IS SPURIOUS. 1. *It is an inversion of the highest propriety.* (1) For it prefers human to Divine applause. However indebted we may be to our fellows, we are infinitely indebted to God. For life. For health. For all things. (2) To seek the praise of men rather than the praise of God is the superlative

of impudence and folly. (3) It is supreme ingratitude to take all from God and give him no thanks. 2. *It is shameful hypocrisy.* (1) Fasting is an expression of humiliation and mourning (cf. Ps. xxxv. 13; Isa. lviii. 5—7). The disfigured face was produced by ashes and earth, with disordered hair and austere and doleful looks (see 1 Kings xx. 38). Under such disguises the Pharisee concealed proud and contemptuous thoughts and a callous heart. (2) The falsehood is aggravated by its affectation of religion. The Pharisee seeks the praise of men on account of a religion towards God which he does not possess, else he would rather seek the praise of God. The cheat is played off upon God. 3. *This is fearfully demoralizing.* (1) The habit of falsehood becomes the character of falsehood. The devil is the original liar. He is here the model in his most odious character of the angel of light. (2) We seek to resemble those with whom we would ingratiate ourselves. Imitation is the sincerest praise. We cannot rise higher than our standard. Men are our standard when we seek the praise of men. (3) If our standard be below us, the result is degradation. Instead of growing into the "increase of God," the hypocrite is shrivelling into the degradation of a devil. 4. *The piety is doubtful of our ostentatious mourning for the dead.* (1) If we believe the departed to be enjoying the exquisite bliss of Paradise, what reason have we to mourn (cf. John xiv. 28)? Is it not heathenish to mourn for the glorified? (2) If we fear the departed are suffering the torments of perdition we may well mourn. But is it decent to publish this to the world in our clothes? (3) If our mourning be simply that of natural affection, is it necessary to proclaim to the world that we have natural affection? Should we parade our grief? If the grief be not there, why, in deference to fashion, hang out the symbol of a lie? (4) Ostentatious mourning for the dead is often ruinously expensive to the poor.

II. THAT GOD REWARDS AND PUNISHES MEN BY GIVING THEM THE DESIRES OF THEIR HEARTS. 1. *True men have praise of God.* (1) They *seek* this above all things. (*a*) By the fasting of the mind from the delights of sin. (*b*) By hungering and thirsting for righteousness. (*c*) By trusting in the blood of Christ with a heart unto righteousness. (*d*) By delighting in good works—works of piety, works of benevolence. (2) They *have* it: (*a*) In the assurance of his favour. By the Spirit of adoption and regeneration. (*b*) In the light and guidance of his grace. (*c*) In triumph over death. (*d*) In the "Well done!" of the judgment. (*e*) In the rewards of immortality. (3) The true man performs the duties of his spiritual fasting with cheerfulness. His face is "washed" in purity—"anointed" with benevolence. Rejoicing in the favour of God, he is dead alike to the praise and censure of men (see Ps. lxix. 10, 13). 2. *False men receive the praise of their fellows.* (1) They seek this in preference to the praise of God, and they get what they seek. But what do they get? Dishonesty. The hypocrite is dishonest in taking praise he has not deserved. (2) From whom do they get this? From the simple, who cannot see through their knavery. Or from the sycophant, who does not object to be the accomplice of the knave. (3) True men would reprove their wickedness after the example of Christ with the Pharisees of his time. 3. *From God they have no praise.* (1) They do not seek his reward. To ensure this they must sacrifice sin and pride, which they are unwilling to do. (2) In greed after the finite they miss the infinite. In greed after the evanescent they miss the enduring. They forfeit heaven. (3) Moreover, they incur the anger of God. The perdition of hell is his retribution upon their insolence and folly.—J. A. M.

Vers. 19—21.—*Hoarding.* The all-absorbing desire of humanity is happiness. A depraved heart naturally seeks this in the world. Money, which "answereth all things," is the exponent of the world's good. Hence the feverish desire to accumulate money. Wealth comes to be loved and laid up because it is loved. This hoarding is sin.

I. MAKING PROPER PROVISION FOR THE FUTURE IS NOT HERE CONDEMNED. 1. *God commends this prudence in his system of nature.* (1) He has so ordered the seasons that one harvest yields enough to serve us until the next. The elements that ripen fruits in the soil tend to rot those gathered the preceding year. God cannot be displeased at our following his providence. (2) He impresses his providence upon the instincts of animals. Thus the bee stores in summer the honey that will serve it for the winter. The morals of nature are for our profit. 2. *He commends it in the economy*

*of grace.* (1) The term of our natural life is given as a probation to be utilized for eternity. It is the seedtime which, if neglected, will leave us to reap a harvest of thorns and thistles. (2) The God of grace is also the God of providence. The principles of grace, therefore, have their lessons of providence for us. 3. *He commends it in the lessons of providence.* (1) History and experience teach us that not only in Egypt in the days of Joseph, but in all lands and in all ages, seasons of plenty are followed by seasons of scarcity. Hence the proverbial "rainy day." (2) We see the sufferings of improvidence. The artisan, in times of plenty thrifty, will not need in duller times to sing through the streets for charity. While the asylum of the workhouse is no disgrace to the unfortunate, it is a disgrace to the improvident. The injunction of the text is that we are not so to lay up treasures upon the earth as to deprive us of the more precious and enduring treasure in heaven.

II. HOARDING IS DEPRECATED AS SINFUL AND PERNICIOUS. 1. *The hopes of riches are delusive.* (1) They do not give immunity from anxiety. The moth, the rust, and the thief, like spectres, haunt the dreams of the wealth-lover. He finds more anxiety in preserving than he found in acquiring his treasure. Men are killed by money. (2) They do not raise us above the fear of want. Millionaires have been so haunted with this fear, that to relieve them their friends procured for them parish relief, and have set them to work for wages on their own estates. (3) Gold cannot purchase health. (4) It cannot remove the terrors of a guilty conscience. 2. *The love of riches is degrading.* (1) The heart will be with its treasure. Its treasure, therefore, should be worthy of it. If heaven be the treasure, then the heart will be ennobled; for the God of purity is its glory. No moth, no rust, no thief, can deprive us of that treasure. (2) If the hoard be the treasure of the heart, degradation is inevitable. The heart cannot be separated from its treasure. Upon this principle it is that "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle," etc. (ch. xix. 24). (3) It hardens the heart. Monopoly is selfishness. The heart of the miser is hardened by a systematic resistance to the promptings of benevolence. We may challenge the world to produce a tender-hearted miser (see 1 John iii. 7). 3. *Riches invest death with additional terrors.* (1) For they have to be relinquished. Garrick conducted Johnson over his mansion, and, directing his attention to valuable pictures and other articles of treasure, expected to be praised for his taste; but the moralist said, "Ah, David, these are the things that make death terrible!" A clergyman walking with an elder brother through his grounds in Yorkshire remarked, "This is a lovely place. You ought to be happy here." "Yes, man," was the reply, "but there is that damned death!" (2) The guilty steward is also haunted by the terror of the account he will have to render to his judge (see Jas. v. 1—4). The wail, not of the poor only, but of lost souls who might have been saved had the Lord's money been invested in Christian enterprise, will pierce and alarm his conscience when death stares him in the face. 4. *Hoarded treasure is often a pernicious inheritance.* (1) How often is such an inheritance dissipated in prodigality! Young men who hope to inherit fortune are seldom disposed to grapple with the difficulties of gaining a profession. Habits of indolence lead to dissipation. (2) Sometimes the hoard inherited becomes the nucleus of a greater. To become a millionaire, or something like it, the inheritor will sell his very soul for gain. (3) How different is the history of the youth who has to rely upon his education and the blessing of God, and who helps the cause of God and humanity with the fruits of his industry! His heart is light. He dies in faith.

III. HOW DOES THE GOOD STEWARD MANAGE HIS ESTATE? 1. *He claims no absolute right of acquisition.* (1) He owns the Source of his prosperity (see Deut. viii. 17, 18). (2) He confesses that God could instantly reverse the tide of his success. (3) He never says, "I can do what I like with my own." 2. *He accepts his maintenance from God.* (1) He is entitled to his food, raiment, and habitation, for himself and those depending upon him. (2) He is, moreover, entitled to a provision against sickness and old age. (3) He is authorized in giving his family an education and a start in life. (4) God will himself add to all this the spiritual rewards of well-doing. 3. *With the rest his problem is to secure the maximum of good.* (1) To this end he will study the needs of men. This may be troublesome; but it is the business of the steward. God will not approve a slovenly disbursement of his money. (2) He will also study the best means of meeting the needs of men. The merits and claims of the great evangelical

and philanthropical societies will have due consideration. (3) He will cultivate the spirit of Christ, so that he may relieve the needs of men without wounding their sensibilities or injuring their self-respect. (4) In all things he will seek direction from God in prayer.—J. A. M.

Vers. 22, 23.—*Purpose.* The eye is the symbol for the purpose, motive, or intention of the heart. It is also put for the understanding. The head is powerfully influenced by the heart. Consider—

I. THE EYE IN RELATION TO THE LIGHT. 1. *The eye is not self-luminous.* (1) It is the "lamp" rather than the "light" of the body. God is the Light. True motives are from God. (2) The "single eye" is the motive to serve God alone. So in ver. 24 it is thus stated: "We cannot serve God and mammon." (3) We have nothing that we do not receive. 2. *It is the capacity for receiving light.* (1) The light of the world would avail little without the lamp of the body. The spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord (Prov. xx. 27). (2) The image of God in man capacitates him for union and fellowship with God. (3) The capacity for receiving light partakes of the nature of light. Hence the eye is said to enlighten the body. 3. *The capacity for God may be destroyed.* (1) The eye—the motive—may become constitutionally evil. "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness." The eye may lose its lustre by *disuse.* It may lose it by *abuse.* (2) The evil eye is the perverted heart, the covetous heart, the envious heart, the avaricious heart (cf. Prov. xxiii. 6, 7; ch. xx. 15; Mark vii. 22). The evil eye of the Pharisee sought the applause of men rather than the glory of God. (3) The *double* eye is the hypocritical heart. The eye is double when we profess to honour God and contrive to honour ourselves. When we seek our own things under colour of seeking the things of Christ.

II. THE EYE IN RELATION TO THE BODY. 1. *Motive gives quality to conduct.* (1) As the eye stands for the motive, so does the body stand for the whole deportment, conversation, or conduct of the man. (2) The eye brightens while looking at God, the essential Light; and it enlightens the whole body. (3) The dark eye involves the body in darkness. Evil motives corrupt the conversation (cf. Ps. lxxxii. 5). 2. *The matter is therefore momentous.* (1) Truth is satisfying. The whole body shall be full of light, as if all eye. Truth brings grace; it brings comfort. (2) Truth is generous. So will the motive be that is true (cf. Prov. xxii. 9; Jas. i. 5). (3) How great is that light! It enlightens the whole body. It is infinitely greater than the body. (4) Conversely, how great is that darkness! Error here; despair hereafter for ever.—J. A. M.

Ver. 24.—*Competitive services.* After discoursing of our treasure (vers. 19—21), and of the motive that should influence conduct (vers. 22, 23), our Lord here indicates two competitive services, viz. the service of God and the service of mammon. We have submitted to our acceptance—

I. THE SERVICE OF GOD. 1. *This implies trust in him.* (1) Trust in God, viz. for deliverance from the tyranny of sin. His help is pledged in his holiness. (2) Trust in God for his help against temptation. He urges us to resist the evil one. He expressly promises his aid. (3) Trust in God for strength to obey him. We need this, for our nature is prone to evil. His grace is sufficient. 2. *It implies love to God.* (1) His Law surveys the motives of the heart. Love is the fulfilling of the Law. (2) The spiritual Master cannot be served without love. Love is the master of the heart. (3) God is infinitely lovable. Truth itself. Essential goodness. The eye will be to the Master's hand (Ps. cxxiii. 1, 2). The servants of God will not serve mammon. 3. *It implies imitation of God.* (1) Imitation is the sincerest love. (2) There are things of God which are inimitable, *e.g.* omnipotence, infallibility. To attempt to imitate these would be outrageous presumption. (3) The imitable things of God are those qualities in which we were created after his image. Knowledge, righteousness, holiness. (4) To aid us in this we have the Spirit of Christ, who is emphatically *the* Image of God.

II. THE SERVICE OF MAMMON. 1. *This is the service of sin.* (1) Mammon is a name for worldly riches (cf. vers. 19—21; Jas. iv. 13). (2) It is any illicit love—anything of which money may be taken as the exponent. It may be appetite (Phil.

iii. 19). It may be ease. It may be honour: Pharisees. 2. *It is the service of Satan.* (1) Mammon is supposed to have been a Chaldean idol corresponding to the Greek Pluto. It is here put for Satan as opposed to God. Sinners do not sufficiently consider the kind of master they serve. (2) Mammon has still his images. Sometimes they take the form of coin, of bonds, of scrip, of estates. Sometimes of furniture, equipages, dress, food.

III. THESE SERVICES ARE IRRECONCILABLE. 1. *God is an imperial Lord.* (1) He claims the complete homage of all our powers by his absolute right of creation. This high claim is consistent with all legitimate secondary claims. (2) By his right of providence. By his providence our existence is every moment preserved. (3) By his right of redemption. Service here is claimed as gratitude for love. (4) Servitude to God is blessed slavery. It is such a slavery as brings perfect liberty. It is slavery to truth and love. 2. *Satan is an imperious tyrant.* (1) Half-service will not satisfy him. Lucifer would be like the Most High. (2) Where he cannot drive, he will lure his victims to destruction. His resources of ingenuity are vast. His persistency is unflagging. (3) Slavery to Satan is drudgery to cruelty. Human nature is too willing to be ruined. 3. *The masters are contrary.* (1) "God and mammon;" "light" and "darkness." (2) The services are as the masters. The orders of the masters are contrary. A man of the world cannot be a religious character. The servants of mammon hate God in their hearts. (3) The attempt to reconcile these services is folly. Those persons try to serve two masters who strain consistency to steer close to the vortex of worldliness. Those who try to make religion serve their secular interests. "The pretending mother was for dividing the child." The Samaritans found the attempt sorrowful to fear the Lord and serve other gods (2 Kings xvii. 33). "It is but *supposition* that gain is godliness."—J. A. M.

Vers. 25—34.—*Lessons of the fields.* God has so constituted the natural world that it furnishes apt similes to illustrate spiritual things.

I. THE FIELDS TEACH US TO BLESS GOD. 1. *They serve admirable material uses.* (1) They furnish us with food (see Gen. i. 29, 30). From the Creation to the Deluge vegetable food only was used. This diet is still, especially in warm climates, the more wholesome. (2) Vegetables are also useful for medicine. Partly because of its medicinal properties the tree of life appears to have had its name. The principal remedies of the pharmacopœia are from the vegetable kingdom. (3) Vegetables have also valuable economic uses. Timber, fibres, gums, and oils. 2. *They soothe and delight the sense.* (1) *Colour.* The elements of all calorific harmony are found in the prevailing green of the earth, with the blue and red of the heavens. (2) *Form.* This may be admired in the graceful curvature and flexure of branches of trees and plants. Also in the varieties of leaves and flowers. (3) *Texture.* So exquisite is the clothing of the lily, that the dress of an Eastern monarch, rich in the choicest productions of the loom and needle, with its gorgeous colouring and profusion of jewellery, sinks in the comparison. Test them severally under the microscope. 3. *They serve high moral purposes.* (1) They raise our thoughts to God (see Ps. cxlv. 15, 16). The food and medicine of vegetable nature suggest the nourishment and healing of the economy of grace. (2) The eloquence of the fields stirs our gratitude to God. It raises our thoughts to the Creator blessing us in the benevolence of acts. To our Redeemer blessing us in the benevolence of suffering.

II. THE FIELDS TEACH US TO TRUST PROVIDENCE. 1. *As they illustrate our dependence.* (1) Plants are dependent for nourishment upon the earth. (2) The rain also is necessary for their life. (3) They need likewise the sun and the air, in the vibratory motion of which they breathe. (4) The birds of the air and animals of the earth in turn depend upon vegetation. (5) All second causes depend upon God (cf. John iii. 27; 1 Cor. iv. 7). 2. *As they illustrate God's thoughtful care.* (1) The comparison of the flower of the lily to clothing is not only poetically beautiful; it is botanically just. The flower serves the purpose of clothing to the seed-vessel. (2) This is evinced in the many exquisite contrivances, such as the provision of tendrils and claspers by which the tender vine avails itself of the strength of the oak. (3) The instincts by which birds are fed, without their sowing, or reaping, or gathering into barns, have their lessons of providence.

III. THE FIELDS TEACH US TO DESIRE DIVINE CLOTHING. 1. *There is a laudable attention to dress.* (1) When our Lord asks, "Why take ye thought for raiment?" he does not advise that we should be reckless as to our attire. He tells us, on the contrary, that our heavenly Father "knoweth that we have need of these things"—that he will "add" them to those who seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. (2) Our clothing exerts a moral influence. By it we may create prejudice favourable to usefulness or otherwise. (3) But there is another extreme. There are those who make clothing more than the body. There are those who plume themselves rather upon their clothes than their virtues. Who despise those who do not appear in gay attire. (4) How this vanity is rebuked in the clothing of the lily that goes into the oven, and by the plumage of insignificant birds! When Crœsus sat upon his throne in all the glory of his ornaments, and asked Solon whether he had ever seen a fairer spectacle, the philosopher replied, "Pheasants and peacocks; for they are clothed with a natural splendour and exceeding beauty." 2. *We should be clad in virtues rather than in velvets.* (1) Is there no reference to the clothing of the spirit in the beauties of holiness in ver. 31? God does not, in his providence, clothe our bodies *in the sense* in which he clothes the grass of the field. In this sense he does clothe our souls in righteousness. The robe of righteousness is emphatically a Divine robe. (2) This is clothing of surpassing beauty. The spiritual is greatly superior to the material. Then "shall he not *much more*," not only as a matter of certainty, but also in glory and beauty, "clothe you" (see 1 Pet. iii. 3, 4)? (3) This spiritual raiment is put on by faith. "Shall he not much more clothe you, *O ye of little faith?*" (cf. Rom. iii. 21, 22). 3. *We should look for the clothing of the resurrection.* (1) The body of the resurrection is represented as a clothing (cf. 2 Cor. v. 2—4). Under the expression "much more" this idea also may be included. (2) The resurrection is aptly illustrated by vegetable similes. The revival in spring (cf. Job xiv. 1, 2—7, 9—14, 15). (3) Our Lord compares the resurrection to the revival of seed-corn (see John xii. 23, 24). (4) What is there incredible in a resurrection (see 1 Cor. xv. 35—38)? What exquisite floral forms bloom from the dunghill!—J. A. M.

Ver. 1.—*The Christian law of giving.* In this second part of the sermon our Lord teaches his disciples how they should stand related to the recognized and usual expressions of religious life. In those days everybody who professed to be religious sought to show people their religion by giving alms, praying, and fasting. But Jesus taught that character, motive, spirit, were the things of supreme importance; and so here he virtually says, "Take care of the motives that inspire religious acts. They win the praise of men, and you may be doing them for the sake of that praise." Our Lord did but state the universal fact when he said, "Ye have the poor always with you." War, limited trade, inefficiently treated disease, and bad governments, have always tended to make a large proportion of Eastern people indigent and beggars. In every religious system the duty of caring for them has been commended.

I. ALMSGIVING IN ITS SOCIETY FORM. For, apart from all religious considerations, the sympathetic care of the poor is a society duty. And it should be seen that the poor among us have their mission to society, as truly as society has its mission to them. The poor bless us as well as receive a blessing from us. 1. They culture the hallowing sentiment of the "brotherhood of humanity," by calling for brotherly help. 2. They nurture the finer graces of human character; sympathy, gentleness, charity. It is the dark side of civilization that it has so changed our relation to the poor. Hospitality and personal service were the virtues of the simple East. Family isolation, and delegation of service, are the weaknesses of the guileful West. Modern society-relations seem to multiply the poor, so that they get beyond society-control. There are the poor (1) by bodily disability; (2) by unfortunate birth-associations; (3) by exigencies of trade; (4) by temporary distress; (5) by the wrong-doing of others. Almsgiving is still a great society claim and duty.

II. ALMSGIVING IN ITS CHRISTIAN FORM. Then it is seen as service directly rendered to Christ. It is a part of the way in which we do his work in the world; and, in doing it, express our love to him. But the loyalty to Christ makes the Christian wholly indifferent to the opinion of men concerning his almsgiving. It leads him (1) to estimate his means so that he may be able to give; (2) to carefully consider the claims

presented, so that he may give wisely; (3) to strive to make his gifts a help to moral character, and a witness for his Lord; and (4) to cherish a holy indifference to men's praise or blame.—R. T.

Ver. 2.—*Character shown in religious duties.* There is no certain evidence of such a custom as our Lord here refers to. Rich men sometimes had a certain day on which they distributed their alms. Then they may have sent round with a trumpet to call the poor people together. "In some cities Saturday is beggars' day, and every merchant, shopkeeper, and housewife lays by a store of coppers and remnants of food." Probably our Lord only used a figure, such as we employ when we speak of the "flourish of trumpets" by the boastful man. The chests in the temple to receive alms were trumpet-shaped, and were called trumpets; and no doubt some almsgivers would fling their coins into these trumpets so as to make a ringing noise, and call public attention to their benevolence. The point our Lord presents is this: almsgiving, as a recognized religious duty, finds expression for character—and it cultures the character through finding it expression—but let us be very careful that *our* charity finds expression for *Christian* character.

I. NATURAL CHARACTER FINDING NATURAL EXPRESSION. There is such a thing as the "milk of human kindness." Some people are born with amiable, sympathetic, charitable dispositions. Doing kind things is simply natural to them. It costs no effort. It involves no self-denial. They give freely. They give so pleasantly that we do not realize how little the giving costs them. We may thank God for the "charitably disposed" among us, and accept thankfully their help toward the perfecting of the human brotherhood.

II. DETERIORATED CHARACTER FINDING REPRESENTATIVE EXPRESSION. This is the case which Christ presents as a warning. Guileful persons, with lowered characters, will make their charity serve their selfish ends. You will see, by the way in which the gift is made, the publicity of it; the anxiety about a suitable report being made of it; the mean advantage taken of the recipient of it; and the continuous after-brag about it; that a very deteriorated character, with very low and poor motives ruling it, was at the back of the gift. If we accept the gift, we cannot approve the giver.

III. SANCTIFIED CHARACTER FINDING PIOUS EXPRESSION. Our Lord puts the pious expression into these forms. The disciple with the qualities indicated in the Beatitudes (1) keeps his giving secret from other people; (2) he even keeps it a secret from himself, and tries not to think about it (ver. 3); and (3) he does his kindness for his heavenly Father's sake, and because he wants to be a worthy child of him who is continually doing good.—R. T.

Ver. 4.—*The Father's open rewards.* "Shall reward thee openly." This turn of the sentence somewhat surprises us. It is not precisely what we expected. Making so much of giving in secret, and the Father seeing in secret, we expect to read, "shall reward thee in *secret* ways." Probably the "open reward" is promised because the man who makes a show of religion does so in order to get open and public fame. (It should, however, be duly noticed that the best manuscripts and most modern editors omit the word "openly.") Plumptre thinks the addition of the word "openly" weakens and lowers the force of the truth asserted. The difficulty of dealing with the word is clearly seen in the notion of some writers that "openly" must mean "before men and angels at the resurrection of the just," about which, at the time, our Lord was neither speaking nor thinking. A good point, and one which is practically important, is this: sincere and humble piety, finding gracious expression in kindly, thoughtful, generous, and self-denying service, will be sure to gain open and public recognition. Christian goodness is no violet "born to blush unseen, and waste its sweetness on the desert air." Men want that Christian goodness in all the life-spheres; and they are quick enough at recognizing it when they see it.

I. CHRISTLY-TONED CHARITIES WIN MEN'S ADMIRATION. We are all keen enough to discern the differences in gifts. We qualify our admiration when we recognize giving on mere impulse; or to get credit; or to outdo others; or to bring business. We keep our highest admiration for evident cases of self-denial, simple benevolence,

and Christian principle. Those who abuse Christianity admire the Christian charity which it inspires.

II. CHRISTLY-TONED CHARITIES WIN MEN'S CONFIDENCE. This is clearly shown in the very patent fact that, whenever there is a local or a national calamity, application is first made for help to the *Christian* people. There is a universal public confidence that, if any good work needs to be done, the Christians will be found ready for the doing. This is their open reward. Place, influence, power, in every generation comes into the hands of the sincerely good; and in this way God gives the reward which men are ever seeking, to those who do *not seek it*.—R. T.

Ver. 5.—*Hypocrite prayers.* Properly, the hypocrite is simply the "actor;" but the word has come to mean "one who acts a part with a view to deceive others, and get undeserved praise for himself." Standing at prayer was usual. Praying in the synagogues was usual. Praying in the streets, if you happen to be in the streets when the prayer-call sounds, is quite usual in the Mohammedan East of to-day. Our Lord does not reprove these things. Our Lord referred to a bad custom of his day. Men went into the synagogues, and stood apart as if absorbed in prayer, while secretly they were glancing round to see the impression which their superior devotion was making. "Prayer standing is the characteristic of the Jews to this day; and though not often to be seen on the streets in the East, is frequent on shipboard."

I. TEST THE CASE SUPPOSED BY THE PROPER OBJECT OF PRAYER. Here is a man who prays so as to draw attention to himself—prays for the sake of getting men's admiration of his praying. Now, is that the proper aim to set before us in praying? Does it matter what our fellow-men may think of us? We ought to pray simply to gain God's help and blessing. Prayer should be the expression of conscious need; it should be the utterance of fervent desire; it should be wholly concerned with the need, and with God, from whom the supply of the need is sought.

"Men heed thee not; men praise thee not.
The Master praises; what are men?"

II. TEST THE CASE SUPPOSED BY THE PROPER SPIRIT OF PRAYER. Prayer is uttered dependence. Prayer is supplication. It is precisely the feeling of dissatisfaction with self which inspires us to pray. And anything like self-exhibition is altogether foreign to prayer. A man must be satisfied with himself who confidently makes an exhibition of himself; and such a man wants nothing, and has nothing to pray for. In illustration of this point, reference may be made to the subtle peril which lies in emotional moods. There is a pride in religious *feelings*, which gets expression in *beautiful* prayers; and when pride is at the heart of them they cease to be prayers at all. There is much danger of insincerity in extempore public prayers, which must fail to be real prayers if they are "addressed to an audience," and intended to be admired by them rather than heard and answered by God.—R. T.

Ver. 6.—*The law of personal prayer.* That which relates to the individual. Private prayer. "Prayer is the offering up of our desires to God, for things agreeable to his will, in the Name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies." Our Lord assumes that his disciples will recognize the need for private prayer, and feel the impulse to private prayer, as distinct from the claim to join in the public prayers of synagogue and temple. "Come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker." "Enter into thy closet," etc. Our Lord's laws for private prayer seem to take a fourfold form.

I. HAVE A PLACE. The "closet" here is really the "store-chamber" of the house. Usually a dark closet, in which the articles used by night are stored away by day. In an Eastern house privacy could be secured in it. Our Lord made a place of prayer on the hillside or in the garden. St. Peter made a place of the quiet housetop. Washington was seen to retire daily to a grove in the vicinity of the camp at Valley Forge. The late General Gordon daily put a sign outside his tent to indicate that he wished to be alone for a while. The sailor-boy made a place at the mast-head; the little servant made a place in the coal-cellar. Of this it may be said, "Where there's a will there's a way."

II. BE ALONE. And feel alone. "Shut the door." "One great advantage of a chamber set apart for prayer is that it keeps us free from many distractions. Our hearts are ready enough of themselves to wander;" and so we need every outward help we can gain. The sense of being undisturbed is most helpful to concentration of thought. Illustrate how God took Moses and Elijah to be "alone with him," before he could speak freely to them. There is nothing so solemnizing as the feeling of being *shut up with God.*

III. SPEAK FREELY. Then we may do so, because there is no one near to hear us, and either admire or reproach us. We can be simply and entirely our own true selves before God. Even in private prayer Easterns spoke *aloud;* and for us to do so would give directness, point, and power to our petitions.

IV. CHERISH CONFIDENCE. Always keep in mind that you are speaking to the *Father,* and may have the good child's assurance. And confidence asks much. John Bunyan tells how beggars used to carry with them a bowl when they went to beg at a house. Some of them brought only small bowls; and so, however rich and bountiful the householder might be, he could not give them more than their bowl could contain; others brought great bowls, and carried them home full.—R. T.

Vers. 9—13.—*The dualities of the Lord's Prayer.* Of this prayer Ward Beecher says, "One knows not which most to admire in this form—its loftiness of spirit, its comprehensiveness, its brevity, its simplicity, or its union of human and Divine elements. All prayer may be said to have crystallized in this prayer. The Church has worn it for hundreds of years upon her bosom, as the brightest gem of devotion." Forms of devotion seem to have been provided by the ecclesiastical rulers. New forms had been given by John the Baptist. It was quite natural that our Lord's disciples should ask either selections from existing forms, or new forms, of prayer from him. Teaching them the *spirit* of prayer, they naturally asked him also to give them a suitable *form* in which that spirit might find expression. Now notice the Hebraic form in which the prayer is set. It is a series of dual sentences, the second repeating the first, with some amplification, after the familiar style of Hebrew writing.

I. THE FATHER-NAME. "Our Father." "Hallowed be thy [Father] Name." In this new name for God may be found the very essence of the revelation Jesus brought. He taught "good news of God;" right thoughts of God. Everything else follows from that; for to know God is eternal life. How far was the Father-Name a new revelation? Certainly, as used by Christ, it carries a new meaning and force. What is hallowing a Father-Name? Showing the obedience and devotion of sons. Remember Jesus called God "Holy Father," "Righteous Father."

II. THE KINGDOM OF THE WILL. "Thy kingdom come." "Thy will be done." These are plainly the same thing; for God's kingdom must be the "rule of his will." A living, active will creates a kingdom. If God's will were fully done, God's kingdom would have come. A kingdom of *moral beings;* ruled by a supreme and holy will. To pray for the kingdom to come is to yield ourselves to the service of the will.

III. GIVING AND FORGIVING. This part of the prayer concerns man's necessities. Our Father in heaven is interested in our daily needs. "Give!" is the cry of the needy child. "Forgive!" is the cry of the *sinful* child. Both attitudes are of supreme interest to our heavenly Father. "Bread" stands for all our *bodily* needs; "forgiveness" for all our *soul*-needs.

IV. DEFENDED AND DELIVERED. Treating ourselves as frail and weak, and yet exposed to evil. "No one can tell beforehand how he will be affected by persistent, insidious, and vehement temptations. If it is a duty to avoid evil, it is surely permissible to solicit Divine help thereto." This is the prayer of self-distrust and dependence. Compare "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe."—R. T.

Ver. 16.—*The moral influence of fasting.* The three expressions of the religious life introduced here—almsgiving, prayer, and fasting—are not treated as duties which we are bound to fulfil, but as things to which we are inwardly impelled by the movements of that religious life. Fasting especially is a personal resolve rather than a prescribed duty—helpful and useful, if a man thus voluntarily brings his body into self-restraint; a snare if, without a man's will, it is done in order to gain merit. Religious

fasting had long prevailed among the devout Jews. It had been perverted by ascetics on the one hand, and by Pharisees on the other. Because misused, our Lord dealt with it thus in the way of correction. He assumes that it is quite possible his disciples may desire to fast; he therefore deals with the proper spirit of fasting.

I. FASTING IS AN ACT OF SELF-RESTRAINT. It belongs to the sphere of self-discipline. And that is strictly a personal and private matter. A man may help his brother by his example, showing the results of self-discipline. No man is called to show his brother the process of self-discipline; indeed, he must spoil the process if he attempts to show it. There is a growth of the plant which must go on in the soil and in the dark. You can never safely expose rootings. Our Lord teaches, that all moral discipline and bodily restraint—which may be gathered up and represented by *fasting*—belong to a man's private life, and should not even be made publicly known by the man's appearance. It is, indeed, a distinct failure of self-restraint to want to show others our self-restraint.

> "Else let us keep our fast within,
> Till Heaven and we are quite alone;
> Then let the grief, the shame, the sin,
> Before the mercy-seat be thrown."
>
> (Keble.)

II. FASTING AS AN ACT OF HUMILIATION. Distinctly the design of fasting is to enfeeble appetite and to humiliate passions. It is noticed that appetites for self-indulgence are strong when the body is pampered with luxurious food. But it is no humiliation to show our humiliation, and get our restrainings praised. That does but change body-pride for *heart*-pride, which is more defiling. Note this danger: in fasting to restrain bodily appetite we may come to think that *evil is in the body*.—R. T.

Ver. 20.—*The treasures of character.* "Treasures in heaven." "Here moral excellence is put in contrast with material treasure. Men are to seek nobility of character, riches of feeling, strength of manhood, and not perishable wealth." Character is called "treasure in heaven," because it alone goes with us into the unseen world. It belongs to us; it cannot be parted from us. It is not something that we *have*; it is that which we *are*, wherever we are.

I. THE INSECURITY OF ALL TREASURE IN THINGS. Everything man sets value on is a perishable thing. To him it is perishable, either by decaying as he holds it, or by removal from him. "The fashion of this world passeth away." "Riches take to themselves wings, and flee away." "We've no abiding city here." This hardly seems so evidently true in our modern times, when wealth gains more apparent fixity, as it did in Eastern lands, when wealth largely consisted in garments, and governments failed to ensure stability and security. Moth and rust (corrosion) would destroy most things, and the thieves would carry off the rest. The truth is as true to-day as it ever was—man can never guarantee his hold on anything he may possess. He has it to-day; he is never sure of it to-morrow. This is true not only of purely material things, but even of such things as skill of body and furniture of mind—things that a man may gain, but which still are outside the real man; only things that he has. Whatever a man only *has* is in peril.

II. THE SECURITY OF ALL TREASURE IN CHARACTER. What a man *is*, and what a man *becomes*, are unaffected by any known decaying forces. Character is the investiture of the soul, in which it passes to the eternal realms. Illustrate the forces that affect our things, and show how powerless they are against our character. See the case of Job. Try death as against the sanctified character that a man may have become. Death can strip a soul absolutely bare of all acquired things. "We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain that we can carry nothing out." Death can take the soul from the body. But death cannot touch character, which is the soul's garment. So he is rich for ever who has won "character."—R. T.

Ver. 22.—*The inspiration of a noble aim.* "The light of the body is the eye." Different versions give "lantern," or "candle," or "lamp." Then the idea is, that the aim and purpose a man has in life will be like a light shining on all his life and

work and relations. If the aim be a high and noble one, it will brighten and ennoble all his doings. If it be a low and ignoble one, it will discolour and degrade all his doings. Or, to take another view: a man's aim in life will be like the eye, through which he comes into relation with everything. If it be clean and healthy, everything is seen as it is. If it be impure and diseased, it is as if a man saw everything through coloured glasses. Then the anxiety of a Christian disciple should concern fixing the right aim, settling the one supreme purpose of life. Christ says our aim should be "righteousness." We do but put the same thing in another form when we say it should be *Christ-likeness*. "Singleness of intention will preserve us from the snare of having a double treasure, and therefore a divided heart." The question to press on attention is—What are you living for?

I. NOTHING. There are thousands of persons who are just living on, they know not and care not how or why. Enough for them is the butterfly-life of self-indulgence. Neither whence they came, nor what they are here for, nor whither they are going, troubles them in the least. And theirs is but as the life of the "dumb, driven cattle," who have no "uplooking eyes."

II. SOMETHING LOW AND POOR. Such things as wealth for wealth's sake, position for position's sake, power for power's sake. A soul has but a low aim who only asks, "What shall we eat? what shall we drink?" and lets the "lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" decide what his aim shall be.

III. SOMETHING NOBLE FROM HUMAN STANDPOINTS. The world has its heroes in all its spheres. We may fix on one, find his aim, and make it ours, and let it inspire us to noble things.

IV. SOMETHING DIVINE. Here show that God has been pleased to come into our human spheres, in the Person of Jesus Christ, that he might make *himself* our inspiring and sanctifying aim.—R. T.

Ver. 25.—*The proper limits of human anxiety.* The evil dealt with in this passage is "undue secular anxiety." "Think of the uncertainty of almost everything we have—life, health, friendship, domestic relationships and affections, riches, commerce. Life has many sad surprises and disappointments. Our own day is full of care." There is abundant cause for anxiety. But Christ reminds us of a truth which should put our earthly care into strict limitations. We have a Father who is actually and effectively concerned in securing the constant and the highest well-being of his children. The children ought to have proper children's anxieties, but they should not take upon them cares which belong to their Father, who "knoweth what they have need of before they ask him."

I. THE EARTHLINESS OF THE UNEARTHLY MAN. Think of the Christian as the "unearthly man," and then see that his unearthliness ought not to be all-absorbing. It should be placed under wise limitations. He is in the body. He stands in relations. He has duties and responsibilities. It is no true spirituality to escape from common earthly responsibilities into monasteries, nunneries, and hermit-cells. "The Son of man came eating and drinking." Human interests were sought by him, and human cares were borne by him. A saint must never forget that he is husband, or father, or brother, or friend, or citizen. Earthly anxiety is God's present burden for his saints; and it has to be cheerfully taken up and borne.

II. THE UNEARTHLINESS OF THE EARTHLY MAN. This is turning the figure round, in order to warn the spiritual man how very absorbing earthly care may become, and to advise him that his supreme anxiety should be soul-culture. "Taking thought" is but an older form of our idea of "worrying," which is "anxiety overdone." "What the Lord bids us guard against is conjectural brooding over the possible necessities of the future, and our possible lack of the resources required for their supply." The spiritual man should be "using the world as not abusing it." In safe limitations keeping both earthly and unearthly.—R. T.

Vers. 26, 28.—*The God of the fowls and the flowers.* The point which seems to be prominently suggested here is this: Fowls and flowers represent the creatures and the adornments of the Father's house. Disciples represent the children of the Father's house. It is fair and forcible argument; it comes close home to us, by its appeal to

our common everyday observations and experiences, that if the Father cares, in a very marked way, for the creatures and the adornments (show a mother's daily care to feed her birds and tend her flowers), he will much more anxiously care for every welfare of his children (see the way of that same mother with her babe). The following line of thought will be readily illustrated.

I. Man is a part of God's creation, just as truly as fowls and flowers are, and must be just as fully included in the Creator's daily care. "The eyes of all wait on thee."

II. But, if included, man must be included as man, and as God knows man, and all his wants, bodily and spiritual, seeing that God created him, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.

III. For God's care—if we are to conceive of it as worthy of God—must be in precise adaptation to each creature for whom he cares.

IV. Then we may be sure that God cares for man so far as man is *kin* with the fowls and the flowers.

V. Then we may be sure that God cares for man so far as man is *superior* to the fowls and the flowers. Remember Mungo Park's reflection when, in a time of utter despair, he found a small moss, and, admiring its root, leaves, and capsule, thought thus: "Can that Being who planted, watered, and brought to perfection, in this obscure part of the world, a thing which appears of so small importance, look with unconcern upon the situation and sufferings of creatures formed after his own image? Surely not." That reflection inspired new effort, which resulted in Park's rescue.—R. T.

Ver. 33.—*The first object of human pursuit.* "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness." In a former homily on this chapter it is shown that the kingdom of God is the *dom*, or rule, of God's will. There is a traditional sentence given by Origen, and by Clement of Alexandria, which our Lord might have uttered, for it is very like this authentic passage: "Ask great things, and little things shall be added to you; ask heavenly things, and earthly things shall be added to you." Man is made for God. "What is the chief end of man? To glorify God, and enjoy him for ever." "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee." In this text our Lord says, "There is one great end and purpose of your being, and that you must voluntarily make your one, first, chief end." There may be intermediate ends and objects which rightly call for your attention, but there is *one* which must never be forgotten. You were made for God; to love him, to serve him, to praise him, to live in fellowship with him, to do and to bear his holy will. The true order of our human pursuits should be—first, God; second, others; third, self. Or, to put it in another way—first, righteousness; second, duty; third, pleasure. Or some point and freshness may be gained by making a distinction between the *kingdom* and the *righteousness*.

I. GOD'S KINGDOM IS THE REIGN OF HIS WILL. And that concerns *conduct*. God's will covers and concerns all our doings and relations.

II. GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS IS HIMSELF. And that is character; concerns character; stands as model for the moulding of character. Then man's two supreme ends—which are really one—which he must always and everywhere put in the first places, are: 1. God's *character*—to be like him. 2. God's *will*—to serve him. It will be a joyful surprise to any man to find how all life goes into place, and everything gets provided for, when he seeks *first* the kingdom and righteousness.—R. T.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER VII.

Vers. 1—12.—(2) As anxiety about the things of this life hinders us Godwards (ch. vi. 19—34), so does censoriousness manwards (vers. 1—12), our Lord thus tacitly opposing two typically Jewish faults. Censoriousness—the personal danger of having it (vers. 1, 2), its seriousness as a sign of ignorance and as a hindrance to spiritual vision (vers. 3—5), even though there must be a recognition of great moral differences (ver. 6). Grace to overcome it and to exercise judgment rightly can be obtained by prayer (vers. 7—11), the

secret of overcoming being found in treating others as one would like to be treated one's self (ver. 12).

Ver. 1.—Parallel passage: Luke vi. 37. **Judge not.** Not merely "do not condemn," for this would leave too much latitude; nor, on the other hand, "do not ever judge," for this is sometimes our duty; but "do not be always judging" (*μὴ κρίνετε*). Our Lord opposes the censorious spirit. "Let us therefore be lowly minded, brethren, laying aside all arrogance, and conceit, and folly, and anger, and let us do that which is written . . . most of all remembering the words of the Lord Jesus which he spake, teaching forbearance and long-suffering; for thus he spake . . . 'As ye judge, so shall ye be judged,'" Clem. Rom., § 13 (where see Bishop Lightfoot's note; cf. also Resch, 'Agrapha,' pp. 96, 136 ff.); cf. 'Ab.,' i. 7 (Taylor), "Judge every man in the scale of merit;" *i.e.* let the scale incline towards the side of merit or acquittal. **That ye be not judged**; *i.e.* by God, with special reference to the last day (cf. Jas. ii. 12, 13; v. 9; Rom. ii. 3). Hardly of judgment by men, as Barrow (serm. xx.): "Men take it for allowable to retaliate in this way to the height, and stoutly to load the censorious man with censure."

Ver. 2.—Parallels to the second clause in Luke vi. 38 and Mark iv. 24. **For.** Explanatory of "that ye be not judged." The principle of your own judgment will be applied in turn to yourselves. **With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.** The judgment (*κρίμα*) is the verdict; the measure is the severity or otherwise of the verdict. In both clauses (cf. ver. 1, note) the passives refer to judgment by God, as is even more clear in Mark iv. 24. The saying, "with what measure," etc., is found in Mishna, 'Sotah,' i. 7 ("With the measure with which a man measures do they measure to him"), where it is applied to the *jus talionis* in the case of a woman suspected of adultery (Numb. v. 11—31). *Again.* Omitted by the Revised Version, with the manuscripts. It was naturally inserted by the copyists, either as an unconscious deduction or from the parallel passage in Luke; but it is absent in the characteristically Jewish form of the saying found in the Mishna.

Vers. 3—5.—The heinousness of censoriousness as a hindrance to one's self and to one's work for others.

Ver. 3.—Parallel passage: Luke vi. 41. **And why**—when it is so contrary to common sense—**beholdest thou the mote, etc.?** A Jewish proverbial saying, *e.g.* Talm. Bab., 'Bab. Bathra,' 15*b*, Rabbi Jochanan (third century A.D.), expounding Ruth i. 1, says, "A generation which when under judgment (שיפדם) judgeth its judges. When one saith to a man, Cast out the mote out of thine eyes, he saith (in answer), Cast out the beam out of thine eyes." In Talm. Bab., 'Erach.,' 16*b*, "Out of thy teeth" seems to be the right reading. In these verses the "eye" is usually taken as belonging solely to the illustration, and as not itself representing any one object. It may be so, but it has been used so recently (ch. vi. 22) of the spiritual sense that it is more natural to take it so here. In this case the thought of the passage is of faults existing in a man's spiritual sense hindering his spiritual vision. The censorious man sees any fault, however small, readily enough in others, but does not see the much greater fault which he himself as a matter of fact has—his own censoriousness. This censoriousness is not a slight, but a great hindrance to his own spiritual vision, much more to his being of use in removing hindrances from the eye of another. *The mote*; *τὸ κάρφος*; Latt. *festucam*; any small vegetable body. The English word is from the Anglo-Saxon *mot*, "a small particle" (cf. further Luke vi. 41, note). Observe that our Lord allows that there is something wrong with the brother's spiritual vision, just as he allows that the unmerciful servant had a real debt owing to him. **That is in thy brother's eye** (ch. v. 22, note). Our Lord is here speaking of the relation of believers to fellow-believers. He tacitly contrasts the censoriousness of the Pharisees towards fellow-Jews (John vii. 49). **But considerest not** (*οὐ κατανοεῖς*). With any attention of mind; contrast Rom. iv. 19 (Abraham gave earnest consideration to his own age, and yet believed). **The beam.** So huge a piece of wood is there in thine own eye. **That is in thine own eye.** The order of the Greek lays still more emphasis on the fact that, though in thy very own eye there is a beam, thou payest no regard to that (cf. ver. 5, note).

Ver. 4.—Parallel passage: Luke vi. 42*a*. **Or.** A second case is supposed. You may only see the mote or you may offer to remove it. **How**; with any conscience. **Wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out?** *Let me* (*ἄφες*, ch. iii. 15). There is nothing here of the rudeness that so often accompanies censoriousness. *Pull out*; Revised Version, *cast out* (*ἐκβάλω*). The thought is of the completeness, not the method, of the removal (cf. ch. ix. 38). **A beam**; *the beam* (Revised Version); *i.e.* the beam already mentioned.

Ver. 5.—Parallel passage: Luke vi. 42*b*. **Thou hypocrite** (ch. vi. 2, note). The thought

here is of the personation of a part (a man free from impediment in his vision) which does not belong to you. **First cast out the beam out of thine own eye.** In ver. 3 the order of the words lays the emphasis on "thine;" here, on the eye. It is in thine eye, of all places, that the beam now is. **And then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.** Surely a promise as well as a statement. *See clearly* (διαβλέψεις, δια- discriminatingly); as in the right text of Mark viii. 25, itself after the recovery of full power of sight. *See clearly.* Not the mote (ver. 3), but to cast out the mote. The verse seems to imply that if the spirit of censoriousness be absent, it will be possible for us to remove "motes" from the eyes of our brothers. Thus the passage as a whole does not say that we never ought to try to remove such "motes," but that this is monstrous and almost impossible so long as we ourselves have a fault of so much magnitude as censoriousness.

Ver. 6.—Matthew only. **Give not that which is holy,** etc. While you are not to be censorious towards brethren (vers. 1—5), you must recognize the great and fundamental differences that there are between men. You must not treat those who are mere dogs and swine as if they were able to appreciate either the holiness or the beauty and wealth of spiritual truth. *Give.* Observe that "give," "cast," are naturally used of feeding dogs and swine respectively. *That which is holy* (τὸ ἅγιον). The metaphor is taken from the law that the things offered in sacrifice were no longer to be treated as common food (Lev. xxii. 1—16, especially ver. 14, τὸ ἅγιον). **Unto the dogs.** The scavengers of Eastern cities, which by nature and habit love and greedily devour the most unholy of things (cf. Exod. xxii. 31). **Neither cast ye your pearls.** *Pearls.* Only here and ch. xiii. 45, 46 in the Gospels. In form not so very unlike swine's food of beans or nuts, they here represent the beauty and precious wealth of the various parts of the Gospel, in which Christ's disciples are accustomed to delight (ὑμῶν). Ignatius ('Eph.,' § 11) calls his bonds his "spiritual pearls." **Before swine;** *before the swine* (Revised Version). Probably in both cases the article is used with the object of bringing the particular dogs and swine to whom these are given more vividly before us. *Swine.* Which have no care for such things, but rather wallow in filth (2 Pet. ii. 22). *Dogs . . . swine.* The terms seem to so far indicate different classes of men, or more truly different characters in men, as that the one term points to the greedy participation of the wicked in open profanation, the other to the sottish indifference of sinners to that which is most attractive. **Lest they;** *i.e.* the swine. Dogs, even though wild in the East, would not "tread down" the food. **Trample them under their feet** (ch. v. 13). In ignorance of their real worth and in disappointment that they do not afford them satisfaction. (For the future, καταπατήσουσιν, cf. ch. v. 25, note.) It here expresses the greater certainty of the trampling than of the rending (aorist subjective). **And turn again**—Revised Version omits "again"—**and rend you.** In rage at the disappointment experienced. The clause expresses the personal enmity which those who wilfully reject the gospel often feel towards those that have offered it to them. It might be thought difficult to carry out this command, as it is evident that we cannot know beforehand who will accept the gospel or not. But in cases where the character of the person is not known (*e.g.* as when St. Paul preached at Athens, etc.), the command does not apply. Our Lord supposes the case where the character is apparent (cf. 1 Tim. v. 24). Theodoret (*vide* Resch, 'Agrapha,' pp. 103, 168), in quoting this verse, adds, "My mysteries are for me and mine," which, clearly an adaptation of Symmachus and Theodotion's rendering of Isa. xxiv. 16, רזי לי (cf. also Targ. Jon.), seems to have become almost an authorized, and certainly a true, interpretation of our verse.

Vers. 7—11.—*Ask, and it shall be given you,* etc. Parallel passage: Luke xi. 9—13. Nearly verbally identical, but in the son's request, reads "egg" and "scorpion" for "bread" and "stone," and reverses the order of the sentences.

In Luke the verses are closely connected ("and I say unto you") with the parable of the friend at midnight, which itself immediately follows the Lord's Prayer. It seems probable that, as with the Lord's Prayer (ch. vi. 9—13, note), so with these verses, the original position is given in Luke; yet, as also with the Lord's Prayer, Matthew's form of the individual clauses may be the more original (cf. ver. 11, note). With the general promise contained in these verses, cf. Mark xi. 24.

The connexion with the preceding verse is probably not (1) pray for others who have no apparent capacity for receiving the truths of the gospel (Weiss); nor (2) in answer to the question suggested by ver. 6, if this be the measure of the Divine dealings, what bounties can sinners expect at God's hands? Let them, nevertheless, ask of God, and it shall be given them (cf. Alford); but (3) in close connexion with the whole subject from

vers. 1—6, you feel conscious of want of wisdom for the true and loving judgment of others without censoriousness—ask for this special grace. With this connexion ver. 12 follows on naturally; *i.e.* the key to the right treatment of others may be found in one's own feelings and wishes; from the perception of what we desire to receive from others we may learn what others ought to receive from us.

Ver. 7.—**Ask . . . seek . . . knock.** Gradation in urgency. Further, the three clauses think of the Giver, the sphere in which the gift lies, the obstacles in the way of obtaining it.

Ver. 8.—**For every one that asketh receiveth.** Every one that asketh of God receiveth, for he is not the censorious Judge that you are inclined to be in your dealings with others. Therefore **ask** expectantly. He "giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth not" (Jas. i. 5).

Vers. 9, 10.—**Or what man is there of you,** etc.? *Or.* Is not what I say true? or—if you think not—what man of you yourselves would act otherwise towards his own son? Our Lord appeals to the experience and natural feelings of his hearers themselves to emphasize the readiness of the Father—"your Father," whose nature you share, and from whom you derive your feelings of fatherhood (Eph. iii. 15)—to grant the prayers of his children. Observe: (1) Our Lord assumes that our natural feelings are of the same *kind* as God's. (2) Our Lord speaks of God's *children* asking him for gifts (cf. ch. v. 16, note). (3) Our Lord does not suggest, "Will he absolutely refuse him?" but "Will he give him something which is an answer in appearance only (a stone for bread, a serpent for a fish)?" *i.e.* our Lord implies that God's gifts, like an earthly father's to his son, are such as really and completely to satisfy the need which is expressing itself. A blessed encouragement, for he will thus answer the underlying desire, though not necessarily the verbal expression of the prayer. So when Monica prayed that her son might not sail to Rome, God did not grant this, but gave her "the *hinge* of her desire," for it was Augustine's journey to Italy that was the means of his conversion (Aug., 'Conf.,' v. 15). **Bread . . . fish.** The most usual food on the Lake of Galilee (cf. ch. xiv. 17; John vi. 9; cf. ch. iv. 3, note).

Ver. 11.—Parallel passage: Luke xi. 13. **If ye then being evil.** Application of the thought of vers. 9, 10, with further emphasis on the evil of human nature. **If** you with your moral worthlessness (ch. vi. 13, note), etc. (cf. also ch. xii. 34). *Being* (ὄντες). **The presence here in the parallel passage of Luke of his common word** ὑπάρχοντες **points** to St. Matthew's form of the sentence being the more original. **Know**; intuitively (οἴδατε). Notwithstanding, then, the evil bent of fallen human nature, there is some good still remaining. **How much more shall your Father which is in heaven.** "In quo nulla est malitia" (Bengel). **Give good things.** Observe: (1) In the parallel passage in Luke, "the Holy Spirit," or, more strictly, an outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Πνεῦμα Ἅγιον). The historian of the early Church not unnaturally singles out that gift which ultimately produces all others; but St. Matthew, keeping to the general subject of wisdom, etc., in the treatment of our brethren, uses a more distributive expression which yet includes the particular gift asked for. (2) Is the omission of the word "gifts" in this clause to be accounted for by our Lord not wishing to suggest that the grace asked for is so given as that it can afterwards be possessed apart from the Giver?

Ver. 12.—Ver. 12*a*, parallel passage: Luke vi. 31; 12*b*, Matthew only. **All things therefore.** *Therefore.* Summing up the lesson of vers. 1—11 (cf. ver. 7, note). In consequence of all that I have said about censoriousness and the means of overcoming it, let the very opposite feeling rule your conduct towards others. Let all (emphatic) your dealings with men be conducted in the same spirit in which you would desire them to deal with you. **Even so.** Not "these things" do ye to them; for our Lord carefully avoids any expression that might lead to a legal enumeration of different details, but "thus" (οὕτως), referring to the character of your own wishes. (For this "golden rule," cf. Tobit iv. 15 (negative form); cf. also patristic references in Resch, 'Agrapha,' pp. 95, 135.) On the occasional similarity of pre-Christian writings to the teaching of our Lord, Augustine (*vide* Trench, 'Serm.,' *in loc.*) well says it is "the glory of the written and spoken law, that it is the transcript of that which was from the first, and not merely as old as this man or that, but as the Creation itself, a reproduction of that obscured and forgotten law written at the beginning by the finger of God on the hearts of all men. When, therefore, heathen sages or poets proclaimed any part of this, they had not thereby anticipated Christ; they had only deciphered some fragment of that law, which He gave from the first, and which, when men, exiles and fugitives from themselves and from the knowledge of their own hearts, had lost the power of reading, He came in the flesh to read to them anew, and to bring out the well-nigh obliterated

characters afresh." (Compare also Bishop Lightfoot's essay on "St. Paul and Seneca," in his 'Philippians.') **For this is the law and the prophets.** *For this.* This principle of action and mode of life is, in fact, the sum of all Bible teaching (cf. Lev. xix. 18). Observe: (1) Our Lord brings out the same thought, but with its necessary limitation to the second table, in ch. xxii. 40 (cf. Rom. xiii. 10). (2) Our Lord thus returns to the main subject of his sermon, the relation in which he and his must stand to the Law (ch. v. 17).

Vers. 13—27.—(4) *Epilogue* (cf. ch. v. 3, note). Dare to take up this position, which has been laid down in ch. v. 21—vii. 12, involving though it must separation from the majority of men (vers. 13, 14); and this notwithstanding the claim of others to reveal the Lord's mind, whose true nature, however, you shall perceive from their actions (vers. 15—20); they that work iniquity have neither present nor future union with me (vers. 21—23). Finally a solemn warning (vers. 24—27).

Ver. 13.—For vers. 13, 14, cf. Luke xiii. 23, 24, which, however (notwithstanding the similarity of vers. 25—27 to our vers. 21—23), were probably spoken later, and were perhaps suggested to both the disciples and the Master by this earlier saying. On the other hand, our ver. 14 seems so direct an answer to Luke xiii. 23 that it is not unlikely that this is one of the many passages placed by St. Matthew, or the authors of his sources, out of chronological order. **Enter ye in.** Show immediate energy and determination. Observe: (1) In Luke, "strive (ἀγωνίζεσθε) to enter in"; here, "enter at once." (2) In Luke, "through the narrow door" into, apparently, the final abiding-place; here, "through the narrow gate" into apparently the (perhaps long) road which takes us at last to full salvation. Thus in Luke our Lord speaks of continued striving; here, of immediate decision, in which, however, lies the assurance of ultimate success (cf. ver. 14, end; also 1 John ii. 13). **At the strait gate;** Revised Version, *by the narrow gate*—the entrance resembling the road (ver. 14, note). Chrysostom (*in loc.*), contrasting present trials with future happiness, says, "straitened is the way and narrow is the gate, *but not the city.*" **For wide is the gate, and broad is the way.** So also the Revised Version, but the Revised Version margin has, "some ancient authorities omit *is the gate.*" (For a full discussion on the difficult question of the genuineness of ἡ πύλη here, *vide* Westcott and Hort, 'App.') Westcott and Hort omit it, with ℵ, Old Latin, and many Greek and Latin Fathers, and say that, though ἡ πύλη is probably genuine in ver. 14, "till the latter part of the fourth century the first ἡ πύλη has no Greek or Latin patristic evidence in its favour, much against it." They think this is "one of those rare readings in which the true text has been preserved by ℵ without extant uncial support. . . . It was natural to scribes to set ver. 13 in precisely antithetic contrast to ver. 14; but the sense gains in force if there is no mention of two gates, and if the contrast in ver. 13 is between the narrow gate and the broad and spacious way." There must be a definite entering upon the right way; no entrance upon the wrong way is necessary, men find themselves upon it only too easily, and it is "made level with stones" (Ecclus. xxi. 10). **Wide . . . broad.** The second epithet (εὐρύχωρος) lays stress on there being plenty of space to walk in (Latt., *spatiosa*). **That leadeth to destruction** (εἰς τὴν ἀπώλειαν); that "perishing" in which "the sons of perishing" perish (John xvii. 12). **And many there be which;** Revised Version, more exactly, *and many be they that* (καὶ πολλοί εἰσιν οἱ εἰσερχόμενοι). Our Lord says that they that are perishing are many (cf. ver. 14, note). **Go in;** Revised Version, *enter in;* keeping up the allusion to "enter ye in." Observe, however, that if ἡ πύλη (*vide supra*) is false, the thought here is of entrance into the final issue of the way—ἡ ἀπώλεια. **Thereat;** Revised Version, *thereby;* i.e. by the way.

Ver. 14.—**Because** (ὅτι); *for* (Revised Version); "many ancient authorities read, *How narrow is the gate,* etc." (Revised Version margin). The reading, "how" (τί) is much easier, as avoiding the difficulty of the connexion of this verse with the preceding, but probably ὅτι is right. The connexion is *either* that it is parallel to the first ὅτι, and thus gives a second reason for decision in entering through the narrow gate; *or,* and better, that it gives the reason for the statement in ver. 13*b*—many pass along the wrong way because the right way requires at the very outset so much determination and afterwards so much self-denial. **Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way;** *narrow is the gate, and straitened the way* (Revised Version). Not only is the gate narrow, but the way itself seems compressed (τεθλιμμένη) by rocks, etc., on either side. **That leadeth unto life** (εἰς τὴν ζωήν). Observe, Christ does not say, "life eternal." He only cares to emphasize the thought of life in the fullest nature of life—life as "the fulfilment of the highest idea of being: perfect truth in perfect action" (Bishop Westcott, on 1 John iii. 14). **And few there**

be that; Revised Version, *and few be they that* (ver. 13, note). Our Lord here affirms more than the disciples ask in Luke xiii. 23; for there the question deals with those in a state of salvation (*οἱ σωζόμενοι*), here those finally saved. **Find it**; *i.e.* the gate and all it leads to. The narrow gate is here looked at as involving life. *Find.* It needs a search (contrast ver. 13). But there is the promise of ver. 7, "Seek, and ye shall find."

Vers. 15—23.—Matthew only in this form, though most of the separate verses have much matter common to other passages; viz.: vers. 16, 18, parallel with Luke vi. 43, 44, cf. also *infra*, ch. xii. 33; ver. 19, cf. ch. iii. 10; ver. 21, cf. Luke vi. 46; ver. 22, cf. Luke xiii. 26; ver. 23, parallel with Luke xiii. 27. (For the connexion of these verses, cf. ver. 13, note.)

**Ver. 15.**—Matthew only. **Beware.** The warning against being led from the right entrance and the right way is all the more emphatic for there being no adversative particle in the true text. **Beware of false prophets.** The whole class of them (*τῶν*). **Not**, observe, "false teachers" (2 Pet. ii. 1), as though these persons only falsely interpreted fundamental truths, but "false prophets," as falsely claiming to bring messages from God. They claim to bring from God the true message of salvation, but their claim is false. These were doubtless found, at the time that our Lord spoke the words, especially among the Pharisees; but when St. Matthew recorded them, chiefly among Christians, either on the Jewish or on the Gnostic side (Col. ii. 8; 1 Tim. vi. 20, 21; cf. also 1 John iv. 1 and 'Did.,' § xii.). **Which**; qualitative (*οἵτινες*); seeing that they. **Come unto you in sheep's clothing.** In, as it were, the skins of sheep (*ἐν ἐνδύμασι προβάτων*), professing simplicity and gentleness, and (for, perhaps, this thought is also included) claiming to be members of God's true flock. Externally they are all this, but at heart they are something very different. **But inwardly they are ravening wolves.** The thought of "ravening" (*ἅρπαγες*) is of both violence and greed. These false prophets are not merely wicked at heart and opposed to the truth, but they wish to injure you, and that for their own gain (cf. Gal. vi. 13). "Of the ravenousness of wolves among the Jewes, take these two examples besides others. *The elders proclaimed a fast in their cities upon this occasion, because the wolves had devoured two little children beyond Jordan. More than three hundred sheep of the sons of Judah ben Shamoe were torn by wolves*" (Lightfoot, 'Hor. Hebr.;' cf. Ezek. xxxiv. 4, on false shepherds).

Ver. 16.—Parallel passage: Luke vi. 44. (For the first clause, cf. also ver. 20 and ch. xii. 33.) **Ye shall know them by their fruits.** Their appearance and their claims are no proof of their true character. It may seem difficult to recognize this, yet there is a sure way of doing so, by their life. The emphasis of the sentence is on "by their fruits." *Ye shall know.* Ye shall come to know them to the full (*ἐπιγνώσεσθε*). (On the greater strength of the compound, *vide* Ellicott, 1 Cor. xiii. 12.) *Fruits.* All considered separately (cf. vers. 17, 18, 20), but in ver. 19 as one whole (cf. ch. iii. 8, note). It is, however, just possible that here and in ver. 20 the plural points to fruit growing on different trees. **Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?** The visible outgrowth reveals the nature of that which is within. Those who "profess to combine fellowship with God with the choice of darkness as their sphere of life" (Bishop Westcott, on the suggestive parallel 1 John i. 6) only show that within they are destitute of fellowship with God. Observe, Christ does not say, "Do thorns produce grapes," etc.? (cf. Jas. iii. 12), but "Do men gather?" *i.e.* he desires to bring out the way in which men ordinarily deal with productions external to themselves. You, my followers, ought to use that common sense in spiritual matters which men show in matters of everyday life. *Thistles;* apparently *Centaurea calcitrapa*, the common thistle of Palestine; in the plains the only fuel.

Ver. 17.—Matthew only. **Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.** The similarity between the fruit and the nature of the tree extends not only to the species, but also to the specimen. *Good tree* (*δένδρον ἀγαθόν*); intrinsically sound. *Good fruit* (*καρποὺς καλούς*); attractive in the eyes of men. As is the inner character of the tree, so is the obvious nature of the fruit. *But a corrupt tree* (*τὸ δὲ σαπρὸν δένδρον*); "the" picturing it. *Corrupt;* unsound, rotten, worthless (cf. ch. xiii. 48); also in the moral world (Eph. iv. 29).

Ver. 18.—Parallel passage: Luke vi. 43 (cf. also *infra*, ch. xii. 33). **A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.** This correspondence of external product to internal character is necessary. It cannot (emphatic) be otherwise. If the heart is good, good results follow; therefore, he implies, if good results are not seen in these "false prophets," it is because of their real character. A bad life cannot but spring from a worthless heart. Of course, our Lord deals only with the general rule. **There are**

apparent anomalies in the world of spirit as of nature. *Bring forth . . . bring forth; ἐνεγκεῖν* (Westcott and Hort) . . . *ποιεῖν*. A good tree cannot have bad fruit hanging on it; a rotten or worthless tree cannot, with all its efforts, produce good fruit.

Ver. 19.—Matthew only (cf. ch. iii. 10, *vide infra*). **Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.** A parenthesis expressing the terrible fate of those the general product (ver. 16, note) of whose life is not good. Christ will warn his followers plainly against listening to them. Observe that the form of the sentence (*πᾶν δένδρον μὴ ποιοῦν καρπόν, κ.τ.λ.*) implies that all trees will be cut down *unless* there is a reason for the contrary; that the normal event (the natural result of universal sin, apart, of course, from Christ's atonement) is that men are condemned and perish. In ch. iii. 10 this general statement is applied (*οὖν*) to a definite time of impending judgment.

Ver. 20.—(Ver. 16, note.) **Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.** *Wherefore* (*ἄραγε*). Ver. 16*a* is restated, but now in "rigorous logical inference" (Winer, § liii. 8. *a*) from vers. 16*b*—18. Since it is a certainty that fruit is the result of inner nature, you shall from these men's fruits fully learn their true character.

Vers. 21—23.—These verses stand in close connexion with vers. 15—20. Seeing that external actions are the result of internal life, it is they, not words nor even miracles (since these may in themselves not be dependent on the inner life, though permitted by the Divine power), by which the true followers of Christ will be finally distinguished from others, and which therefore will alone secure admission to abiding with Christ in the kingdom of heaven. To these verses Luke xiii. 23—28 have many resemblances (cf. also vers. 13, 14, *supra*). St. Luke thus omits the warning against false teachers. (For ver. 21, cf. also Luke vi. 46.)

Ver. 21.—**Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord.** Professing obedience (ch. vi. 24). Observe the indirect claim to this title of reverential submission and the implied expectation that it will be given him by many. **Shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.** The final goal of our hopes. **But he that doeth the will of my Father.** Not "of me," but of him whom I represent, and to whom I stand in a unique relation (observe the claim). This man also says, "Lord, Lord" (Winer, § xxvi. 1), but not merely says it. Such a man enters into family relationship to Christ (ch. xii. 50). **Which is in heaven.** Since you desire to enter the kingdom of heaven, be now obeying the will of him who dwells in heaven. (For the thought of the verse, cf. 1 John ii. 4.)

Ver. 22.—Matthew only; but cf. Luke xiii. 26, from which the "Western" addition of eating and drinking is probably derived. **Many will say to me in that day.** The great day. Notice Christ's claim, so early as this, to be the future Judge of the world. **Lord, Lord** (cf. Hos. viii. 2). In ver. 21 a profession of service, *i.e.* as regards work; here, as regards wages. **Have we not prophesied.** Revised Version, *did*, etc.? The thought is not of abiding effect, but merely of historical facts (*οὐ τῷ σῷ ὀνόματι ἐπροφητεύσαμεν*). **In thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?** Revised Version, *by thy name*. An important difference, for "in" implies some vital connexion. But in this case the revelation (ch. vi. 9, note) of Christ was merely the instrument by which these men proclaimed Divine truths, cast out demons, and wrought miracles. With him, or even with it, they had no real union. The connexion of "prophesied" with the two other words seems to forbid this being only false prophesying (ver. 15; cf. especially Jer. xxvii. 15 [xxxiv. 12, LXX.]; xiv. 14). Rather does the verse teach that spiritual results can be effected by unspiritual men. "Suggested by this and like passages, Augustine has many instructive words and warnings on the nothingness of all gifts, even up to the greatest gift of working all miracles, if charity be wanting" (Trench, 'Sermon on the Mount').

Ver. 23.—(Cf. Luke xiii. 27.) **And then will I profess unto them.** Openly in the face of all men (cf. ch. x. 32). **I never knew you.** Even when you did all these miracles, etc., I had not that personal knowledge of you which is only the result of heart-sympathy. There was never anything in common between you and me. Although this is, perhaps, the only example of this sense of *ἔγνων* in the synoptic Gospels, it is common in John. **Depart from me.** The absence of recognition by Christ, though not represented as the cause, yet will involve departure from his presence (cf. 2 Thess. i. 9). This clause reproduces verbally the LXX. of Ps. vi. 8, except in St. Matthew's word used for "depart" (*ἀποχωρεῖτε*), which gives more idea of distance in the removal than the word used in the psalm and in Luke (*ἀπόστητε*). **Ye that work.** In full purpose and energy (*οἱ ἐργαζόμενοι*, cf. Col. iii. 23), and that till this very moment. **Iniquity.** The assurance of the psalmist becomes the verdict of the Judge. Observe that at this, the end of his discourse, our Lord speaks not of

sin generally (*τὴν ἁμαρτίαν*), but of lawlessness (*τὴν ἀνομίαν*). He has throughout been insisting upon obedience to the Law in its final meaning as essentially necessary for his followers (most recently ver. 12). So that instead of saying, "ye that work sin," he uses the correlative (1 John iii. 4), for sin is neglect of or opposition to the perfect Law of God in the three spheres that this regards—self, the world, God (cf. Bishop Westcott, on 1 John iii. 4). It is, perhaps, more than a coincidence that in 2 Tim. ii. 19 we have again the collocation of the Lord *knowing* and of man's *departing*, i.e. either from him or from sin (cf. especially the parallel Luke xiii. 27); *vide* Resch, 'Agrapha,' p. 207.

Vers. 24—27.—Parallel passage: Luke vi. 47—49 (cf. also Ezek. xiii. 10—16). A solemn close to the sermon. By the similitude of two builders our Lord warns his followers that to have heard his words will have been useless unless they put them into practice.

Observe that although the word "hear" in these verses cannot indicate that full "hearing" which it sometimes connotes (ch. x. 14), yet it seems to mean more than merely listening, and to imply both a grasp of what is intended by the statements made and at least some acquiescence in their truth (Acts ii. 22; Rev. i. 3; John v. 24).

According to the above explanation, it will be seen that in the imagery the rock represents practice; the sand, mere sentiment. There is thus a partial correspondence with the works insisted on by St. James in contrast to a bare orthodox faith (Jas. ii. 24). Assent is insufficient; there must be action.

Not uncommonly, indeed, the rock is considered to refer to the Lord himself, and the sand to human effort. Cf. Ford: "The parallel passage (Luke vi. 48), where the words, 'cometh unto Me,' are inserted, indicates clearly the foundation of *faith*, the receiving the Lord Jesus as our Prophet, Priest, and King, which is the only basis on which *good* works can be built" (cf. even Alford). This, however, is hardly exegesis, but application, for the "coming to Christ" is in Luke only introductory to the hearing and doing, and is altogether omitted here. Although the statement is true in itself, it is only so far proper to this passage in that, apart from practice, there is (ver. 23) no heart-union with Christ.

Ver. 24.—**Therefore whosoever heareth**; Revised Version, *every one therefore which heareth* (*πᾶς οὖν ὅστις ἀκούει*, ch. x. 32). The relative used lays stress on the quality implied in the verb: every one who is of the kind that *hears* (contrast ver. 26). **These sayings** (Revised Version, *words*) **of mine, and doeth them.** Not the individual utterances (*ῥήματα*, John vi. 63), nor the substance of my message considered as a whole (*λόγον*, ch. xiii. [19] 20), but the substance of its parts, the various truths that I announce (*λόγους*). **I will liken him**; Revised Version, *shall be likened*, with the manuscripts. Not shall, in fact, be made like, ch. vi. 8 (Weiss), but shall be likened in figure and parable. **Unto a wise man.** Prudent, sensible (*φρόνιμος*). **Which built his house upon a rock**; Revised Version, *the rock*. Which in not a few cases may be found at no great distance from the surface.

Ver. 25.—**And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a** (Revised Version, *the*) **rock.** The stages of the tempest are expressed more vividly than in St. Luke.

Vers. 26, 27.—**And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell; and great was the fall of it.** In the Plain of Sharon the clay seems to have been so inferior that not only were the jars made of it often worthless, but the bricks could offer so little resistance to the weather that the houses were hardly safe. Hence a special prayer was offered by the high priest on the Day of Atonement that the Lord would grant that their houses might not become their tombs (Talm. Jer., 'Yoma,' v. 2 [Schwab, p. 218]; cf. Neubauer, 'Geograph.,' p. 48). In the parable, however, it is not the structure, but the foundation, that is wrong. *The sand* may refer, as Stanley suggests ('Sinai and Palestine,' ch. xiii. p. 430), to one locality, in which case it is probably "the long sandy strip of land which bounds the eastern plain of Acre, and through which the Kishon flows into the sea;" or, as would seem more probable, to the sand which would naturally be found on the edges of such a torrent as is here described. *Beat upon; smote upon* (Revised Version). In ver. 25 the thought is more of the swoop of the tempest (*προσέπεσαν*); here, of its impact on the house (*προσέκοψαν*). It is possible that there is here less indication of force necessary for the destruction. "It needed

only the first blow, and the house fell" (Weiss, 'Matthäus-ev.'). *And great was the fall of it.* Our Lord's solemn verdict of the utter ruin awaiting him who does not put his assent into action. The clause conveys an impression even stronger than ver. 23. There the positive worker of lawlessness is banished from Christ's presence; here, on the mere non-worker of Divine messages received is pronounced ruin and (for such, at least, seems suggested) that irremediable.

Vers. 28, 29.—*The impression produced on the multitudes.* With the exception of the formula, "It came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings" (cf. ch. xi. 1, note), the words are almost identical with Mark i. 22 (Luke iv. 31, 32), but the time is, as it seems, later. The oral statement of an impression which was probably often produced is affirmed of slightly different times.

Ver. 28.—**Sayings**; Revised Version, *words* (ver. 24, note). **The people**; Revised Version, *the multitudes* (*οἱ ὄχλοι*). In contrast to the scribes and ruling classes. **Were astonished** (cf. Acts xiii. 12). **At his doctrine**; *at his teaching* (Revised Version).

Ver. 29.—**For he taught them.** Such was his constant habit (*ἦν . . . διδάσκων*). **As one having authority, and not as the scribes.** Who, indeed, never claimed personal authority. Jewish teachers lean on the fact of their having received that which they expound. They professedly sink their own personality in that of those of old time, to whom the teaching was first given (ch. v. 21). To this our Lord's personal claims stand in sharp contrast. *The scribes;* Revised Version, *their scribes*, with the manuscripts; *i.e.* the scribes to which they were accustomed to listen. Whether the reference is primarily to scribes of the nation generally or only to those of the neighbouring district, is hardly material, for these were representatives of the one class. A few authorities add, "and the Pharisees," which may either be derived from Luke v. 30 or be an independent gloss due to the fact that the Pharisees were looked upon as the typical Jewish teachers.

## HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—20.—*Various practical rules issuing out of the central duty of self-consecration.* I. CONDUCT TOWARDS OTHERS. 1. *Gentleness in our estimate of the lives of others.* The hypocrites trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others; they made an ostentatious display of their own supposed good deeds, and passed stern judgments on their neighbours. The righteousness of Christ's disciples must exceed that of the Pharisees in both respects. Indeed, Christ's words must not be understood in that literalness which was one of the characteristic errors of the Pharisees. The judge must pass sentence upon criminals; it is his duty to God, to society. The minister of God must "reprove, rebuke, exhort": when God saith unto the wicked, "Thou wicked man, thou shalt surely die," he must warn the wicked of his sin; for otherwise (God himself hath said it) "that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thy hand." All Christians must hate sin, and show that they hate it. "Woe unto them," saith the Prophet Isaiah, "that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" Sometimes it is our duty to judge others. When it is our duty, we are safe, if we do it with pity for the sinner and with grief for the dishonour done to God (see Ps. cxix. 136). It is a duty full of danger and temptation; there is need of prayer and self-examination and careful scrutiny of our own thoughts and motives. When it is not our duty, it is never free from the danger of sin against the law of love. Censoriousness is one of the great blots of social intercourse. People who have nothing else to talk about, talk about their neighbours; they discuss their conduct; they impute unworthy motives; they repeat slanders, they exaggerate them; they take a sinful pleasure in condemning others; they often sin against the ninth, continually against the new, commandment. And these unchristian judgments imply self-righteousness, pride, hypocrisy; they usurp the prerogative of the great Judge, who alone can search the thoughts of the heart; they bring the uncharitable into exceeding great danger, for the commandment of the Judge is, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;" and surely those who judge their brethren harshly take part (awful as it seems) rather with Satan, the accuser of the brethren, who accuses them before our God night and day, than with the Lord Jesus Christ, the most loving Saviour, who dearly loved the souls of men, who wept over impenitent Jerusalem, and said, "Father, forgive them," as they nailed him

on the cross. Therefore "judge not, that ye be not judged." Men will judge harshly those who judge others harshly, and the human judgment passed upon the censorious is but a shadow of the more dreadful judgment that is to come. 2. *Strictness in judging ourselves.* We extenuate our own faults; we always have excuses ready. We magnify the faults of others; we have no excuse for them. Our faults seem to us as motes, theirs as beams; our judgment is often reversed by the just judgment of God. Consider your own faults, concentrate your attention upon them—that is your duty; not, as a rule, to pass judgment upon your neighbours. "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God." Of himself; then let him take heed to his own soul, let him look into its state narrowly and jealously, let him carefully remove every mote and every defilement, let him wash it white in the blood of the Lamb. This diligent self-examination will prepare us for the difficult and delicate task of helping others. He who would take heed to the flock must take heed first unto himself (Acts xx. 28); it needs a clean heart, and a close fellowship with Christ, and a purified spiritual vision, to see clearly to cast out the mote out of our brother's eye. There is need of true humility and heavenly wisdom and deep spiritual experience, if we are to deal successfully with the souls of others. If we are to restore others, it must be in the spirit of meekness, by the help of the good Spirit of God, always considering ourselves, lest we also be tempted. 3. *Holy caution in dealing with the worldly and the wicked.* "Holy things for the holy," is a well-known direction in the ancient liturgies; it expresses the lesson which the Lord would teach us here. Judge not, but yet be careful. The deep things of spiritual experience are not for all men. The mysteries of the soul's converse with God are not to be lightly divulged in common talk. "My Beloved is mine, and I am his." The intercourse of the converted soul with the heavenly Bridegroom is a thing too sacred for ordinary conversation. "The *secret* of the Lord is with them that fear him;" "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another." The Christian can tell what God hath done for his soul only to the like-minded—the holy with the holy; and there are hidden things of which he speaks only to God in the silence of his heart. The deepest thoughts of that life which is hid with Christ in God, the blessed truths on which the soul feeds in loving faith, are far too sacred to be offered to the contentious, the unbelieving, the mere controversialist; far too precious to be thrown down to the gross and sensual, who despise the pearl of great price in comparison with their low and coarse enjoyments, who will turn angrily and scornfully upon him who introduces such subjects. Confessions of past sin, histories of conversions, spiritual experiences, are very sacred; but they are not for all men. They will do harm to the worldly; they will provoke them to scorn and derision.

II. OUR RELATIONS WITH GOD. 1. *The duty and blessedness of prayer.* "Ask . . . seek . . . knock." *He* bids us pray through whom all prayer is offered, in whose Name every knee must bow; he will hear us, we know. He has just taught us the blessed words of his own most holy prayer; he bids us use them, not as mere words uttered by the lips, but as true prayer prayed out of the depths of the heart. "Ask," he says, "and it shall be given you; . . . every one that asketh receiveth." It is not asking, to repeat a few words without real desire. The heart must ask; the heart asks by its longings, yearning after God with groanings that cannot be uttered. Ask thus, and surely ye shall have. "Seek," he says, "and ye shall find." You ask for that which you need; you seek that which has been lost, that which is hidden. Original innocence has been lost; the true treasure of the soul is a hidden treasure. Seek after righteousness, seek the kingdom of God, seek Christ. Seeking implies perseverance, careful, watchful effort. The Lord came to seek and to save that which was lost. He sought on and fainted not through the thirty years of his quiet life at Nazareth, through the three years of his ministry—those years of unwearying labour, self-forgetting love. He sought on even as he hung dying in agony on the cross: "Father, forgive." He sought and he found: "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." He sought, and we must seek; we must seek him who is seeking us. If we seek as he sought, in patience, perseverance, in love, we shall surely find him; for he is still seeking, still calling, "Come unto me." "Knock," he says, "and it shall be opened unto you." But knock now, while it is the day of grace. There are some who will stand without, and knock at the door, saying, "Lord, Lord, open unto us;" and he shall answer, "I know you not." Knock now. Knocking implies importunity. It is not enough to be "not far from the kingdom of God;" we need to enter in, into

the presence of the most holy One. He will open if we knock in faith and strong desire; for he himself, in the wondrous condescension of his infinite love, deigns to knock at the door of our poor unworthy heart. "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof." But he desires to enter, in his gracious mercy. "If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Then we know that he will open if we continue knocking; he will not keep the door shut against those souls of men whom he loved so very dearly. He will admit us, if we persevere in faithful prayer, into his most gracious presence now, into the joy of our Lord hereafter. 2. *Our Father hears the prayer of his children.* Earthly fathers give their children what they need; they will not give a stone for bread, a scorpion for fish. They are sinful; the inherited corruption of sin cleaves to them all; yet they love their children and care for them. How much more does our Father which is in heaven, our Father who is Love, care for us, his children! Our Father listens to our voice, but he listens in wisdom and true holy love. We ask him sometimes for stones or scorpions, for earthly things which will only be a weight and hindrance in our heavenward journey, or perhaps may even tempt us to fall into sin, which is the sting of death. He will not give the evil things which we blindly ask; but it is in love that he refuses. "My grace is sufficient for thee." He gives the true bread—the bread which, if a man take, he shall live for ever. He gives good things to them that ask him; not always the good things of this world, which are not reckoned good in the world to come—"Son, thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things"—but things really good, things that the souls of the blessed can take with them when the world passeth away. He gives, in answer to the prayer of the heart, the best of all good things—the Holy Spirit of God. 3. *We must imitate him.* "Be perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." To be like unto God is not to be strong and beautiful and brave, like Homer's godlike heroes, but to imitate God in that which, his apostle tells us, enters into his very nature. "God is Love." If we would have him give good things to us, we must give good things to our neighbours according to our power. Our Lord lays down a plain, simple rule to guide us in our daily walk: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." We must ask ourselves how we would have our neighbour act towards us if our circumstances were reversed. Thus our own heart becomes our guide; it tells us just how we ought to act. Only let us be sincere, truthful with ourselves, and we cannot be deceived. The rule is wide in its range. It is not, "Do not to others what you would not they should do to you;" others before our Lord had said that much. The Lord's rule is far wider, far more stringent. It strikes hard at that selfishness which is the parent of so many sins; it extends over all the circumstances of life; it substitutes for the minute rules of the Pharisees one comprehensive principle; it implies the energy of holy love in the heart, for only true Christian love can enable a man to apply this commandment of the Lord to the government of his own life and actions. This is the Law and the Prophets. All the commandments of the second table are briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." And it implies the commandments of the first table; for Christian love, that charity which is the greatest of all graces, flows out of the love of God. "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments." Then this is the Law and the Prophets. All the practical teaching of Holy Scripture is contained in the one law of love; and one Teacher only can write that law upon our selfish hearts, and teach us to apply it to the details of our daily lives—the Holy Spirit of God, whom our Father which is in heaven will give (his blessed Son has promised it) to them that ask him.

III. THE OBSTACLES WHICH IMPEDE OUR OBSERVANCE OF THE SAVIOUR'S RULES. 1. *Their difficulty.* (1) The Lord does not hide from us the difficulty of persevering obedience. Our righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. They seek the praise of men; they please themselves. There are many forms of the self-pleasing life, varying with the character, the surroundings, the early influences; they all meet in one way. That way is broad, the Lord says. There is no difficulty in finding it; 'many there be which go in thereat;" you have but to go with the multitude, to live as others live, to swim with the stream. There is no need of a guide to find the broad way; we have but to follow the devices and desires of our own hearts, to live

without self-denial, without the fear of God, without the restraining, solemnizing thoughts of death and judgment, and the awful world beyond the grave. The way is broad, the Lord says—spacious in its wide extent; it covers the whole world, the whole range of human life, save only one narrow path. Many ways converge into it—ways coming from many different quarters, far apart at their outset, very unlike in their circumstances, in the country through which they pass; but all meeting in the one broad way. Many travellers pass along it, differing widely from one another—old and young, rich and poor, learned and ignorant; but all alike in this: they have forgotten the prayer which the Lord himself had taught them. They never say, "Thy will be done;" or, if they say it, certainly they never think of it; it never enters into their hearts; it does not exert the least influence upon their lives. "Our will be done," they say in their hearts—our will, weak it may be, wavering, ill-directed, ignorant of the true end of life; but to follow one's own will needs no painful effort, and so men prefer it to the holy will of God. And they pass on, heedless and thoughtless for the most part; some of them now and then hesitating, wondering what the end will be, half inclined to try the one narrow path, but driven back again by the press of the crowd; a few here and there drawn by some constraining power, tearing themselves away, faltering at first, then resolutely choosing the narrow way; but the most still moving onwards, all in the same direction, till the gate is reached at last—the gate that is set across the road at the journey's end. That gate is wide; it can receive a multitude. They reach it, they pass through it; a few are drawn violently back, plucked, as it were, out of the fire at the very last; others are full of trembling anxiety, disturbed by many doubts and fears, but yet they pass on. The most end their journey as they began it, moving on with the crowd, thinking nothing of the future. They pass through that wide gate; and oh! what lies beyond it? Death, the Bible tells us—eternal destruction from the face of the Lord, and from the glory of his might; the great outer darkness, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth. (2) Therefore the Lord bids us enter in at the strait gate; in his tender love for our souls he condescends to show us the way, entering there himself. Few find it, but the Lord Jesus is with those few. He is their Guide; his cross goeth before them; they follow him in trustful faith, though often with much fear and trembling, sometimes with many anxious doubts. For the path is very narrow; it is hemmed in on each side with difficulties and dangers. Many side-paths open out from it; they seem sometimes to follow the same general direction, but a slight divergence at first often leads very far astray. They are sometimes very tempting; they look smoother, easier, pleasanter, than the one narrow way. There is need of much careful thought, much self-restraint, to keep the right path; it is steep, sometimes very rugged, leading ever upwards. Few find it. Sometimes, in moments of depression, they seem to us very few indeed; but we remember that when Elijah thought himself alone, God could tell him that there were seven thousand faithful men in Israel. And if they are but few, they are the followers of the Lamb, "called, chosen, faithful." He himself is with them, cheering, comforting, strengthening them. The narrow path is often a vale of weeping—there is much sorrow, many trials; but there is much comfort. The Lord is with his followers; therefore "they go on from strength to strength, and at the last unto the God of gods appeareth every one of them in Zion." For at the end of the narrow path lies the strait gate. It is strait; there is need of self-denial, diligence, holy thoughtfulness, even to the last. It is strait; but there is room for all to enter in who have chosen the service of Christ; for he has passed through that strait gate himself, and he will open it wide to his followers. It is strait; but it leadeth unto life—to that life which is indeed worth living; the everlasting life with God in heaven. For the strait gate of the parable is, indeed, the pearly gate of the golden city; there shall enter the saints of God, ten thousand times ten thousand, when the fight with sin and death is over, and the redeemed of the Lord, more than conquerors through the precious blood, go up with singing to Zion into the city of the living God. 2. *The influence of false teachers.* (1) Their description. Few find the narrow way. There is one true Guide; there are many false guides; there is need of thought and prayer. We must not be led about by divers and strange doctrines; we must not believe every spirit; we must try the spirits. False teachers come in sheep's clothing; they put on the prophet's dress; they are fair-speaking; they ensnare simple souls. There have been false teachers in every age; blind guides, like the

scribes and Pharisees in our Lord's time. There was one false apostle among the chosen twelve—one who was a thief; who cared not for the poor, but only for his own selfish gains. There are false teachers now, who care not for the sheep, but only for themselves; they are wolves in heart, "grievous wolves, not sparing the flock." (2) How to distinguish between the false teachers and the true. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Grapes and figs are among the good gifts of God; thorns and thistles tell of Adam's sin (Gen. iii. 18). The good fruit springeth not from the evil tree; a tree is known by its fruit. The outward life is the evidence of the inward. Indeed, the hypocrite acts the part of the righteous, and sometimes succeeds in deceiving the world; his almsgivings, his prayers, his seeming self-denials, impose upon men for a time. But in the long run even the world can discern the difference between the real and the unreal; there is an undefinable something, in look, voice, and manner, which betrays unreality—a something which is felt even by the irreligious. And he that is spiritual judgeth all things. A man who knows what it is to deny himself for Christ's sake, to pray out of the depths of his heart, who knows something of the deep experiences of the spiritual life, its sorrows and its joys,—such a man will distinguish by intuition, by a feeling which is rarely wrong, between the real and the unreal, the Christian and the hypocrite. A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit; it may have a show of goodness, but when you test it, it is worthless. An unbeliever cannot live a holy life; he may assume the appearance of piety, but there will be something forced, something unnatural, which betrays him; he will fail in the distinctive Christian grace of humility—that grace which our Lord puts in the forefront of the Beatitudes. His actions may seem good, but the goodness is only outward; the root is evil; the inner life of thought and motive is corrupt in the sight of him who searcheth the heart. The corrupt tree cannot bear good fruit, but it may by the grace of God become a good tree; the wild olive may be graffed in upon the good olive tree, and partake of its root and fatness. Thus only can it bring forth good fruit by union with the root of the good tree. This change is possible as long as the tree remains in life; it is necessary, if it is to be saved from death; for "every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." The fruit of the Spirit is the test of reality, the evidence of spiritual life, the earnest of a blessed immortality. Without it there is no salvation. The Lord who died for us warns us in the plain words of that true love which will not gloss over sin or hide the danger that is impending. He tells us of that hell which threatens the unloving and the hypocrite, of the prison from which there is no escape, of the destruction to which the broad way inevitably leadeth, of the fire into which the corrupt tree must be cast. Let the awful thought sink deep into our souls. Enter in at the strait gate; beware of false prophets; a tremendous alternative awaits us. The loving words of Christ our Lord call us to the way of holiness; may he give us ears to hear!

LESSONS. 1. The Lord teaches the great danger of idle and slanderous gossip; take heed, listen, and obey. 2. Pray earnestly for grace to see your own faults, examine yourselves; be real, hate unreality, and hypocrisy. 3. Pray always, in trustful faith, in persevering earnestness. 4. Deny yourselves; only the way of the cross leadeth to the crown of life. 5. Seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit; beware of false teachers.

Vers. 21—29.—*Conclusion of the sermon.* I. THE NECESSITY OF OBEDIENCE. 1. *Not all disciples will be saved.* They all say, "Lord, Lord;" they all call themselves by the holy name of Christians; but not all can enter into the kingdom of glory at the last. For our Father which is in heaven is the King of heaven; and none can enter into his kingdom but those who do his will. They all pray, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." It is mere hypocrisy, it is mocking God, to say that holy prayer and not to try to do the will of God ourselves. It is done in heaven. There is room for no other will there; all wills in heaven are one with the blessed will of God. We must learn to do our Father's will in earth, that our will may by his grace be more and more conformed to his most holy will; so may we one day enter into that blessed place where all do his will lovingly and perfectly. 2. *Not all teachers.* In the great day men will call Jesus Lord. Could he say that, were he not what we know he was, the Lord God Almighty? He accepts the title, for it is his by right; he himself called no man lord. They will call him Lord then, some of them in terror and fearful

anticipations; alas! he says there will be many such. They will plead, in deprecation of the dreadful judgment, their works done outwardly for him, and, as it seemed, by his help. "Did we not prophesy by thy Name?" But the gift of prophecy is nothing worth without the grace of love; there have been great preachers gifted with the mighty power of spiritual eloquence who yet knew not the Lord themselves, whose own hearts were cold while they kindled the love of others. "Did we not by thy Name cast out devils?" But so did Judas, who was the son of perdition, into whom the devil entered. "Did we not by thy Name do many mighty works?" But Holy Scripture tells us that though we had all faith, so that we could remove mountains, yet we should be nothing if charity were wanting. It seemed a great thing to have the gift of prophecy and the power of working miracles, but these great gifts will not save the soul; there is need of something deeper—the hidden life of holiness which the Father only seeth, the submission of the human will in love and faith to the holy will of God. 3. "*The Lord knoweth them that are his.*" "I know mine own," he saith, "and mine own know me." "I never knew you," he will say to the false prophets; to many, alas! who once seemed to be doing great things for him, but yet in their hearts loved him not. "Depart from me." For they were really working iniquity when in the eyes of men they were working for Christ; their life was a lie, untrue, unreal; it was a piece of acting, nothing more. And now the mask is torn away, and the miserable truth is seen. He never knew them as he knoweth his sheep, his chosen. Oh that he may know us as the Father knoweth him (John x. 14, 15), with the knowledge of holy, heavenly love; and that we by his grace may learn to know the good Shepherd with that blessed knowledge which is life eternal (John xvii. 3)!

II. PARABLE OF HEARING AND DOING. 1. *The obedient hearer.* He receives the Word with joy; he recognizes it as the Word of God. But he is not content with hearing. Every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God ought to be listened to with solemn reverence. But there needs something more than solemn reverence, something more than intent listening. The Lord could look into the hearts and thoughts of the vast multitude gathered round the Mount of the Beatitudes. They were astonished at his doctrine; they had listened with interest, with admiration, and with wonder. They would go away. Sometimes they would remember the great Teacher; they would call to mind that look of Divine majesty, those holy eyes beaming with tender love, those tones of touching persuasion and more than human authority; they would tell their friends of the great audience, of the hushed silence, of the strange originality of the Lord's teaching, so utterly different from that of the scribes. But would their lives be changed? Would they live as many, most of them perhaps, had half intended to live while the sound of the holy words was yet falling on their ears? Alas! no. How many would very soon forget all that they had heard! They would relapse into their old ways; some of them would join the scribes and Pharisees in persecuting the great Master. The Lord knew it would be so; he forewarns them of the danger. The Word of God must be obeyed; obedience is greatly blessed. The obedient hearer is like a wise man, who built his house upon a rock. His religion is the house in which his soul is sheltered—the house which is to be his refuge in the storms of adversity, in the hour of death and in the day of judgment. The religion of the obedient hearer is real, deep, and true; it rests upon a rock. That Rock is Christ, the tried Stone, the sure Foundation. The faithful disciple had dug deep, below the surface of words and mere profession, and had reached the Rock; his house rested upon it, it was built into it, and in that union with the living Rock it was safe. Temptation might come, and suffering and persecution; sickness might come, pain of body and anguish of soul; it would come sooner or later; but the house that had foundations, the house that rested on the Rock, could not be shaken; it would stand even when the floods of the river of death were beating against it; for the faithful followers of the Saviour "die in the Lord," in vital union with him who is the Rock of ages. 2. *The careless hearer.* He heareth, but doeth not. Perhaps he hears with pleasure, with interest; but this is a very unworthy result, if this is all. The Word of God is very sacred and august; it brings a solemn responsibility upon the hearers; it ought to produce conviction, obedience. He that doeth not shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand. It was without foundations; it rested not upon the Rock. That house is the mere profession of

religion—outward worship, outward forms, outward conformity; there is no change of life, no reality, no obedience, no self-denial; there are words only, and not deeds. And that house cannot stand. For a time it may seem fair and stately. It has a look, perhaps, of strength and solidity. But it has no foundations; it cannot give shelter to the trembling soul in sorrow and distress, in sickness and the fear of death. "It fell, and great was the fall of it."

III. THE FEELINGS OF THE AUDIENCE. The great sermon was over, but the spell of the Preacher's voice and manner yet held the people in astonishment. They compared him with the scribes; *they* were accustomed always to adduce the authority of others—Moses, or the prophets, or some famous rabbi. The Lord spake with authority: "I say unto you." He represented himself as the Judge who was to distinguish between the real and the unreal, who would say to the hypocrites, "Depart from me." Only the Son of God could use these words, only One who knew in the depth of his consciousness that he himself was God over all. He spoke with authority then on the Mount of the Beatitudes. He speaks with authority now from heaven. Blessed are the true children of the kingdom. Great must be the fall of the hypocrite and the disobedient.

LESSONS. 1. Words will not save us; only holy obedience, the obedience of the heart: "Thy will be done." 2. It will not help us to hear the greatest preachers unless we try to live as we are taught. 3. Build upon the Rock; think of the end; the sand will not bear the house; the Rock is the Rock of ages.

## HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 1—5.—*The mote and the beam.* As we read the Gospel narratives we cannot fail to be impressed with a singular mingling of severity and kindness in the teachings of our Lord. His standard is lofty and he admits of no compromise, yet he deals gently with the erring, and he urges a similar line of conduct on his disciples. He came not to judge the world, but to save it. He bids us not judge one another, while we are to be severe in judging ourselves. Let us consider the evil of censoriousness.

I. IT IS DANGEROUS. In judging others we court judgment ourselves. 1. *From men.* The critic becomes unpopular. By his irritating conduct he excites animosity, and induces people to be on the look out for his offences. They will be ready to use the *tu quoque* argument in sheer self-defence. None of us is so perfect as to be able to stand the fire of adverse criticism without a defect being revealed. The fierce light that beats upon a critic should quiet his censoriousness. 2. *From God.* It is unpleasant for our faults to be exposed by men; it is far worse, it is fatal, for them to bring down upon us the judgment of God. Yet it is the repeated teaching of Christ that God will deal with us as we deal with our neighbours. If we do not forgive them, God will not forgive us. With the unmerciful he will show himself unmerciful. So long as we make it our business to point out the sins of other people there is no hope that our sins will be blotted out (ch. vi. 15).

II. IT IS HYPOCRITICAL. The censorious person is the last to perceive his own sin. It may be huge as a beam, yet he is quite unable to see it while he is busy in hunting for the speck of dust in his brother's eye. There is nothing which so hinders a person from heart-searching self-examination, nothing which so hardens him in self-complacent pride, as the habit of finding fault with other people. The prophet may be a greater sinner than the people whom he is denouncing; yet the very act of denunciation blinds him to his own great wickedness. The English bear a reputation of hypocrisy on the Continent, and are not popular there as a nation, because they are constantly denouncing "continental vices," while dishonesty in trade, self-seeking in politics, and immorality in life belie their exalted pretensions. It is a common habit of Churches to thunder against the heresies and wrong-doings of sister-communions; they would do better to look at home first. Religious people are horrified at the sight of publicans and sinners; but have they nothing to be ashamed of? Comparing their advantages with the temptations of the miserable drunkards and harlots whom they denounce, they might well ask whether their pride, uncharitableness, and covetousness may not be veritable beams in the eyes of God.

III. IT IS FUTILE. While there is a beam in his own eye the critic cannot remove

the mote from his brother's eye. To do so is to perform a very delicate operation. Any obscurity of vision will allow only of a bungling attempt, that will give much pain and yet will not effect its purpose. The beam must go first. While a man is blinded to his sin, he cannot save his neighbour. Christ, the Saviour of the world, was sinless. Christians must seek deliverance from their own sins before they undertake a crusade for the saving of their brethren. The humility that confesses personal unworthiness is the spirit best fitted for seeking to save lost and degraded fellow-men and women.—W. F. A.

Ver. 6.—*Pearls and swine.* At the first blush of it this reads more like a motto of the scribes than a proverb from the large-hearted Christ. It is quite as important to see what it does not mean as to lay hold of its positive teaching, because we are all tempted to abuse it in order to excuse our narrowness and selfishness.

I. MISAPPREHENSIONS OF THE PROVERB. 1. *In neglect of the poor.* This is the most gross and insulting abuse of the principle which can be thought of. No one would venture to express it in so many words when he was thus misdirecting it. Yet virtually such an application of it is very common. It is thought that any coarse fare will be good enough for the poor; not only coarse food and clothes, but coarse treatment, coarse methods of religion, coarse amusements, and the ministration of coarse men. To bring works of art and good music to "the lower classes" is thought to be wasteful. Refined people are not to spend themselves on the common people. This is Pharisaism without its religion—the pride of the cultivated Roman with the bitterness of the scornful Pharisee. 2. *In contempt of the illiterate.* The Gnostics reserved their choicest ideas for the inner circle of the initiated. Ignorant people might walk by faith; Gnostics had attained to knowledge. This is not the religion of Christ. He rejoices that God reveals his best truth to babes and sucklings. 3. *In despair of the sinful.* We are tempted to shrink from speaking of Christ to the very lowest people. It looks like a profanation to set the treasures of the gospel before them. They can hear the Law that condemns their sin; the beautiful thoughts of God's grace in Christ are too good for them. This, too, is unchristian. Christ brought his good tidings to all men, and the first to leap up and grasp it were the publicans, the sinners, and the harlots.

II. THE TRUE APPLICATION OF THE PROVERB. If these obvious uses of it are all contrary to the mind and method of Christ, how does he wish us to use it? Let us look at it on two sides—in regard to men and in regard to truth. 1. *In regard to men.* Who are the dogs and the swine? Not the poor and the illiterate; not only or always the abandoned and degraded. (1) The cynical. Cynicism most effectually excludes the gospel. It is not best conquered by being offered the gems of Divine grace. It needs to be made ashamed of itself. (2) The greedy. Dogs and swine are proverbially gluttonous. We must here think of the former animals not as we know them in England—as man's true friends and companions—but as they are in the East, pariahs of the animal world, surly scavengers of the streets. Low, selfish greed prevents its victims from appreciating Divine truth. (3) The unclean. The animals named are typical of foulness. Now, we have seen that the gospel is for sinners. But it comes to their better selves. It has no contact with their corrupt imagination. Sensuous pictures of religious experience lead the degraded to defile the very religion of holiness. 2. *In regard to truth.* (1) In personal experience. The Christian is not to hang his heart upon his sleeve. There is a spiritual modesty, a decency in religion. We need to be careful how we unveil the choice experience of communion between the soul and its Saviour. (2) In revealed truth. All men may have all truth, but not at all times and in all ways. We must choose an opportunity. There is a word in season. Some aspects of truth are best for publicity, others for private meditation, though all are for every seeking soul.—W. F. A.

Vers. 7—11.—*Encouragements for prayer.* Jesus is revealing the Fatherhood of God, and now he is showing how that great truth is the basis of faith, and, in particular, the ground for confidence in prayer.

I. THE CALL TO PRAYER. 1. *Thrice repeated.* This threefold invitation shows us (1) the importance of prayer; (2) the backwardness of unbelief; (3) the gracious

kindness of Christ. It is not only permissible for us to pray; we are invited and urged to avail ourselves of the great privilege. 2. *In varied forms.* (1) Ask. There are things that we want to receive. The simplest prayer is to ask for them. (2) Seek. There are truths we desire to know—hidden treasures out of sight which urge our pursuit; and God himself is unseen, and at first seemingly distant and hidden behind the clouds. The soul cries in its distress, "Oh that I knew where I might find him!" This is a deeper, a more spiritual prayer. (3) Knock. Now we have reached the third stage of prayer—not to obtain a gift, not to reach after the hidden treasure, but ourselves to enter the kingdom. Nothing apart from God will satisfy. Our great evil is not our poverty, but our exile. Our great blessing is not an enrichment where we are, but our reception into the Father's home. 3. *With promise of success.* Prayer is more than confiding in God. It is not a voice crying in the dark for its own relief, and satisfied without any reply. It must be answered, or it will despair. Christ teaches us that God gives in response to prayer what we should not receive without it. This cannot be because God is ignorant of our needs (ch. vi. 32), nor that he is reluctant to help. It must be because he sees that blessings which it would not be fitting to bestow on the careless, the distrustful, or the self-satisfied, may be bestowed with wholesome results on those who humbly trust him and prepare themselves to receive them.

II. THE GROUNDS OF CONFIDENCE. 1. *The Fatherhood of God.* This is a greater reason for confidence than any definite assurance of help. We delight to plead the promises; but what if we need something lying outside the range of them? or what if we dare not apply some of them to ourselves? We assure ourselves by meditating on the Divine covenant. But how can we be certain that we are parties to the covenant? And are there no blessings to be had that are not named in that deed? Here we have assurances of uncovenanted mercies. The father does not bind down his kindness to the limits of his promises. Because God is our Father, there is no limit to his willingness to help and bless. 2. *The analogy of human families.* It is customary with Christ to use his parables as arguments. He is often found reasoning from what is generally accepted among men. With him religion is so natural a thing that the very course of nature is a ground of assurance. It would be quite contrary to nature that God should not show his love as a Father. To disbelieve it is to believe an amazing monstrosity of unnatural heartlessness. 3. *The superior goodness of God.* The argument is *à fortiori*. Blind unbelief will not credit God with the common paternal instinct found even in sinful human parents. Thus it places him below man. But he is infinitely above man. Then he must be a better Father than the best of human parents. If imperfect fathers on earth will not deceive their children, much less will the perfect Father in heaven. Apply this (1) to the cry for forgiveness; (2) to the pursuit of the better life; (3) to the hunger for a future life.—W. F. A.

Ver. 12.—*The golden rule.* This is the great Christian rule of life. In some respects it was not unknown before Christ; the famous rabbi Hillel is said to have uttered a maxim somewhat like it. Nevertheless, it is distinctly Christian because Christ sets it before us as of primary importance, because it is the first rule of Christian conduct, because it is the law of our Lord's own life, and because he alone shows us how it can be carried out in practice and so makes it real and living.

I. WHAT IT MEANS. It is an application of the old principle of the Law that we are to love our neighbours as ourselves. It sets before us an excellent test by which we may see whether we are doing so, an admirable standard by which we may measure ourselves. Observe its characteristics. 1. *Action.* It carries us beyond the love of sentiment to the love that is seen in action. It is useless to feel kindly to others if we do not act fairly. 2. *Breadth.* "All things whatsoever" are included under it. It is to apply to men generally—not merely to brethren, friends, neighbours, fellow-Christians, fellow-citizens. It applies to strangers, disagreeable people, foreign nations, the heathen, savage races. 3. *Lucidity.* Here is a clear guiding light. We can well perceive what we should like ourselves. We know how we should like to be treated under certain circumstances. Accordingly we may see how others would also wish to be treated. Thus we can perceive what is desirable, and instead of letting self-interest blind us to our duty to others, we may use the voice of self-interest as the very indicator

of what should be done to them. 4. *Reasonableness.* Nothing unfair is here laid upon us. No one can possibly complain of this rule. It is a principle of perfect justice, and every man is to be his own judge in regard to it.

II. WHAT IT CONTAINS. "The Law and the Prophets," *i.e.* the whole Scripture. Here is the whole duty of man. Of course, it is evident that Christ is referring to that side of man's duty which belongs to his fellow-men. Yet even the further duty of serving God is here best fulfilled.

"He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small."

In human intercourse this maxim may be taken as a universal guide. Were it always employed no more would be needed. It is set forth in Kant's categorical imperative, "So act that thy conduct may be a universal law to mankind."

III. HOW IT IS PRACTICABLE. The chief distinction between Christ and moralists when he deals with moral questions is not so much the superior character of his teaching—though that must be apparent to all—as the power that accompanies it. The Utopian dream of the ethical thinker becomes a possibility, becomes a reality in the kingdom of heaven. The golden rule floats hopelessly above our reach until we come into personal contact with Christ. But it is the very law of the life of Christ, and when we are united to him the inspiration of his life makes it possible for us. Thus it is not just to say that this rule is Christianity, and that all else in our religion is needless. On the contrary, it is a living, spiritual Christianity—faith in Christ and devotion to him—that enables us to carry out Christ's great rule of conduct.—W. F. A.

Vers. 13, 14.—*The two ways.* The idea of "the two ways" seems to have laid hold of the mind of the early Church very strongly; a treatise known by that name was in use among the primitive Christians, and the first part of the recently discovered Church manual, entitled, 'The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles,' embodies that treatise. It was not thought easy to be a Christian in the heroic days of persecution; it is not really any easier to-day, when the difficulty comes rather from the all-pervading atmosphere of worldliness.

I. THE ENTRANCE. The gate of the one way is narrow, the gate of the other wide. We are directed to think of beginnings. This is a subject to be studied in early life. It comes up at the great moment of decision. We must just think of the gate, for until we have passed through we cannot be in the way at all. 1. *The straitness of the first gate.* No one can become a Christian without an effort. We do not drift into the kingdom, nor do we grow up in it unconsciously. Even the children of Christian homes need to come to decision and make a deliberate choice. Moreover, there are sins to be repented of, evil habits to be renounced; pride must be humbled, and the simple trust of a little child attained. We become Christians by complete surrender to Christ. 2. *The width of the second gate.* We do not need to make any choice of evil. Evil is all around us. We have but to let ourselves go, and we shall be swept through the wide gate. This is so very wide that we cannot miss it if we merely permit ourselves to go with the crowd.

II. THE WAY. Life is more than its beginnings. We have to consider its whole course. But that course is likely to resemble its commencement. The strait gate leads to the narrow way, the wide gate to the broad way. The whole life has a character of its own. 1. *Why the right way is narrow.* This is not because there is a virtue in restraint on its own account. (1) There is but one right way, while there is an infinite diversity of wrong ways. At every moment there is just one thing needful, one thing that it is our duty to do then and there. If we neglect that, we can make our choice out of any number of things that ought not to be done. (2) Righteousness involves self-denial. We have to take up the cross to follow Christ. 2. *Why the wrong way is broad.* The very variety of evil makes it so. Then there is no law in sin. Sin is lawlessness (1 John iii. 4). Thus the way of evil is one of wild self-will; it is every one turning to his own way (Isa. lxvi. 3). A track across open country, if much used, tends to become wider and wider as each fresh traveller chooses what seems to him the best bit of ground on which to walk.

III. THE END. The two ways keep apart from beginning to end; neither issues in

the other. The broad way is not a short cut to the narrow way. Each has a separate destination. We do not all come to the same end. But the character of the end is determined by the character of the way. This makes the way of great importance. It is not a city in which we dwell, nor even a temporary camping-ground on which we rest for a night. We are always moving along it. The great question is—Whither does it tend? Christ sets the alternative before us very clearly—eternal life or destruction. Here is reason for rousing ourselves and listening to the urgent entreaty of the Saviour, "Enter ye in," etc.—W. F. A.

Vers. 15—20.—*The tree and its fruit.* It is not enough for Christ to spread his own wholesome teaching; he must warn against the dangerous influence of bad teachers. Later in his ministry he had occasion to speak of the pretended shepherds, who were really thieves, or at best hirelings (John x. 10, 12). Here his reference to the tree and its fruit is meant to be applied to the teacher and his work. It shows that he expects people to be watchful over those who assume to be their instructors. Christians are to judge prophets.

I. THE QUALITY OF THE WORK IS DETERMINED BY THE CHARACTER OF THE WORKER. 1. *Work is fruit.* A man's true work is not something which he has chosen to do by free selection from any number of possibilities. It is the very product of his being; it is himself thrown out and expressed in action. All real work is a growth from a man's life. 2. *The fruit must correspond to the tree.* It is not just a miniature tree, but it is "after its kind." The teaching and life-work may not be merely photographs of the mind of the teacher and worker, but they will correspond in kind. This is necessary because it is natural. Christ's parallel goes beyond an illustration, and becomes an argument from analogy. The whole course of nature makes it monstrous to suppose that good work can come from bad men, or bad work from good men.

II. THE WORKER MUST BE JUDGED BY HIS WORK. 1. *He should not be judged prematurely.* We are tempted to form hasty prejudices about people, the results of first impressions. But these are most delusive. A pretentious or an attractive teacher may be worthless. One who vexes and offends us may be a very prophet of God. The present popularity of a preacher is a poor test of the value of his ministrations. 2. *His work must be examined.* Our Lord distinctly requires this. We are not to judge men in private life and as to their own individual conduct. But when any one takes on him the office of a public teacher he invites examination. It is not incumbent on us to criticize for the sake of the criticism, but we must decide whether a man whom we follow is leading us aright. 3. *The test is to be found in final effects.* There are snares in the judgment by results. We may look only at external effects; we may be impatient for quick returns; we may mistake quantity for quality. It is necessary to wait for some autumn fruit ripening. Then the question is as to kind and quality. If these are good, the teaching is wholesome. The best form of Christian evidences is the biography of Christian men. Honest missionary reports are an important element in apologetics.

III. THE BAD WORK WILL CONDEMN THE UNWORTHY WORKER. The tree only exists for the sake of its fruit. Its goodly shape, its vigorous growth, its luxuriant foliage, count for nothing, or worse than nothing, for they cumber the ground. What would be a merit in the forest is a fault in the garden. Trees planted for fruit must bear fruit, or they will be useless. It is bad to produce poisonous or worthless fruit; but it is also a matter of condemnation to be barren, like the fruitless fig tree of the parable (Luke xiii. 6—9). God's test at the great judgment will ignore the fame of popular preaching, the glitter of daring thinking, the honour of exalted position. All will go by the quality of the output. And on this test will follow more than the acceptance or the condemnation of the work. The worker himself will be judged—condemned or rewarded.—W. F. A.

Vers. 24—27.—*The rock and the sand.* Christ turns from the judgment of the teacher, in the parable of the tree and the fruit, to the judgment of the hearer, in the parable now before us. The hearer is responsible as well as the teacher.

I. LIVING IS BUILDING. Every man is building himself a house, for all life-work is the putting together of a habitation in which the worker will have to dwell. Some

build feebly and set up but slight structures, mere huts and shanties. Others work with more ambitious designs, and will make themselves spacious mansions, gorgeous palaces, or massive castles. Whatever a man builds, in that he must dwell. We cannot get away from the results of our own life-work. These will either become a shelter to protect us or a ruin to fall about our heads.

II. THE SECURITY OF A BUILDING IS DETERMINED BY THE SOLIDITY OF THE FOUNDATION. Our Lord's imagery would be particularly vivid in his own country. Nazareth is built in a cleft of the hills, some of its houses perched on jutting rocks. A similar character of foundation would be found in the neighbourhood of Gennesaret, where Jesus was now teaching. If the foundation is rotten, the greater the building the more insecure will it be, and the greater will be the fall thereof when it comes down. It is vain and foolish to be bestowing care on the towers and pinnacles while the foundation is giving way. Efforts spent on mere ornamentation are quite wasted if the question of the foundation has not been first of all carefully attended to. Yet in practical life this is the last thing that many consider. They would reach the goal without entering the strait gate; they would gather the fruit without grafting in the right stock; they would complete the house without attending to the foundation. Yet the first great question is as to what we are building on.

III. THE FOUNDATION WILL BE TESTED. All is well at first. The house on the sand looks as fair and solid as that on the rock. Perhaps it is of a more pretentious character. But the calm dry weather will not last for ever. The rainy season ensues. Torrents scour the mountain-sides and sweep the loose soil from the rocks. Wind and rain beat on the house at the same time that it is being undermined by the raging flood that washes the sand from beneath its foundation. This is like the persecution and tribulation that scorch the growth on the stony ground (ch. xiii. 20, 21). Trouble is a test of the foundation of a professedly Christian life. Death is a great final test.

IV. THE SOLID FOUNDATION IS OBEDIENCE. A careless hearer of this parable might be ready to assume that Christ is the Foundation, and that faith in him is building on that Foundation. Of course, these are truths expressed elsewhere (*e.g.* 1 Cor. iii. 11). But they are not the lessons of the present parable. Our Lord is distinctly warning us against a superficial profession of allegiance to himself (vers. 22, 23). All is useless if there is not obedience. Faith without works is dead (Jas. ii. 17). In other words, the only living faith in Christ is that which proves its existence by bringing forth fruit in active service. Only they are on the rock who do what Christ teaches.—W. F. A.

Vers. 1, 2.—*The warning in judging.* Thus, at the early beginning of the new generations of the earth, did the Author of them, foreseeing their long and ever-broadening tumultuous streams, declare *this* among the essential conditions of a true inheritance in them, that men fear and avoid rather than rush into the seat of the judge. It is a great condition of membership in the new society. To the soundness and health of this society many an element must contribute; and to exist it *must be* healthy. No fencing of it from without, no careful tending of it from without, but only its innermost sound constitution can secure this. As we now survey the complex conditions of human society, we admire that prevision of the Organizer and ultimate Lord of it. And we wonder at the sanitary provision marked so clearly by the exhortation and argument contained in these two verses. Their injunction is indeed one that easily courts superficial lip-objection, but it is also one that does not fail to draw forth a deep "Amen!" from the "good and honest" heart, warned by the disasters, unnumbered and innumerable, consequent on the neglect of it, informed by careful observation of life, and matured by experience. When we ask *what* it really is that is contained in it, we may at once without hesitation reply that its purport is certainly not to affront reason and common sense; it does not bid us blind our eyes, either by disuse of them, or worse, by blank contradiction of their testimony; it does not forbid or put some dread ban on our sober use of our faculty of judgment. But, plainly, it is a great direction of life, essentially practical in its significance, and not better for others and the peace of the life of the community than safe for self. Just as those most emphatic and repeated directions of Scripture to guard the use of tongue and lips with all diligence do not ban the *use* of them, so the words of perfect

wisdom now before us guard a dangerous power, and restrain a disposition ever too willing to assert itself against the fatal *abuse* of it. For—

I. TO UNDERTAKE TO JUDGE IS TO USURP A POSITION BETWEEN GOD AND MAN, NOT ONLY UNAUTHORIZED, BUT BOTH ELSEWHERE AND HERE IN THE MOST IMPORTANT CONNECTION ESPECIALLY FENCED OFF.

II. AMONG A THRONG OF NECESSARY AND INEVITABLE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITIES, IT IS TO COURT AND EVEN CHALLENGE A GRATUITOUS AND VERY DANGEROUS ADDITIONAL ONE.

III. IT HAS IT IN ITS VERY GENIUS, AND ALSO AS A NOTORIOUS FACT TO ENGENDER AN INSTINCTIVE RESENTMENT ON THE PART OF THOSE WHO ARE THE OBJECTS OF IT, AND TO PROVOKE RETORT.

IV. IT BREEDS INTRINSIC DANGER TO THE DISPOSITION OF THOSE WHO EXERCISE IT, AND OFFERS INCENTIVE, WHERE DISCOURAGEMENT IS WHAT IS SPECIALLY NEEDED.

V. IT DARES CONSEQUENTIAL VERY PRACTICAL RISKS, FOR THOSE WHO INTRUDE, STIRRING FOR THEM JUDGMENT AND JUSTICE THAT MIGHT SLEEP, AND DANGEROUSLY SUGGESTING THE SELF-ASSIGNED MEASURE OF IT. If anything might be expected to operate as a deterrent upon the habit that has proved itself to have so strong a hold on men, it might well be this dread thought.—B.

Vers. 3—5.—*The confronting question.* The question or questions of these verses arise only too directly out of the matter that immediately precedes. The habit, so human, of sitting in judgment on our fellow-beings is almost invariably aggravated by other satellite habits, also very human, and that fail to amaze and to shame us *only* by reason of our too intimate familiarity with them. Thus—

I. LITTLE FAULTS IN OTHERS WE SEE VERY LARGE, AND LARGE FAULTS IN OURSELVES WE SEE VERY LITTLE.

II. LITTLE FAULTS IN OTHERS WE SEE VERY LARGE, FOR THE BLAMABLE REASON THAT LARGE FAULTS IN OURSELVES WE SEE VERY LITTLE.

III. THE LARGE FAULTS OF OURSELVES ARE IN A CERTAIN WAY MEASURABLE, AND THIS THE MEASURE OF THEM—THEY ARE OF JUST THE SIZE TO BLOCK OUR VISION OF ALL THAT IS OUR FIRST DUTY TO "CONSIDER," *i.e.* OF ALL THAT IS AS NEAR TO US AS OURSELVES.

IV. THEY DO AS A MATTER OF FACT BLOCK THAT VISION SO SADLY EFFECTUALLY, THAT THOUGH LABOURING UNDER ALL OUR OWN PERSONAL DEPRIVATION, WE PROFFER PATRONIZINGLY TO DO THAT OFFICE FOR OUR NEIGHBOUR WHICH NONE BUT THE PUREST VISION IS QUALIFIED TO DO, AND NOTHING BUT THE IMPURITY OF PHARISAIC SELF-CONCEIT WOULD PRESUME TO VOLUNTEER OR DARE TO ESSAY EXCEPT ON SOLICITOUS ENTREATY.—B.

Ver. 6.—*Christian economy, and gospel frugality.* This verse, apparently solitary and detached, depends for its effect certainly on no *verbal* connection with what precedes it, but throws itself fearlessly on its intrinsic virtue. It provides all needful counteractive, and counteractive very efficacious, to the verbally unqualified prohibition of the first and second verses of the chapter. Charity, moderation in our own inner judgments of others, and restraint of lip in the expression of them, are not to degenerate into lavish latitudinarianism, nor to presume on pleading the exhortation of Christ for sanction of any such perversion. To rule in one's own mind that any are "dogs" and "swine" sufficiently postulates, surely, an unemasculated judgment, and suffers none to tax it with want of vigour in expression. The language is, indeed, figurative under any circumstances, but it is some of the most trenchant of all left on record as proceeding from the lips of Christ. It may be termed another great direction of conduct, but probably in this case, if not in the last, specially of apostolic conduct. A certain wisdom, and restraint of judgment, and temperateness of language are an imperative necessity for those in responsible office, both for safeguard to themselves and example to others. To throw "holy" food to dogs must be counted a monstrosity of profanity, and certainly would very promptly be apprehended such by a Jew in particular; and to "cast pearls before swine" must be counted a monstrosity of prodigal wastefulness and insane folly pretty well all time and all the world over. But if these directions be plain for their meaning and very plain for their force, they are perhaps not so plain

as regards the question to what possible conduct they apply. It may be necessary herein to guard their intent. They do *not* mean, *e.g.*, (1) that the gospel itself, even from the rudimental original of its expression on earth, should be prohibited to Gentile ears; nor (2) that genuine ignorance should be visited with a denial or withholding of it; nor (3) that deep depravity of life should similarly have that punishment meted out to it; nor (4) that in the development of time an esoteric and exoteric treatment of it should plead here any foreshadowed sanction or justification. But the passage in its unity—

I. FORBIDS THE DISREGARD (WHETHER THROUGH INDISPOSITION TO TAKE THE RIGHT PAINS, OR THROUGH UNSKILFUL INDISCERNMENT, OR THROUGH THE SPIRIT OF DEFIANCE) OF THE PERSONS TO WHOM, THE TIME WHEN, THE PLACE WHERE, THE PRICELESS BLESSINGS OF REVEALED TRUTH ARE OFFERED IN ALL THE WORLD. Before Christ himself it was ordained that the way be prepared by John the Baptist. Again, in every city and village whither he would go, he did himself appoint that two disciples should prepare the way. And we are told that once and again, where the field of operation was manifestly unhopeful, manifestly obstinately set against impression, he withdrew alike his doctrine and himself. Perhaps it may be said that an *instinctive*, an almost unconscious appreciation, and approving from the heart of this powerful direction of our Lord, *has* through *all the ages* since guarded sacred, at any rate, the administration or even offer of the holy sacraments of the Lord Jesus Christ.

II. FORBIDS THE RECKLESS OR THE UNADVISED AGGRAVATING OR ENRAGING OF A HUMAN WICKEDNESS ALL THE APPEARANCE OF WHICH PROCLAIMS IT IN VERY NEAR ALLIANCE WITH THE INFERNAL WICKEDNESS ITSELF.

III. FORBIDS ANY AND ALL EITHER MANIFEST OR SUBTLY-CONCEALED WASTEFUL SACRIFICE OF HUMAN EFFORT, ABILITY, OPPORTUNITY, WHICH, THE LESS THEY ARE, DO RATHER NEED ALL TO BE RELIGIOUSLY TREASURED AGAINST THE DAY OF INCONTESTABLY NECESSARY EXPENDITURE AND UNAVOIDABLE CONFLICT.

IV. EMPHATICALLY FORBIDS THE PRESUMPTION OF COURTING MARTYRDOM.

V. STILL MORE CERTAINLY FORBIDS WITH CONDEMNING EMPHASIS THE COURTING OF IMPERFECT MARTYRDOM, *i.e.* THAT IN WHICH THE GOAL INVOLVES A VERY POOR CHANCE—A MERE TRAVESTY—OF THE ACTUAL WITNESS OF BLOOD. The blood of *the* martyrs is the seed of the Church. Granted, with deep-drawn "Amen" of acclamation. But the blood of pseudo-martyrs is *very different* seed! This seeds tares, and is another of those "devices of Satan, of which we are not ignorant." And the pseudo-martyr is not only the man who might from a guiltily presuming ambition dare a bid for the *real* martyr's crown hereafter, but also the man whose literal wreck of himself and of useful work has been paid as the tribute to despair on the one hand, or on the other to the unholy bravado of unspiritual and mere sentimental or even physical inflation. Such examples stand along the line of history not altogether infrequently. But they are to the discredit of human reason and heavenly prudence; of Christian devotion and gospel frugality; of the Word which we have received, and of that all-gracious Personage from whom we have received it. They are not to the glory of God; they are not to the weal and service of the Church of Christ.—B.

Ver. 7 (first clause).—*The generous challenge.* The trio clauses of this verse will all be best understood if they are sufficiently viewed as what may be called representative words. They stand for a whole type of thought, fact, truth. These same challenges and assurances linked, we find repeated much later in the life of Christ (Luke xi. 29). It adds to our conviction that these utterances of our great Teacher were of the nature that might be designated very studied and deliberate, very designed and far on-looking. The three clauses cannot for a moment be supposed to be merely repetitions, nor even merely three ways of putting the same essential thing. They require to be considered *seriatim*. Each grows on that which precedes it, and the added force is only obtainable at the end. The first of the clauses is sure to be the most generic, elementary, fundamental. The prospect which it holds out seems to one sometimes vague, sometimes too comprehensive to be anything but the language of extravagance or exaggeration. It has had the effect perhaps of producing *misgiving* in the heart. Note then—

I. CHRIST IS NOT SPEAKING OF MEN IN THEIR WIDE, SCATTERED, UNCERTAIN

RELATIONS TO THE WORLD AND TO ONE ANOTHER; HE HAS THE BEGINNING OF HIS OWN SCHOOL BEFORE HIM, WHICH SHOULD INDEED BECOME LARGE AND VARIOUS TILL IT GATHERED ALL IN ITS EMBRACE, AND IT IS WHAT THESE, AS HIS LEARNERS, HIS FOLLOWERS, HIS SERVANTS, MAY RELY UPON, THAT HE DECLARES. Let the world speak for itself, publish *its* manifesto, which it does large enough, loud enough, false enough. Jesus here speaks *his own* manifesto, and it is deficient by no means in largeness, but awaiting the test of quality and reliableness! Ever since, *all* who have in any sense, in any appreciable degree, really known Jesus, have been investigating, testing, pronouncing upon these two things—what his Word is good for, and how good he is to his Word.

II. CHRIST HAS AN OPEN EAR AND AN OPEN HAND; FOSTERS EXPECTATION, AND DOES NOT DISAPPOINT IT; INVITES PRAYER—PRAYER WIDE, VARIOUS, IMPORTUNATE, LARGE—AND THEN DEALS BOUNTIFULLY FROM HIS TREASURY AND WITH HIS OWN INFINITE RESOURCES. *Facts* all answer to these assertions. The very genius of Christ's truth points to them. That truth is *not* repressive to the mind, *not* contracting to the heart, *not* crushing to the life, *not* adverse to knowledge, to civilization, to brotherly fellowship, to practical benevolence. To all appearance Christ himself was nowhere without exciting a vast amount of inquiry and a vast variety of it. Never was breath of wind so healthful, so enlivening, so purifying by a millionth part, as was the breath of his Word. And wherever his truth has travelled, rested, paid the casual visit, or rooted itself, its force has been of a milar kind. It has taught and *provoked* men to ask for things outside of and above themselves, and with no idle fancy and no unrewarded desire has their eye rolled from earth to heaven. Things they never dreamed of before have become visions of brightness at which they gazed, objects of attraction that never lost their power, and of solemn practical quest which they never rested till they found and secured. They have been led to want to *ask*, *have* asked, and have found. In all this world there is no asking which comes near to that which Christ has originated in it—so large, so various, so deep or again high in its nature, and so richly rewarded. *Souls* ask, and souls have given to them, beyond all ambition's asking, or love of money's asking, or love of pleasure's asking, or love of life's asking, or the goading of misery's asking. Most native, therefore, to the spirit of Christ was it, is it, to say "Ask," and in his radiant generosity of nature to "give" to the asking! Oh! wonderful fountain of fresh life, Giver of good, Pitier of sorrow, Rescuer from death—it is *he* whose free, unqualified invitation needs but one short word in which to express itself, and that word "Ask."—B.

Ver. 7 (second clause).—*The challenge to the seeker.* When we pass on to the consideration of this second challenge, with accompanying assurance, of Jesus Christ, we may at once inwardly notice a leading difference between it and that which went before, and that difference one in the nature of an advance. It is true that when a child "asks" he expects to receive, and to receive "bread," and not a "stone," at the hand of his father. And Jesus emphasizes this fact to his present purpose: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall that Father of yours, which is in heaven, give good gifts to them that ask him?" On the other hand, it is a most certain thing that when as grown men we "ask"—not like children asking of their father—our voice is not very acceptable to the world, even when it is attended to, and very often is *not* attended to. "Asking" is not liked. And it is no little evidence of this that *we* do not like "asking." We all feel that a solitary act of asking means *some* sort and some little degree of humiliation; more asking means that we are run into some extremity; and perpetual asking, that we are lost to self-respect. Nor have we fashioned this rough code without some good reason; for we have been sometimes sharply reminded that stones may be sent for bread, and serpents for fish. But, again, who can deny that the world has some admiration for the man who "seeks"? The better part of the world despise those who live ever on the "ask" system, but are prone to respect those who set to work, "quit them like men," and "seek" with mind and heart and strength. May we not, then, note, that while Christ *does* love, for his own reasons and in his own sense, what the world and the better part of it do *not* over and above love, viz. the "askers," yet this is no reason why he does not love the "seekers"? "Faith without works is dead." And so in a

sense is asking without seeking. Prayer and work are far too often divorced. Note, then—

I. SEEKING LOOKS LIKE HONESTY; SHOWS SINCERITY; PROVES REALITY; ADDS TO FAITH, AS SURELY AS DILIGENCE SCOUTS DOUBT; WAKES SLEEPING POWERS; PREVENTS THEM FALLING ASLEEP AGAIN; AND ACQUIRES FRESH FORCE. Whatever advantage genuinely belongs to the real observing of practical work in our worldly life, is the merest shadow of that which any one may find who shall heartily, lovingly take to it in the conduct of his Christian life.

II. SOME THINGS ARE IN THEIR VERY NATURE TO BE HAD MORE REALLY IN SEEKING THAN IN ASKING, THOUGH EVEN THE ASKING BE OF GOD. The great thing, sanctification as compared with justification, may illustrate this. The latter is to be had, from that first solemn moment which finds us, with all the deepest anguished desire of a sin-convicted conscience and soul, begging, crying, or "asking" for it. But sanctification is not to be had for the mere asking for it, any more than that "increase of faith" which the disciples so ignorantly, yet so innocently, "asked" from Christ. But sanctification needs a long, patient, earnest "seeking" for. How many are fatally faulty in this very matter! They wish for forgiveness, beg for pardon, cry for mercy; and these got, or supposed to be so, they do *not* continuously and with holy perseverance and patience seek sanctification. Other, perhaps we should rather say all, Christian graces demand the same earnest practical *seeking;* certainly those that follow on that root of all graces, faith—as, for instance, hope and love. We "seek" these by *using* them, doing the works of them, trying their strength.

III. SPECIAL PROMISES ARE MADE TO SEEKING. How wide is the range of these even through the Old Testament! "They that seek me early shall find me;" "Blessed are they that seek him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways;" "Seek good and not evil, that ye may live, saith the Lord; yea, seek ye me;" "Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad;" "He is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek him;" "To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life." Whatever best things diligent and honourable earthly seeking has found, as lesson and encouragement by the way, what are they all by the side of the things given to the seeking of what is contained in three such words as those, "glory, honour, immortality"! It is surely *this* kind of "seeking" to which Christ here gives the sanction of his emphatic invitation. It is to this matter of seeking, to these objects of seeking, that an illimitable prospect of supply opens. For these none can seek too early, too perseveringly, too earnestly, too long. The seeker is blessed *because* he seeks, blessed all the while he seeks, and blessed in the entire escape assured to him, from illusion now or disappointment hereafter, in respect of the fact and the habit of seeking, which mark him.—B.

Ver. 7 (third clause).—*The challenge of the closed door.* This clause marks the climactic challenge of the three which the verse contains. It certainly equally bespeaks the climactic stage in the inner experience of many a timid, or doubting, or unbelieving, or disbelieving soul. After many askings of mere words, their accents betraying distrust; after wayward and intermittent seeking, that scarcely earned its name, at length strife and conflict have wrought themselves up to the crucial point, the task of one distinct *effort.* Upon that one distinct *effort* close has come the answer, and with this answer content and peace, progress and happiness, have come. In this third part of the triplet of reviving impulse offered by the language of Christ, the preacher may bring up the subject, make general and comprehensive observation of the working of human nature, as baulked by the difficulties incident to individual peculiarities of character (legion by name), to the petty and untractable tyrannies of habit, and to the confrontings of the events and circumstances of (that element, which acts so largely on human nature) the outer world, with all its cotemporary history, looming large now, and now diminishing to the deceptively trivial. The instances of the places and the manners, the concealed, unconscious motives, and the manifest determining impulses of the resurrections of the soul's life and health, are as boundlessly interesting as they are various and innumerable. And they show for how much misery and ruin the pale features of hesitation and indecision are answerable. Against all this, like the sound of some

welcome trumpet of morning, are these words spoken by the voice of heaven upon earth, "Knock, and it shall be opened." Consider—

I. THE NECESSITY TO CHRISTIAN LIFE, TO THE BEGINNING OF IT AND CONTINUOUSLY TO THE VERY CLOSE OF IT, OF HOLDING A DIRECT, UNDIVIDED CONVICTION THAT THERE IS AN ACCESSIBLE AND AN APPROACHABLE PLACE OF MERCY AND OF VARIOUS HELP.

II. THE NECESSITY OF AN UNDETERRED FORCE OF RESOLUTION IN MAKING DEFINITE APPLICATION AT THAT PLACE.

III. THE SUGGESTION WHICH THE FIGURE HERE EMPLOYED CONTAINS, AS TO THREE LEADING PETITIONS FOR MERCY AND VARIOUS HELP, APPROPRIATELY MADE AT THAT PLACE CALLED A DOOR OR GATE, VIZ. (1) INFORMATION AND DIRECTION ON THE ROAD; (2) BREAD TO EAT, WINE TO DRINK; (3) SHELTER FROM STORM PRESENT OR THREATENING, AND FOR THE CERTAINLY COMING NIGHT.

IV. THE UNLIMITED, UNCONDITIONED PROMISE. "It *shall be* opened." That you are challenged to "knock" points to the supposition that you have arrived at a door, and that a closed door. It also means that the door need not certainly remain closed, for that there is a power on the other side, from within, that may open it, to your wish, to your need, and to your confession and expression of the same. But in this case it means all this and yet much more; the challenge is accompanied with a promise to the full as unconditioned and unlimited. "It *shall be* opened." On the other side there is compassion and there is good will, there is mercy and there is love; and these all decide to "open;" and their *promise* is engaged thereto.—B.

Vers. 11, 12.—*The improvement upon the earthly pattern.* Although the "asking" in ver. 7 was pressed on to the further developments of "seeking" and "knocking," our Lord returns here to the most generic form of application on the part of one person to another in his use of the word "*ask*," when he speaks of "them that ask him." But, perhaps, not only because this is the most generic description of application from one to another is the word used in this connection, but because further it embodies least of the participation of the applicant, and when the answer comes to him, and, it may be, the rich gift falls into his lap, then least can he claim it as the result of his own work, merit, co-operation. He must acknowledge it the sovereign gift of sovereign grace. Notice in this passage—

I. THE CONDESCENDING USE OF THE EARTHLY PATTERN FOR THE THINGS OF THE HEAVENLY PATTERN.

II. THE INCORRUPT FIDELITY OBSERVED IN THAT USE. The pattern is quoted, is used; but its imperfect adequacy is openly averred. The pattern is not only in a lower sphere, not only on a lower scale, but it is admittedly *marred;* it is a *fallen* pattern, a pattern obtaining indeed, subsisting indeed, *actual;* yet among the fallen, erring, faulty, and sinful, all in turn.

III. THE UNSTINTED ENCOURAGEMENT (TO OFFER WHICH IS THE MANIFEST CENTRAL AIM OF THE PATTERN QUOTED, ITS FIDELITY AND ALL INCLUDED) TO THE APPLICANTS AND CANDIDATES OF GOD'S KINGDOM. The perfection alike of willingness and of wisdom combined is now the sovereign Dispenser, the universal impartial Distributor.

IV. THE GRAND USE MADE OF AN OCCASION OF A PARTIAL SUMMARIZING (ver. 12) TO PROCLAIM THE NEW COVENANT FORM OF THE SECOND TABLE OF THE OLD AND VENERABLE AND UNIVERSAL TEN COMMANDMENTS. With our ver. 12 comp. ch. v. 17. From the kind of giving and the manner of giving (*i.e.* in reply to *asking*) of fathers in imperfect and "evil" human society, and from the supreme example of the perfection in both kind and manner of the "Father which is in heaven," the grand dictum of most sacred heavenly lips utters itself forth for the regulating of men's mutual relations, wide as the world stretches, and long as the world lasts.—B.

Vers. 13, 14.—*The noblest provocation to sanctified imagination.* Supposing that it was certain that we were intended to have, in the recorded sayings of the discourse of the mount, a *closely connected* discourse, we might feel it difficult to pronounce with any confidence *on* the connection of *this* thrilling passage, and feel anxious and grieved proportionately that we could not discharge more satisfactorily the responsibility herein which lay on us. Both for extent and for significance and commanding

point of view, what a domain this passage has conquered for its own in its journey down the unrolling Christian centuries! What thoughts, what feelings, what facts and illustration from life, do now, with solemn rich sadness, cluster round it! Though difference of opinion may justly prevail as to the link of connection between the matter we have here and all that precedes, or whether there be any specific link at all, yet it may safely be generally remarked that, nearing the end of the discourse, it speaks appropriately enough more directly of the things that near the end of life, that solemn end, regard it as we may. The great bulk of the matter of the discourse graciously and condescendingly and practically affects the *conduct* of life; but here, and in the two great following and closing sections of the discourse, the solemn *event* of all here, of all the passing, the fleetly passing present, seems to be intentionally borne upon our heart and conscience, fear and hope. It may further be well to note that, if in all three of the clauses concerned, the "gate" comes first, and in the two in which the "way" is spoken of it follows distinctly the "gate," nevertheless the "gate" is that which must be found *after* traversing the way, and at the end of it, as surely as the grave or gate of death is at the end of life (see Luke xiii. 23, 24). And, once more preliminarily, hold up prominently to view this instructive and impressive fact—that the Light and the Love of the world, the Power and the Salvation of heaven in the world, thought fit to challenge, and did boldly challenge, thus suddenly the ignorance of those his first hearers, *their surprised ignorance*, as matter of fact (and leaving out all count of the causes of it, or the greater or less guilt of it), *with these detached proclamations* of eternal truth, as unseen by ordinary eye, and as unthought of as they were and ever are of matchless significance. What a model for the pronounced, dogmatic preaching of the Church to-day and for ever! From the Model how far in some quarters has the departure travelled! The many-sided, massive heart of the subject of these verses may then be treated thus. Invite to a reverent, humble attempt to meditate, to ponder, however afar off from the magnificent subject—

I. THE GREAT MYSTERY OF THE GATE THAT LEADETH TO LIFE. 1. How *really* great this mystery is; because we know so little of it; because we grasp so little of it; because, probably, we *can* at present grasp *only* so little of it! 2. How *glorious* the mystery is, as measured (with power to measure, which we do possess, which we certainly *can* command) by the mere *subject* of it—"the gate that leadeth to life"! What a gate this must be, what a way, out of all the dull, toilsome, overshaded contrast, which we struggle on with here! 3. How wakening, rousing, fascinating, to the imagination, which herein has offered to it its supremest employment! Everything conspires to this end. The conterminousness and the coincidence in time of this "gate" of life, in its last and highest expression, with certain grossest facts of our experience, which tyrannize over us under the name of death and *its* gate, offer the noblest provocation to an imagination though only ever so partially to be called a "sanctified" imagination. Invite to a humble, penitential meditation of—

II. THE CAUSES WHY THIS GATE IS CALLED, AND IS, STRAIT. It is all even too certain that it is strait, and *must* be so, or evil and sin and misery would be *perpetuated*, not stayed; *propagated* on infinite scale and to *infinite* proportions, not cut off. The straitness of the gate secures that only those shall pass back again into the life of Eden—yes, yet higher and better life than that—in whom is left *no* love of these, *no* seeds of these, *no* infection of them—those only in whom have *died* the deadly fruits, the vain flowers, the subtle growths of them, by reason of (1) *penitence* unfeigned; (2) *repentance* practical and thorough; (3) *mortification of self*, through *sanctification* of the Spirit. If the "gate that leadeth into life" were *not* strait with this straitness, it would be another and yet blanker abortion of life, misnamed, to which it would conduct. Necessities, absolute and essential, rule the straitness of this gate. And the transformation that sincerity, and truth, and purity, and the denial of the bodily self, and the denial of certain passions of the spiritual self, and the abhorring of all the cursed inspirations of the devil—the transformation that all these accomplish in one and another man, alike vindicate the straitness of the "gate," and pass *him* blessedly through it. Insist on the fact that—

III. THE STRAIT GATE IS ONLY TO BE COME AT BY THE NARROW WAY. *This life* not left to drift, not treated defiantly, not wasted recklessly, not passed in an ungodly, unrighteous, unsober temper—*this* life it is which must choose between the broad way

or the narrow way, and which must "find" and follow the narrow way, if it is to find and enter through the strait gate into the city of life and of splendour "which is not strait." The narrow way is one of sorrow and carefulness, of confession oft and watchfulness constant, of severest self-condemnings, and of humblest clinging to Christ and obedience renewed again and again to a slighted and injured Holy Spirit. "But," said Chrysostom (fourteen centuries ago), "let us not be sad when many sorrows befall us here; for the way is strait, but not so the city; neither rest need we look for here, nor anything of sorrow, fear, there."—B.

Vers. 15—20.—*The branded false prophets.* This passage brings us to the last but one of the great typical admonitions of this primæval discourse in Christian ethics. Typical they must surely be regarded. Nor, as we scan them with ever so jealous eye, do we find it at all easy to make comparisons as to any imagined relative temporariness of application belonging to them, or the reverse. But if, on the contrary, we suffered ourselves for a moment to be the victims of mere plausible impression, and to court illusion therein, then, perhaps, we might be tempted to rule that this present admonition, though it should be the only one, was *the* one the importance of which had dwindled in the growth of time, however real it had once been. The impression cannot vindicate itself, but it might serve to convict us of the extent—the depth and breadth—to which the evil has spread which it fancied was not existent. And we come round to the persuasion that this last but one of the series of admonitions is not behind any other whatsoever in testifying to the foresight of Christ, to his forecast of the character of the history of untold Christian generations, and to his measured, faithful, emphatic warning of his Church respecting them. In language that cannot be mistaken, the passage certifies to us—

I. THE BRAND THAT CHRIST SETS UPON FALSE RELIGIOUS TEACHERS. They are ravening wolves, covered over with sheep's clothing. It may be that through the centuries of Christendom the name of these has been truly enough legion many times multiplied. And it may be that because of this our vexed thought blankly refuses to face the deadly field of slaughter, the widespread, disastrous havoc the ravening wolves have wrought! But on our wearied ear may not then these words of Christ fall, with all their original forcible simplicity, to waken a more natural conscience, graciously to exorcise its callous indifference, and to freshen young faith? *E.g.*: 1. They suggest how Christ would guard, and does guard, the springs and the rudiments and the inspirations of our higher life. 2. They give us to infer the genuine honour in which Christ holds our real teachers, though they be still only human teachers. 3. They caution us, if for the hundredth time, against deserting well-assured principles in favour of appearance, of soft voices, of smooth vestures, of complaisant manner. These all are but other versions of sheep's clothing, disguising the ravening wolf. Christ strengthens our faith in the sure landmarks of matter, of reality, of plain sincerity, *howsoever* plain.

II. THE CRITERION ACCORDING TO WHICH THEY ARE TO BE JUDGED. The "*fruits*" of "false prophets," of false teachers, who invest themselves with the abused title of "religious," are both those fruits which appear in their own manner of life, and those which appear in their *work*, their ill work, among and in others. The false prophet often denounces *himself* in the utter incoherence of his doctrines, and in the inconsistency and impurity of his life. But whereas he is also a "ravening wolf," on the highest authority, it is because of the dissensions, divisions, malice, and schism that his path is strewed with; and because of the falseness of his creed—erring now by defect, now by invention and addition, and now by contradiction of the Word and the Spirit. Not all the hostile forces that array themselves from without against the Church compare for a moment, in the disastrous, ravening havoc that follow in their track, with the cunning, dissembling, subtle havoc of the ravening wolves—a widespread foe, that haunt the fold within—in the fleece of the flock that belong to it. And, lastly, it is to be remembered that, whereas it is not always of design, nor always of ill intention and pure malice towards souls, that false prophets work the havoc of ravening wolves, for this very reason—the criterion of their works, or "fruits," is *the* one given to men. For charity's sake we may not make ourselves judges by any assumed superiority of our own knowledge or wisdom; yet less may we arrogate the authority of the only omniscient, unerring Judge, nor offer to do the angels' work

prematurely, and presume to separate the tares from the wheat; but, says Christ, "by their fruits ye shall *know* them." Let *intention* be what it may, if the fruit is bad, that prophet is a false prophet. Some of the less crew of ill quality, vanity, conceit of superior illumination—that worst ignorance that is so ignorant that it has not a suspicion of it—irresistible or certainly unresisted loquacity, presumptuousness,—these may have the dominion that effectually make the self-sent prophet, the *false* prophet. He wears the clothing of the sheep, and did not don it for the conscious purposes of deceiving; but he *is deceived* himself, and in nothing would be more individually surprised and mortified, if that could be brought home to him—than which nothing is more certain—that he is doing the odious work of the ravening wolf. Who can count the number of these deceived and deceivers, and the number of grievous wounds and rendings of limbs which *these* have made in the body of Christ in this one current half-century? We are entitled to say it, we are compelled to bewail it—"because of their fruits." And in the seething multitude of those who name the Name of Christ *now*, one warning, one merciful, gracious caution, needs to be uttered aloud and to be listened to, "Beware of false prophets!"—B.

Vers. 21—29.—*The saying and hearing contrasted with the doing.* This passage bears internal and intrinsic evidence of standing in the original position at the end, and as the end of the discourse. Its connection with what precedes is also apparent. "Fruits" have been spoken of as the test of the false or the true prophet. And the discourse finishes with a forcible setting forth of the fact that practice, not profession, is the passport, whether into the kingdom of heaven on earth or into the kingdom of "that day." There would seem in form to be allusion to both of these, though we should confess their reality to be but one in either case. Notice—

I. THE INTRINSIC AND ESSENTIAL QUALIFICATION FOR CITIZENSHIP IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. "But," says the Supreme Authority on the matter, "he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." Dwell on: 1. The highness of this type. 2. The encouragingness of it. It is *not* offered as a mocking of our feeble power of excellence, feeble grasp of high conceptions, or feeble, inconstant purposes. 3. The condescendingness, withal, of it. What life of reality should it pour into our pictures of the future and our attempts of the present! What happy natural agreement there is between this statement and the formal petitions of the prayer, "Thy kingdom come; *thy will* be done in earth as it is in heaven"!

II. THE DISTINCT PROPHETIC DECLARATION OF MOST SAD, SOLEMN IMPORT, TO WHICH THE MIGHTY SEER COMMITS HIMSELF. Notice how: 1. Christ specifies the number of the deluded and the presumptuous: "Many." 2. Christ specifies the *matters* of their delusion and presumption. We have furnished to us hereby both constant warnings for *all*, and help, not extended for uncharitable use, towards judging of the too transparently impeachable motives of some very busy outer works of men.

III. THE THRILLING DISCLOSURE IN PART OF THE JUDGE OF "THAT DAY," AND IN PART OF HIS JUDGMENT. Notice: 1. The long forbearance that had been shown is here witnessed to: "*Then* I will profess to them." How long had he waited, tried, given room for repentance and for reality! 2. The terrible indictment of the wasted, deluded lifetime: "I *never* knew you." Christ will *not* disown, in his glory, majesty, power, and in the startling day of their astounding manifestation, those whom he had once in the day of his hiddenness, or in the yet earlier days of his mortal sorrows, acknowledged. But Christ will say what none had the sure right to say before, "I *never* knew you," if this be indeed the awful truth!

IV. THE SIMILITUDE BY WHICH CHRIST NOW SETS FORTH THE DECISIVE AND DISASTROUS DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HIM WHO HEARS ONLY THE SAYINGS OF CHRISTIAN REVEALED TRUTH, AND HIM WHO ALSO DOES THEM. 1. The man who hears and does the "sayings" of Christ makes knowledge, *and* the graces that abide, which are realities *to* abide, to abide here, and to abide evermore. 2. The man who hears indeed, and who does *not*, makes knowledge, perhaps very much knowledge; it may tower aloft, it may make him tower aloft among men; but he grows no grace; which *can come* only of work, of discipline, of "much tribulation," and which is the only structure that abides. The exceeding directness, simplicity, and force of these similitudes, and of the comparison instituted by them, have always arrested attention. To "do the sayings" of

Christ is the way, and the one only way, to build that holy "house" called a holy nature, a Christian life, the enduring character. Anything less than "doing" the things Christ says may make show; may rise, a very vision, it may be; and may have some sort of foundation; but it will not be the foundation called a rock, and least of all that called *the* Rock, which is Christ Jesus.—B.

Vers. 1—12.—*Sermon on the mount: 6. Against judging others.* This "Judge not, that ye be not judged," comes in unexpectedly, and seems out of its place. But the superficial, ostentatious righteousness which our Lord has been exposing betrays itself in nothing more certainly than in censoriousness. To sigh and shake the head over a sinful world is one of the easiest roads to a reputation for sanctity. The reasons our Lord gives for refraining from judging others are two. 1. If we judge harshly and unmercifully, we shall ourselves receive similar judgment. The person who uses false weights cannot complain if, in buying as well as in selling, false weights are used. If we judge without knowing all the circumstances, if we have no patience to give weight to explanations, no sympathy to put ourselves in the offender's place, we shall receive the same summary treatment. And this, not by the action of a mere arbitrary retribution, but by a law deeply laid in the nature of things. For at the root of such judging lies hatred of our neighbour; and if not hatred, indifference to righteousness; and where these exist in the heart, the very foundations of a godly character are yet to be laid. The man who is sincerely grieved at the sin of men has no heart to expose it unless this is clearly for the benefit of all concerned. In fact, this is a department of conduct in which the great law laid down by our Lord is our best guide: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." We continually see that in judging our conduct men are entirely at fault, imputing motives, perhaps no worse than, but certainly different from, our actual motives, so that it is the part of wisdom, no less than of charity, to be slow to judge. 2. The second reason our Lord assigns is that our own faults so disturb our moral perception that we are not fit to eradicate those of our neighbour. It is proposing to pick a mote from our brother's eye while a beam is in our own. How can we understand the methods by which a man can be delivered from sin if we have made no practical acquaintance with these methods by seeking deliverance from our own sin? Two things are suggested by our Lord's words.

I. TO RID A MAN OF A FAULT IS AN EXTREMELY DIFFICULT OPERATION. It requires the same absolute accuracy of vision and delicacy of touch which an operation on the eye requires. The blemishes you would remove are so closely connected with virtues or qualities essential to the character, that the vision must be purged by integrity and humility, and the hand steadied by sincere affection.

II. AGAIN, TO OUR LORD, BEFORE WHOM THE MORAL WORLD ALL LAY as glaringly visible as the natural world lies to us, it seemed grotesque that a censorious, fault-finding person should try to rid men of their faults. In his judgment the uncharitableness which lies at the root of so many of the apparently pious criticisms we hear and make is a beam far more damnatory than the mote we find fault with. Yet judgment of a kind we must pass on those who come under our observation. If we are not to cast what is holy to the dogs, we must, of course, determine who the dogs are. There are vile, fierce, snarling people in the world; and if we are not to give them the chance of showing their contempt for sacred things, we must distinguish between man and man. And in other cases of daily occurrence we are compelled both to form and to pronounce our judgment. The law, therefore, is levelled against all uncalled-for malicious judgments. It is not enough that our judgments be true, we must not utter them until compelled. The law of the land recognizes the distinction, and punishes uncalled-for defamation.

This sermon on the mount is a sermon describing righteousness, and distinguishing it from current imitations rather than telling us how we may attain it. That it is a true fulfilment of the Law and the prophets which our Lord has described no one can doubt, and yet the very copiousness of illustration dazzles and confuses. It is true we have the Law of God marking out for us the great lines on which human conduct is to move, and we have the prophets—a series of supernaturally enlightened spiritual teachers who have indicated how it is to be applied, and enforced it by stirring appeals.

But what we still desiderate is that all the teaching of the Law and all the enlightening and moving power of the prophets be condensed into a summary which the frailest memory can carry, and which a child can apply. We instinctively feel that for righteous living all men should have guidance sufficient, that there should be a light like the sun, common to educated and uneducated; and this we have in the words, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: this is the Law and the prophets"—this is the sum and this the substance of all that has ever been said to guide men to right conduct. Our own experience, aided by our imagination, will enable us to understand the treatment a man desires in the different positions in life. And by the observance of this rule you get both your own view of the case and your neighbour's; so that you shall neither on the one hand refuse a lawful and fair demand, nor on the other yield to an exorbitant, imprudent, or wicked one. In proclaiming this practical rule, our Lord had in view the achievement of that righteousness which constitutes the kingdom of God. Evidently it is sufficient for this purpose. Almost the whole of life is in one form or other of the dealing or commercial kind; none of us being sufficient for ourselves, but each contributing for the good of the whole that which it is his calling to supply. This frame of society, if animated by Christian principle, by a genuine desire to be as helpful as possible to the common good, is as heavenly a state of things as need be; but empty it of this, and leave only the desire to advance our own interests, and then you have not heaven but hell upon earth—a grasping, struggling, hard-hearted, cruel competition. Yet to this latter state we are always tempted. We are throughout life under pressure to make too much of our own interests. It is obvious that nothing so effectually counteracts this pressure as the expedient we are considering. That fineness of character and delicacy of feeling which every one admires and respects is formed, consciously or unconsciously, by obedience to this rule, by consideration of the feelings of other people, and a ready adjustment of our conduct to these feelings even in the smallest matters. Beyond the assurances given in the memorable words beginning, "Ask, and it shall be given you," very little answer is given in this sermon to the inquiry, "What must I do to be saved?" But a man can walk, although he cannot name the muscles he uses. Believe Christ when he tells you that if you seek righteousness you shall find it; go on seeking it, assured that God is helping and will help you; and what further directions are essential to salvation? Our Lord here tells us God has a kingdom; he tells us what that righteousness is which constitutes his kingdom; and he assures us that he that knocks shall be admitted. These promises put the future in your own hand. The waiting, striving, seeking spirit will not ultimately be disappointed. The weak and sin-tossed creature, whose efforts to attain have only proved his weakness more clearly, is assured that if he asks he shall have all that he needs for purity, for righteousness, for love. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give good things to them that ask him?" If we, who are ourselves entangled in much sin, can yet devise substantial benefits for others, how much more may we expect such substantial aid from our Father, whose title it is that he is "heavenly," above all the influences that narrow the heart! It is God's life to communicate, his delight to see his children grow in likeness to himself. There is no mystery about entrance into God's kingdom and attainment of righteousness. If you wish to enter, you can. Begin where Christ teaches you, and abide always in the assurance of the Father's love. "If the life be careless, bring back the mind to that; if the heart be unhappy or discontented, compel the thoughts to that; if the habits of our daily walk cause us many a conflict between conscience and inclination, anchor the will on that."—D.

Vers. 13, 14.—*Sermon on the mount: 7. "Enter ye in at the strait gate."* That is to say, life is difficult, not easy. To be saved is an exceptional thing. It is an unwelcome, saddening intimation; yet it is uttered by lips that spoke more comfortingly and more hopefully to men than any others dared. It is the Saviour of the world who admits that in spite of all he does, many are destroyed. Our nature makes a strong resistance to such ideas. There is that in us which always says—Do not put yourself about; you may surely run the chance other men are running. These warning voices are but the moanings of fear or the ravings of fanaticism. It is manifestly absurd

to suppose we are placed in a world in which our first duty is to begin to *correct* everything; that a life is granted to us which is but a veiled death, and of which the first strength must be given to altering the entire course and character it would naturally take. But notwithstanding the antecedent unlikelihood of our being born at such a disadvantage, the conclusion that it is so is forced on every one who has observed what men make of life. The terms on which the lower animals maintain life affords corroborative evidence. It is only with a struggle they keep their place in life at all. And, in fact, the truth is recognized by teachers beyond the Christian pale. "Badness," says Hesiod, "you may have easily, and abundance of it; for the path is plain, and she dwells close at hand. But before excellence God has placed toil and labour; long and steep is the road that leads to her, and very rough it is at first." The broad road and the narrow is an image that suggests itself to the serious observer of life—the broad, easy meadow-path in danger at last of being swallowed up by the stream which runs by it; and the narrow, upward path difficult and sometimes dangerous, but leading to prospects unconceived before. What do they say who have entered the narrow way and pursued it? Ask Paul; ask the most eminent of saints if they found the following of Christ easy? Best of all, ask the Leader himself whether the path was not easier than his words imply. What, then, mean those nights spent in prayer, the wrestling with temptation in the wilderness, and the strong crying and tears that escaped him? If his strength was taxed to the uttermost, will life be easy, safe, and victorious for us? We may say—Christians take life much as other people, and anything like cross-bearing and resolved self-mastery are quite exceptional. But our own experience can scarcely fail to have shown us this difficult, arduous life in actual example. Have we not seen righteousness preferred to advancement in life, the narrow way to the broad, inflexible self-discipline maintained that the power of sin might be broken? It was not that the persons who did so had more or deeper corruptions than others, but simply that they were in earnest, and recognized what the case required. It is vain to tell them to relax their vigilance; they know that there is no easier way. What constitutes the straitness of the gate, the narrowness of the way? Radically, just what the figure implies—that sin is easy and natural, holiness difficult because contrary to our propensity. Or, as our Lord says elsewhere, "He that will be my disciple must *deny himself*—must be prepared to accept another guide and law than his natural inclination." It is long before we get the idea thoroughly wrought into our lives that lawless life is simply destruction. Self-denial, therefore, is an absolute requisite of entrance into the kingdom.

I. IT IS FOR WANT OF SELF-DENIAL THAT SOME FAIL EVEN TO MAKE GOOD THEIR ENTRANCE TO THE KINGDOM. They acknowledge that outside there is no life; they see that there is something out of joint between God and their soul, and that it is largely due to their own shortcomings; and they think much and perhaps do what they can to bring about a change. But they lack the one essential thing—a true and clear submission of themselves to Christ; a deliberate and pronounced renunciation of self, in every form, self-government especially.

II. SUPPOSING THE GATE TO HAVE BEEN PASSED, NO PROGRESS IS POSSIBLE WITHOUT SELF-DENIAL. There is an old and true comparison, likening the soul to a chariot and the passions to horses. Only lay the reins on the necks of the horses, and the chariot is destroyed: only neglect self-denial, and the evil is done. For between indulgence and self-denial there is no middle place. And so it is that a man may seem not to be doing anything very sinful; he may even be denying himself much, and yet day by day tenderness of feeling departs, and a wall of separation seems to grow up between his soul and Christ. He has gone so far, but he has not been willing to go all lengths with Christ; and manifestly anything short of the self-denial which enables him to keep pace with Christ and hold fellowship with him is unavailing. This it is which constitutes the straitness of the gate, the narrowness of the way. And we may determine whether we are on the way or not by the self-denial and sacrifice it costs us to go forward. We can all recall the struggles we made, the hardships we endured, in gaining some position we sought. If we have no similar remembrances connected with our following of Christ, it is to be feared we have evaded the difficulties or diverged wholly from the path. If you have had no difficulties, no crosses, no struggles, where has been your self-denial? How have you found the way narrow? When we see

clearly the unworldly, self-denying life to which Christ leads, we are tempted to think that in order to follow him we must change the whole frame and conditions of our life; we long to convince ourselves by some great sacrifice that we are truly his followers. And no doubt some are called to this; but for most of us there is enough in the small occasions of daily life to try our fidelity and test our self-denial. We shall find room enough for the exercise of these in striving to maintain habits of devotion, and to form our life throughout after the example of Christ.

III. FINALLY, OUR LORD WARNS US OF THE DIFFICULTY OF THE WAY,—not to discourage, but to stimulate; that we may not be dismayed when we find it hard to follow. We are in the same cause as he, and have all the help and encouragement and hope that are available in him. He means also that a thankful, watchful spirit should possess those who have found the way and are in it. If you are in the way, you have passed the grand difficulty in human life—a difficulty which *few* pass. You may have much to contend with in life, but if *this* grace has come to you that you are brought into the way your Saviour trod, and that leads ever closer to him, no evil can permanently assail or oppress you.—D.

Vers. 15—29.—*Sermon on the mount*: 8. *Wise and foolish builders. The righteousness required in God's kingdom* is the subject of our Lord's teaching in this sermon. After contrasting this with various spurious forms of righteousness, he shows the ruin that results from false pretensions. This he does by means of three figures: 1. The mere pretender is like a wolf in sheep's clothing; you cannot turn a wolf into a sheep by merely putting on it from the outside a fleece. 2. Or he is like a thorn-bush that has artificial flowers and fine fruits stuck on to it. It may for a time excite the admiration of the ignorant, but the tree remains wholly unaffected. 3. Or he is like a man who builds a superb mansion, sparing neither pains nor cost upon it, and yet neglecting the one essential that it should have—a foundation. Two objections may be taken to this simile, the first a trifling one. (1) It may be said no man is such a fool as to build in the situation here described. This, though the objection of a pedant, serves to bring out a point in the comparison. What no man would be fool enough to do with a house, many and many a man is fool enough to do in matters of religion. So ineradicable is the feeling that there *all* is mere show, that the rashness no man would be guilty of in practical matters is almost universal in religion. (2) Our Lord here indicates that the wise man is he who not only hears, but *does*, while in the scene from the last day which he introduces he seems to make no account of doing. By this seeming inconsistency he brings out his meaning more exactly. There must be works, fruits, a shining light, a fleece; there must be a visible manifestation; the inward influence of the words of Christ must become apparent in the life; but there need not be a loud profession of Christ's name—a crying, "Lord, Lord!" a doing of *wonderful* works. The pretentious religion he seeks to expose abounds in these. It may be identical in appearance with the true righteousness. But the works in the one case are done for the sake of persuading either the pretender or others that he is a good and godly person; in the other case they are the natural, spontaneous, necessary outflow of what is within, and would surely be done though there were no judgment to be passed on them. They are produced as the apple tree produces apples—because it is its nature to do so. To gather up the practical teaching of this passage, we see—

I. THAT OUR LORD WARNS AGAINST TRUSTING TO APPEARANCES. He indicates that there is a stronger tendency to this in religion than in secular life, and more unsparingly and thoroughly does he tear off the mask of the hypocrite than the fiercest assailant of Christianity has ever done. The tendency to display, though we sometimes smile at the ways in which it manifests itself in others, is no venial fault; it is a species of dishonesty which gradually corrodes the whole character. In religion it is damaging in various ways. 1. There is a large class among us, the class of respectable people, whose whole character and habits have been so formed under the influence of social opinion that when they wish to ascertain what is right or wrong, they think whether it will shock people or not. They unconsciously reverse our Lord's judgment; and to them the poor wretch who has fallen under the power of some evil habit, and ruined his prospects in life, is a far more hopeless and pitiable object than the hard-hearted, self-righteous, respectable sinner, who has not a tenth part of the other's

humility or longing after righteousness. 2. However quick we may be to detect and repudiate what is showy in other departments of life, we are all liable to be shallow in religion. The primitive idea of God that he is exacting, a Lord who must be propitiated, is one so native to the guilty conscience, that it lingers among the motives of conduct long after we have mentally repudiated it. We will not comprehend that it is all for our benefit religion exists; that it is an essential of human life and happiness. So we do those things which it is supposed God requires, but we remain in nature unchanged. 3. Or we may admire a certain kind of character, and set it up as our ideal, without possessing it even in its beginning. A man may have the reputation of being a Christian, and may learn to accept himself as one, while he has no foundation; it is only the appearance which is in his favour. 4. Or we may have such an eagerness to hear teaching about righteousness, that we feel as if the hearing itself were sufficient evidence of a devout mind; we make such efforts to *understand* what God's will is, that we exonerate ourselves from doing it; we make such profuse declarations of our obligation to obey, that we feel we have done enough. But do not believe in your purpose to serve God better until you do serve him better. Give no credit to yourself for anything which is not actually accomplished. Do not let us be always speaking of endeavours, hopes, and intentions, and struggles, and convictions of what is right, but let us do God's will.

II. THE RESULTS OF SUPERFICIALITY are portrayed in language intended to bring out their overwhelmingly disastrous nature, but not less their certainty. For what is it that brings the house about the builder's ears? It is nothing exceptional; it is the inevitable that tests it. So it is with character. It is tested by the ordinary emergencies of life. Time is all that is required to test anything. The wolf may pretend to be a sheep for an hour or two, but his natural appetite soon reveals him; the tree makes a fair show till autumn tests it. So some reputations are short-lived. Some sudden temptation may reveal to others, and even to a man himself, that his most rooted motives are not what his conduct indicates. Other reputations survive all the storms of life, and a man passes to another world undetected by himself or others. But the evil day is thereby only delayed. Under the eye of Christ all disguises must drop off, and we shall be known for what we really are. The *catastrophe* of which we are forewarned can be averted by spending pains on the foundation. Through the surface soil of inherited tastes and tendencies, of social restraints and traditional morality, of pious desires and righteous resolves, try and get down to the very basis of your character; make sure that it has such a foundation that it will stand all the shocks of time and last to eternity. Make sure that you know why you strive and labour to reach righteousness, why you hope through all failure that yet righteousness awaits you. Make sure especially that if you are not bringing forth fruit as spontaneously and as regularly as a good tree, you yet know what is changing your nature, and giving you every day an increasing love for what is good and a readiness to do it.—D.

Vers. 1—3.—*Judging.* In warning against hindrances to holiness, our Lord begins with judging; for in this young converts too often expend the zeal which is given them for better uses. The text admonishes us—

I. THAT THERE IS A JUDGMENT TO COME. 1. *This life is under judicial rule.* (1) There is a Divine providence in human affairs. (2) The sense of justice in human nature expresses this. (3) Sin returns upon the head of the sinner. 2. *But the judgments of this life are not final.* (1) They are incomplete. Virtue is often rewarded. But it is often trampled. Vice is often punished. But it often prospers. (2) A future judgment is therefore necessary. Moral discrepancies and contradictions must be compensated and adjusted. 3. *Revelation makes this clear.* (1) It sets before us the pomp and circumstance of a great assize. The Divine Judge. His throne of white light. His myriad retinue. The assembled universe. (2) It sets before us the final awards. The rewards of the righteous in heaven. The punishment of the wicked in hell.

II. THAT DIVINE JUSTICE IS RETRIBUTIVE. 1. *In its principles.* (1) "With what judgment ye judge," etc. "He shall have judgment without mercy that hath shown no mercy." (2) "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." 2. *In its sanctions.* (1) "With what measure ye mete," etc. The severity of our dealings

with our fellows will react upon us. (2) History abounds with illustrations of this principle. Witness Ishmael (see Gen. xvi. 12). Adonibezek (see Judg. i. 7). Witness the crucifixion, at the destruction of Jerusalem, of the children of those who crucified Christ and imprecated his blood upon themselves and their children. (See Alison's 'Europe' for many remarkable examples of punctual retribution.) Witness the prophetic doom of the mystical Babylon (Rev. xiii. 10; xvi. 6). (3) But there is the "greater measure" of an eternal retribution.

III. THESE FACTS SHOULD INFLUENCE OUR CONDUCT. 1. *The injunction "judge not" is conditional.* (1) It cannot be construed to teach tolerance to falsehood or wrong. Scripture cannot contradict itself (cf. Isa. v. 20; Ezek. xiii.). Our Lord cannot contradict himself. He clearly authorizes "righteous judgment" (see also Matt. xxiii. 14, 33). (2) It cannot be interpreted to condemn judicial decisions in courts civil or ecclesiastical. 2. *We must not judge rashly.* (1) To pre-judge is to judge rashly. (2) We are quick to see the failings of others (the mote), while we overlook formidable evils of our own (the beam). The way to righteousness is the reverse of this. (3) We judge rashly by indulging evil surmises. (4) We judge rashly in precipitate decisions. 3. *We must not judge harshly.* (1) To pre-judge is harsh as well as rash. By such judgment we become so interested in the success of our prediction as perhaps to procure or facilitate its fulfilment. We should evermore hope for the best. (2) To condemn severely is to judge harshly (cf. Luke vi. 37; Rom. ii. 1—3). 4. *There is a sphere in which we must not judge.* (1) We have no jurisdiction over the consciences of our fellows. Here the words "judge not" express a direct and positive prohibition. (2) We must not denounce to perdition as heretics those who differ from us. (3) Nothing provokes more surely the judgment of God than the sufferings of his martyrs. (4) We have no magisterial authority over our brother (see Jas. iii. 1; iv. 11).—J. A. M.

Vers. 4—6.—*Reproving.* This is kindred to judging, and so these are here closely associated. The duty of reproving should be discharged with discretion.

I. THE REPROVING OF A BROTHER SHOULD BE CONSIDERATE. 1. *Reproof is a precious and holy thing.* (1) So it is described (ver. 6). The snuffers in the sanctuary were of pure gold (see also Ps. cxli. 5; Prov. iii. 18; xxv. 12). (2) It is sanctioned by the holiest examples. Moses; the prophets; Christ. (3) It serves holy uses. (*a*) Saves souls from death (see Jas. v. 19, 20). (*b*) Frees our souls from the guilt of complicity (see Lev. xix. 17, margin). (*c*) Leaves the sinner without excuse. So the fidelity of Noah condemned the antediluvians (Heb. xi. 7). 2. *The office of reprover should not be lightly undertaken.* (1) We are naturally too prone to attempt to set others right. Envy and malice give us piercing vision to discern motes in their eyes. (2) Blindness to our own faults proves us disqualified to cure those of others. Reproof is too often an attempt to depreciate the reproved that the reprover may be better thought of. (3) It is hypocrisy to pretend zeal for the amendment of others while we have none for our own. Since the prerogative to reprove is with the saint, hypocrites reprove to simulate the saint. (4) To correct error in another requires moral principle as well as intellectual discernment. Sin destroys spiritual vision. In overlooking this parents err in correcting their children. The truly righteous are the most merciful. (5) Our badness must not excuse us from reproving. Rendering us unfit to reprove, it does not release us from the obligation to become fit. "A man's offence can never become his defence."

II. THE INCORRIGIBLY WICKED ARE BEYOND REPROOF. 1. *They are described as dogs and swine.* (1) Some, like the dog, are pronouncedly unclean. The dog does not part the hoof. He makes no profession of a clean walk. Neither does he chew the cud. He does not ruminate upon spiritual things. (2) Some profess to be better than they are. The hog parts the hoof. Here is the profession of a clean walk. But then he does not chew the cud. He is filthy in the thoughts and intents of the heart. Note: (3) The hog is no less abominable than the dog. False-faced sinners are the more offensive. 2. *Their dispositions are brutish.* (1) They would trample upon pearls. The ungodly see no more beauty in holiness than the hog sees in a gem. (2) They would turn again and rend you. The more refined are your tastes and dispositions the more intensely will the wicked hate you, and the more viciously will they treat you. 3. *Let the incorrigible alone.* (1) "Give not that which is holy." The allusion is to

the holy things of the sanctuary. These were things which had touched the altar and were of the nature of sacrifice. (2) Such things were never intended for dogs. They were eaten by the priests and Levites. The gospel is the "children's bread." There is no gospel for the impenitent. (3) Our respect for Christ should lead us to preach repentance first rather than faith to the wicked. Resentment against reproof is the sign of an unclean nature. (4) We are not needlessly to hazard our lives in reproving the wicked. The hog will mistake the pearl of reproof for the stone of reproach (see Jer. vi. 10; Luke xi. 45). He will "turn again" in resentment. So Herod turned upon the Baptist. (5) Our time may be better employed in preaching to those who will hear (see Acts xiii. 41).

LESSONS. 1. There are degrees in sin—the mote as compared with the beam. 2. There are those who have the beam in the eye, but do not consider it. They justify their enormities by pleading that "others do worse." 3. He is no enemy to sin who does not hate it in himself. 4. Let reproof begin at home. 5. Let the severity of our reproving be restrained by consideration of our own frailty.—J. A. M.

Vers. 7—12.—*Prayer.* From the subject of giving our Lord turns to that of asking. The text instructs us in—

I. THE NATURE OF PRAYER. 1. *It is asking.* (1) Asking of God. He requires our prayer, not to induce him to give, but to fit us to receive. (2) Asking implies want. We have needs for our fellows; for ourselves—temporal, spiritual (cf. ver. 11; Luke xi. 13). (3) We ask with the *heart.* 2. *It is seeking.* (1) Seeking for the hidden riches of promise. (2) Seeking implies loss. The loss of God. The loss of heaven. The loss of the soul. (3) This term "seek" suggests the way, viz. to eternal life. To asking we add diligent endeavour. (4) We seek with the *understanding.* 3. *It is knocking.* (1) To seeking we add importunity. Our need is urgent. Our loss is serious. (2) Knocking suggests perseverance. "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." (3) It suggests, moreover, the obtaining of admission to the house and kingdom of God. (4) We knock with the *life.*

II. THE ENCOURAGEMENT TO PRAY. 1. *In the promises of God.* (1) "Ye shall receive;" "Ye shall find;" "It shall be opened." (2) They are free for all. "Every one that asketh," etc. Jew and Gentile. Rich and poor. Bond and free. No sinner is too vile. 2. *In the character of the promises.* (1) Our Father. We give good gifts to our children. He is the Author of our nature. He made us after his own image. (2) The Father of goodness. We are evil: "If ye then, *being evil.*" Here is a testimony to original sin. Yet natural affection will not allow us to give our child a stone for bread, a scorpion for a fish. The good father cannot mock his children with false promises. He delights to give good things (3) Note: Christ speaking in the second person, "If *ye* then, being evil," excepts himself from original sin. Through the merits of the Son of God we receive. (4) Sonship comes in with prayer. "How much more will *your Father* which is in heaven give good things to them that *ask* him?"

III. THE CONDITIONS OF PRAYER. 1. *These are given in the promises.* (1) They are sometimes expressed in them. (2) They are evermore implied. (3) Without compliance with the conditions we have no claim upon the promises (cf. Jas. i. 5—7; iv. 3; 1 John v. 14). 2. *They are embodied in the golden rule.* (1) Prayer, to have weight with God, must be in charity towards men. As our heavenly Father is kind to us, so in kindness to our fellows are we his children (see ch. v. 45). Let our brotherly love be practical, and our Father will acknowledge us in blessing. (2) The equity of this rule comes home to every conscience. Read it negatively: "What ye would *not* that men should do unto you," etc. Read it positively: "What ye *would*," etc. "If our heart condemn us, then have we *not* confidence before God" (see 1 John iii. 19—22). (3) This rule sums up the Law and the prophets (cf. ch. xxii. 39, 40; Rom. xiii. 8; Gal. v. 14). The Law, prophets, and gospel are essentially one. The gospel is the spirit and glory of the Law. The prophets bring the gospel out of the Law by anticipation. The golden rule is the law of heaven. 3. *Apply this rule.* (1) In thought. Where, then, will be evil surmisings and suspicions? (2) In word. Where, then, will be evil-speaking, abuse, backbiting, detraction? (3) In deed. In buying and selling. In service and remuneration. (4) This law requires, not exchanges of states, but simply of places. Exchanges of states would be exchanges of identity, so nothing would be

gained. (5) To fulfil this rule we need the converting grace and constant help of God. —J. A. M.

Vers. 13—20.—*Two ways.* The course of human action is in Scripture called a way. Of these there are two—the right and wrong, the good and the evil. There is no intermediate way. Here we have—

I. THE WAY OF DEATH. 1. *It is broad.* (1) The "commandment" of God is "exceeding broad." It extends to all our works, words, and thoughts. No less broad is the way of transgression. (2) It is even broader. There is but one way of keeping the commandments. The *thing* done must be right; so must be the *manner* of doing it; so also must be the *circumstances.* But there are many ways of breaking every commandment. (3) The way widens as men walk in it. Restraints upon natural appetite are thrown off. The appetite becomes insatiable. 2. *Its gate is wide.* (1) We need not seek it, for it is in our own minds. Self-indulgence opens it. (2) We enter it by impenitence. Beware of the first temptation to sin. Let the young especially be cautioned. (3) Return from the gate, that you may never walk in the way of persistent sinfulness. 3. *Its company is large.* (1) The men of the world, who make no profession of religion, are in it. The atheist, the non-theist, the infidel, and the unconcerned. (2) Nominal Christians are in it. Many who never enter a place of prayer. Many who enter to conform to custom. Men of pleasure. Men of "progress." (3) How many! Of every age, rank, profession, employment. They go in it because it is "broad" Because the other way is "narrow." (4) The good time is coming when the company will be great (see Ps. xxxvii. 9—11). Then will the words of the text be history. 4. *Its end is destruction.* (1) The end of sin is the destruction of character. Vice intoxicates. It wrecks. Character is life. (2) Sin is the gate of hell. Damnation is the closing of mercy's gate to the sinner (see Luke xiii. 22—28).

II. THE WAY OF LIFE. 1. *It is strait.* (1) It is straitened by the golden rule (cf. Prov. xiv. 12; Isa. xxxv. 8; Jer. vi. 16). (2) The way of holiness has its difficulties. Its restraints. Its sacrifices. It calls for circumspection and perseverance. (3) It is the way of poverty of spirit, meekness, holy mourning, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, mercifulness, purity of heart. 2. *Its gate is narrow.* (1) Repentance cuts off every sin. (2) Faith cuts off all self-righteousness. (3) To some the gate is narrower than to others. "How hardly shall they that have riches enter!" How easy is the entrance to the child! The strength of our aversion to good makes the gate narrow. (4) "Strive to enter in" (see Luke xiii. 24). Earnestness is required. 3. *The company is select.* (1) "Few there be that find it." Majorities are not always right. (2) How few be those who find the way even of heathen honesty! (3) How few are free from unkindness! (4) How few have hearts clean in the sight of God! (5) How few have the courage to be singular! But the way of holiness is singularity all over to an ungodly world. 4. *Its end is life.* (1) Existence is not life. (2) Salvation from sin and death. (3) Union with Christ. (4) Holiness and heaven.

III. WHICH WAY WILL YOU TAKE? 1. *You have the option.* (1) None go the wrong way of necessity. God will be justified when he judges. (2) None go the right way by compulsion. (3) We are persuaded. Therefore the admonition: 2. *Beware of false prophets.* (1) Those who produce false commissions (Rev. ii. 2). Enthusiasts who pretend to revelations of which they give no proof. (2) Those who preach a broad way to heaven. Who do not preach the narrow, strait, way. (3) We may be false teachers to ourselves. Listening to prejudice. Listening to inclination. (4) They are wolves in sheep's clothing. They come with professions of innocence, of usefulness, of love. The man of sin has horns like a lamb (cf. Isa. xxx. 10; Rom. xvi. 18; 2 Cor. xi. 13, 14; Rev. xiii. 11). 4. *Test them by their fruits.* (1) The fruits of their faith may be tested by appealing to the Law and to the testimony (cf. 1 Thess. v. 21; 1 John iv. 1). It is more important to test principles than persons. (2) The fruits of their doctrine may be tested in their lives. The works of a man are the tongue of his heart. He cannot be trusted to show the narrow way who is walking in the broad. (3) Plain persons may judge a teacher by his fruit as they judge a tree. The bark and leaves may deceive. We judge character, not by its occasional, but by its habitual fruit. 4. *Be warned of their doom.* (1) To be hewn down as useless. (2) To be burned (Dan. iv. 14; Ezek. xxxi. 12, 13; ch. iii. 10; John xv. 6).—J. A. M.

Vers. 21—29.—*The title to the kingdom.* As our Lord concludes his sermon, bringing us before the judgment-seat, so should we habitually judge ourselves as in the searching light of eternity. He advises us—

I. THAT BY TRUE OBEDIENCE TO THE WILL OF GOD WE PROVE TITLE TO THE KINGDOM. 1. *That will is embodied in the "sayings" of Jesus.* (1) The Sinai covenant emanated from him. It was given by the God of glory. But the Father is essentially invisible. The Son has ever been his Revealer (John i. 14, 18; v. 37; vi. 46; 1 Tim. vi. 16, 17; 1 John iv. 12). (2) From him also came the Law published from Zion (Isa. ii. 3; Luke xxiv. 47). Nowhere is this Law more fully set forth than in this sermon. (3) The gospel law is love. Loving our neighbour as ourselves. Loving our brother better than ourselves (John xiii. 34). Loving God supremely. Love is practical. 2. *Profession is no substitute for obedience.* (1) Antichrist says, "Lord, Lord!" The Jewish. Mohammedan. Papistical. Infidel. Yet antichrist is the "man of sin" and the "son of perdition." (2) Hypocrites say, "Lord, Lord!" There are modern Pharisees. "Talking about Christ, his righteousness, merits, and atonement, while the person is not conformed to his *Word* and *Spirit*, is no other than solemn self-deception" (Clarke). Note: Everything short of doing the will of God is merely *saying*, "Lord, Lord!" and it is working iniquity (see ch. xxi. 31). 3. *Zeal in the cause of religion is no substitute for religion.* The repetition of the word "Lord" suggests earnestness. (1) "Workers of iniquity" may prophesy. True prophecy came from Balaam. So from Caiaphas. They may *teach;* write excellent books; preach excellent sermons; give good advice. A finger-post points out a road it never travels. (2) "Workers of iniquity" may cast out devils. Origen relates that devils were sometimes cast out by wicked men, using the name of Jesus (cf. ch. xii. 27; Mark ix. 39; Acts xix. 13). The truth, though ministered by ungodly men, may be made the power of God to the salvation of the hearer. The minister of saving truth may himself become a castaway (cf. 1 Cor. ix. 27). (3) "Workers of iniquity" may perform "many wonderful works." There may be faith-miracles without love (cf. 1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2). "Grace may bring a man to heaven without miracles, but miracles will never bring a man to heaven without grace" (Henry). Wonderful works, viz. of party zeal.

II. THAT IT IS OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE THAT WE BE THUS ABLE TO PROVE OUR TITLE. 1. *For the testing will be severe.* (1) It is compared to the striving of fierce elements upon a building. The "rain" in the East comes down in streams. The "floods" then rise with terrible suddenness. And the "wind" rushes with a violence seldom equalled in our climate. So by every kind of temptation—from above, from beneath, from around—from the world, the flesh, and the devil, are our principles tested even in this world. (2) But in the day of judgment. "That day" (cf. Eccles. xii. 14; Dan. vii. 10; ch. xxiv. 36; Luke x. 12; 2 Tim. i. 12, 18). Then the heavens and the earth will be shaken; the severity of the testing will be most searching. 2. *The life-building founded on the Rock of Ages will abide.* (1) Our work must be *begun* in him. "Other foundation can no man lay" (cf. ch. xvi. 18; Eph. ii. 20). The Founder of the earth is himself an immutable Foundation (see Heb. i. 10—12). "The Name of the Lord is a strong tower." (2) It must be *continued* in him. "Not every one that *saith unto me.*" We have to deal with Christ. "I never knew you"—never acknowledged or approved you. We must ever have the approbation of him "with whom we have to do." The materials of this building are spiritual. The building is for eternity. (3) It must be *ended* in him. He claims to be our Judge. This doctrine astonished the Jews. Jesus spake with the authority of confirming miracles (cf. ch. iv. 24, 25; Mark i. 27; Luke iv. 32, 36); but it was his *doctrine* that astonished (cf. John vi. 42; vii. 46). The scribes never spake in this style. Even the prophets said, "Thus saith the Lord;" but Jesus, "I say unto you." 3. *The life-building founded on the sand will be wrecked.* (1) Any foundation other than Christ is sand. Religious speculativeness. Orthodoxy, or right opinion, by abuse of terms is called faith. Innocence or doing no harm. Self-righteousness. Attendance upon the ordinances of religion. (2) The fool is at as much trouble to build on the sand as the wise man on the rock. How many fools pass for wise men! How often those who pity fools are of their number! Wisdom and folly, in Scripture, express not intellectual but moral states. (3) False hopes are delusive. Sand looks like rock. In the judgment everything will be tested (cf. Rom. ii. 11; 1 Cor. iii. 13). (4) The doom of the foolish is dreadful. The more pretentious

the building the greater the wreck. "Depart from me." Separation from Christ is hell. Note: The ending of this sermon teaches that it is not necessary that every sermon should end with consolation. But let us be wise, prudent, in time.—J. A. M.

Ver. 1.—*The sin of unloving criticism.* This part of the sermon deals with the life of relationships and mutual obligations which the disciple of Christ has to live. The second part of the sermon dealt with his personal life of piety. Here our Lord shows how the new regenerate life will put a new tone and character on all the ordinary and everyday human relations. True piety must gain expression; if it be true piety it will be ever seeking to gain worthy expression. A characteristic fault in human society is the disposition to judge others in a suspicious temper, and that is *misjudging*, which hurts the man who misjudges quite as much as him who is misjudged. Never was the spirit of criticism, and even of unfriendly criticism, so rife as it is to-day; and never was the warning of Jesus more needed. It may be our duty to criticize *things done*; but we need to take great pains to find out whether we are really called on to criticize the *doers*. What our Lord condemns is the *censorious spirit*, which is opposed to the "forbearance," the "fairness in judgment," which duly allows for faults. Criticizing habits become a snare, in which even good men are often entangled.

I. WE MAY CRITICIZE THINGS DONE. These are fair subjects of mental exercise. We cannot be active-minded without forming a personal judgment on every incident and event of family, social, and public life. The man who has no views on anything is a tiresome man, and altogether below his manhood. He will be easily led by others. Thought is really criticism, estimate, judgment on things.

II. WE MAY CRITICIZE OPINIONS HELD. And these are distinctly separable from the *persons* holding them. This represents the higher range of human knowledge. In it man transcends the sphere of the material, and works in the range of the *immaterial*, the range of thoughts. Men's opinions are fair grounds of discussion; and we plead for absolute and unlimited freedom in dealing with opinions.

III. WE HAD BETTER NOT JUDGE PERSONS. 1. Because we can never be sure of doing that fairly. There are prejudices which blind our vision. There is imperfection of knowledge, which destroys the value of our judgments. There is inability precisely to appraise motives. 2. Because he who is unfair and severe in his judgments of others establishes a testing standard for himself. He can never complain if he is judged as he judged others.

Judging our erring brother may come to be our public duty. Our Lord does not refer to this case. But then Christian judgment should be toned by "heavenly, Divine charity." And for us all the advice is good, "Forbear to judge, for we are sinners all."—R. T.

Ver. 3.—*Honest self-estimates.* It is plain that our Lord's figure is paradoxical. Beams of wood in eyes is quite an impossible conception; and when he spoke of it it must have caused a smile. With a curious realism, the old Bible picture represents a man with a long beam of wood, standing straight out from his eye, and unsupported. Our Lord's teachings require to be read with our faculty of imagination in healthy activity. Probably in this case our Lord used a familiar Jewish proverb, which satirized men's readiness to espy small faults in others while they overlook large ones in themselves. Note that ophthalmia is very prevalent in the East, caused by the particles floating in the dry atmosphere. The similar rabbinical saying is thus given: "I wonder if there is any one in this generation who would take reproof. If one said, 'Take the mote out of thine eye,' he would answer, 'Take the beam from out of thine own eye.'"

I. HONEST SELF-ESTIMATES ARE DIFFICULT TO MAKE. Burns writes—

> "O wad some power the giftie gie us,
> To see oursels as others see us!"

But just that power is generally lacking. We all think we know other people well; we all, in fact, know ourselves most imperfectly. Many a man has been humiliatingly surprised to discover that the fault which he most blamed, and had least mercy on, in others, was his own characteristic failing. The inscription may be put on the Greek

temple, "Know thyself;" but that is precisely what the people, who walk the pavements below, are not interested in doing. We all prefer to keep our self-delusions concerning our own excellences. A man must deal resolutely with himself who means to know the truth about himself. Honest self-estimates prove (1) surprising; (2) humbling; (3) they culture gentleness and charity toward others. Every man has his failing—his "beam in the eye."

II. HONEST SELF-ESTIMATES ARE INFLUENTIAL WHEN MADE. What our Lord intimates is that, if a man discovers his own beam, he will be so concerned about it, and so busy over it, that he will pay no particular attention to his neighbour's mote. And if it should come to be his duty to point out that mote, he will remember that it is but a *mote* in comparison with his own *beam*. The man who sees his own sin aright, and reads it in the light of its inspiring motives, can never see his brother's sin to be as big as his own. "Men who see *into* their neighbours are very apt to be contemptuous;" that is, when the feeling of their own beam does not hopefully influence their vision.—R. T.

Ver. 6.—*Piety in the restraint of prudence.* Dogs are treated throughout Scripture as unclean animals. The usual thought is evidently of the pariah dogs, which are the scavengers of Eastern towns. Little is said of trained shepherds' dogs; and nothing is said of pet dogs. Swine are, by emphasis, the unclean creatures. Our Lord has spoken of carefulness in judging others. But his disciples are required to exercise discrimination. They should prudently estimate situations, opportunities, and occasions. The guilelessness and simplicity of the Christian disciple is quite different from incompetency and foolishness. Prudence should guide all the expressions of piety. "That which is holy" refers to flesh offered in sacrifice. This must not be treated as if it were refuse, and given to dogs. Pearls may look like peas or beans, but if you give them to swine, and so deceive the creatures, you may expect them to destroy the pearls, and turn the anger of their disappointment on you. In the ordering of Christian conduct there is hardly a more complex and difficult subject than the restraints in which piety should be held by prudence.

I. PIETY IS EVER SEEKING TO GAIN EXPRESSION. Both in word and in conduct. The activity and energy partly depend on natural disposition, and partly on the vigour with which the Christian responsibilities are taken up. Some Christians must be always speaking, ever finding or forcing opportunities. They easily come to think all self-restraint is sinful yielding to self-indulgence. No word can wisely be spoken that even seems to check the activity of sincere piety. It ought to be weighted with responsibility for conduct.

II. PIETY MAY BE UNDULY CHECKED BY PRUDENCE. Perhaps more among us are exposed to this danger than to the opposite one. So long as prudence deals with *reasons*, all is well; when it begins to take up *excuses*, there is peril. Then what we call "prudence" is really self-interest in disguise. Be sure they are "dogs" or "swine," to whom your good word is to be spoken, before you shelter yourself behind your Lord's carefully qualified advice.

III. PIETY SHOULD BE WISELY RESTRAINED BY PRUDENCE. Prudence deals with fitting (1) times; (2) seasons; (3) forms; (4) degrees. It estimates occasions, surroundings, individuals. It aims to secure adaptation. "A word spoken *in season*, how good is it!"—R. T.

Ver. 7.—*The condition on which answer to prayer depends.* The reference to prayer seems to be introduced here as an "aside;" but the connection is not difficult to trace. Our Lord had been calling his disciples to duties which would make the most serious demands on them. They would be sure to feel the need of sustaining and supporting grace, such as comes only from God. Then let them be quite sure that they could always have this grace for the asking; but let them be also quite sure that they would not get the grace *apart from the asking*. In dealing with this familiar passage, it is usual to fix attention on the apparently unlimited promises of answer to prayer. "Ye *shall* receive." It may, however, be that thus our Lord's point is missed. He put emphasis on the "asking," the "seeking," the "knocking," as if he had said, "You *must ask*, if you would have a good hope of receiving." Compare "For all these things

will I be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them;" "Ye have not, because ye ask not." The three terms, "ask," "seek," "knock," have been shown to represent an ascending scale. They are each what the man himself must do; the condition on which alone he gains the blessing. Are we ever conscious, then, of failing powers in the Christian life? we may never say that we are straitened in God: it must be that we are straitened *in ourselves*. We expected God to *give*, but we did not meet his conditions, and *ask*. An objection should be dealt with, which is perhaps oftener felt than expressed—If God knows everything we need, why does he require us to ask? The answer is twofold. 1. If he does require us to ask, there must be reasons for his so doing, in his Divine Fatherhood; and children should obey when they do not understand. 2. We can see that the *asking* becomes an agency of spiritual culture to us. It nourishes that dependence which takes us out of ourselves, and checks self-confidence. It might be added that it helps to keep before us the connection between our blessings and God's providings. The condition that we must ask may be shown to work out into (1) we must ask earnestly; (2) must ask persistently.

I. HE WHO "ASKS" MAKES REQUEST.

II. HE WHO "SEEKS" PRESSES HIS REQUEST.

III. HE WHO "KNOCKS" PERSISTS IN HIS REQUEST.—R. T.

Ver. 11.—*Human and Divine fatherhoods.* God can only be apprehended by man through some *relations* that are familiar to man. It may be assumed that the highest, best, most universal, of human relations will be found most fittingly to represent him. The one relation which is universal, and universally esteemed the highest, is the parental. It is passing strange that any difficulty should be found in securing the thankful acceptance of the doctrine of the Divine Fatherhood. Probably men are hindered by the desire to attain abstract conceptions of the Divine Being; certainly they are hindered by observing the patent fact of the imperfection of human fatherhoods. But it is the ideal Fatherhood, which human fatherhoods do but suggest, which alone can be applied to God. We not only have references to God as the Father characteristic of our Lord's teaching—indeed, it is almost the only word he uses for God—but in this text we have his own comparison of the human and Divine fatherhoods, giving a precedent of which we may confidently take advantage. Probably theology would become altogether more human and more attractive if this comparison were more freely made. Man in the image of God is the best revelation of God. And it should be easy to separate man as man from man the sinner.

I. THE HUMAN FATHER IS A PRAYER-HEARER. 1. This he is by virtue of his relationship. A father has children; they are dependent on him. Dependence is the essence of prayer; it may be silent or it may be vocal. 2. This he is upon impulse of affection. His love inspires willingness to hear the needs of his children. Their good is a personal interest to him. 3. This he is by the persuasion of duty. All relations involve responsibilities; and a father is under obligation to meet the wants of his children, whether he knows them upon fatherly observation, or they make them known to him by cry and prayer.

II. THE DIVINE FATHER IS A PRAYER-HEARER. 1. He also has been pleased to sustain relations as the Author of our being. And our dependence on our Creator is prayer to which he must respond. 2. He also has declared his personal love to us; and love must be heedful of the needs of its objects. 3. We may even think of God as being placed under honourable obligations by the relations into which he has brought us.—R. T.

Ver. 12.—*Primary moral duties not original.* It is critically urged that our Lord's moral teachings were not original. We may gladly admit that they were not. How could they be? What are original moral teachings? Man was endowed from the beginning with the complete circle of moral principles. If he had them not at the very first, he gained them all in the first experiences of human relationship; and the "Decalogue" did but state, in brief and formal sentences, the moral duties which man has always apprehended that he owed to man. Did any one arise now, and presume to teach us authoritatively new morals, we should know well what to say to him. "The new is not true, and the true is not new." It would have been the moralist's

criticism of the teachings of Christ, if they had been original and new. Hillel, the great Jewish teacher, is reported to have said, "Do not unto another what thou wouldest not have another do unto thee. This is the whole Law; the rest is mere commentary." If we expand this moral duty, it will at once appear how common, how human, and how universal it is. Every noble moral teacher will find expression for it in some more or less appropriate form.

I. THAT WHICH IS PLEASING TO SELF IS LIKELY TO BE PLEASING TO OTHERS. This is recognized as a good assumption to go upon; but it does not always prove a correct assumption. Probably it would if the "pleasing" were not too often made the equivalent of self-indulgence. Clearly we should try to please others. The standard to begin with is what pleases us; but this will be altered as we get accurately to know them.

II. THAT WHICH IS RIGHT FOR SELF IS LIKELY TO BE RIGHT FOR OTHERS. But we err in two ways. 1. We claim rights which we are not prepared to give. 2. We give ourselves liberties which we deny others. And universal morality stamps both these as unfair. My rights my brother can equally claim; my liberties are my brother's due.

III. THAT WHICH WE CLAIM FROM OTHERS WE MAY REASONABLY EXPECT OTHERS TO CLAIM FROM US. This may appear to fail in recognizing the various relations of classes in society. But it is based on what is the true equality of mankind. Equality of ability, place, opportunity, education, influence, even of character, there can never be. But equality in *service*, mutual service, there can be. The master serves the servant; the servant serves the master. Then Christ's Law is seen to apply. "The service I seek is the service I should give."—R. T.

Ver. 14.—*The initial difficulty of all good enterprises.* "Strait is the gate . . . which leadeth unto life." Dean Plumptre gives the similar figure, taken from what is known as the "Tablet of Cebes, the Disciple of Socrates:" "Seest thou not a certain small door, and a pathway before the door, in no way crowded, but few, very few, go in thereat? This is the way that leadeth to true discipline" (comp. 2 Esdr. vii. 1—13, "The entrance to the city was made by only one path, even between fire and water, so small that there could but one man go there at once"). Buckingham, the traveller among the Arabs, has a striking illustration: "Close by the sarcophagus is a curious old mosque, with a large open centre, and colonnades, or wings of three arches each, on each side. Some of the arches rest on square pillars of masonry, and others on small circular columns of basalt. One of these pillars is formed wholly of one piece of stone, including pedestal, shaft, and capital; and near it is a curious double column, the pedestals of which are in one piece, the shafts each composed of two pieces, and the two capitals with their plinths all formed out of one block. These pillars are not large, and are only distant from each other, as they stand, *about a human span*. They are right opposite the door of entrance into the mosque, and we were assured that it was a general belief among the Mohammedans that whoever could pass through these pillars unhurt was destined for heaven, and whoever could not might prepare either to reduce his bulk, or expect a worse fate in hell."

I. THE BEGINNING OF COMMON HANDICRAFT IS DIFFICULT. So the apprentice ever finds it. A lesson in self-discipline is the first lesson every one must learn who means to do anything worth doing. This is readily illustrated in specific instances.

II. THE BEGINNING OF ALL MENTAL ACQUIREMENT IS DIFFICULT. A strait gate is at the entrance of all science. He who will not wrestle with the perplexities of the alphabet shall learn nothing.

III. THE BEGINNING OF ALL MORAL CULTURE IS DIFFICULT. As difficult as these other things. More difficult, because the moral nature has taken a bias to self-indulgence and evil. So there is the dead weight of self-resistance to overcome. The pillars at the entrance of the temple of all true good are only a span apart. No man who will not squeeze himself, deny himself, can hope to enter in.—R. T.

Ver. 20.—*The test of the fruitage.* Whately says, "If you saw in any country the fields carefully ploughed and cleared and sown with wheat, and yet continually sending up a growth of grass and thistles, which choked the wheat whenever they were not

weeded out again and again, you would not suppose wheat to be indigenous (that is, to grow wild) in that country, but would conclude that, if the land had been left to itself, it would have produced grass and thistles, and no wheat at all. So also, when you see men's natural character so opposite to the pure, and generous, and benevolent, and forgiving character of the gospel, that, even after they have received the gospel, their lives are apt to be quite a contrast to its virtues, you cannot think it likely that such a being as man should have been the inventor of such a religion as the Christian." Our Lord would warn his disciples of the mischievous influence of false teachers. Those cherishing guilelessness and trustfulness would be especially exposed to the power of such teachers. It was necessary to provide a safe test for the trying of all such.

I. WHAT IS THIS MODE OF JUDGING MEN? Show that, all through creation, the *nature* of things is exhibited to us in their *forms*. Illustrate seeds. Qualities of the tree, or of the bud, or graft, placed in the tree. Creatures; and man. Everywhere disposition is seen in conduct; and we esteem it fair to judge disposition by conduct.

II. BUT IS THIS ALTOGETHER A FAIR MODE OF JUDGING? On the whole, we may say, "Yes, it is." It is our only mode, for we cannot read motive. It is a mode with which we are familiar, in which we ought to be practised and skilful. We never hesitate about testing by it our fellow-men. And yet it can hardly be a perfect test. Men are so often better than their actions. We *must* endeavour to find what they are *trying after*. True in the large, it often fails in the minute.

III. USE THE TEST TO JUDGE OUR OWN INDIVIDUAL LIFE. Can we safely let the world judge our fruitage as professing Christians? What fruits of holiness, worship, brotherhood, charity, service, do they see? Come searchingly to deal with minute things. Our fruit may be good-looking, but not good; it may be like crab-apples. Our fruit may be actually good—*not* crab-apples, and yet of very inferior value. Our Lord said, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit;" and that means "much and good."—R. T.

Ver. 21.—*The self-deception of professors.* The professors here are the "prophets" of ver. 15. But the sadness of their condition comes out in a very striking way when they are seen to be both deceivers and self-deceivers. There may be a designed allusion to the characteristic teachers of the day, some of whom were hypocrites, and some of whom were self-deceived. Illustration may be found in the mischievous influence of the Judaist teachers who followed St. Paul and eagerly laboured to destroy his spiritual work.

I. THE SELF-DECEPTION OF THE FLUENT SPEAKER. "Have we not prophesied in thy Name?" Reference may be made, not merely to glib and easy public speaking, but also to glib and easy expression in prayer; and in the utterance of religious feelings and experiences. Strange is the power of self-deception in these things. Because we can express, we feel sure we must feel. Because we can express earnestly, we satisfy ourselves that we must be feeling deeply. It costs great heart-searching, and continuous watchfulness, if our speech is made and kept strictly sincere. And it will soon be found that the talker is too often a mere talker.

II. THE SELF-DECEPTION OF THE EXORCIST. "In thy Name have cast out devils." Remember that, in our Lord's day, there were many who claimed power to exorcise devils. Noticing that Christ cast out devils, it was easy to deceive themselves into the idea that they could exorcise as they had been accustomed to do, only using Christ's Name. They stand to represent those professors who continue life on precisely the old principles, but think they secure themselves by freely using Christ's Name. Everything depends on their right, as disciples, to use the Name. They must belong to Christ first.

III. THE SELF-DECEPTION OF THE MIRACLE-WORKER. Miracle-worker, in those days; *successful* man in religious work, in these days. We are constantly deceived into saying of a man, "He must be a good man, for see how *successful* he is." Then, how the man may be self-deceived by the success! Success may be won on purely human principles, and may have nothing Divine in it. Personal relation to Christ is the beginning of all good work.—R. T.

Ver. 29.—*The distinguishing feature of Christ's teaching.* "As a rule, the scribe hardly ever gave his exposition without at least beginning by what had been said by Hillel or Shammai, by Rabbi Joseph or Rabbi Meir, depending almost or altogether upon what had thus been ruled before, as much as an English lawyer depends upon his precedents." Geikie mentions one of the rabbis who "boasted that every verse of the Bible was capable of six hundred thousand different interpretations." But on such principles who could hope to know or find the truth? To venture on originality and independence in teaching was something hitherto unknown; and the difference between the method of Jesus and the method of the scribes forcibly impressed the people. The point which may be profitably opened, illustrated, and impressed is the difference in *power* exerted by those who must be classed under the term "scribe," and those who may be classed along with the Lord Jesus. And all our teachers, in home, school, church, society, literature, will thus divide.

I. THE POWER OF THE SCRIBE-LIKE TEACHER. A very small power. Such men often do more harm than good by their pettiness, narrow limitations, quibbles, interest in trifles, and uncertainties of mere verbal interpretation. They are always seriously affected by the prejudices of the schools to which they belong. They find it impossible to grasp or to apply great, comprehensive principles. Such are dangerous teachers still.

II. THE POWER OF THE CHRIST-LIKE TEACHER. No doubt Christ had an authority arising from his office which was unique; but we can recognize also an authority in respect of which we may be like him. He was strong in unquestioning, unwavering, convictions of the truth. That is the kind of authority that is still needed. Prophet-like authority. The age needs men, like Christ, who can speak with the "accent of conviction." Our fellow-men—and we ourselves—are always best helped by those who hold truth with a great grasp of faith, and have no quavering in their voice as they speak to us the message of God. They are not stubborn men, but believing men. What they say to us is this, "I believe; therefore have I spoken."—R. T.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER VIII.

Ver. 1—ch. ix. 34 —MESSIAH'S WORK AS COMPLEMENTARY TO HIS TEACHING. We return in this section to matter which resembles that of Mark and Luke, and undoubtedly belongs to the Framework (*vide* Introduction).

St. Matthew has given a lengthy summary of the teaching of the Christ, and he now supplements it by a summary of his daily work. He is not concerned with the chronological connexion of the incidents here narrated, for this is evidently to him a matter of but secondary importance. He only desires to bring out different aspects of the Lord's life. Thus he notices—

1. Christ's miracles of healing, and the secret of his ability to perform them (vers. 1—17).

2. The personal trials that Christ incurred in his work (ver. 18—ch. ix. 8).

3. The liberty of the gospel as shown by Christ's treatment of the outcast, and his answer to those who insisted on fasting (ch. ix. 9—17).

4. The completeness of his healing power (ch. ix. 18—34).

Vers. 1—17.—1. *Christ's miracles of healing, and the secret of his ability to perform them.* Observe: (1) The variety in the patients. (*a*) One of the chosen people, who had lost all social and religious privileges; (*b*) a Gentile, an outsider by birth; (*c*) the near relation of a personal follower; (*d*) multitudes. (2) The variety in the requests for his aid. (*a*) The request by the sufferer; (*b*) the request by another; (*c*) apparently no request, yet the personal follower has Christ with him; (*d*) the sufferers are brought to him.

Vers. 1—4.—*Healing the leper.* Parallel passages: Mark i. 40—45; Luke v. 12—16. Observe in this miracle (1) the Lord's sympathy, running counter to popular prejudice (*vide* Edersheim, 'Life,' i. 495); (2) his full acceptance of the Law (ch. v. 17); cf. ver. 4, note.

Ver. 1.—Matthew only. **When he was come down from the mountain** (ch. v. 1, note), **great multitudes followed him.** A transitional verse. It carries on the thought of the ὄχλοι in the last verse of the preceding chapter, and serves to introduce the following examples of sick folk; or, perhaps, it may be connected with the "great multitudes" (ὄχλοι πολλοί) of ch. iv. 25, coming, as the plural suggests (cf. also ch. xii. 23) from the various places there enumerated. If we must combine this verse with Luke v. 12, we must suppose our Lord to have descended the mountain, and to be passing through "one of the cities," coming (our ver. 5) afterwards to Capernaum, the "great multitudes" (cf. Luke v. 15) being drawn from the various cities through which he passed. The verse reminds us that the two sides of the Lord's life, preaching and work, were intimately connected. Men not only wondered at what they heard (ch. vii. 28, 29), they also followed him, and this led to occasions for the exercise of his practical activity. The result was that they wondered at his work (ch. ix. 33), as they wondered at his preaching.

Ver. 2.—**And, behold.** In this case the unexpected (ch. i. 20, note) was the near approach (προσελθών), the "worship," and the prayer of an outcast. **There came a leper.** Loathsome physically and typically. The other passages which speak of the healing of lepers by our Lord or the apostles are (1) ch. x. 8; (2) ch. xi. 5; parallel passage, Luke vii. 22; (3) Luke xvii. 12; (4) perhaps ch. xxvi. 6; parallel passage, Mark xiv. 3. **And worshipped him** (ch. iv. 9, note). From the parallel passages we may see that the word here refers more to the posture of his body than to the nature of his thoughts. **Saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.** Leprosy stood in so peculiar and solemn a relation to the Israelites that it would hardly be included under the terms, "all manner of disease, and all manner of sickness," in ch. iv. 23, 24; we have therefore no evidence that up to this time any leper had been healed by our Lord. The man's utterance marks, therefore, a distinct advance in faith. None like him, the object of the Divine "stroke," had been healed; but from lesser examples of Jesus' power he argues to the greater. Sure of Jesus' power, he appeals to his heart. **Make me clean** (καθαρίσαι). Not merely "heal me;" for a leper could not but think of healing *and its consequences*—restoration to social and religious privileges (*vide infra*).

Ver. 3.—**And Jesus put forth** (*and he stretched forth*, Revised Version) **his hand, and touched him.** The careful record of the twofold action may be either a trace of the increasing astonishment of the bystanders or a means of indicating that this was no accidental touch, but the result of deliberate will (cf. ch. xiv. 31). According to the Law (Lev. xiii. 46 with xi. 40), our Lord by this action would become unclean until the evening. But of this there is no hint. That indeed he could not by it contract any real impurity, or even any ceremonial impurity in the eyes of God, is self-evident. But how could he himself justify his exemption from the Law? and how could the people justify it? Probably both he and they felt that as "the priests, in their contact with the leper to be adjudged, were exempted from the law of defilement," much more was the One who "cleansed" him. "He says, '*I will*,' to meet the heresy of Photinus. He *commands*, because of Arius. He *touches*, because of Manichæus" (Ambrose, in Ford). **Saying, I will** (θέλω). Synchronous with the action. **Be thou clean**; *be thou made clean* (Revised Version); καθαρίσθητι. The external power which the man had himself acknowledged was now applied to him, and he was made clean by it, physically and therefore ceremonially (cf. Bishop Westcott, on 'Hebrews,' p. 346). **And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.** (On the parallel passage in Mark and Luke, "departed from him," see Professor Marshall, in *Expositor*, June, 1891, p. 464.)

Ver. 4.—**And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man**; *i.e.* of those who were not present (Bengel). The command may have been given (1) to save the man from temptation to self-importance; *or* (2) to prevent any rumour of the miracle coming to the ears of the recognized authorities, and thus prejudicing them in their verdict upon his case; *or*, and more probably, (3) for the Lord's sake, for this seems to be the reason for the command in all the other occasions when it is given (ch. ix. 30; xii. 16; xvii. 9; Mark v. 43; vii. 36; viii. 26; cf. Mark i. 34; iii. 12). The Lord did not desire to be thronged with multitudes who came only to see his miracles; he would work in quiet (cf. the quotation from Isaiah in ch. xii. 18—21). **But go thy way, show thyself to the priest.** The latter clause belongs verbally to Lev. xiii. 49, but the thought is that of Lev. xiv. 2, *sqq.* Without the official verdict, the man could not be restored to communal privileges (so also Luke xvii. 14). **And offer the gift that Moses commanded.** Including (1) "two living clean birds, and cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop" (Lev. xiv. 4); (2) "two he-lambs without blemish, and one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish, and three tenth parts *of an ephah* of fine flour for a meal offering, mingled with oil, and

one log of oil" (Lev. xiv. 10), unless he be poor, in which case lesser sacrifices may be substituted (vers. 21, 22; cf. Keil, 'Arch.,' § 59; and for details of the traditional ceremonial, Edersheim, 'Temple,' pp. 315—318). **For a testimony unto them** (*εἰς μαρτύριον αὐτοῖς*). Although a fair sense might be extracted by connecting this clause with the words, "Moses commanded," it would, especially in the parallel passages, be a very awkward addition to them. Rather it must represent the man's "offering" in its ultimate purpose, and this not necessarily in the man's own mind. So more clearly the "Western" reading in the parallel passage in Luke, *ἵνα εἰς μαρτύριον ᾖ ὑμῖν τοῦτο*. Whether "them" refers to the priests or to the nation generally is not of grave importance, for the priests themselves, in act and feeling, represented the nation (cf. ch. vii. 29, note). Of more interest is the question —What is that which is here testified of? (1) *Primâ facie* the man's own state. The performance of the rites would be legal evidence that he was clean. (2) Yet this interpretation is hardly borne out by the usage of the phrase. *Εἰς μαρτύριον* in the LXX. (never closely with the dative as here) seems to always refer to that which is both permanent and important (cf. Gen. xxi. 30; xxxi. 44; Deut. xxxi. 26; Josh. xxiv. 27; Hos. ii. 12). And in the New Testament with the dative it elsewhere refers either to work for the Lord (ch. x. 18; xxiv. 14; Mark vi. 11) or to a solemn judgment (Jas. v. 3). So probably here. The man's offering is to be a permanent testimony to the nation of our Lord's relation to the Law. His miracles confirmed his profession (ch. v. 17). (3) Some, however, accepting the above view in the main, translate, "for a testimony against them" (as Mark vi. 11; cf. Luke ix. 5, and as perhaps Jas. v. 3, but *vide* Plumptre there); but it is unlikely that so harsh a thought towards the nation would be expressed by our Lord at this early stage of his ministry. In Mark vi. 11 there is a definite reason for its use.

Vers. 5—13.—*The healing of the centurion's servant.* (Vers. 5—10; parallel passage: Luke vii. 1—3, 6—10. Vers. 11, 12, equivalent to Luke xiii. 28, 29.) According to St. Luke, the centurion sent first elders of the Jews to plead for him, and afterwards friends, and expressly said by them that he did not think himself worthy to come to Jesus. Their return in ver. 10 seems to forbid the supposition that he eventually came. This detailed narrative seems more likely than St. Matthew's, which is not only compressed, but, if taken by itself, gives a wrong idea of what appears to have actually taken place. But *quod facit per alium facit per se*, and as Trench points out, this is "an exchange of persons, of which all historical narrative and all the language of our common life is full. A comparison of Mark x. 35 with ch. xx. 20 will furnish another example of the same." The fact is that St. Matthew (or, perhaps, the original framer of the source that he used, or those through whose hands it passed) seizes on the Gentilic origin of the centurion, without troubling himself to record his previous kind and generous attitude towards the Jews, and the interest that they now show on his behalf. This led to the omission of the second group of messengers also, and, of course, to the modification of the language where necessary, *e.g.* ver. 13. For the same reason, St. Matthew records vers. 11, 12 in this place.

For the contrast between this and the superficially similar miracle recorded in John iv. 46, *sqq.*, cf. Trench on that miracle.

Ver. 5.—**And when Jesus** (Revised Version, *he*) **was entered into Capernaum.** (On Capernaum, see ch. iv. 13.) **There came unto him**; *i.e.* by messengers, as we learn from St. Luke (*vide supra*). **A centurion, beseeching him.** The centurion probably belonged to the soldiers of Antipas, in whose district Capernaum lay. They would naturally be organized after the Roman manner; cf. the forces of the Indian native states and our own. It should be observed, by the way, that even the imperial troops stationed in Palestine were drawn, not from distant lands, but from the non-Jewish inhabitants of the country, perhaps especially from Samaritans (*vide* Schürer, I. ii. p. 50).

Ver. 6.—Matthew only. **And saying, Lord, my servant**; Revised Version margin, "boy" (*ὁ παῖς μου*), just as in some English-speaking communities "boy" is commonly used for "manservant." In the parallel passage of Luke, the narrative speaks of him as *δοῦλος*, the message as *παῖς*. **Lieth.** Perforce (*βέβληται*). **At home**; Revised Version, *in the house*; i.e. of the centurion. **Sick of the palsy, grievously tormented** (cf. 1 Macc. ix. 55, 56). "Paralysis with contraction of the joints is accompanied with intense suffering, and, when united, as it much oftener is in the hot climates of the East and of Africa than among us, with tetanus, both '*grievously torments*,' and rapidly brings on dissolution" (Trench,

'Miracles,' p. 231 : 1866). Observe that the statement of the case is itself a petition.

Ver. 7.—Matthew only. **And Jesus** (Revised Version, *he*) **saith unto him, I will come and heal him.** The emphasis is not on the coming, but on the person who comes (*ἐγὼ ἐλθών*). Observe Christ's perfect self-consciousness. *Heal* (*θεραπεύσω*); contrast ver. 8.

Ver. 8.—**The** (Revised Version, *and the*) **centurion answered and said.** His reply as reported in Matthew is almost verbally the same as his second message in Luke, save for the important addition there of his unworthiness to come. **Lord, I am not worthy** (*ἱκανός*); ch. iii. 11, note. **That thou shouldest come under my roof.** "My," probably emphatic: however thou mayest honour others. **But speak the word only; *but only say the word*** (Revised Version); *ἀλλὰ μόνον εἰπὲ λόγῳ*. Only say with a single word what is to be done, and it shall be done (cf. ver. 16). **And my servant shall be healed** (*ἰαθήσεται*); ch. iv. 23, note.

Ver. 9.—**For I am** (*for I also am*, Revised Version) **a man under authority, having soldiers under me** (*under myself soldiers*, Revised Version): **and I say to this man** (*this one*, Revised Version), **Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.** The centurion says that he knows the power of a command when given by one in authority, through the obedience that he himself shows and through that which he himself receives. Observe, he naturally orders his soldiers movement, and his slave work. Further, may not "and to my slave" represent the climax of his faith? He felt that the powers of nature (at least those concerned in this illness) were not only subordinate to Jesus, but were completely under his power. At his command they would act and the man be healed.

Ver. 10.—**When** (Revised Version, *and when*) **Jesus heard it, he marvelled.** Contrast "and he marvelled because of their unbelief" (Mark vi. 6). We read in John ii. 24, 25, "But Jesus did not trust himself unto them, for that he knew all men, and because he needed not that any one should bear witness concerning man; for he himself knew what was in man." Yet here our Lord marvels at the character of the centurion. How can we reconcile these two statements? As yet not fully, for the question takes us to the centre of our Lord's personality. But we must remember: (1) That Augustine's solution—Christ did not so much actually wonder, as commend to us that which was worthy of our admiration—"brings an unreality into parts of our Lord's conduct, as though he did some things for show and the effect which they would have on others, instead of all his actions having their deepest root in his own nature, being the truthful exponents of his own inmost being" (Trench). (2) That St. John was referring, as it seems, to persons with whom our Lord was brought into contact, while here the centurion is probably absent (*vide supra*). Our Lord's powers of perception (*ἐγίνωσκεν*, John) have here had no opportunity of action. (3) That, in any case, even our Lord's mental powers did not act in any unnatural method. In his grasping the true character of each man's mind, the same processes (however rapid in his case) must have taken place as take place in men generally, and among these processes is wonder at some fresh trait. (4) That unless we are prepared to accept a subtle Apollinarianism, we must suppose that Christ came to know human hearts by his human rather than by his Divine powers. This, of course, will not exclude his receiving special communications in the Holy Spirit, by whose agency we may suppose that he "saw" Nathanael (John i. 48). **And said to them that followed.** The multitudes (ver. 1). **Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.** So also the Revised Version (similarly Luke), but Revised Version margin and Westcott and Hort read, "With no man in Israel have I found so great faith," in which there is more distinct reference to the individuals whom he had actually met. A Gentile surpassed them all. Notice that the centurion is put above the apostles; and rightly, especially if even Peter had not as yet thought of the cure of his mother-in-law (ver. 14, note). Yet the centurion was not called to apostleship. *Found.* "Quærens, cum veni" (Bengel).

Vers. 11, 12.—In Luke (xiii. 28, 29) not joined to this miracle, but placed after the warning about mere professors (our ch. vii. 23). Also they are there given in the reverse order. Taking the other facts (ver. 5, note) about this miracle into consideration, there can be little doubt but that St. Matthew does not place these verses in their historical connexion. He wishes to emphasize the teaching of the miracle, that Gentiles accept Christ, though Jews reject him. For this reason also he gives the two verses in the reverse order. **And.** In contrast (*δέ*) to this comparative absence of belief in Israel. **Many.** Not in the parallel passage in Luke, but it agrees with the aim of St. Matthew's Gospel. **Shall come.** Though not emphatic, as it is in the parallel passage in Luke, yet expressive of purpose and decision. **From the east and** (Revised Version, *the*) **west.** Not only residents in Palestine, like this centurion, but from the furthest limits of the earth. The thought was well known; *e.g.* Mal. i. 11; Isa. lix.

19; also Jer. xvi. 19; Zech. viii. 22. **And shall sit down**; *i.e.* at a feast. The image, taken from Isa. xxv. 6, is exceedingly common in Jewish Haggadic (*i.e.* mostly parabolic) teaching (cf. Dr. Taylor's 'Sayings,' etc., iii. 25; Schürer, II. ii. 174). **With Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.** An early "Western" reading is, "in the bosom of Abraham," etc. (cf. Luke xvi. 23). Probably a traditional form current among Jewish Christians. **But the children**; *sons* (Revised Version). Those who ought rightfully to enjoy its privileges (ch. v. 9, note). In ch. xiii. 38 those so called answer fully to the appellation. **Of the kingdom.** "Rather than of the king; since many are in the kingdom, whom notwithstanding the king rejects as traitors; whereas all the children of the king are adopted as co-heirs with his only begotten Son" (Beza, in Ford). This interpretation is attractive, but doubtless false. The Hebrew idiom enables the writer to suggest the idea of the Jews, who are by nature heirs of the Divine kingdom, being notwithstanding excluded (cf. Acts xiii. 46). **Shall be cast out** (Revised Version, *forth*); ἐκβληθήσονται (ch. vii. 4, note). The "Western" reading, ἐξελεύσονται, suggests that they shall go out by their own present act of refusing blessing. **Into** (Revised Version, *the*) **outer darkness.** The form of the expression, which comes only in Matthew (ch. xxii. 13; xxv. 30), points to a double conception; they shall be cast into the darkness, and cast outside the palace within which the feast is going on. Such is the loss in its personal (εἰς τὸ σκότος) and in its social (τὸ ἐξώτερον) aspect. **There shall be** (Revised Version, *the*) **weeping and gnashing of teeth.** The article, which should strictly be repeated before *gnashing*, points to a recognized conception. The phrase occurs (except in the parallel passage, Luke xiii. 28) only in St. Matthew (ch. xiii. 42, 50; xxii. 13; xxiv. 51; xxv. 30), in each case contrasting the place into which the wicked are sent with that which they might have enjoyed. Observe the description of "hell"—absence of spiritual light; separation from the company of the saved; lamentation; impotent rage. The second couplet corresponds to the first.

Ver. 13.—Matthew only. The parallel passage, Luke vii. 10, gives the result found by the messengers on their return. **And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and** (omitted by the Revised Version) **as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee.** *As.* Not strictly proportionate, but in the same way as (ch. vi. 12; xviii. 33) thou hast now believed, be it done unto thee. **And his servant was healed in the selfsame** (Revised Version, *in that*) **hour.**

Vers. 14, 15.—*The healing of St. Peter's wife's mother.* Parallel passages: Mark i. 29—31; Luke iv. 38, 39.

Ver. 14.—**And when Jesus was come into Peter's house.** Straight from the synagogue (parallel passages), for food, ver. 15 (Chrysostom). It seems clear, from the parallel passages, that St. Peter had not previously told our Lord about his mother-in-law's illness, but that he, with others, now asked (ἠρώτησαν, Luke) him to heal her. Among these others were probably Andrew, who also lived in the house, and James and John, who accompanied our Lord (Mark). Whether or not it was Peter's own house, we have no means of telling (but see next verse). **He saw.** Presumably on entering, before they asked him about her. **His wife's mother** (1 Cor. ix. 5). As St. Peter lived for some forty years more, he can hardly have been now very long married (cf. Bengel). **Laid** (βεβλημένην); ver. 6. **And sick of a fever.**

Ver. 15.—**And he touched her hand.** Perhaps with her, as with the leper (ver. 3), the word alone would not have been enough. In both cases the faith seems to have been below that of the centurion. **And the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them**; Revised Version, *him*, with manuscripts. Serving them all (parallel passages), and him in particular. If it were her own house this would be doubly natural (cf. Luke x. 40). The change of tense (aorist to imperfect) contrasts the single act of arising from her bed and her continued ministry at the meal (cf. ch. iv. 11).

Vers. 16, 17.—*The great number of his miracles, and the secret of his performing them.*

Ver. 16.—Parallel passages: Mark i. 32—34; Luke iv. 40. **When the even was come**; Revised Version, *and when even.* According to the original connexion, preserved, as it seems, in Mark and Luke, this was the evening of the day in which our Lord had healed the man with the withered hand in the synagogue. Probably, therefore, the day had been a sabbath. But with the setting sun (parallel passage in Luke), or rather, according to Talmudic teaching, when three stars were visible after sunset (*vide* Lightfoot, 'Hor. Hebr.,' *in loc.*), the sabbath was over (Lev. xxiii. 32), and people were free to carry out their sick. Should the day not have been a sabbath, we may presume that the evening was chosen as cooler for the sick to be moved, and as more convenient to those who carried them, the day's work being done. **They brought unto him many that were possessed with devils** (ch. iv. 24, note): **and he cast out the**

spirits with his (Revised Version, *a*) word (ver. 8). In contrast to saying over them the long formulas of exorcism used by others. **And healed all that were sick.** The stress is on *all*. None were so ill as to be beyond his power, and no kind of disease too great for him to subdue.

Ver. 17.—Matthew only. **A summary statement of Christ's relation to diseases. That it might be fulfilled** (ὅπως πληρωθῇ); ch. ii. 23, note. **Which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses;** *diseases* (Revised Version); Isa. liii. 4, from the Hebrew. *Took* (ἔλαβεν) regards the transference, the assumption; *bare* (ἐβάστασεν), the oppressiveness; *infirmities*, negative; *diseases*, positive. St. Matthew in this verse calls attention to two points. First, that prophecy had foretold that Christ would heal the sick. For this he might have adduced Isa. xxxv. 5, 6, and similar passages; but as one verse will serve his double purpose, he prefers it. Secondly, that the method by which Christ did this was specially noteworthy. He did not perform miracles by magic (as is commonly asserted of him in the Talmud; cf. Laible, 'Jesus Christ im Talmud,' p. 44: Berlin, 1891), nor by the power of God exerted as it were externally on his behalf, nor by his own inherent Divine power, but by himself bearing the sicknesses that he removed. He wrought his miracles at his own expense, and that expense the greatest. The thought is far-reaching, and implies both that he bore the ultimate cause of sickness, the sin of the world (John i. 29), and also that each miracle of healing meant for him a fresh realization of what bearing the sin of the world included. In other words, the passage in Isaiah, as interpreted by St. Matthew, refers, not only to the Passion as such, but also to Christ's suffering an earnest and a foretaste of it at each miracle. May not this have been in part the cause of his sigh at one miracle (Mark vii. 34), and his deep emotion at another (John xi. 33)? Observe that this may be the complementary side of his experience recorded in Mark v. 30 (parallel passage: Luke viii. 46), that "power" went out of him. A miracle of healing, though performed in momentary unconsciousness of what was taking place, still necessitated personal contact with sin, which to Christ's whole nature meant moral effort. The utterance recorded by Origen, "For those that are sick I was sick, and for those that hunger I suffered hunger, and for those that thirst I suffered thirst" (Bishop Westcott, 'Introd.,' Appendix C; Resch, 'Agrapha,' Log. 47), probably expresses the same thought as our verse, though in the language of ch. xxv. 35, 36. A similar idea seems to underlie the well-known saying of Talm. Bab., 'Sanh.,' 98*b*, with reference to Messiah, "The Leper of the house of Rabbi is his name; for it is said, 'Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.'" On this and on Raymund Martini's false reading, "the Sick One," *vide* Dalman ('Leid. Mess.,' p. 36: 1888).

Ver. 18—ch. ix. 8.—2. *Incidents grouped round the thought of the external trials endured by Christ in his work.* (1) No settled home (vers. 19—22). (2) His exposure to the elements (vers. 23—27). (3) His rejection by Gadarenes (vers. 28—34). (4) And by scribes (ch. ix. 1—8). Yet there was also recognition of him by (1) a scribe (ver. 19); (2) another of the disciples (ver. 21); (3) the winds and the sea (ver. 26); (3) demoniacs (probably Jews, *vide infra*) and demons (vers. 29, 31); (4) a paralytic and those who brought him (ch. ix. 2); (5) the multitudes (ch. ix. 8).

Ver. 18.—Parallel passages: Mark iv. 35; Luke viii. 22. **Now when Jesus saw great multitudes about him.** So also the Revised Version and Westcott and Hort margin; but Westcott and Hort text, "a multitude," with B. Probably the received text is derived from ver. 1. From the parallel passages it is natural to infer that this crossing was some little time subsequent to the evening of the day on which he had healed Peter's wife's mother, etc. (vers. 14—16), and that it was on the day in which he had spoken the parable of the sower. **He gave commandment to depart unto the other side.** It was good for the multitude that he should leave them, for they were wont to take too carnal a view of his mission (cf. John vi. 15), and would now have time to consider its true nature; and it was an opportunity of blessing to all who were on that further shore.

Vers. 19—22.—Parallel passage: Luke ix. 57—62. *The would-be followers.* (On this section, cf. by all means Trench, 'Studies in the Gospels,' pp. 156—167: 1867.) Notice that St. Luke (1) places it almost at the beginning of the Great Episode, calling attention by it to the qualifications required of those who would follow the Lord up to Jerusalem; (2) adds a third example. So far as we have materials for deciding, the chronological position found in St. Matthew seems more probable.

Ver. 19.—**And a certain scribe came;** Revised Version, *and there came a scribe.* Contrast the order in ver. 2. There the leper was recognized as such before ever he came

near, an emphasis being laid on him and his actions by the addition of "Behold;" here the official position is of but secondary importance. *A certain; a* (Revised Version); εἷς. The Hebrew numeral not uncommonly stands for an indefinite article (cf. ch. ix. 18 [Westcott and Hort]; xxvi. 69). Trench's "'*one scribe*' . . . with, perhaps, an emphasis on the 'one' to mark how unfrequent such offers were," is tempting, but improbable. *Scribe.* St. Matthew alone records his profession. Perhaps because the distinction of Jewish classes presented itself more vividly to his mind than to St. Luke's. **And said unto him, Master**; better, with the Revised Version margin, *teacher* (διδάσκαλε). It may be that he recognized one who was superior in an important branch of his own occupation, or, less probably, that he willingly accorded to him a title due to his occupation (cf. John iii. 2; and *infra*, ch. xii. 38). **I will follow thee**; ἀκολουθήσω σοι (*not* ἐγὼ ἀκολουθήσω σοι). Self is placed in the background; he is wholly taken up with that which he proposes doing. **Whithersoever thou goest.** Though, as a scribe, he would naturally prefer quiet. Contrast John vi. 66 (περιεπάτουν). But the discomforts would be greater than he expected. Observe, however, that there is no sign in him of that φιλαργυρία of which he has been accused (Cram. Cat.). Trench strangely favours the suggestion that he was Judas. Is Apoc. xiv. 4 a reminiscence of this offer?

Ver. 20.—**And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes.** The Asiatic fox (*Vulpes corsac*) is decidedly smaller than our European species, but has the same habits. **And the birds of the air** (Revised Version, *heaven*) **have nests.** So the Old Latin and the common text of the Vulgate (*nidos*), but birds do not generally live in nests, nor is "nests" so natural a meaning for κατασκηνώσεις as "shelters" (cf. Trench, *loc. cit.*). The renderings in the true text of the Vulgate (*tabernacula*), and in Old Latin *k*, and Cyprian (*devorsoria*) are interesting. Revised Version margin has, "Gk. *lodging-places*" (cf. ch. xiii. 32 and parallel passages). **But the Son of man.** The original phrase, "one like unto a son of man," was used in Dan. vii. 13, apparently as a symbol of the Jewish nation, to which was to be given supreme power. There is no evidence that it was understood of Messiah before our Lord employed it, but rather the reverse (cf. Bishop Westcott, on John i. 51, and especially Professor Stanton, 'Jewish and Christian Messiah,' pp. 109, 239, *sqq.*; yet see Professor Sanday, in *Expositor*, January, 1891; cf. further, ch. ix. 6, note). Our Lord uses it here for the sake of the contrast it suggested to the lower creation. **Man,** the head of creation (as none would acknowledge more fully than this student of the Law), has in the person of the ideal Man not even the luxuries which correspond to those enjoyed by beasts and birds. Such was the love and self-abasement of the Restorer of creation (Rom. viii. 21). **Hath not where to lay his head.** He has no home to call his own.

Ver. 21.—**And another of his** (Revised Version, *the*) **disciples said unto him.** *Disciples* in the wider sense (ch. v. 1, note), whether the twelve had or had not been chosen. In the latter case, the man may have been Thomas (Trench, *loc. cit.*), but hardly Philip (Clem. Alex.) after John i. 43. Yet it is precarious to see in him the despondency of Thomas (John xi. 6; xx. 24, 25) merely because his father is dead, and he has scruples about immediately following Christ. **Lord, suffer me first.** The man's words imply a consciousness of a call. His heart told him that he ought to go, but he asks for a delay, and, in fact, a real difficulty seems to hinder him from going. St. Luke places the Lord's "Follow me" before the man's request; but here, as in textual criticism, *proclivi scriptioni præstat ardua.* **To go and bury my father.** Then lying dead. Of all filial duties perhaps the most binding (cf. Tobit iv. 3; xiv. 10, 11). Observe (1) that the burial would take place much sooner than is usual with us, and would seldom be more than twenty-four hours after death; (2) that, however, according to Jewish law, the ceremonial observances connected with the burial and consequent purifications would have taken many days (Edersheim, 'Life,' ii. 133).

Ver. 22.—**But Jesus said unto him, Follow me, and let**; Revised Version, *leave.* Yet the thought of leaving seems here merged in that of permitting (cf. ch. xxiii. 14; Mark v. 37; x. 14). **The dead** (Revised Version, *to*) **bury their** (Revised Version, *own*) **dead** (τοὺς ἑαυτῶν νεκροὺς). The paradox was self-interpreting. Let the spiritually dead have to do with death; dead men belong in a special sense to them. Observe that there was no danger of his father remaining unburied. Christ means that there are times when his service admits of no postponement, however sacred the conflicting duty. His followers must on such occasions be very Nazarites (Numb. vi. 7) or high priests (Lev. xxi. 11). St. Luke adds, "But go thou, and publish abroad the kingdom of God," and adds a third similar case.

Vers. 23—27.—*The storm on the lake.* Parallel passages: Mark iv. 35—41; Luke viii. 22—25. Matthew, as usual, is both shorter and less precise. Nösgen and others see in this an "undesigned coincidence"

with his still being at "the receipt of custom" (ch. ix. 9).

Ver. 23.—**And when he was entered into a ship** (Revised Version, *boat*), **his disciples followed him.** Did St. Matthew see in the very order of embarking a symbol of the Christian life? It may be so, but a more probable reason for mentioning the order is that our Lord was, perhaps, on this occasion not using a boat that belonged to any of the disciples. Passage may have been given to him at his request, and of course the disciples went where he went.

Ver. 24.—**And, behold** (ch. i. 20, note). Perhaps when with Jesus they hardly expected a storm. **There arose a great tempest in the sea.** St. Matthew records only the effect of the sudden rush (λαῖλαψ in the parallel passages) of the wind down the gorges. **Insomuch that the ship** (Revised Version, *boat*) **was covered with the waves.** The waves swept again and again clean over the boat. Slowly but surely the boat was filling (parallel passages). **But he was asleep.** All the time (ἐκάθευδεν). Yet what a contrast to Jonah (i. 5).

Ver. 25.—**And his disciples** (Revised Version, *they*) **came to him** (καὶ προσελθόντες). The insertion of the words, "his disciples," distracts the mind from the fact of their coming. Their skill and their long experience of those waters now failed them. **And awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish** (Κύριε, σῶσον, ἀπολλύμεθα). The last and most emphatic word comes in all the narratives. They had no hope of escape from the death that was already overtaking them except through him.

Ver. 26.—**And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?** (ch. vi. 30, note). The winds and waves were mastering their souls as well as their bodies. **Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea.** *Rebuked* (ἐπετίμησε); cf. Ps. civ. 7. The words spoken are recorded by St. Mark. **And there was a great calm.** Corresponding to the "great tempest" (ver. 24).

Ver. 27.—**But** (Revised Version, *and*) **the men.** Perhaps the disciples ("Sie als Menschen staunen," Nösgen), but probably those to whom the boat belonged (ver. 23, note), the crew. It seems very far-fetched to explain it of all men who heard of the miracle. **Marvelled.** As the multitudes (ch. ix. 33; but contrast ch. xiv. 33). **Saying, What manner of man is this!** (Ποταπός ἐστιν οὗτος;). Parallel passages, "Who then?" (τίς ἄρα;). The term indicates the slightness of their knowledge of his character (probably not his origin, which, according to Phryn. [Wetstein], would be ποδαπός; though it may be doubted whether the distinction can be pressed in Hellenistic Greek). They seem, with Nicodemus, to have recognized that holiness was an essential condition of performing miracles (John iii. 2), but not to have realized that this condition was satisfied in Jesus. **That even the winds and the sea obey him.** "Him," emphatic (αὐτῷ ὑπακούουσιν). The miracle has been seen to be a parable of the security of the ship of the Church since at least the days of Tertullian ('De Bapt.,' § 12). (For the comparison generally of the Church to a ship, compare especially Bishop Lightfoot on Ignatius, 'Polyc.,' § ii.)

Vers. 28—34.—*The Gadarene demoniacs.* Parallel passages: Mark v. 1—20; Luke viii. 26—39, where see full notes. Matthew is much less detailed. Matthew mentions two demoniacs; the parallel passages, one; the reason may be either that one was less fierce than the other, or that only one came from Gerasa (Nösgen). But in our present knowledge of the extent of inspiration, we cannot confidently affirm that the evangelists were kept from errors in numbers, and that the addition of the second demoniac is not due to some misunderstanding, perhaps of the use of the plural in the demoniac's answer in the parallel passage, Mark v. 9 (cf. Weiss, 'Marcus-ev.,' p. 172). (For a similar difficulty, cf. the note on ch. ix. 27—31.) With regard to this mysterious narrative generally, the explanation of its details can be little more than empirical in our present knowledge of psychology and of spiritual influences.

Ver. 28.—**And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes;** Revised Version, *Gadarenes*, which is certainly right here, as is "Gerasenes" in the parallel passages (cf. Westcott and Hort, ii. 'App.'). Gergesa (Textus Receptus here, and Alexandrian authorities in parallel passages) and Gerasa (unless, with Origen on John i. 28, we understand by this the Arabian Gerasa fifty miles away) are probably forms of the same name now represented by *Khersa*, a village discovered (? in 1857) by Thomson ('The Land and the Book,' pp. 375, *sqq.*, edit. 1880) on the eastern side of the lake, and lying "within a few rods of the shore," with "an immense mountain" rising directly above it, "in which are ancient tombs, out of some of which the two men possessed of the devils may have issued to meet Jesus. The lake is so near the base of the mountain that the swine, rushing madly down it, could not stop, but would be hurried on into the water and drowned." To this Origen's

description (*loc. cit.*) corresponds: "Gergesa, to which the Gergesenes belong, is an ancient city by what is now called the Lake of Tiberias, by which is a steep place adjacent to the lake, and down this, as is pointed out, the swine were cast headlong by the demons." Gadara, in some sense the capital of Perræa (Josephus, 'Bell. Jud.,' iv. 7. 3), and one of the towns of the Decapolis confederacy (ch. iv. 25), was some twelve miles distant from *Khersa*, and six miles from the nearest part of the lake, to which, in fact (as the stamp of a ship on its coins shows), its territory extended (cf. Schürer, II. i. p. 100, *sqq.*). St. Matthew describes the locality, not by the little-known village, but by the well-known city of the district, to which (as we may gather from the parallel passage, Mark v. 20) the news of the miracle afterwards spread. But since he leaves the expression, "the city," in vers. 33, 34 as he found it in his sources, *i.e. Khersa*, the result is at first misleading. **There met him** (ὑπήντησαν; *occurrerunt*, Vulgate). St. Matthew (contrast vers. 2, 5, 19) omits the nearer approach recorded in the parallel passages, Mark v. 6 and Luke viii. 28. **Two** (*vide supra*). **Possessed with devils** (ch. iv. 24, note), **coming out of the tombs**; Revised Version, *coming forth out*. The Greek shows that they did not merely come from among the tombs, but actually out of them (cf. the experience of Warburton, as quoted in Trench on this miracle). **Exceeding fierce, so that no man might** (Revised Version, *could*) **pass by that way.** Matthew only. It deepens the contrast to their present behaviour. Perhaps "that way" refers to the Roman road by the side of the lake (cf. Thomson, *op. cit.*, p. 378).

Ver. 29.—**And, behold.** This probably seemed to the evangelist not the least of the many strange things that he introduced by this phrase. **They cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee?** (Τί ἡμῖν καὶ σοί; מה לנו ולך, frequent in the Old Testament, *e.g.* 2 Sam. xvi. 10). What community either of interest or of character? The deepest realization of personal sinfulness may co-exist with absolute ignorance of the Divine love. **Jesus.** Omitted by the Revised Version here, yet genuine in the parallel passages. Matthew omitted from their utterance the name which (ch. i. 21) indicated the bridging of the chasm between the sinner and God. **Thou Son of God?** Their sense of sin, their belief in a future torment, and their use of this phrase, alike point to their being Jews. Observe how great a contrast is implied by this term on the lips of demoniacs. As in 1 John iii. 8 (cf. Bishop Westcott there), it brings out the nature of the conflict ("the spiritual adversary of man has a mightier spiritual antagonist"), so here. **Art thou come hither**—had they felt themselves safe in that distant spot and its gloomy surroundings, far away from all religious influence? —**to torment us before the time?** Their abject terror is still more evident in the parallel passages. Observe (1) the words are not given as those of the demons, but as the men's own; (2) a future torment is assumed; (3) they have no doubt as to their own share in it.

Vers. 30, 31.—**And there was a good way off from them a herd of many swine feeding. So** (*and*, Revised Version) **the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out** (Matthew only), **suffer us to go away** (*send us away*, Revised Version). This is distinguished from ver. 29 as expressly the utterance of the evil spirits. In the true text there is no thought of permission, but only of command (ἀπόστειλον). They recognize his mastery. **Into the herd of swine**; and not into the place of torment—"the abyss" of the parallel passage, Luke viii. 31. If he did not send them there, they might hope for a long respite, and one perhaps spent in various tenements. Further notice: (1) The unclean chose the unclean (2) Though we cannot attribute to the evil spirits absolute foreknowledge of what would happen in this case, their past experience may have enabled them to feel sure that they would have their love of destroying fully gratified. (3) It is also not impossible that they may have considered that their entering the swine would be likely to prejudice the Gerasenes against Jesus.

Vers. 32, 33.—**And he said unto them, Go.** As they asked; for he was not yet come to send them to their final home. He would not employ his inherent Divine power even against the kingdom of Satan, or forcibly disturb the conditions under which evil existed in the world. Notice further: (1) That as regards the right to destroy the swine when they were the property of others, our Lord in no way destroyed them himself, but only did not interfere with the powers of the evil spirits in giving them permission to work out their own purposes. It is possible, too, though far from certain, that the owners of the swine were acting illegally in owning them (though even then our Lord was not constituted as judge, Luke xii. 14); but this supposes first that they were Jews, and secondly that it was illegal for Jews to keep swine, of which suppositions not even the latter can be clearly proved either by Scripture or by early forms of tradition. (2) The destruction of the swine might well be beneficial to the complete recovery of the men. (3) It would fully arouse the Gerasenes, and bring home to them the holiness of the Lord from whom evil spirits fled, and the

call to personal holiness that such a Presence demanded. The result of their being thus aroused lay with themselves (John iii. 19; 2 Cor. ii. 16). (4) It would also prove an important element in attracting the attention both of the neighbouring district (*e.g.* Gadara, ver. 28; cf. parallel passage, Mark v. 20) and of all places to which the news would come. **And when they were come out, they** (Revised Version, *and they came out and*) **went into the herd of** (Revised Version omits "herd of") **swine; and, behold, the whole herd of swine** (Revised Version omits "of swine") **ran violently** (Revised Version, *rushed*; emphatic; in the Greek it follows "behold") **down a steep place** (Revised Version, *down the steep*, κατὰ τοῦ κρημνοῦ); *vide supra*, ver. 28, note. **Into the sea, and perished in the waters. And they that kept them** (*fed them*, Revised Version; οἱ δὲ βόσκοντες). Those whose duty it was to drive the swine from place to place, that they might find food. Observe that the swine were "far" (ver. 30) from Jesus and the demoniacs, so that the swineherds need not have passed near the demoniacs' dwelling. Also they were on the mountain, and the demoniacs dwelt, as it seems, near the road at the bottom (ver. 28, end). **Fled.** Doubtless in terror. **And went their ways; and** *went away* (Revised Version); ἀπελθόντες. "Ways" is in this passage probably the old genitive singular (cf. 'Bible Word-Book,' *s.v.*). **Into the city.** *Khersa* (ver. 28, note). The addition in the parallel passages of "and in the country (ἀπήγγειλαν εἰς τὴν πόλιν καὶ εἰς τοὺς ἀγρούς)" seems to primarily refer to the news being carried also to those men of the city who were at their daily labour outside it. **And told everything, and what was befallen to the possessed of the devils;** Revised Version, *them that were possessed with devils.* Matthew repeats the plural (ver. 28, note). Observe: business first, philanthropy second.

Ver. 34.—**And, behold.** The third of the stages (vers. 29, 32) in this incident that were apparent to all. **The whole city;** *i.e. Khersa*, from the parallel passages (ver. 28, note); *all the city* (Revised Version, though a similar phrase is not altered in ver. 32); πᾶσα ἡ πόλις. Not really less comprehensive, but giving a less vivid representation of one united body than ὅλη ἡ πόλις (Mark i. 33, and especially Luke viii. 39); cf. ch. iv. 23, 24, ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ Γαλιλαίᾳ, εἰς ὅλην τὴν Συρίαν. **Came out to meet Jesus** (εἰς ὑπάντησιν τῷ [Westcott and Hort margin, τοῦ] Ἰησοῦ). A distance of half a mile or so would satisfy the expression. The true reading, ὑπάντησιν (also ch. xxv. 1; John xii. 13), would seem to suggest the closest proximity (cf. Bishop Lightfoot on ὑπεναντίος, Col. ii. 14), while ἀπάντησιν (ch. xxv. 6; Acts xxviii. 15; 1 Thess. iv. 17) connotes a contrast to the place left. Συνάντησιν, again (Textus Receptus here, and John xii. 13, D, *al.*), emphasizes the thought of companionship. **And when they saw him, they besought him that he would depart out of their coasts;** *from their borders* (Revised Version). These Gerasenes, vexed at the loss of wealth, felt, like the demoniacs, that there was nothing in common between themselves and Jesus, but, unlike them, showed no consciousness of sin. Without this he could do nothing for them, so he granted their request (ch. ix. 1). St. Peter also once bade Jesus depart (Luke v. 8), but his reason, "for I am a sinful man, O Lord," showed a heartfelt desire after the deepest union with him. With the ungranted request of the man to remain with Jesus, and his subsequent preaching to these Gerasenes and others (parallel passages), St. Matthew does not concern himself.

## HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—4.—*Departure from the mount of the Beatitudes.* I. THE MULTITUDES. 1. *They followed him.* The Lord came down from the mount; the great sermon was ended. The attraction of his presence continued; great multitudes followed him. He had taught them as One having authority; there was a strange, startling originality about his teaching; it was totally unlike anything that they had ever heard before. It appealed to their hearts; it seemed to fill a want of which they had been more or less conscious; it satisfied the cravings of their souls. And so they followed him, anxious to hear more from his lips, to see more of his life, to know more of himself. There was a difference of character, a variety of motives; some were more deeply impressed than others, some were more persevering in their attachment to Christ than others were. But they all followed him. 2. *It is an example to us.* We have all heard his words, we have read them in the Scriptures; we have heard his voice, if we are his indeed, speaking to us in the depths of our heart. We must not forget what we have read and heard; we must not allow our interest in his holy teaching to die away; we must follow him. He confirmed his Word with signs following. He manifested forth his

glory by his miracles. He does so still. If we follow him with persevering steadfastness, we shall see that he still worketh miracles of grace. His blood cleanseth from all sin; he heals the dying soul; he casts out the evil spirit; he calms the tempest of distracting doubts and anxious fears; he is mightier than all the hosts of the wicked one.

II. THE LEPER. 1. *His prayer.* He was in great misery, full of leprosy. He felt the fatal power of that terrible disease; it was disfiguring his person with a loathsome deformity, eating out the very life; it was separating him from the society of men; he was unclean, avoided by his nearest relatives; he was cut off from all that could give him consolation; nothing remained for him but death—a slow, lingering death. Its hand was upon him now; there was no help in man. But he heard of the Lord Jesus; perhaps he had hovered on the outskirts of the crowd, listening to the Saviour's words in the distance; perhaps he had been told of the wonders which he had already wrought. He had not yet healed a leper. Leprosy was regarded as a visitation, a stroke, from the hand of God. "Am I God," said the King of Israel (2 Kings v. 7), "to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy?" It was God who sent it; it was God alone who could remove it. But, in spite of this fixed belief of the Jews, the leper had faith in the Lord Jesus; there was something about him, something in his look, manner, words, which told of the heaven whence he came. The leper doubted not; he came, he kneeled down, he fell on his face, he worshipped him, and said in words so striking that they have been recorded by the three evangelists, notwithstanding various differences of detail in the narration of the miracle, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." He was conscious of unworthiness; perhaps he knew that sin had brought this misery upon him. He dared not presume upon the mercy of the Lord. He felt his own degradation; he knew not whether Christ would be willing to help one so unworthy, so guilty; but he had no doubt of his power. As he came to Christ, so we must come. He came with reverence; he kneeled down. Humble reverence, reverence in gesture and in heart, becomes us sinful men when we draw near to the Most Holy One. He came with intense earnestness of supplication; his felt his misery, his danger. So must we come if we would be saved from the leprosy of sin; we must feel our guilt, our awful danger, the greatness of our need; we must come with strong desire, hungering and thirsting for forgiveness, longing to be made clean from the defilement of our sin. And we must come in full assurance of faith, confessiug our unworthiness of the Saviour's mercy, but doubting not his love and power. 2. *The Lord's answer.* He "put forth his hand, and touched him." He feared not the danger of Levitical defilement; his perfect holiness cleansed all who came to him in faith, whom he deigned to touch with that gracious purifying hand. He spoke the word of power, "I will; be thou clean." As he taught with authority, so he heals with authority. It is his act; he heals in his own Name, by his own authority. "His touch hath still its ancient power;" his blood cleanseth from all sin; still he speaks that gracious word, "I will." He was moved with compassion then; he is the same compassionate Redeemer now; he is ready, willing, to cleanse us. There is no lack of power or of love in him; the fault is in ourselves. Only let us come with the faith, the earnest longing, the reverent prayer of the leper, and we shall hear that gracious "I will," and the leprosy of sin will depart before the saving touch of the Lord. 3. *The Lord's direction.* The leper was cleansed, but he must show himself to the priest; he must go to the temple and offer the appointed gift. He was to tell no man till he had gone to Jerusalem. Silence was best, perhaps, for himself; the Lord knew his spiritual condition; it was best, perhaps, for the success of the Lord's ministry. He was to go to the temple to give thanks to God in the sanctuary for his wonderful recovery; he was to observe the ordinances of the Mosaic ritual, and to show his gratitude by his offerings. So should we do when God has been merciful to us; we should give thanks in the church; we should bring our thank-offerings to Almighty God.

LESSONS. 1. It is not enough to have heard Christ once; follow him; we need him always, all our life. 2. Sin is a loathsome, fatal sickness; only One can heal, the Lord Jesus Christ. 3. Come to him; doubt him not; he is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

Vers. 5—17.—*Miracles at Capernaum.* I. HEALING OF THE CENTURION'S SERVANT.

1. *The centurion.* He was a soldier and a Gentile; he had been brought up in heathenism, and had lived among the temptations inseparable from a military life. His example and that of Cornelius show us that there were devout men among Gentile soldiers, as there are many good Christian men among soldiers now. Temptations may be great, but the grace of God is greater; we can serve him acceptably in any lawful calling. This centurion had seen the vanity of heathenism; he felt drawn towards God's ancient people; he loved the nation, and had himself built the synagogue at Capernaum—perhaps that of which the white marble ruins may still be seen at *Tell Hûm.* (1) His *humility.* He showed a singular humility, a grace hardly to be expected in a Gentile soldier; he recognized the dignity of Jesus, he felt his own unworthiness. He sent the elders of the Jews, St. Luke tells us in his longer narrative, as if he felt that he was not worthy even to draw near to the great Teacher. Again he sent friends. At last in his anxiety he came himself, still owning his unworthiness: "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof." Many say unto him, "Lord, Lord," of whom he will say in the last day, "I never knew you." He knows with the knowledge of Divine love and mercy all who come to him as this centurion came, in humility, in faith and love. "He that abaseth himself shall be exalted." The centurion thought himself unworthy of the Saviour's presence in his house; the Lord deigned (we may gather from the sacred narrative) to mark him for his own, to enter into his heart, and to abide evermore with him. More than once he accepted the invitations of Pharisees; he entered into their houses, and sat down with them; but that outward presence, great honour though it was, was nothing compared with the grace granted to the humble centurion. (2) His faith. Like the leper, he believed that Christ had power to heal; but his faith was more spiritual, in that he recognized the Lord's independence of any outward means as the channels of his saving power. There was no need, he felt, of the outstretched hand, the healing touch; no need of the Lord's bodily presence; the will was enough; the word of power, spoken at a distance, would heal his servant. He himself, he said, was a man under authority, a subaltern; yet he was obeyed by his soldiers, by his servant. The Lord, he felt, was very great and high and holy; the disease would pass away at his word; demons would flee at his command; angels would do his bidding; his simple word was all that was needed. It was wonderful faith indeed, at that time, and in a Gentile soldier. That centurion is a model for us. We need a faith like his, simple, spiritual, undoubting: Such a faith can remove mountains. (3) His charity. He cared for his slave. It was a rare thing in those days. A slave was treated just as a piece of property—a "living tool," in the words of Aristotle; he was scarcely regarded as a man, and received just so much attention as was sufficient to enable him to perform his work. This centurion was a good master; his servant had returned his kindness with ready obedience; he was dear to him. It is an example of the relations that ought to exist between a master and his servants. Again, although a Gentile, he had shown his love for the people of God and his reverence for the God of Israel by building at his own expense a house for the worship of God. He had won the affection of his Hebrew neighbours; they undertook to plead for him; they besought Christ earnestly (St. Luke says), saying, "He is worthy that thou shouldest do this for him." They thought him worthy; he felt his own unworthiness. His example shows us how a loving heart conciliates the love of others; it shows with what prevailing power the prayer of humility, faith, and love pleads with the great King. 2. *The Lord's answer to prayer.* Again the gracious "I will:" "I will come and heal him." The Lord will not work miracles to display his power or to satisfy curiosity; but the answer to faithful prayer is ever the same, "I will." It is full of gracious encouragement to those who come to Christ in earnest supplication, whether for themselves or for others. 3. *The Lord's wonder.* It seems strange that he should wonder to whom nothing was wonderful; for all things were made by him, and all the depths of the human heart were known to him. But he was man as well as God; he increased in wisdom, he wept, he rejoiced in spirit; once he "looked round about him with anger." The mystery of the union of the human and the Divine in the Person of Christ is one of the deepest of all mysteries. "He marvelled." It can scarcely be, as some have said, that his admiration was merely intended to teach us what we ought to admire; such an explanation seems to introduce an element of unreality into the conduct of him who is

the Truth. "He marvelled." We must accept the fact as belonging to the truth of the Lord's human nature, while we learn of him to admire above all things humility and charity and trustful faith. 4. *His prophecy of the gathering in of the Gentiles.* This centurion was probably the first Gentile, except the Wise Men from the East, who had sought the presence of the Lord. The Lord contrasts his great faith with the unbelief which, he knew, would be prevalent in Israel. He saw in the clearness of his foreknowledge the Gentiles flocking into the Christian Church. The Jews would not eat with men uncircumcised (Acts xi. 3), but in the kingdom of heaven a great multitude from the east and from the west, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, would sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob at the marriage-supper of the Lamb. But side by side with this bright prospect came a sorrowful foreboding; the children of the kingdom would be cast out; Israelites, who were heirs of the promises, but had forfeited their inheritance by disobedience and unbelief, would, alas! find no place but the great outer darkness, where are weeping and gnashing of teeth. These are stern words, but it is the sternness of love. The Lord Jesus Christ, the most compassionate One, does not hide from us the awful doom of the disobedient. He warns us that outward privileges, whether those of the Jewish or those of the Christian Church, will not save us in themselves. There is need of faith, humble, trustful, loving faith; without that, ordinances, sacraments, means of grace however precious, will not avail to the saving of the soul. The children of the kingdom will be cast out, if they are only in the outward kingdom, and have not the kingdom of grace within their souls. 5. *The promise to the centurion.* "As thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee." His faith brought him nearer to God than unbelieving Israel. At Nazareth, his own city, the Lord found very little faith. He marvelled at the unbelief of the Nazarenes (Mark vi. 6), as he marvelled at the faith of this centurion. He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief. He healed at once the servant of the centurion. Faith is better than privileges. Faith saves the Gentile; privileges cannot save the Israelite. We mark the prevailing power of faith; we mark the value of intercessory prayer. "His servant was healed in the selfsame hour." Let us pray, "Lord, increase our faith." Let us learn to pray for others, for the sick and suffering, for the ignorant, for all Christian people, for all mankind.

II. HEALING OF PETER'S WIFE'S MOTHER. 1. *Her illness.* She was sick of a fever, very ill; she lay helpless on her bed. The Lord entered into the house; it was his home when he sojourned at Capernaum. Doubtless it was a holy household—St. Peter, his wife, and her mother. The Lord was welcomed there; he was an honoured member of the family circle. That family is blessed where Christ dwells, where husband and wife, united in holy wedlock, are united also in the love of Christ. Such families are not exempt from sorrow and suffering, but Christ's presence softens the sorrow. There was sorrow now in that humble home. They told the Lord, as we should tell him in prayer, of all our troubles; they besought him for the sick woman (she could not, it seems, pray for herself), as we should commend our suffering friends to his mercy. 2. *Her recovery.* The Lord felt for his afflicted friends; he listened to the voice of their prayer. He touched her hand, he rebuked the fever, he lifted her up. Immediately the fever left her. The Lord listens to his people's voice; he always answers prayer. Not always as we wish; he knows, we do not know, whether a longer life or an early death is best for ourselves or for our friends. We must ever add to our prayers the utterance of faith, "Thy will be done." "He doeth all things well." 3. *Her gratitude.* She arose at once; she ministered to Christ and his apostles; she attended to their wants. So should we work for Christ. Every blessing received, every prayer answered, should lead us to give ourselves more entirely to his service, to minister to him by ministering to his poor, to give freely and generously for the work of his Church.

III. MANY MIRACULOUS CURES. 1. *The sick brought to Christ.* There was great excitement at Capernaum. But (we gather from the other evangelists, who relate the last miracle in a different connection) it was the sabbath day. They might not carry burdens, they might not walk beyond the traditional two thousand paces; but when the even was come, and the sabbath rest was over, the enthusiasm of the people was not to be restrained. All the city was gathered together at the door of Peter's humble dwelling. All the sick of Capernaum and the surrounding district were brought to the great Physician. A strange, confused mass of helpless suffering, of

bodily agony, of that worst of all afflictions, the demoniacal possession, which was characteristic of those sad despairing times, lay before the door in the sight of Jesus. The sight of suffering always touched the Lord's compassionate heart; he moved among them in his gracious mercy; he laid his hands on every one of them; he healed them all. We must trust our sick to his mercy; we must ourselves care for the sick and suffering, for so did Jesus Christ. 2. *The fulfilment of prophecy.* "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." He was never sick (as far as we know) during his earthly life; but his compassion, in the full etymological meaning of the word, was complete and perfect. He was "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." He felt the anguish of others as if it were his own; he made it his own; he took it, he bore it, he relieved it. He sighed when he healed the deaf-mute; he wept with those that wept. He was indeed "a Man of sorrows;" he suffered himself intense agony of body and soul; he sorrowed for the sins of those whom he loved so dearly, whom he came to save, and he sorrowed for the sorrows of others; his entire unselfishness, his perfect love, enabled him to feel for the sufferings of others as we sinful men cannot feel. He feels for us now. We may come to him in our troubles; we may open our griefs to him. He will listen; his sympathy will sweeten the bitter cup; it will give real and precious comfort; it will drive out the evil spirit of despondency and selfish repining; it will bring peace, the blessed peace of God.

LESSONS. 1. Be humble: "God giveth grace to the humble." 2. Have faith in God: "As thou hast believed, so be it done to thee." 3. Follow after charity: "Blessed are the merciful." 4. The Christian family should be hallowed by the presence of the Saviour: he brings peace; he comforts in sickness and sorrow; he blesses those whom he sanctifies.

VERS. 18—27.—*The departure from Capernaum.* I. ITS ATTENDING CIRCUMSTANCES. 1. *The multitudes.* The Lord departs from them. It was not so when he saw the multitudes at the mount of the Beatitudes. He taught them then; now he departs. The enthusiasm and excitement had become very great; all the city was gathered together in wondering expectation. Perhaps they were wishing, like the five thousand after the miraculous feast, to take him by force to make him a King. He was a King, indeed, but his kingdom was not of this world; he would not use earthly means for the accomplishment of the Divine purpose; he would not avail himself of Jewish enthusiasm, the fanaticism of an excited multitude. The kingdom would come, but it must come in God's appointed way—through patient teaching and working; through a life of holy self-denial and perfect obedience; through a death of Divine self-sacrifice. The cross was to draw all men unto him; the cross was to give him the empire over human hearts. He had no yearning for popularity, no delight in the applause of crowds. He left them. "He gave commandment to depart unto the other side." 2. *The proposal of the scribe.* A teacher himself, he addressed Christ as Teacher. He was struck with our Lord's power and wisdom; he had witnessed his miracles and heard his teaching. The Lord was about to depart from Capernaum, to leave the thronging and excited multitude. This one scribe wished to follow him; he was ready, he said, to go anywhere that he might be with Christ. The wish seemed good and holy, but the Lord did not encourage him in his purpose. Perhaps he was acting from a sudden impulse, carried away by the surrounding excitement. The Lord could see his heart; it was not the heart of an apostle. He was ready to follow Christ now, in the season of his popularity; but would he persevere in danger, in persecution, and in hardships? The Lord does not hide the self-denials of the Christian life. At all times there is the strait path and the narrow way; at that time there was danger and self-chosen poverty. He himself, the Messiah of whom Daniel had prophesied; who, though the Son of God from all eternity, had become in time the Son of man, had no settled dwelling, no home of his own. His disciples must be as their Master. Would the scribe follow him now? We are not told; probably we should have been told had he persevered. 3. *The excuse of the disciple.* The scribe, unbidden, had offered to follow Christ. The Lord had first called this disciple. "Follow me," he had said, if the similar narrative in St. Luke, placed much later in the history, refers to the same incident. The disciple hesitated; he had a pressing home duty. His father was dead; he must, he thought, attend the funeral. (1) But the Lord had other work for him—

work that required his immediate attention. He must go and preach the kingdom of God, for Christ had called him. To bury the dead is an act of Christian charity: "Honour thy father and thy mother," is one of the commandments of God. But there are still higher duties: "Seek first the kingdom of God;" "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart." And in the presence of that higher duty the calls of human affection must sometimes be disregarded, though it be at the cost of a sharp struggle. The Lord had called this disciple. There was no room for doubt; the Lord knew where his duty lay. We may not leave our family duties unless there be a clear and distinct call to other work; in this case there was plainly such a call. (2) And there were others who could perform the last offices for the dead; others whom Christ had not called to preach the gospel. "Let the dead bury their dead," the Lord said. They were spiritually dead; they had no spiritual life; they felt no call to spiritual work. They might attend to the funeral, and leave the disciple free to work for Christ. Perhaps, too, it was dangerous for him to return home; his relations, who were dead in sin, might draw him from the life of Christ. (3) Again the Lord teaches in these words that the press of seeming duties may sometimes distract the heart. The first duty of the awakened soul is to follow Christ, to cling to him, to be always with him. Sometimes when we are immersed in business, or even in what seems to be religious work, we are tempted to lose our own hold on Christ. Then his voice sounds in our ears, "Follow me." Everything must be subordinated to that holiest call, that one highest duty. No amount of outward work, no labour, however arduous and self-denying, will compensate us for the loss or weakening of our own spiritual life; and that spiritual life can be maintained only by walking close with Christ. "Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead." "Cling to Christ," the Lord says to the Christian soul; leave worldly cares to the worldly minded. The life of the worldly is a continual burying of their dead—dead hopes, dead joys. The Christian hath a life that dieth not—the life that is hid with Christ in God.

II. THE CROSSING OF THE LAKE. 1. *The tempest.* The Lord and his disciples entered a boat, seeking perhaps quiet and retirement. Suddenly a violent storm swept down upon the lake; the boat was covered with the dashing billows—it was rapidly filling; the danger was great; the disciples, hardy sailors as they were, were terrified. But the Saviour slept. The Church of Christ seems often in exceeding peril amid the chances and changes of this mortal life; dangers arise, when least expected, in the midst of calm and prosperity. Christ's people are fearful; their faith fails them. But he is in the ship, though he may seem asleep. And the ship that bears the Saviour of the world, the Church that hath the presence of the Lord, may be tempest-tossed, grievously vexed, driven hither and thither by the raging billows, but it cannot be lost, it cannot sink; it must at last reach the blessed haven—the haven where we would be. 2. *The prayer of the disciples.* (1) The Lord slept—a calm, majestic repose amid the wild tumult of the storm. "So he giveth his beloved sleep." He who slept in the raging tempest gives rest to the harassed soul. "Come unto me," he saith, in those sweetest words of loving invitation, "all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." They find rest unto their souls who seek rest in Christ. This life is full of unrest, full of anxieties, full of disappointments and perplexities; but there is rest for all who seek it in the bosom of the Lord. The outward life may seem full of care and trouble, but within the Christian heart there is peace; the soul that hath found Christ resteth in the Lord. (2) The terrified disciples awoke him. Their faith was weak, but it was real; they trusted in his power and love. Their cry was not like that of the shipmaster who awoke Jonah from his sleep: "What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not." The disciples asked not Christ for his prayers; they asked for more. He could do more than pray; they felt that. They knew not what he would do. Probably they did not realize the fulness of his power and majesty. But they had trust in him—like the trust which children have in the presence of their parents when the lightning flashes and the thunder rolls; and, like children, they were not satisfied with the mere presence of the sleeping Lord; they woke him, that he might know their danger and their terror. "Lord, save us!" they said: "we perish!" It was the "Hosanna!" the cry so often lifted up in praise, now used in its literal meaning. "Save us, we pray!" 3. *The miracle.* The Lord heard not

the noise of the storm; he heard the cry for help. He hears his people always when they call upon him out of the depths, in the hour of darkness, in terror or in agony. The cry, "Lord, save us!" never goes up in vain when it is uttered in earnest supplication. He is with his chosen when they pass through the waters of affliction, when they are in the fires of anguish, his presence bringeth calm. He gently reproved the disciples, "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" They should not fear who have the grace of Christ's presence; they should have faith in his power and love. He rebuked the winds and the sea. He stills the tempest now; he brings us safe through the storm of adversity; he stills the tempest in our hearts. "Peace, be still!" he says; and there is a great calm, where once there were harrowing doubts, distracting perplexities, anxious cares. "What manner of man is this?" All things obey him: the storms of nature and the storms of the restless heart. "What manner of man is this?" The Man of sorrows; the Word made flesh; the Son of God, "who loved me, and gave himself for me."

LESSONS. 1. Christ's servants must not seek popularity; it is a snare and a temptation. 2. Christ was poor; his servants must be contented. 3. Those whom he calls must follow him; no earthly ties must separate them from him. 4. Trust him in danger and distress. He heareth his people's cry; he giveth peace.

Vers. 28—34.—*The country of the Gergesenes.* I. THE DEMONIACS. 1. *Their description.* There were two—one fiercer, more violent, than the other. Satan's power has been broken; the incarnation of the Son of God, the atonement made upon the cross, has weakened his hold upon men. "I beheld Satan like lightning fall from heaven." The times were very evil when the Saviour came. Satan was the prince of this world, the ruler of this world's darkness. His power is still very terrible, but it is not what it was; he has not now the dominion which he once exercised over human spirits. Probably there are cases of demoniac possession still, but they are comparatively few. The characteristic of this possession, as distinguished from that wickedness which is another form of the devil's power over souls, seems to be a divided will. The unhappy demoniac felt that there was another will, a will not his own, ruling over him, driving him into frenzy. 2. *Their conduct.* The one demoniac mentioned by St. Mark and St. Luke came running to Christ. He fell down before him and worshipped him. He came as the sorrowing and afflicted came to Christ. They sought relief from their troubles; he longed to be delivered from the awful beings which tyrannized over his soul. He was not wholly evil—not like those who hate the light, neither come to the light. There were men more wicked than he, men possessed with devils in another sense, who had yielded up their wills to the evil one, who would not come to Christ that they might have life. This man came, drawn to Christ by the sense of his own misery, by the attraction of the Saviour's love. But there was a strange power that ruled over him; there was another voice, not his own, but so strangely blended with his being that it seemed his voice. And that voice cried, "What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" There were two conflicting wills in him; the one sought Christ, the other was separated from Christ by an impassable barrier; the one hoped for mercy, the other looked only for torment. The devils had no part in Christ, nothing in common with him; there was an intense antagonism between them and the holy Son of God. The poor man, amid all the horrors of his miserable condition, felt that his one hope was in Christ. Christ might save him, only Christ could save him, from the horrible tyranny that oppressed his soul. The power of the devil is broken, but he still goeth about like a roaring lion; still there is a conflict in the heart of man; "the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other." The devil tempts us through the lusts of the flesh. He is strong and we are weak; but Christ is stronger than he. If we come to Christ in earnest prayer, he will cast out the devil; God giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. The devils recognized the power of Christ; they knew their own impending doom: "Art thou come to torment us before the time?" Christ must reign; all things must be put under him. Satan must be cast into the abyss, the bottomless pit; the kingdom of darkness must give way to the kingdom of light. "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

II. THE DEVILS. 1. *Their request.* The Lord had said, "Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit." They felt his power; they must obey. But they lingered. If they could no longer torment the men who had been so long their victims, they would, if possible, torment other creatures; the lower, if they were driven from the higher; unclean beasts, if the heart of man was to be cleansed from their defiling presence. And there seems to have been another strange, mysterious reason for their entreaty. They must be cast into the abyss if they could not harass men or animals with their cruel presence. 2. *The Lord's permission.* He utters one word of command, simple in its majesty—"Go." They must obey him now. They were left free to enter into the swine if so they pleased. We know not why; we know not why they had been allowed to torment the two poor men; we are very ignorant of the whole subject. The personality and power of Satan, the very existence of evil, involve dark mysteries into which we cannot penetrate, difficulties with which we cannot grapple. (1) The poor men were saved from their tormentors; the departure of the evil spirits was manifested to the sight of men. Perhaps the strange wild rush of the maddened swine into the waters of the lake helped the men to realize their deliverance—it may have made that deliverance easier; and men are of more value than many swine. (2) Sometimes the wicked obtain their evil desires; it turns to their destruction. Satan was allowed to harass the holy Job; Satan was confounded. Job was more blessed in his latter end than at the beginning. The devils were permitted to enter into the swine; it led, apparently, to that which they feared—to the abyss.

III. THE EFFECTS OF THE MIRACLE. 1. *Upon the keepers of the swine.* They fled. They were frightened by the power of our Lord, not touched by his goodness. They had seen it all, but they were simply terrified. Terror does not save the soul; men fear death, they fear the judgment, they fear the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched. But this mere terror is only selfish; it has nothing really religious in it. Sometimes, by God's grace and mercy, it is made the means of drawing men to Christ. But it is love that saves, and not fear; the love of Christ, not the fear of hell. 2. *Upon the inhabitants.* They listened to the strange story of the keepers of the swine; they came; they saw the man who had been in such grievous bondage, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind. He was their fellow-creature, perhaps their countryman. He was saved, but the swine were lost. And, alas! they thought more of the swine than of their fellow-citizen; more of their loss than of their own souls. If they were Jews, they had broken the commandment in keeping these unclean animals; but they did not recognize the loss as a punishment—their heart was not softened. The whole city came out to meet Jesus. They all saw the gracious face of the Redeemer; they knew his power and love. But, alas! "they besought him that he would depart out of their coasts." He took them at their word. He departed; they saw him no more. Let us learn to hate selfishness; let us value, above all things, the glimpses of the Saviour's presence which he from time to time vouchsafes. And, oh! let us shrink from the awful danger of driving him from our hearts by worldliness and selfish greed.

LESSONS. 1. The devil is a cruel master: pray to be saved from his power. 2. The demoniacs came to Christ; the keepers of the swine fled from him. Oh that we learn to come and never leave him! 3. How awful to drive Christ away for the sake of worldly gain! Rather let us, like St. Paul, count all things else as dross, that we may win Christ.

## HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 1—4.—*The leper.* This incident follows immediately after the sermon on the mount. It is questionable whether any of the great words of that discourse reached the leper, who could only have stood beyond the outermost ring of the crowd. But though at first he was quite shut away from Christ, his opportunity came while our Lord was coming down the hill; then he could claim the beggar's privilege and stand by the wayside. Jesus speaks to multitudes, but he cares for individuals. He is not so taken up with the crowd as to have no time for special needs. Thus the gospel story repeatedly records the transition from public utterance to private kindness. These more private scenes best reveal to us the heart of Jesus. Let us look at the story of

the leper, first as it regards the sufferer, and then as it concerns the action of the great Healer.

I. THE BEHAVIOUR OF THE POOR SUFFERER. 1. *His condition.* A leper. His disease was loathsome, and his state of life pitiable in the extreme. An outcast from society, shunned as an unclean person, regarded as hopelessly afflicted, he was an object of perfect misery. The leper has always been regarded as typical of the sinner in his uncleanness, shame, and misery. 2. *His action.* He came to Christ. Why? Doubtless he had heard of previous cures (ch. iv. 24). But the very look of Jesus would be enough to draw him to the feet of the Friend of the miserable. Never had he seen such sympathy and kindness. We need to know something of Christ to be drawn to him. When we do perceive his grace, we must come to him if we would have his salvation. 3. *His reverence.* He worshipped. We cannot suppose that he perceived the full Divinity shining through the garb of simple humanity. Yet it may be that he saw more of it than any one else, for it is most revealed in compassion. But if he only bowed as an act of homage to a great one, this showed reverence—a fitting accompaniment of faith in Christ. 4. *His words.* He begged for cleansing, not for money. He knew his need, and he sought for the one thing most essential. He showed faith in the power of Christ; he only prayed for Christ's willinghood. Both are needed for salvation.

II. THE RESPONSE OF THE GREAT HEALER. 1. *His brotherly touch.* This is one of those single actions that send a flash of light into the nature of Christ. No one else would defile himself by touching a leper. The sufferer did not expect such an act of condescension, and Jesus had to "stretch forth" his hand to reach him. Here is Christ's unlimited brotherhood. If there is danger of contagion he will not think of it. Christ heals through personal contact, through gracious brotherhood. 2. *His consenting words.* (1) The word of grace: "I will." Then the two conditions are fulfilled. The father of the lunatic boy doubted the other condition—the power (Mark ix. 22). But both are present with Christ. (2) The word of power: "Be thou made clean." His language to the leper is typical of his message to the sinner. He saves by cleansing. 3. *His perfect healing.* There is no delay, there is no slow process. Immediately the cure is complete. Thus Christ is perfectly successful. His works prove his claims. He is able to save unto the uttermost—lepers in body, lepers in soul. 4. *His final directions.* (1) Silence. Perhaps from natural modesty. He was not like the Pharisees who trumpeted their alms. He would not let his left hand know what his right hand did. (2) Obedience to the Law. This was not yet superseded. The leper lived under the Law. The priest would give the man a certificate. The offering would be a sign of gratitude.—W. F. A.

Vers. 5—13.—*A soldier's faith.* We pass at once from the miserable leper to the Roman officer. Both have faith in Christ, and in their faith they possess much in common. Yet the centurion has interesting traits of his own. Faith takes different forms according to the character and habit of mind of those in whom it shows itself. Something special is revealed in this soldier's faith.

I. IT IS INSPIRED BY KINDNESS OF HEART. The centurion seeks no favour for himself. He is troubled about his valet, his "boy." The distress of the poor lad so touches the master's heart that he goes out to seek for the Healer. We may have faith for the sake of others as well as for our own benefit. Kindness is a good preparation for faith. Selfishness is often cynical, and cynicism is always sceptical. We may learn faith in the school of love. As we feel kindly to others we shall discover how to trust in Christ, for we shall thus come to understand Christ by sharing the spirit that is in him.

II. IT IS TRIED BY HUMILITY. Christ belonged to the despised race of the subject Jews; the centurion was an officer in the proud army of the imperial government. It was difficult for a Roman not to despise a Jew. There must have been something very fine in the nature of this man to allow of his having emancipated himself from the prejudices of his caste, so as to be able to perceive the greatness of Christ and to feel lowly and humble by the side of him. A low estimate of one's self helps one to look up to the greatness of Christ; at the same time, it tries faith by creating a sense of utter unworthiness.

III. IT IS ENLIGHTENED BY EXPERIENCE. The centurion knew power. He exercised it on those beneath him; he felt it from those above him. The whole of the iron structure of the Roman empire was knit together by means of authority and absolute obedience. In this stern school the centurion had learnt lessons that enabled him to believe in the irresistible power of Christ's word of command. We can best understand religion if we interpret it in terms of our own experience. It will then take different forms from those of established usage. But it will not suffer on that account. On the contrary, it will become wonderfully fresh and vivid.

IV. IT IS LED TO SEE RIGHTFUL POWER. This is the special advantage of a Roman training. The Jew would look for legal fitness, the Greek for truth and beauty, the Roman for authority. Thus the man trained in the discipline of an imperial army is able to interpret to us an aspect of the character and life of our Lord which but for him we might have missed. It is important to recognize the authority of Christ, his command over nature, his power over man. He saves by his strong arm.

V. IT IS REWARDED WITH ADMIRING RECOGNITION. Here is a man of heathen birth showing greater faith than Jews possess. The New Testament always gives us favourable portraits of Roman centurions, and thus lets us see that there was good in the Gentile world. Christ was the first to recognize this. No eye was so keen for goodness in unexpected quarters as his. He is no respecter of persons. He is generous to recognize all hopeful signs. And when he recognizes them he responds. The lad is healed by a word from a distance—a most exceptional action. But the centurion's faith is exceptional, and the Divine blessing is always according to our faith.—W. F. A.

Vers. 14, 15.—*A domestic scene.* The long day is nearly over. The great sermon has been preached, the healings by the way have been accomplished; at last Jesus has come home to rest for the night with one of his friends. But even now his ministry cannot cease. Wherever he goes he sees human need; whenever he sees human need he is ready to put forth power to help.

I. THERE IS TROUBLE IN THE HOME. Pain and sorrow are not shut out when the darkness of night is excluded and the door is closed on the tempest. Though there be no trouble in the streets, the bird of evil omen may brood in the very centre of the family. All may be well with the state, yet the household may be distracted with misery. The great Atlantic steamer is sailing safely on her voyage, but sick women and crying children down below have a wretchedness of their own that is never chronicled in the captain's log-book. How many homes of beauty and comfort are just dens of misery! how many more are haunts of anxiety!

II. THE FRIENDS OF CHRIST ARE IN TROUBLE. Peter is one of the best friends of Jesus—one of his newly chosen disciples. Yet a near relative of Peter's is found to be seriously ill. The service of Christ does not insure us against the invasion of trouble. Christian families do not escape the epidemic that brings distress to the homes of the godless. The Church of Christ is not a Goshen which the angel of pestilence avoids. If the laws of health are broken in a Christian household, that household has no bill of indemnity to save it from the consequences of its mistake. While Peter lived by the low swamps of Gennesareth, a place to invite fever, it was natural that fever should appear in his house.

III. CHRIST ENTERS THE HOME. He is not like John the Baptist, dwelling alone in the wilderness. He lives with his friends. He loves home-life. Though now unseen because our "eyes are holden," he still visits homes. We pray for his presence in the Church, and we hope to meet him in our public worship. But his habits on earth show us that he is quite as ready to be found in the family. The family is the social unit. Society will be out of joint unless the family is consecrated by the presence of Christ. Let us always think of him as One at our table, sharing our domestic life.

IV. CHRIST'S PRESENCE BRINGS HEALTH. He was not invited into Peter's house for the purpose of curing the sick woman. Peter knew nothing of the trouble. The fever, as is often the case in tropical climates, may have seized the poor woman without a moment's notice. Christ was invited for his own sake, that he might partake of refreshment and rest awhile. But the most unselfish serving of Christ will receive back unsought and unexpected blessings. Where Christ is present, he is ready to help. He saw, he touched, he healed. According to St. Mark, some told Jesus of the distressful

condition of his hostess's mother (Mark i. 30). Then Jesus went to see her for himself. He is not unobservant of suffering, and for him to see is to help.

V. BLESSINGS FROM CHRIST LEAD TO THE SERVICE OF CHRIST. The sick woman is perfectly cured. She does not suffer from the languor that usually follows fever. Feeling well, she immediately sets about her daily work. Plainly she is a most sensible woman. It is worth while to cure such a practical person. The end of salvation is service. Each may best serve Christ in the way of his or her own capacities. The grace of Christ is not to lift us above doing the homeliest duties, but to fit us for them. —W. F. A.

Vers. 16, 17.—*The sympathy of Christ.* He has finished a long day's work, and has gone into the house for rest. Even there he finds work to do, and he heals Peter's wife's mother. Meanwhile a crowd is collecting at the door. They have brought their sick from all quarters, and Jesus cannot let them come in vain. Tired as he is, he goes forth to them and heals them all. So touching a proof at once of the people's need and of Christ's sympathetic help leads the evangelist to see a fulfilment of the ancient prophecy of the "Servant of the Lord." Here the sympathy of Christ is revealed to us.

I. SYMPATHY IS THE MOTIVE OF CHRIST'S LIFE-WORK. It was sympathy that led him to take up the great task of saving the world. Sympathy is also apparent in the details of that task. There have been philanthropists whose private conduct seemed hard, who were negligent of the misery at their feet, who took little interest in individual cases of distress, while they manifested the greatest energy in pressing on large measures of humanitarian reform. Christ is not thus partial in his kindness. Moreover, we find no attempt at working miracles for any other purpose than the help of the sufferers. No doubt Christ was aiming at the glory of God throughout (see John ii. 11; xi. 4); evidently his miracles were visible parables, setting forth in concrete acts the grace of his spiritual work. Yet the motive in his heart was not didactic, but sympathetic. His first idea was not to teach a lesson, but to relieve distress. He was "moved with compassion."

II. THE SYMPATHY OF CHRIST EXTENDED TO BODILY TROUBLE. He healed the sick. He cared for men's bodies as well as their souls. Often he reached their spiritual natures by first of all showing himself their Friend in temporal affairs. 1. Thus he encourages us to pray to him in sickness for our sick friends, and in regard to earthly troubles generally. Christ does not disdain these things. 2. Thus, also, we are urged by the example of Christ to help the suffering in their bodily needs. God gave miracles to the first century; he has given medicine to the nineteenth century. It is our duty to use what means we have for healing the sick. Medical missions are most Christ-like.

III. THE SYMPATHY OF CHRIST IS EFFECTIVE. It is more than the tear of pity. Christ feels with the sufferers, and that is much; but he goes further, and relieves them of their sufferings. He cured the sick. He freed the possessed. He reclaimed the lost. His spiritual work now is practical. When we open our hearts to the love of Christ we receive more than compassion; we receive redemption.

IV. THE SYMPATHY OF CHRIST IS COSTLY. He takes our infirmities; he bears our diseases. This means more than the removal of those troubles; the strong words cannot be satisfied unless we understand them to teach that the afflictions are a burden to Christ. The sympathy which costs us nothing is shallow and worthless. Christ's sympathy was deep and real. It was pain to him. Perhaps the healing process was itself painful, as he felt the "virtue" going out of him. However that may have been, his coming into this world, his endurance of sights of misery, and his deep compassion for the distressed, wrung his heart, because he felt that the sufferings of his brethren were his own sufferings. All this was a shadow of his great anguish when he bore more than sickness, when he bore the sins of the world on the cross.—W. F. A.

Vers. 18—22.—*The hasty and the reluctant.* We have here two types of possible disciples of Christ. Each has its defects, though they are opposite in character.

I. THE HASTY DISCIPLE. One of the scribes, one of the official teachers of religion, is enraptured at what he sees of the gracious Galilæan ministry. He will follow Christ anywhere. 1. *The scribe's offer.* It is well that he is attracted to Christ. Being

attracted, he naturally desires to follow the great Teacher and Healer, that he may be always in his presence. No doubt he intends the following to be a genuine discipleship. He will sit at the Master's feet and devote himself to his service. Yet he is very hasty; he has not thought out his project; he does not know what it involves; therefore he cannot say whether he is prepared to be faithful to his promise. It is foolish to make a profession of devotion to Christ before we know what his service really is. There is much that is attractive in him, and in favourable moments our hearts are moved and go out to him. But all this may be like Ephraim's goodness, like the morning cloud, like the growth on the stony ground. 2. *Christ's reply.* (1) The statement of a fact. Jesus was a poor Man, who had no home of his own; having abandoned the not very lucrative craft of a carpenter, he was dependent on the hospitality of the grateful. But he who lives on gratitude has a most uncertain livelihood. Yet Jesus humbled himself to this condition. Birds and foxes had more. (2) A needful warning. The servant must be as his master. Christ's genuine disciples had forsaken all to follow him. Let us count the cost, for there will be cost in all Christian service. It is a dangerous sign if what we think to be the service of Christ brings us ease and affluence.

II. THE RELUCTANT DISCIPLE. 1. *His call.* The first disciple had not waited for the call of Christ. He had boldly volunteered for the service, and he had been taught a lesson of humility and reflection. But now Christ himself calls another disciple. This is clearly stated by St. Luke (ix. 59). When Christ calls, it is our part to respond at once. The case is now quite altered. Duty does not admit of any consideration of difficulty or danger. 2. *His excuse.* He would first go and bury his father. This seems to be a most natural excuse. The sacred duty of filial piety would appear to claim the man. Burials in the East follow quickly on death. At most the son would be away but a few hours. Then he would be free to follow Christ for the remainder of his days. How can we blame him? It may be said at once that if this were a true view of the case he would have been excused, and Christ would have been the first to sympathize with him. Therefore we must conclude either (1) that he meant he wanted to wait for his father's death, or (2) that he was simply quoting a proverb—as an excuse in his case for more delay. But to postpone our coming to Christ is to show want of true devotion to him. 3. *His rebuke.* Jesus saw through the hypocritical excuse. Yet he answered the man after his own style. He would postpone the service of Christ to secular interests. But the secular minded who are spiritually dead can attend to those affairs. Christ's claim is paramount. He is no true disciple who treats what is dearest to him in such a way as to make it a hindrance to his service of Christ. The most sacred home ties are snares when they interfere with our devotion to our Divine Lord.—W. F. A.

Vers. 23—27.—*Christ in the storm.* The only way to escape from the thronging multitude was to cross the lake to the comparatively deserted eastern shore (ver. 18). Yet even on the sea quiet could not be had, for one of the sudden tempests that sweep down from the hills upon land-locked lakes with scarcely a moment's warning fell upon the little fishing-smack, when it was in the middle of its voyage, with such violence that even the experienced fishermen who manned the craft were in terror for their lives; yet Christ was asleep!

I. CHRIST IS ASLEEP IN THE STORM. This is a striking picture. Consider what it reveals in him. 1. *Natural weariness.* He had had a long day of toil. Even when he sought rest in the house it was forbidden him. Now at last he is free from the multitude, and Nature asserts her sway, and he falls into the heavy sleep of utter exhaustion. See here (1) Christ's true humanity; (2) how he can sympathize with our weakness; (3) how his work was not easy, but toilsome and wearisome, yet freely given for the good of men. 2. *Inward peace.* He need not lie awake tortured by anxiety. He has no evil conscience to disturb him. Within one breast all is calm while the tempest howls round the boat. 3. *Perfect faith.* His time has not yet come. But if it had come he would not need to be disturbed; for he is always ready for his Father's will. He knows that all is safe with God.

II. CHRIST IS AROUSED BY HIS DISCIPLES. Their action is natural. They were in imminent danger—or at least they thought themselves so. Their conduct reveals their

state of mind. This was a strange mixture of faith and unbelief. 1. *Faith.* Christ is a landsman—a carpenter of the inland town of Nazareth; these men are natives of the seashore, and fishermen well used to the sea. Yet they instinctively cry to Christ. In all his trouble the Christian cannot but turn to his Master. 2. *Unbelief.* These panic-stricken men cannot wait for their Master to rise at the right moment and save them. In their terror they are impatient of his calm slumbers—which is natural; but they are also querulous and unkind—which is less excusable. They hint that Christ cares not whether they perish. Great trouble is a severe test of faith, especially when we have to wait long for deliverance.

III. CHRIST STILLS THE STORM. First he rebukes the little faith of the disciples. Then he turns to the terror of wind and wave; and in a moment the storm has dropped as suddenly as it arose. Here is the real rebuke of unbelief. Christ is never negligent of his people in their troubles. He may seem to delay; but at the right moment he will do all that is needful. Whatever may be the trouble, he is able to conquer it. Yet it is easier to quiet a storm at sea than to quiet a troubled heart. If you hold a glass of water in your hand you can secure its being quite at rest while you hold your hand still. But if you have caught a wild bird in the hedge and hold it in your hand and feel its little heart throbbing against your fingers, you cannot quiet it merely by holding your hand still. You must teach it to trust you. When it has gained confidence it will be at rest. The sea may be stilled by a word of command, but the heart of man only through faith.—W. F. A.

Vers. 1—4 (see also Mark i. 40—45; Luke v. 12—16).—*The leper's example.* Some concise account of the nature of the disease of leprosy, of the place it held in the Jewish economy as the "sacrament of death," of the leading allusions to it in the Old Testament, and of the Levitical provisions in the event of a recovery or supposed recovery, may form introduction to discourse. Then dwell on some suggestions arising from the fact of—

I. THE FAME OF JESUS TRAVELLING TO A LEPER.

II. A LEPER TRAVELLING TO JESUS HIMSELF AT ALL RISKS.

III. THE WELL-LEARNT HUMILITY OF THIS LEPER.

IV. THE CLEAR DECISIVE FAITH OF THIS LEPER.

V. THE PROMPT AND PRACTICAL COMPASSION OF JESUS: HE TOUCHED THE LEPER. It was legal defilement to touch a leper, because he was a leper; but it was not defilement to touch a leper, if he thereby ceased to be such.

VI. THE PROBABLE REASON OR REASONS OF THE CHARGE OF JESUS TO HIM. 1. The reason may perhaps solely have had reference to what the Saviour knew of the real tendencies of the leper he had cleansed. 2. The reason may have had rather some outer aspect, and may have had it in view to obtain before men, and as a much-needed "testimony against" themselves, a true and unprejudiced and confessed verdict from the priests as to the genuineness of the great work of cleansing which he had accomplished. 3. The reason may have been strictly that, for Jesus, his "time was not yet ready," while the defence of the cleansed and happy, late leper, will ever be that he could *not* contain his joy, his praise, and his gratitude.—B.

Vers. 5—13 (see also Luke vii. 1—10).—*The centurion's example.* Use the introduction to advert to the apparent discrepancy between the account of St. Matthew and that of St. Luke, in that the latter informs us that it was by messengers and not by himself that the centurion's appeal to Christ was made. Plausible as the objection may justly be allowed to appear, *one* fact is sufficient to silence it, namely, that the apparent inconsistence appears quite sufficiently in the one selfsame account of St. Luke. Notice, for instance, and compare vers. 8—10 there. Also allude to the favourable circumstances in which three other centurions are brought before our notice in Christian history, *e.g.* ch. xxvii. 54; Acts x. 1; xxvii. 3, 43; xxviii. 16. Notice—

I. THE CHARACTER THIS CENTURION HAD ACQUIRED, AND, THOUGH AN OUTSIDER, THE ESTEEM IN WHICH HE WAS HELD. Nor is the secret of this far to find. 1. He had a large heart and a sympathetic. He loved the nation of the Jews, and had built them a synagogue, no doubt because of the higher good he had gained from them. He had reaped their spiritual things, he had given his carnal things. 2. He loved his servant,

and evidently was taking great pains, not felt as such, now to get help for him, as much as though he had been a son or a brother.

II. THE CORRECT AND HIGHLY ENLIGHTENED ESTIMATE THAT HE HAD ALREADY EVIDENTLY FIRMLY PLANTED WITHIN HIM OF THE CHARACTER AND THE JUST DIGNITY OF CHRIST. Whence, it may naturally be asked, did this come? 1. From the fact that he used aright his reason, *upon* his observation; *i.e. upon* the induction of things seen and heard by him, of Christ. Of how many things higher and deeper than those of which the apostle first used the question may not the same words be used, "Doth not even nature teach you?" And in what harmony with this do we find the argument of St. Paul in Rom. i., when he says, summing it up, "So that they are without excuse"! 2. How well it may be believed that the centurion was among the instances of those illuminated by that Spirit who was always omnipresent, and who as at this time worked often where least supposed! We are reminded of the illustration used by our Lord himself preceding the sentence, "So is every one that is born of the Spirit."

III. THE GENUINE HUMILITY WHICH PENETRATED HIM. 1. He genuinely pleads deep sense of his own unworthiness as the reason why he did not come in person to Jesus. 2. He with every witness of genuineness pleads the same as the ground of deprecating Jesus coming in person to him. It would appear from the account of St. Luke that the centurion in the first instance *did* ask Jesus "to come and heal his servant." But second thoughts, and the awe of the imminent advent of the great Sovereign of bodies and souls changed his prayer, took away the last remnant of mere human boldness, and superseded it by diviner humility.

IV. THE FAITH, SO SIMPLY CONSTRUCTED AND SO PERFECT, FROM THE FIRST AND IN ALL DETAIL, OF THE CENTURION. This was the "marvel" for Christ. It is "great" faith; it is "so great faith;" it is greater faith than the greatest Jesus had as yet "found in Israel" even, and this *not* in Israel!

In conclusion, dwell on all the sweet, condescending grace of Jesus. "I will come and heal him;" "and he went with them;" "he marvelled at him;" and he praised his faith "to the people that followed him;" and "they who were sent returning to the house found the servant whole." What a parable in drama of the great grace of Jesus Christ!—B.

Vers. 14—17 (see also Mark i. 29—31; Luke iv. 38—40).—*The instinct of beneficence.* In introduction, note the place given to the occurrence of this miracle in the two parallel places, these two defining with accuracy what is left unalluded to by St. Matthew. Also comment on ver. 17, comparing it with St. Peter's quotation, and noting St. Matthew's language as not that of the Septuagint. Reject all the lesser exegeses of the wonderful characterization of the Redeemer here given; such as fatigue of body through the late and prolonged work; exhaustion of soul through the fearful strain confessed by us all, of high and deep spiritual engagement; and even such as the adumbration in all this of the achievement of the cross, and all the endurance it postulated; but point out how the personality of Jesus Christ now, and all through his public life, was the unfailing and the all-gathering focus, in one way and another way and all ways, of the sufferings, and the diseases, and the evil, and the infinite sorrow of that man, one grand essential condition of the saving of whom was, that his Saviour be "One touched," really, absolutely, tenderly, keenly touched, "with the feeling of his infirmities." This verse (seventeenth) *expresses* "the travail of his soul." Notice—

I. THE EXCEEDING PROMPTNESS WITH WHICH THIS MIRACLE WAS WROUGHT. Observe on the variety of the miracles of Christ, in this one respect by itself. Sometimes delay was the rule, and in such cases, sometimes with an evident reason and use, but sometimes not so. The occasions when we *can* see the reason or a reason will teach us how there were reasons in the other cases, though perhaps untraceable by us. On the other hand, many miracles were marked by very quick action, as with the impotent man and the blind beggar, etc., but nowhere perhaps more than in this case.

II. THE OUTWARD SIGNS ACCOMPANYING THE WORKING OF THE MIRACLE. "He touched her hand;" "he rebuked the fever;" "he took her by the hand;" "he lifted her up." In these facts stated, which may be very far from being rightly called in every sense *outward* signs, two leading points may be observed—the "*rebuke*" to

the oppressor, the *assistance* to the oppressed, significant and genuine suggestions to our Christian work, and to our conflict in Christ's Name with human woe, and with those forces of evil which stir it and fix it and only so reluctantly loose their grasp. Nor are the *forms* of help barren of suggestion. He stood over her; he saw her; he touched her hand, took her by the hand, lifted her up. The very gradation in the assistance proffering us lessons, or reminding us of what we have not failed already to observe and reason upon.

III. THE GRATEFUL AND DEVOUT AND PRACTICAL RESPONSE ON THE PART OF THE SUFFERER, NO LONGER THE PREY OF HER FEVER, TO HER DELIVERER. Picture the splendid contrast. The prostrate with fever *immediately* transformed into the active and thoughtful servant, and the minister both to her Lord and his attendants and friends. Enlarge on this as the consummate type of Christian conduct and character after genuine conversion. For this is followed by devout and unfeigned consecration of service to Christ and his Church.

Conclude with noticing the *harvest* of that night, after the close of the sabbath. 1. The ingathering of what untold blessings to the people! 2. The toil and travail (in the sense of ver. 17) that harvest meant for Jesus Christ.—B.

Vers. 19—22 (see also Luke ix. 57—62).—*Three human types—one Divine type.* In introduction, note that the passage in St. Luke has by some been regarded, on account of its very different place and apparent connection, as not *the parallel* of the present passage. On the other hand, it can scarcely be a mere duplicate or even a *replica*. Under any circumstances, if not *the* parallel, it certainly is a parallel, and the very equivalent, when allowance is made for the addition supplied by St. Luke. In fact, the absence of the *third* position from St. Matthew's account may possibly find explanation (explanation confessedly somewhat asked for) for any who hold, with some of the best of critics, that we may not improbably have here, in the three persons described, the anonymous biographies in so far as this incident goes of Judas Iscariot, St. Thomas, and St. Matthew himself. Notice—

I. JESUS CHRIST THE TYPE OF DISCRIMINATING FIDELITY; NOT DISGUISING, NOT FLATTERING, THE CHARACTER OF HIS OWN SERVICE. If any one, whether more or less savouring of the things that be of Judas Iscariot, seeks to enter the service of Christ and the kingdom of heaven, he shall not do so untaught as to the service, unwarned as to the conditions of it; he is plainly, faithfully, and most impressively told of these. Remark on the perfection for effectiveness of the warning here given, in its naturalness and simplicity (ver. 20), and of the touching, exquisite pathos of the last of the three clauses. Remark also on the inevitable dangers of times of apparent prosperity and popular impression, as well those that flourish in dispositions of the sanguine and enthusiastic type. Discriminate between the man who offers himself, as "moved by the Holy Ghost," and *the way in which* he offers himself, and the boastful volunteer, whether of the nature here portrayed, or of that of the misguided zeal of Peter.

II. JESUS CHRIST THE TYPE OF CLEAREST VISION IN THE MATTER OF THE RELATIVE WORTH OF THE HEAVENLY CALL, AND ANY AND EVERY EARTHLY CALL; THE HEAVENLY RELATIONSHIP, AND ANY AND EVERY EARTHLY RELATIONSHIP; AND OF UNBROKEN SINGLENESS OF DEVOTION, AND LOYALTY INCORRUPT TO THE HIGHER. Remark here on the expression (ver. 21), "another of his disciples," as finding its explanation from St. Luke (ix. 59), where we learn that Jesus had *just* called him, and that he was therefore his disciple. Illustrate from other clear deliverances of Jesus Christ that there is not to be imagined here for a moment any depreciation of the sacredness and the worth of human affections, but rather *exaltation* of *the* Divine affection (which must be ever the one determinating and turning-point of human character and hope and eternal outlook). Show how, in this instance, all this was yet more illuminated by the grace and kindness and inspiriting nature of the further commission, "But go thou and preach the kingdom of God."

III. JESUS CHRIST THE TYPE OF THE UN-LOOKING BACK, THE UN-MISGIVING, THE UN-TURNING, AND THE "WITHOUT-REPENTANCE" WHEN HIGH DUTY, WHEN THE MORE THAN HEROIC HEIGHTS OF PRESENT SELF-SACRIFICE, WHEN HOLY EFFORT AND HEAVEN, ARE THE GOAL IN FRONT. Dwell lovingly on the undoubted *dependence* (equally extraordinary and glorious in its essential nature) of true Christian work, on an exact,

a clear, a steadfast eye, and a heart thereupon *perfect* to follow *its* outlook. How much so-called Christian work withers like untimely birth itself by reason of carelessness, mixed motive, and lack of supremely dominating affection!—B.

Vers. 23—27 (Mark iv. 35—41; Luke viii. 22—25).—*The novel call to faith.* In introduction, emphasize the little chain of events that led to the position of peril, as in every sense natural, as wearing that appearance, and justly wearing it, and resent the imputation that it was an artificial one. The suggestive parallel or contrast, so often pointed to by various students of the New Testament in many an age, may be recalled, viz. that of Jonah fleeing from duty in a ship, falling asleep through a callous heart and a stupefied conscience, and creating peril for all his fellow-voyagers. Allow respecting the disciples now that there was much natural in their fear, and right in a secondary degree, though secondary only in their repairing with anxious cry to Jesus Christ in their extremity, as they supposed, of danger. But show, on the other hand, that the time was one of deeper teaching; the opportunity one of getting a word, and a powerful word, in for exercise of higher faith; and the crisis had arrived when, for the disciples at any rate, a step in advance was to be taken, and they are compelled to see it. For—

I. THE CALL TO FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF IS NOW PUBLISHED FOR THE DISCIPLES, AND NOT SIMPLY FAITH IN WHAT HE MAY DO. 1. He was asleep, but it *was* he. 2. He was asleep, but he was *in the ship*. 3. He was asleep, but it was certain he *did* "care" for his disciples, and did care that they should "*not* perish."

II. THE CALL TO FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST WAS FOR SUCH FAITH TO OWN HIM OMNIPOTENT MASTER IN EVERY AND ALL DIRECTIONS OF GOD'S WIDE DOMAIN. It was a new surprise that "winds and sea obey him." But if it were this, a *new surprise*, what did it mean, except that they knew it not before or doubted it before?

III. THE CALL TO EXERCISE FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST WAS A CALL TO BELIEVE THAT THE ENEMIES TO BE SUBJUGATED BY HIM WERE NOT SUCH AS COULD BE CALLED ACCIDENT AND THINGS UNCONSCIOUS, BUT UNSEEN FOES IN DISASTROUS ALLIANCE WITH THESE. Christ "*rebuked*" the "winds and sea." The alliance of spirit with flesh and blood and matter of *such* kind (wonderful and mysterious as is the bridge from one to another, the subtle but powerful and, for long lasting, *tyrannous* link between them), is undenied; and is so familiar as a phenomenon and a fact with us that we think not at all about it, except with special effort and on special occasion. Yet deeper things are *betrayed* to us in revelation and by revelation, viz. such a thing as *this*, that spirit may possess other matter and other forms of matter; and tyrannously dominate the ubiquitous "elements of nature" and their forces. The deeper and less recognized whisperings and suggestions of revelation are sometimes equivalent to authoritative pronouncements of what we had once named the superstitious figments of heathen minds. Let it be they *were* such; yet how cravingly, inquiringly, wearily, and *not altogether* vainly, did they roam round and beat at the bonds and environment of their ignorance; and *sometimes* they touched truth! The disciples were *taught* such truths, and we through them.—B.

Vers. 28—34 (Mark v. 1—20; Luke viii. 26—39).—*The divorce of supreme pity.* In introduction, distinguish between the genuine possession by an evil spirit and the phenomena of madness, or the most of those instances of merely bodily plague which in the worst times have probably nevertheless been the result and degenerate outgrowth of the extremes of sensuality and intemperance. Also allude to the fact that only one demoniac is mentioned by St. Mark and St. Luke. Note therewith that *here*, though it is said "they" both spoke and cried to Jesus, yet only *one* form of words is given. In passing, note also how, in the account of each evangelist, *this* narrative follows that of the stilling of the storm and tempest in the material world. Notice—

I. A DREADFUL TYPE IN BODILY LIFE OF THE MAN WHOSE SPIRIT, GIVEN HIM WHEREWITH TO RULE AND "HAVE DOMINION," IS OVERRULED AND OVERMASTERED BY AN EVIL SPIRIT, AND EXERCISES BUT A VERY PRECARIOUS AND OCCASIONAL SWAY OF ITS OWN.

II. THE EXTRAORDINARY BUT MOST SIGNIFICANT ACTION OF THIS DUALITY OF SPIRIT WHICH MANIFESTED ITSELF AT THE CRISIS OF THE APPROACH OF JESUS CHRIST. The

"he" who met Jesus, and ran to him as by irresistible instinct or attraction, and "worshipped," and "fell down" before him, and the *other* "he" (or "they") of whose devilish inspiration were the words which the victim used. How graphic, how dramatic, how dreadful the parable the description speaks of the conflict and the strife in the soul between itself in deep need, deep distress, deep consciousness, *and* the odious tyrant that holds him at bay!

III. THE NOTICE TO QUIT NOW, AND THE MORE SIGNIFICANT SUGGESTION THAT THE NOTICE, YET TO COME ONE DAY, WOULD BE A LONGER NOTICE, ONE TO QUIT FOR EVER. The entreaty of the united legion, by the lips of the oppressed and tormented demoniac, is that they shall not be banished the "country" (*i.e.* the *world*); and should *not* be sent into "the deep" (*i.e.* the unseen domain), where there would be no "wicked," no "weary" from whatsoever cause, for such to possess and tyrannize. And this entreaty betokened sufficiently plainly what they knew of their *ultimate* destiny, and what they had in view in deprecating being "tormented before the time." Note the *easy* prey that the vast number of swine were to the evil spirit or spirits; and how is thereby set forth the strong power to resist of the human soul, and its long-continued power to resist, and in the same relative proportion the prolonged, unutterable suffering and anguish.

IV. THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE COWARDLY AND SELFISH GADARENES IN BESEECHING CHRIST TO DEPART, AND THE IMPASSIONED PRAYER OF THE RECOVERED DEMONIAC TO BE PERMITTED TO REMAIN WITH CHRIST.

Conclude by remarking on the fearful compliance on the part of Jesus with the one entreaty, and his most gracious refusal of the other.—B.

Vers. 1—13.—*The leper and the centurion.* The miracles of our Lord are an integral and necessary part of God's revelation of himself to men. Christ came not so much to reveal God's power as to reveal God's disposition to use that power for us; not so much to show God's holiness as to show his desire and purpose to make us also holy. Miracles, therefore, lay as naturally and inevitably in the way of Christ's work as his teaching with authority did.

I. THE HEALING OF THE LEPER is the first miracle recorded by Matthew, and it probably struck him more than it would at first sight strike us, by appealing to his Jewish ideas and sentiments. 1. For, in the first place, *leprosy was not an ordinary, though a common, disease.* It had a religious aspect, and was as symbolic as sacrifice or any other of the Jewish ordinances. It was, in the eye of the Jew, a frightful symbol of the condition of the outcast from God; he saw in it the true representation of the consuming and polluting nature of sin. For the sinner, too, is forced to cry, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" To cut off one member brings no relief; the diseased blood strikes out in some other part. You may make one sin impossible, but another takes possession of you. The disease, you find, is yourself; you are full of it. What can you do but what the leper did—come worshipping and beseeching to him who has power to heal? 2. It was partly because *leprosy was symbolical of inward disease* that Matthew saw in this healing of the leper the fulfilment of the prophetic words, "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." But partly, no doubt, because the prompt reply of the Lord, "I will; be thou clean," and his touching the man, disclosed the deep sympathy he had with men. Somehow the man had been brought to know that what nothing else could do for him Christ could. It is true of us all that we are dependent on Christ's will. Obviously one who professes to have all power in heaven and on earth can do many things which you need and which no one else professes to be able to do for you. Will Christ listen to the cry of bodily disease and be unmoved by the poor wretch that cries for deliverance from moral defilement? With what may we not fill up the leper's form of petition, "If thou wilt, thou canst"? Very appropriately does Matthew put this "I will" of Christ's in the forefront of all the miracles he records. It is this word that opens the gate and lets in upon us supernatural forces. Will is, indeed, the only supernatural force we know. Our own wills are in a certain sense supernatural. And when our Lord utters the words, "I will; be thou clean," he is merely exerting in a higher degree this same inscrutable spiritual force. We know not how his will is exerted upon the sufferer, but the effect is immediate and undeniable. From the number of miracles our Lord wrought

at this time Matthew selects these two, of the leper and the centurion's servant, that we may see the readiness and the potency of the will of Christ to heal.

II. In THE CENTURION we meet with a high type of man; a kindly, generous, devout nature; a humility not to be expected in one accustomed to command and to represent a ruling race. But, as our Lord reminds us, there are humble, unselfish, right-minded men in all ages and in all countries. In the centurion he saw promise of a far richer harvest than Israel could afford—myriads of earnest men pressing from every quarter of the globe to hear the words of his kingdom. The exhilarating prospect has, however, its dark background. The earnest and humble devoutness of spirit which spring up, one cannot tell how, in those outside the kingdom may be lacking to those within. These men glorified Christ, showed him in a right light and reflected honour upon him by their conduct. We have known more about him, have clearer views of his Person and methods; but, were our dealings with him recorded, would there be the same fair record of simple, unmurmuring faith, of humble dependence on Christ's will, and undoubting worship? But the distinctive feature of the centurion's application to our Lord is his persuasion that Christ's will can work at a distance as easily as at hand. He reasons from his own experience. He had but to give the word of command, and his whole troop obeyed him; and he could not suppose the word of Christ was in his peculiar sphere less potent and authoritative. Perhaps this idea had been suggested to him by his feeling the contrast between his own power on the battle-field and helplessness at the bedside of his servant. Was there not some one who had power even here—some one whose will could quicken even that inert body? The soldier, the law-abiding Roman, felt there must be.

Two injunctions were laid upon the healed leper. 1. To *tell no man*. This is an instance of what our Lord very commonly did, enjoining the healed person to keep silence about his cure, partly from regard to the person's own best interests, partly from a regard to the proper work of Christ. If this man went and published his cure, many would come merely by way of experiment, as they would try a new doctor. But what was our Lord to do with such people, who merely wished for the physical benefit, and had no regard for his Person and no serious faith in him? And it would seem not improbable that this is the reason why we ourselves, even when we pray, get so little from Christ. Our faith is not serious enough; it is not the deeply rooted conviction that grows up in a man's self by the working of his own mind and the course of his own experience; it is second-hand faith. We ask from him not because we are sure we shall receive, but because other people think it right to do so. 2. The man is *sent to the priest* that his cure might be verified. The cure was real and substantial, and our Lord shrank from no official examination, but rather courted it. Another reason was simply because this was commanded. This man was not to suppose that, because his cure was extraordinary, he was to be exempt from the customary regulations. Now, the significance of this for all who derive benefits from Christ is obvious. They must approve themselves healed and sound-hearted persons before that court that tries us all, and in which the judges are the ordinary duties of life, and the persons with whom or for whom we work. The character formed by Christ is fit for all the practical work and service of life; and he who fancies that because his cure has been wrought in a miraculous, supramundane, heavenly fashion, it is to be followed only by an ethereal, supramundane goodness that can do none of the rough work of the world, may well suspect he has not been cured at all. But the main impression of these incidents is meant, no doubt, to be a deep conviction of the quick response our Lord ever shows to true dependence on him.—D.

Vers. 1—4.—*The leper.* Jesus, in his sermon on the mount, spake with an authority that asserted his Divinity. He claimed to be the King and Judge of men. Coming down from the mount, followed by the multitudes who were astonished at his doctrine, he wrought a miracle which proved his authority to be no assumption. The miracles of Christ were not only miracles of power; they were, moreover, miracles of wisdom—parables of omnipotence.

I. LEPROSY IS AN EMBLEM OF SIN. 1. *It is a most loathsome disease.* (1) Mungo Park thus describes it as he witnessed it amongst the negroes in Africa: "It appears at the beginning in scurfy spots upon different parts of the body; which finally settle

upon the hands and feet, when the skin becomes withered and cracks in many places. At length the ends of the fingers swell and ulcerate; the discharge is acrid and fetid; the nails drop off, and the bones of the fingers become carious, and separate at the joints. In this manner the disease continues to spread frequently until the patient loses all his fingers and toes, and sometimes his hands and feet." Maundrel says, "Leprosy is the extreme state of corruption of which a living body is capable" (cf. Job vii. 5). (2) A corresponding moral condition comes to the day in our police-courts. In the eye of God the unregenerate heart of the Pharisee is no less revolting (see ch. xxiii. 27, 28). 2. *It is an insidious disease.* (1) Leprosy at first spreads secretly. Sometimes it is for years concealed. So the venom of sin is hidden, being restrained by environments of Christian influence. (2) It is an hereditary evil. The leprosy of Naaman was not only transferred to Gehazi; it was also entailed upon his seed (2 Kings v. 27). The entailment of sin is universal. (3) It is, moreover, *contagious.* Hence the Law required that the leper should live apart, and warn passengers to keep aloof by crying, "Unclean! unclean!" (Lev. xiii. 45, 46). So Miriam (Numb. xii. 14, 15). Things infected with leprosy were destroyed. So is sin contagious, and the company of sinners is to be shunned (2 Cor. vi. 14—18; Jas. iv. 4).

II. ITS CURE SETS FORTH CHRIST AS THE SAVIOUR OF SINNERS. 1. *The Law prescribed no cure for it.* (1) The cleansing was not the healing of the leper (see Lev. xiv. 3). This man was healed and then sent to the priest to be ceremonially cleansed (ver. 4). So neither has the Law any cure for sin. (2) The gospel supplies this lack. Hence David, in his moral leprosy, instead of going to the priest, went to the Lord (Ps. li. 7). (3) There was a sense in which the faith of the Samaritan had made him whole, in which his nine ungrateful companions, though healed physically, were not made whole (see Luke xvii. 11—19). 2. *Jesus is able to save all men.* (1) This miracle proving his Divinity establishes his ability. (2) But he saves us not by arbitrary power. He cannot sacrifice justice to mercy. (3) He satisfies the claims of justice by taking our sin upon him. This is parabolically taught in his touching the leper. By that healing touch he became himself ceremonially unclean. (4) In this Jesus broke no law. There is no law that says, "Thou shalt not touch a leper." 3. *He is not willing to save all characters.* "If thou wilt." (1) He spurns the impenitent wicked (see Isa. i. 10—20; Ps. lxvi. 18). (2) The contrite believer he will save. "I will." The leper came *humbly.* "Worshipped him," or, as in Mark, "kneeling down to him." *Trustfully.* "If thou wilt, *thou canst.*" None such are too vile. "A leper." 4. *Impurity instantly yields to the rebuke of Christ.* (1) Why should a present salvation be disputed? Jesus is the Omnipotence of purity. "*Straightway* his leprosy was cleansed." (2) But why did Jesus send him to the priests? "For a testimony unto them," viz. as to the *power* of the gospel. Also as to its *truth.* For this is beautifully set forth in the ceremony (see outline on Lev. xiv 1—7). The miracle is a splendid commentary upon the Law.—J. A. M.

Vers. 5—13.—*The centurion.* We take this to be the centurion also mentioned by Luke (vii.). The points of agreement in the narratives are too remarkable and too numerous to be taken to apply to separate persons. The narratives are harmonized upon the principle of personation common in the sacred writings (see *e.g.* 2 Sam. i. 15 compared with iv. 10, and Acts ix. 23, 24 with 2 Cor. xi. 32). Let us consider the centurion's faith and its reward.

I. HIS FAITH. 1. *It was reverent and humble.* (1) He did not presume to come to Jesus in person. According to Luke, he approached him through the elders of the Jews. He thus forestalled the objection that he was a stranger. (2) He had enlightened views of the majesty of Jesus. For, though Jesus had appeared in humiliation amongst men, this Roman said (still by representation), "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof." Note: We should value and venerate what we can see of Christ in the humbled saint. Had we juster views of the majesty of Jesus we should have humbler views of ourselves. We judge by contrasts. (3) There are some whose reverence would not restrain them from touching the Lord (see ch. ix. 18—20). The same inward feelings may be variously displayed. (4) A sense of unworthiness is a sign of worth. He that is furthest from self is nearest to the Lord. This centurion, as Augustine says, while owning himself unworthy that the Lord should enter

his house, was accounted worthy that that Lord should enter his heart. Though corporeally distant, the centurion was through faith enabled to converse in spirit with Jesus. 2. *It was strong and earnest.* (1) He came with entreaty. "Beseeching him." The earnestness of entreaty is a sign of faith; for it grows out of the conviction of the ability of the person supplicated to grant the petition. (2) So strong was the faith of this centurion that it saw no need for the presence of the Miracle-worker. It recognized the omnipresence of Omnipotence. This faith is the more remarkable since up to this time no example of a miracle wrought by Jesus at a distance is on record. (3) The centurion's apprehension of the Divinity of Christ is also recognized in his argument. It proceeded upon the principle that the forces of nature were absolutely under the control of Jesus. The obedience of the soldiers and servants of the centurion were rendered to one under the authority of superiors; but Jesus was absolute Ruler in nature. 3. *It was large and generous.* (1) It was exercised on behalf of his servant. Many came to Christ on behalf of their children; this is the only example we have of one so interested in a servant. Many, like the Amalekite, forsake their servants when they are forsaken by health (1 Sam. xxx. 13). The good master studies the welfare of his servants. (2) The centurion was touched by the suffering of his servant. Great agony is experienced in palsy when it passes into apoplexy. Faith is nourished in the sympathies of goodness. (3) The elders who represented the centurion's case to Jesus were moved by admiration of his nobleness. They pleaded, "He is worthy; for he loveth our nation, and hath built us a synagogue." Faith is strong in the heart of the generous.

II. ITS REWARD. 1. *It gained for him his suit.* (1) Before the elders had fully opened the case, Jesus said, "I will come and heal him." His coming is healing. "Unto you that fear my Name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings." (2) Before the elders returned to communicate the answer, the centurion had the answer in his house. "His servant was healed in that hour." "Before you call, I will answer; and while you are yet speaking, I will hear." (3) The centurion gained more than his suit. He received healing also in his own soul. "As thou hast believed, so shall it be done *unto thee.*" In blessing we are blessed. 2. *He had the highest commendation.* (1) Jesus marvelled at the greatness of his faith. For he was a Roman. Conversely, Jesus marvelled at the unbelief of certain Jews (see Mark vi. 6). All circumstances are surveyed in the judgments of Jesus. (2) His faith was honoured with the promise of the kingdom. The Gentile by faith becomes the child of the covenant. "Shall sit down with Abraham," etc. (cf. Gen. xii. 3; xvii. 4; Gal. iii. 7, 9, 14, 29). (3) This means the friendship of the King. Sitting with Abraham, etc., is enjoying the company of the aristocracy of virtue. *Reclining* with Abraham, etc., viz. on the bosom of the King. That last supper at which the disciples reclined on the bosom of Jesus was the anticipation of a fulfilment in the kingdom of God (cf. ch. xxvi. 29; Luke xiv. 15; xxii. 15, 16, 29, 30). (4) Jesus handsomely commends his friends (see ch. xi. 6; xv. 28; xxv. 34—36; xxvi. 10; Luke vii. 44; xxi. 3). 3. *He was made a specimen of the conversion of the Gentiles.* (1) "And I say unto you [Jews], That many shall come from the east," etc. By faith the Gentiles shall enter the kingdom of grace. By faith also shall they enter the kingdom of glory. (2) To the Jews Jesus came in person; to the Gentiles he sends his healing Word. "Only say the word." Grace triumphs in unlikely places. So in unlikely persons. A devout soldier! No man's calling can excuse his unbelief. 4. *The reception of faithful Gentiles is condemnation to unfaithful Jews.* (1) Jesus had not found such faith, no, not in Israel. He sought faith. He seeks it still. (2) He sought it first among the children of the kingdom. The gospel as well as the Law came first to the Jews (see Rom. ix. 4). Privileges bring responsibilities. So the last become first by their faith. The first become last through their unbelief. (3) How fearful is the condition of the rejected! Shut out from the light of the banquet of glory. In the cold and hunger of an endless night. *The* weeping. *The* gnashing of teeth. No such sorrow and misery as those of the lost.—J. A. M.

Vers. 14—17.—*Reciprocal ministries.* Here we notice two things—

I. THAT JESUS ACCEPTS THE MINISTRY OF HOSPITALITY. 1. *He accepted the hospitality of Peter.* (1) This apostle resided at Capernaum, and Jesus lodged with him

(cf. ch. xvii. 24). Peter had a house; his Master had not one. Here the servant was above his Lord. (2) Peter formerly resided at Bethsaida (John i. 44). Probably he removed his dwelling to be near to Jesus—to render him hospitality, and to benefit by his heavenly conversation. In changing residences Christians should not remove from the ordinances of religion. In seeking the health of the body the health of the soul must not be imperilled. Israel journeyed ever under the Shechinah. (3) Peter's wife's mother ministered to Jesus, or supplied him with refreshments. Jesus needed such hospitality, for his humanity was real. So are still his human sympathies. (4) In accepting this hospitality, Jesus sanctioned marriage amongst his clergy. With what little grace do the Romanists contend for the celibacy of those who, while professing to derive infallibility from Peter, go contrary to his example (cf. 1 Cor. ix. 5)! 2. *He will accept the hospitality of our hearts.* (1) Though corporeally gone into heaven, Jesus is still spiritually present with us. He sups in blessed friendship with the loyal, loving heart. He looks for a spiritual ministry to him. Temporal things are valuable as they are prompted by spiritual motives and aim at spiritual ends. (2) We minister to Jesus when we serve his Church. The Church is the mystical Christ (cf. Rom. xii. 4, 5; 1 Cor. viii. 12; Gal. iii. 16 with ver. 29). (3) Individual believers are specimens of the Church and representatives of Jesus. So he takes home as to himself hospitalities, or conversely unkindnesses, shown to them (cf. ch. xxv. 40, 45; Acts ix. 5). (4) We are qualified by the grace of Christ to minister to Christ. Peter was made a disciple of Jesus before Jesus accepted his hospitality. Peter's wife's mother was empowered by Jesus before she ministered to Jesus. "We give thee of thine own." (5) Peter was a young man—for his wife's mother was an active woman—yet Peter was a senior among the apostles. They were, therefore, all young men. Youth is the period for enterprise. Those who waste their youth waste their lives.

II. THAT JESUS EXERCISES THE MINISTRY OF SALVATION. 1. *He healed all manner of diseases.* (1) "The fever owned his touch, and fled." The touch of that hand intimated the tenderness of a heart that is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." It also evinced Divinity. The healing was as sudden as the touch. There was no interval of convalescence. (2) Jesus healed Peter's wife's mother on the sabbath (cf. Mark i. 21, 29). For "it is lawful to do good on the sabbath day." But the Jews did not bring their sick until after sundown, when the sabbath ended (see Lev. xxiii. 32; also ch. xii. 10; Luke xiii. 4). He respected their prejudices, and healed them all. 2. *He cast out the spirits with his word.* (1) An essential distinction is here strongly marked between the spirits "cast out" and the diseases "healed" (cf. Mark i. 34). (2) Demoniacs were prevalent in Judæa in the time of Christ because the nation was then advanced to a height of impiety. The Jews were then also strongly addicted to magic, and invited spirits to be *familiar* with them. (3) If there is anything beyond charlatanry in the spiritualism of these days it is like a revival of the necromancy denounced in the holy oracles (see Deut. xviii. 9—12). (4) Evil spirits have never ceased to dwell in impure affections; and they still possess the souls of the wicked as formerly they possessed their bodies. 3. *These works denoted the Messiah.* (1) They were wrought in fulfilment of prophecy. The citation of Isa. liii. 4 here evinces this. But the words of the prophet also have reference to the atonement for sin, for so they are applied elsewhere (see 1 Pet. ii. 14). (2) The miracles were wrought in anticipation of the atonement. For sickness is a consequence of sin. The removal of the consequence was a pledge that the Miracle-worker would remove the cause. Upon the same principle of anticipation Old Testament believers were saved by the death of Christ. (3) The miracles of Jesus, together with the sympathy of his whole life, must be viewed as belonging to his great work of atonement, which was therefore only "finished" on the cross. So, in working his miracles, Jesus sometimes—perhaps always—"groaned in spirit, and was troubled." Both kinds of "bearing our diseases" were requisite to our great High Priest (see Heb. iv. 15; v. 1, 2). Remarkably this view is expressed in the rabbinical book of Zohar: "There is one temple which is called the temple of the sons of affliction; and when Messiah comes into that temple, and reads all the afflictions, all the griefs, and all the chastisements of Israel, which came upon them, then all of them *shall come upon him*; and if there were any that would lighten them off from Israel, and take them upon himself, there is no son of man that can bear the chastisements of Israel, because of the punishment of the Law,

as it is said, '*Surely he hath borne our griefs*,' etc." (4) The diseases and afflictions of the body miraculously cured by Jesus are to be taken as figures of corresponding moral evils.—J. A. M.

Vers. 18—27.—*Christian discipleship.* To avoid the pressure of the crowd gathered by the fame of his miracles—perhaps to disperse the crowd, lest the jealous Romans might suspect sedition—Jesus gave commandment to cross the lake. Therefore a disciple—a scribe, desiring to come into more constant communion with Jesus—said, "Teacher, I will follow thee," etc. (vers. 19, 20). Another, following as a disciple (tradition says it was Philip, some say Thomas), said, "Lord, suffer me first," etc. (vers. 21—22). The whole subject unfolds the principles of Christian discipleship.

I. THE ONE CONDITION OF CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP IS IMPLICIT SUBMISSION TO CHRIST. 1. *This was confessed in words by the scribe.* (1) His words recognized the great Teacher (ver. 19). (2) They expressed unreserved devotion to him. The genuine disciple *will* follow Jesus *anywhere*. (3) They expressed, moreover, voluntary service. "Love is the fulfilling of the Law." 2. *But he said more than he meant.* (1) His enthusiasm arose from the persuasion that in following the Miracle-worker he might secure worldly advantages. He did not discern that Jesus sought faith, not fees; that he made no material profit by his healing power. Men may propose right things from sordid motives. (2) He too lightly estimated what it is to follow Christ. Many, like him, would follow in the sunshine, but, meeting hardships, take offence. He was too hasty in promising. "Soon ripe, soon rotten." Christ's followers in paths of publicity and enjoyment are many; in the walks of humility and suffering, few. (3) He was too self-sufficient. A man that is not illuminated by the Spirit thinks himself capable of *anything*. The true man knows he can do nothing without the Spirit of Christ. (4) All this is suggested in Christ's discouraging reply (ver. 20). Jesus does not deceive his followers. He promises them glorious rewards in the great future. He promises them present blessings also. But withal he promises hardships and privations (cf. 1 Cor. iv. 11). 3. *Yet not more than Christ requires.* (1) The scribe's discouragement from Christ was because his motives were not as good as his words. Christ "for our sakes became poor," and for his sake we must be "poor in spirit." The Christ-like have no abiding city here. Let the poor be comforted in their resemblance to Christ in circumstances. But let them also seek his moral likeness. (2) The foxes have holes. Cunning men of the world "feather their nests." The birds of the air have lodging-places. Those who prey upon the simple have their convenient retreats. 4. *The claims of Christ are uncompromising.* (1) This is evident in the reply of Christ to Philip. The request to be permitted first to bury his father seems in itself reasonable. Elijah permitted Elisha to bid farewell to his friends. (2) But things otherwise lawful in themselves must not divert us from the more important duty of following Christ. Duties take precedence in the order of their importance. Many are by family ties hindered from following Jesus. Piety to God is before piety to parents (cf. Lev. xxi. 11, 12; Numb. vi. 6—8; Luke xiv. 26). (3) It is not clear that Philip's father was dead or even dying. He may have been from age, as it were, lingering on the brink of the grave. In this case, suppose he should linger three or four years, then Philip, in waiting to bury his father, would miss his opportunity of attending upon Jesus, whose ministry closed within that period. 5. *The claims of Christ are spiritual before all things.* (1) The unspiritual are dead while they live. "The philosophers esteem those dead who subject the mind to sense" (Clemens Alexandrinus). "The wicked are dead to virtue, alive to evil" (Philo). "The wicked are dead while yet alive" (Maimonides; cf. Eph. ii. 1; Col. ii. 13; 1 Tim. v. 6; Rev. iii. 1). (2) "Let the dead" in trespasses "bury their dead." There is an affinity between spiritual and natural death. Those are styled dead who are in a fitter state for burying the dead than for preaching the gospel. (3) Let those look after the dying for the sake of what they may inherit, who are spiritually dead. The spiritual must not turn aside from the gospel for any temporal gain. When God calls to the ministry we must leave the business of this world. (4) "Follow me." We must surrender ourselves at once and entirely to Christ. Want of leisure is too often want of inclination.

II. THE LIFE-LESSON OF CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP IS CHRIST. 1. *Christ is the Teacher in his school.* (1) He has ushers or under-teachers—prophets, apostles, ministers.

But their commission is to preach Christ. If they teach for doctrines commandments of men, they betray their trust. (2) The Spirit of Christ is ever present in his Church. He sheds his light upon the Word that he inspired. He sheds his love abroad in the hearts of his sincere disciples. 2. *Christ is also the Subject of his teaching.* (1) Styling himself "the Son of man," he claims to be Messiah (cf. Ps. viii. 4 with Heb. ii. 6, 16; see also Dan. vii. 13, 14). (2) The correlative title is "Son of God." Christ constantly speaks of himself as "the Son of man" (see ch. xxvi. 63, 64). He uses the term to assert his humanity (see John xii. 34). His miracles asserted his Divinity. (3) With a single notable exception (see Acts vii. 56), his disciples speak of him as "the Son of God." 3. *Properly to know Christ we must embark with him.* (1) By embarking with Christ we do not escape storms. On the contrary, we may encounter them because he is in the ship. Does not Christ's "rebuking" the wind suggest that intelligent agency was behind it? The "prince of the powers of the air" would rejoice to sink such a freight as Christ and his Church. (2) But with Jesus we are safe. "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" Fearfulness is a sign of little faith. Why did they not confide in his Godhead, which never sleeps? Had they been able in faith to say, "The Lord is my Strength," then would they have added, "Of whom shall I be afraid?" (3) The sleep of Jesus in the storm showed the confidence of his humanity in his Godhead. It betokened also that inward peace which his disciples might have amidst the storms of temptation and affliction. (4) The recourse of the disciples to the humanity of Christ shows how necessary is that humanity to us as the way of our access to the Godhead. (5) "And he *arose*, and rebuked the wind." So the calming of the storm in the soul is the result, not only of the Lord's awaking, but also of his arising, viz. from the sleep of death. He rebuked and calmed the spirits of his disciples first, and then he rebuked the wind and calmed the sea. Spiritual things take precedence of material. (6) "What manner of man is this?" The Divine Man. To still the raging of the sea is the acknowledged work of God. The God of nature is the God of grace.—J. A. M.

Vers. 28—34.—*Demoniacal possession.* The personality of devils or demons has been called in question, and the examples of demoniacal possession recorded in Scripture have been construed as cases of insanity. But the narrative before us refuses to be thus treated. Here clearly are intelligences who can know, reason, speak, and pray, and who can exist separately from the subject of possession, and after expulsion from men can enter and possess inferior animals. Note—

I. THAT DEVILS ARE FORMIDABLE FOES. 1. *They are formidable in power.* (1) This is evident from their *appellatives* (see Eph. ii. 2; vi. 12; Col. ii. 15). (2) From their *exploits.* See the history of Job. Did not Satan transport the body of Jesus from the wilderness to the pinnacle of the temple, and thence to the mountain summit (see ch. iv. 5, 8)? (3) From the *example* of these demoniacs. No man could bind them (see Mark v. 3, 4). 2. *They are formidable in number.* (1) Else how could they tempt so constantly the 1,400,000,000 living men? Their number must be great if all the wicked men that have died are demons. (2) Their name is "legion." A Roman legion numbered six thousand men (see Mark v. 9). (3) Things singly insignificant in numbers become formidable. Frogs and flies in multitudes became Egyptian plagues. In relation to the swarms of demons marshalled by Satan he is called Beelzebub—"Lord of flies." 3. *They are formidable in their military order.* (1) This, too, is suggested in the name of "legion." They are officered into principalities, powers, world-rulers of darkness, and spiritual rulers of wickedness in the heavens (see Eph. vi. 12). (2) They are efficiently marshalled. Some are devils of pride; some of coveteousness; some of sensuality; some of profanity; some of malice. Those who are led by any propensity to evil are possessed by a demon apt to stimulate it. Is your familiar an "unclean spirit"? 4. *They are formidable in their inveterate malignity.* (1) They are proud spirits. What but inveterate malignity could induce them to ask leave of God to work mischief? (2) The more so when they know that for the mischief they work they will incur a terrible retribution. Devils are not yet in hell. Their time of torment is the day of judgment (cf. ver. 29; Rev. xii. 12; xx. 1—3, 10). 5. *They are formidable because of their passion for enshrinement in humanity.* (1) Out of humanity they are troubled and uneasy (cf. ch. xii. 43). It is "torment" to them

to be ejected from humanity (ver. 29). (2) They prefer enshrinement in the body of a beast to being houseless. Satan enshrined himself in a serpent. These demons entreated to be allowed to enter into the swine. (3) They make havoc wherever they come. The evil disposition of the heart is a tomb in which a demon dwells.

II. DEMONIACAL ASCENDENCY IS DISASTROUS TO HUMANITY. 1. *Disastrous because assimilating.* (1) This is more evident in Mark's account, in which the plural and singular are so mingled that it is difficult to know whether the demons or the demoniac speaks (cf. Mark v. 6—10). (2) This possession is the more deplorable as it diabolizes the Godward side of humanity. 2. *Disastrous because dissocializing.* (1) These demoniacs were driven from society into the solitude of the tombs. (2) Sin breaks up homes and friendships. (3) It destroys commonwealths. (4) The rich man in hell did not desire the company of his five brethren. 3. *Disastrous because infuriating.* (1) It is *suicidal.* These demoniacs cut themselves with stones (see Mark v. 5). The priests of Baal cut themselves with knives (1 Kings xviii. 28; see also Lev. xix. 28; Jer. xvi. 6). Sin is moral suicide. (2) It is *fratricidal.* "Cain was of that wicked one, and slew his brother." These demoniacs were the terror of passengers (ver. 28). "One sinner destroyeth much good."

III. ABSOLUTE SUPREMACY VESTS IN CHRIST. 1. *Demons confess him their Superior.* (1) This is remarkable in their history since the experiment in the wilderness. There it was, "If thou be the Son of God." Here it is, "What have we to do with thee, thou Son of God?" (2) They tremble in the presence of their Judge. "Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" They were preconscious of their casting out. That casting out they regarded as a presage of their time of final judgment (cf. John xii. 31; xiv. 11). 2. *He may listen to a devil's prayer.* (1) He consented to the prayer of these demons that they should be suffered to enter into the swine. He consented to the prayer of Satan that he might torment Job. (2) Why should he not? He can work gracious purposes by the most unlikely agency. His consent to the prayer of the demons was a judgment upon the sin of the swine-dealers. (3) The injury wrought upon the fig tree, that upon the traffickers in the temple, and this upon the swine-dealers, were severally presages of future vengeance. 3. *He may listen to a rebellious sinner's prayer.* (1) The Gadarenes besought him to depart out of their borders. They would rather have demons and swine among them than the holy Jesus. He heard their prayer. (2) Let the blasphemer beware. His horrible prayers may be answered. The imprecation, "His blood be upon us, and upon our children," had a terrible response in the wars of the Jews and in the horrors of their long captivity. (3) Let the rejecter of the gospel beware. 4. *He may refuse the prayer of a saint.* (1) The Gadarene, now no longer a demoniac, but a grateful believer, entreated that he might be with his Deliverer (see Mark v. 15), but was refused (Mark v. 18, 19). The bodily presence of Jesus he must not have; but his spiritual presence he may enjoy. (2) Jesus had other work for him to do (Mark v. 19, 20). He was to go home, where he was best known, and there to let his light shine. (3) Let us not be discouraged if our prayers are not answered precisely as we desired. God answers our prayers to our utmost advantage.—J. A. M.

Ver. 2.—*Doubts turned into prayers.* "If thou wilt." This may be the first instance in which our Lord put forth his power to cleanse a leper, and, if so, the hesitation and anxiety of the man is very naturally explained. His approach is that of a man who had his doubts and fears, but had also his confidences and hopes; and he very properly let his faith decide his action rather than his fears. We may look on him as a man doubting, but showing us how to deal with our doubts; and proving to us how easily our doubts may be dispelled, if we deal wisely with them; and we deal wisely when we do not keep them to ourselves, but turn them into prayers, and speak them out to God.

I. THE SPIRIT OF DOUBT. This can only be regarded as an evil thing. The spirit of trustfulness, receptiveness, is becoming to the child of God. A fashion of doubting, and a pride in doubting, as if it were something very clever, are in every way most mischievous, ruinous to our moral nature, because destructive of that which is the great glory of the creature, the capacity for trust. And yet it must also be seen and recognized, that doubt is really the working of a necessary quality of mental manhood.

He is not really a man who is *unable* to doubt. To see two sides of a thing, and have to choose between them, involves a period of doubting. The man who *cannot* doubt cannot have an intelligent faith. The basis of all moral decision is doubt that can weigh considerations. So it is a great thing to say, "We *can* doubt, yet we *do* believe." This leper may have heard of the great things Jesus had done, but the question came—Could he cleanse a leper? There was no settling that doubt; so he turned it into a prayer, and took it to Christ.

II. OUR ACTUAL DOUBTS. It may be well to notice what subjects those doubts chiefly concern. And we must deal, not with intellectual doubts, but with religious doubts—those which bear relation to our spiritual condition, our cleansing from sin. Letting the case of the leper be suggestive, we may notice that: 1. Our doubts may concern our *need* of Christ as a Saviour. It may be that we admit he is *the* Saviour, but we doubt our need of him as *our* Saviour. 2. Our doubts may concern the *ability* of Christ to save. We may incline to accept his good will, and to doubt his power. We may be disposed to say, "If thou *canst*." Doubt often makes men think there is something special in their case that puts them beyond the reach of Christ. 3. Our doubts may concern the *good will* of Christ. Everybody else shunned the leper; how well the man might fear that Christ would shun him too! But he took all his doubts to Christ.—R. T.

Ver. 4.—*Our Lord's avoidance of public excitement.* "See thou tell no man." There may have been some precise reason for this injunction in this particular case; but it is only one instance among many of our Lord's desire to work quietly, and keep free from the pressure of mere crowds, and the rush of popular excitement. To understand our Lord's objection to crowds, we must realize how excitable Eastern people are, and how entirely it is *animal* excitement, with very little intellectual or moral character. It therefore was an altogether hopeless seed-bed into which to cast seeds of truth. Dean Stanley describes the crowding of the people, in the Lebanon district, when the news spread abroad that there was a doctor in the company. "The stairs and corridors of the castle of the Maronite chief, Sheikh Joseph, were lined with a crowd of eager applicants." Travellers notice that, because so excited, Eastern crowds are rough and unmannerly, every one pressing to secure his own interest at once. We can see some reasons why Jesus avoided excitements.

I. HE DID NOT WISH TO MAKE MIRACLES HIS CHIEF WORK. But this they would soon have become if he had not put a check on them. Very soon he might have had every moment of his life filled up with doctoring work, and the Saviour of souls might have become a mere Eastern hakim. We cannot too constantly set before ourselves the truth that our Lord's miracles were not his *life-work*, but the *illustration* of his life-work. Illustration must always be kept in due place and proportion.

II. HE DID WISH TO DO HIS WORK IN MEN'S THOUGHTS. It cannot be too clearly seen that our Lord's mission was largely intellectual, and that the emotional had to be kept within strict limitation, because the emotional is sure to push out the intellectual. Christians brought in at revival-times seldom or ever show any interest in intelligent religion. The teaching of the day had put ritual, religious routine, in the place of personal thinking. It is not sufficiently considered that one first and most valuable result of Christ's teaching was this—it made men think for themselves. Now, crowds do not think. Intelligence is not characteristic of the crowds that now follow after revivalists.

III. HE DID WISH TO DO HIS WORK IN MEN'S CHARACTERS. And so he proposed to work as leaven works. He dealt with individuals. The adhesion of a number was of little interest to him. He admitted to the kingdom one by one, after a direct and personal dealing with each one. So the individual was of primary importance to Christ. To him character was power, and it would prove powerful, influential, a redemptive force.—R. T.

Ver. 10.—*A faith that caused surprise.* "That upon which the Son of God fastened as worthy of admiration was not the centurion's benevolence, nor his perseverance, but his faith. And so speaks the whole New Testament, giving a special dignity to faith." Our Lord found something unusual in this man's faith, which he contrasts with the

faith he had already observed. Evidently this man had risen above the common idea of faith, as a sort of magical influence, which required some personal touch, or the working of some charm, to the idea of a delegated power, depending only on the will of him who possessed it. The centurion's expectation of instant obedience to his lightest command enabled him to believe that Christ had a similar power and authority in relation to disease. Consider the requirement of faith.

I. THE PRIMARY DEMAND OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION IS FAITH. Illustration in our Lord's demand from all those whom he healed. This is sometimes very evident; it is always present, though needing to be searched out. The first demand of Christianity may *seem* to be love; it is only love because love carries and enshrines faith.

II. THE LIFE AND DEATH OF THE LORD JESUS ARE NOW THE OBJECTS OF FAITH. Just as the word of Jesus was for the centurion. He believed the word Jesus had spoken, and acted on the belief. The life and death of Jesus (1) reveal *God*, and ask me to believe that he is Love; (2) reveal *me*, and ask me to believe that I am a sinner; (3) reveal the glory and grace of *Jesus* as God's Son and my Saviour.

III. CONVERSION IS FAITH IN THE WORD OF GOD, WHICH JESUS IS. The strength and happiness of Christian life come from believing and obeying the word which the living Jesus speaks. "God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."

IV. FAITH IS A REAL AND PRACTICAL POWER IN COMMON HUMAN CONDUCT. "We trust our senses; and that though they often deceive us. We trust men; a battle must often be risked on the intelligence of a spy. A merchant commits his ships, with all his fortunes on board, to a hired captain, whose temptations are enormous. Without this principle society could not hold together for a day. It would be a mere sand-heap. Such, too, is religious faith; we trust on probabilities; and this though probabilities are often against us."

V. FAITH IS THE LINK GOD HAS APPOINTED TO ATTACH US TO HIMSELF FOR SALVATION AND STRENGTH. F. W. Robertson says, "Faith is that which, when probabilities are equal, ventures on God's side, and on the side of right; on the guarantee of a something within which makes the thing seem to be true because it is loved."—R. T.

Ver. 13.—*The grounds and rewards of faith.* Christ's miracles were not so much convictions for the unbelieving as confirmations for the believing. If we believe in Christ on other grounds, then his miracles will serve to establish and to instruct our faith. It is not the merely wonderful features of them; it is the moral and spiritual truth they exhibit and illustrate which really blesses men. And so we find that they are always called "signs" or "mighty works."

I. THE GROUNDS OF FAITH. Faith is exceedingly difficult to explain and define. Partly because it has both an intellectual and a moral side. It is, in a sense, the mental grasp of a proposition; and it is heart-acceptance of a relation. It is *belief* and it is *trust*. Commonly received definitions do but give features or aspects of it. Essentially it is the act and expression of soul-dependence. Faith is not difficult to recognize in particular instances; as when the little child leaps into the dark cellar on her father's assurance. Faith is not difficult to recognize as the motive power in our common, everyday relations. We know well how our daily life is built upon mutual trust. And yet the faith that bears relation to our eternal salvation must have a ground or reason. It may rest on (1) a statement; or on (2) a person; or on (3) a doctrine; or on (4) a character. The highest ground is trust *in a person*. The most effective influences on our lives are our trusts in persons. Sometimes through the doctrine faith comes to reliance on the person. Sometimes through the person it comes to the acceptance of the doctrine. Both apply to Christ; in one way or the other, saving faith is reliance on the living, redeeming, sanctifying Person—the Lord Jesus Christ. Our proper ground of faith is Jesus himself.

II. THE REWARDS OF FAITH. These may be either: 1. *Gaining the thing desired.* Responding to the prayer of faith, Christ may be graciously pleased to say, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Let it be the burden of sin, he may say, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." 2. *Increase of faith.* More than once a little and weak faith came to Christ, and in his presence grew stronger; it won a blessing, and in the joy of the blessing it sprang up into fuller power. Wait for the right faith, and you may wait in vain. Use well the little faith you have, and in the use you shall find the

faith increase. 3. *Kindling faith in others.* We seldom recognize as we should what a power there is in faith to quicken faith in others. The confident, hopeful man cheers all about him. The world is being saved, not by its men of science, but by its men of faith.—R. T.

Ver. 17.—*Bearing others' woes by sympathy.* "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." The evangelist is here pointing out that our Lord actually suffered with those who suffered. His power to heal was directly connected with his power to sympathize; and such sympathizing was necessarily followed by extreme weariness and physical exhaustion. If we can get a true and worthy idea of the way in which our Lord *bore* the sufferings which he removed, we shall be in a fair way to understand how he could bear the *sins* from which he came to deliver us. This passage, quoted from Isa. liii. 4, "does not mean that Christ literally took into his body and bore himself all the fevers, pains, lamenesses, blindnesses, leprosies, he healed, but simply that he took them upon his sympathy, bore them as a burden upon his compassionate love. In that sense exactly he assumed and bore the sins of the world; not that he became the sinner, and suffered the due punishment himself, but that he took them on his love, and put himself, by mighty throes of feeling and sacrifice and mortal passion, to the working out of their deliverance. The sins were never his, the deserved pains never touched him as being deserved, but they were upon his feeling in so heavy a burden as to make him sigh, 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful.' And just because the world in sin took hold of his feeling in this manner, was he able in turn to get hold of the feeling of the world, and become its true Deliverer and Saviour. In this fact lay bosomed the everlasting gospel" (Bushnell).

I. HUMAN SYMPATHY BEARING THE WOES OF OTHERS. Take illustrative cases, such as the mother, who bears the disabilities, or sufferings, of her child. Let it be a cripple-child, see how sympathy finds expression in tireless ministries. Or take the doctor, whose sympathy leads him to take his patient up into thought, study, anxiety, and sets him upon every effort to preserve life, or relieve pain. In what a full and true sense the pain we take up by sympathy becomes *ours!* Yet more striking is a mother's sympathy when her boy brings on himself sufferings *through his sins.* Then her *bearing* means effort to get him delivered from both sufferings and sins.

II. DIVINE SYMPATHY BEARING THE WOES OF OTHERS. We may learn of God from our best selves. But this we may confidently say, if God takes up our woes, he will be most concerned about the sins which are the real causes of all the woes.—R. T.

Ver. 20.—*The testing of would-be disciples.* These cases are more fully given by Luke (ix. 57—62). Our Lord did not aim to be the founder of a sect, and he never showed any interest in mere numbers. He made each offer of discipleship either a test of the real religious condition of the individual, or else an opportunity for laying down or illustrating the great principles, responsibilities, and duties of his kingdom. Two cases are before us in connection with this text. Both men illustrate the general evil of the divided heart—the heart not wholly given to the Lord God. But we may see the form this general evil may take in the case of a precipitate disciple, and in the case of a procrastinating disciple.

I. THE TESTING OF A PRECIPITATE DISCIPLE. With very forcible figures of speech, Christ replies to the precipitate disciple, who gushingly says, "I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest,"—"Stop; sit down quietly; count the cost; calmly anticipate; worldly honours do not crown this profession which you are so hurriedly taking up; earthly riches do not lay their treasures at the feet of those who bear this name; the servants are likely to be as the Master; and while 'foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.' Are you honestly and heartily prepared to take up your cross, and to take up that cross daily, and follow Christ, not ashamed even though your Lord should be treated as a crucified malefactor, and your brethren be regarded as those that turn the world upside down?"

II. THE TESTING OF THE PROCRASTINATING DISCIPLE. In language rather more difficult to understand, our Lord in effect says to him, "'Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation.' *I* called thee—*I* who am thy Lord, thy Redeemer. Nothing can excuse delay in replying to the call of thy Lord and thy God Thy Lord

is more to thee than thy earthly father; thy living Lord is certainly more to thee than thy dead father. Let those who are 'dead in trespasses and sins' care for the naturally dead; just now your attention is arrested by an all-absorbing call; your redeeming Lord has called you; then at once, without delay, without hesitation, obey,—'Go thou and preach the kingdom,' as a sign that you are my disciple." That message tested him. It tests us. If God has spoken to our hearts, that message is an all-absorbing message. Our weak hearts are always urging us to say, "By-and-by, Lord; by-and-by." Augustines still pray, "Lord, convert me, but not yet." And Jesus still says, "He that forsaketh not all that he hath cannot be my disciple."—R. T.

Ver. 20.—*Christ's name for himself.* Christ had a distinctive name for God. He almost always speaks of him as *the Father*. Christ had as distinctive a name for himself. It embodies the apprehension of him that anybody and everybody might gain; and not that particular apprehension which would come only to more intimate, and more spiritually taught, disciples. The name "Son of man" is used seventy-one times in the New Testament, and in every case but one by our Lord himself. The martyr Stephen also uses the name (Acts vii. 56; comp. Dan. vii. 13). To see the force of the term we must keep in mind that Jewish surnames took the form "son of." Thus Simon Bar-Jona, or "son of Jona;" James and John, the sons of Zebedee.

I. WHAT DOES THIS NAME DENY? That Jesus was the Son of any particular man. It would be to limit him and his relations if he could have been called "the Son of Joseph." Properly regarded, this name denies the ordinary natural origination of Jesus, and supports the great doctrine of the Incarnation. Observe, too, that our Lord never had the difficulty of deciding between the authority of the earthly and heavenly Father.

II. WHAT DOES THIS NAME ASSERT? 1. That Jesus was humanity's Child. He belongs to the race. 2. That Jesus was a new Race-head, a second Adam, a Beginner of a new spiritual generation. 3. That Jesus was a Divine Child, getting an origination by the inbreathing of God as truly as the first Adam by the fiat of omnipotence. So the truth of his being the *Son of God* is actually carried by the assertion that he is the *Son of man*. It may further be shown what this implies concerning his *unity* with our race—it involves the possibility of his full sympathy with human sorrow and need. And yet it includes also the explanation of his having no home, for he was the Son of no particular man, and so had no natural home rights. "It is remarkable that this name for Christ never passed into the current language of the apostolic Church, nor into the theological or liturgical phraseology of Christendom. It is not used in any of the Epistles" (but see Rev. i. 13; xiv. 14).—R. T.

Ver. 27.—*Revelations of the mystery in Christ.* This text gives the impression produced by one of the most striking miracles that Jesus wrought. It belongs to the earlier part of the ministry, when men scarcely knew what to think of him. Christ was asleep in the boat, lying on an old sail, or on John's fisher-coat—so fast asleep that the howling wind, and creaking oars, and flapping waves, did not disturb him. The fishermen scarcely knew what to do for the best. It took all their rowing to keep the boat's head to the wind, and she was fast filling with the waves that broke over her sides. At last, in their despair, they awoke the Master. He rose as calmly as if there was no danger, and spoke the words which declared him to be the Lord of nature, but set the fishermen wondering who he was. All Christ's life was a revelation of himself. Revelation can come by acts and by words, by nature, by a book, or by a life. Miracles are revelations; so we ask—What does this miracle reveal?

I. THE REVELATION IT MAKES OF THE PERSON OF CHRIST. Throughout his life the question was asked, "Who is he?" "What think ye of Christ?" It was asked by his countrymen of Nazareth; by his disciples; by John the Baptist; by the Pharisees from Jerusalem. Christ's answer is, "If ye believe not me, believe the works." Then look at *this* work. 1. It gives deep impression of Christ's being *within* humanity. See the suggestions of his sleep. His sleepless nights of prayer do not surprise us; his *tiredness* does. A human Saviour is he who sleeps. 2. It gives deep impression of Christ's being *beyond* humanity. He controls the storms; commands the forces of nature. If that man is under limitations, he must have put himself under

limitations voluntarily. Show how the thought of Christ has grown. Carpenter, great Teacher; wonderful Hakim; Messiah; Son of God. Then spiritual Saviour; and to us ideal Manhood—"God manifest in the flesh."

II. THE REVELATION IT MAKES OF THE MISSION OF CHRIST. Which was to show men the Father. He told them what the Father was, and what the Father thought. He showed them what the Father was always doing in his love to them. What, then, did he show here? How the Father-God is ever at work, controlling the hindering and distressing circumstances that imperil us. In the Old Testament *water* is the type of the oppositions of outward circumstances. Illustrate: the Red Sea; the river Jordan. We often think ourselves mastered by outward things, or at least find in them our excuses. This is the age of masterful circumstances; so we need this miracle, and its assurance that our Father-God holds the waters—and all they represent—in the hollow of his hand.—R. T.

Ver. 28.—*Power over devils.* It should not be surprising that some incidents in our Lord's life prove to be beyond present explanation. In this there is a similarity between God's works and God's Word. Probably we could explain our Lord's power over devils if we could recover fully the sentiments of his day concerning possession by devils. Scientific medicine was not known by the Jews. Their persistent ignorance is due to their strange belief that sickness was the punishment of sins committed either by the sufferer himself or his relations; hence it was almost always attributed to the action of evil spirits. The only cure possible, therefore, was the expulsion of the evil spirit, and the whole science of medicine consisted in discovering the best method of exorcising the demon.

I. DEVIL-POSSESSIONS. It is necessary to consider some received views as to the nature of evil. 1. The Manichæan. Two co-ordinate principles of good and evil. Compare the Zoroastrian principles represented in Ormuzd and Ahriman. 2. The pantheistic. No reality, or separate existence to evil. Only a lower form of good; unripe good. 3. The scriptural. Evil the contingency necessary to creaturehood; the essential possibility of a *moral* being, entrusted with the control of his own actions. Man a being subject to influences; other wills do affect his. Illustrate by power of one man over another. Man is in a state of sin; that is a state of bondage to another will. So comes in the Scripture idea of a king and kingdom of evil. With this in mind, examine the particular form of sickness called "devil possessions." Perhaps it differed from epilepsy, hysteria, or insanity; but the lack of scientific description prevents our forming a precise judgment. What we notice is (1) lost control of the bodily organization; (2) consequent unrestrained sensuality; (3) lucid intervals; and (4) the sense of misery and cry for deliverance. We may best compare with *delirium tremens*, the mastery of a man's body and will by the spirit of drink.

II. THE JEWISH MODE OF DEALING WITH CASES OF DEVIL-POSSESSIONS. They used incantations. The rabbi pronounced a magic formula. One of the Jewish books prescribes a sacred root called *baaras*. Using this aright, the devils will come out through the nostrils.

III. OUR LORD'S POWER OVER THE DEVIL-POSSESSED. Notice: 1. The absence of all incantation. 2. Our Lord used no agencies. 3. The word of command sufficed. If devils represent the supreme woe that can afflict man, then Jesus proclaimed himself Master of man's worst woe.—R. T.

Ver. 34.—*The design of miracle frustrated.* The destruction of the swine is one of the chief difficulties of the gospel narratives. Some common impressions in relation to it need careful correction. 1. They were wild hogs, not what we understand by pigs. Their conduct is that of half-wild creatures. 2. Christ, at the most, gave permission, not command. 3. That the spirits did enter the swine, and that this explains their wild conduct, is the people's idea, based on the paroxysms of the man when the devils were in him. 4. Similar rushes of animals are due to natural causes. See the stampede of horses, as, some time since, at Aldershot. 5. We need not think a judgment on the people for keeping swine was intended. There is no proof that they were under any Jewish obligations. We may notice the ends served by the scene. 1. It became an effective proof of the reality of the man's deliverance. So it answers to the

command, "Take up thy bed, and walk." Such a proof was needed by the *man*, who may have feared it was only a lucid interval. 2. It exhibited the terrible nature of the devils' possession. If the devils wrought such havoc in the swine, what must they have wrought in the man! The people may not have properly felt the sadness and misery of their brother's condition. See the effects of the incident on the Gadarenes. It was their "day of grace." Opportunity of salvation was afforded them.

I. OPPORTUNITY OF SALVATION WAS REJECTED BY THESE GADARENES. All Christ's offers are associated with some searching test, which makes it hard to accept them, and compels a man to deal resolutely with himself before he accepts them. Illustrate Zacchæus; young rich ruler; Matthew; St. Paul. Here the test was a mere loss of property. It can never be an easy thing to enter the kingdom. The entrance is a low postern door—a "needle's eye." Tests may now be more subtle; they are not less real, and they are much more searching. Gadarenes failed under their test.

II. OPPORTUNITY OF SALVATION WAS REMOVED FROM THESE GADARENES. Their rejection had to be recognized. It might have been recognized by some actual punishment. It was recognized by the immediate removal of the aid they misconceived and feared. Jesus went away grieving, and never came again. This may be your day of grace. It comes with a testing. In the test you may fail, and reject your Saviour. Rejected, he may remove.—R. T.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER IX.

Vers. 1—8.—*The paralytic forgiven and healed.* Parallel passages: Mark ii. 1—12; Luke v. 17—26. (For connexion of thought, cf. ch. viii. 18, note.) In the parallel passages this narrative follows our ch. viii. 1—4. Matthew's account is shorter, as usual.

Ver. 1.—**And he entered into a ship**; *boat* (Revised Version). So completely did he grant the request of the Gadarenes. Observe that this expression is not an original phrase of the writer of the First Gospel, but is a reminiscence of the source that he has just used (cf. Mark v. 18; Luke viii. 37; in both of which it now forms part of the preceding narrative). **And passed over**; *crossed over* (Revised Version); διεπέρασεν, also in the source (cf. Mark v. 21). **And came into his own city**; *i.e.* Capernaum, where Mark says that the following miracle took place. The thought is that of John i. 11. Yet observe the contrast with ch. viii. 34. There "all the city" rejected him; here some of the leaders reject him, but the multitudes fear and glorify God (ver. 8).

Ver. 2.—**And, behold, they brought to him** (προσέφερον αὐτῷ). Bengel's remark, "*Offerebant*—Tales oblationes factæ sunt Salvatori plurimæ, gratæ," though very beautiful, is, from its undue insistence on the sacrificial use of προσφέρω, hardly exegesis. Matthew omits the difficulty that was experienced in bringing him to our Lord (see parallel passages), yet this alone accounts for the special commendation of their faith. **A man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed.** Probably a mat or quilt (ver. 6). Professor Marshall, in the *Expositor* for March, 1891, p. 215, has a most interesting note showing that the differences between "lying on a bed" (Matthew) and "carried by four" (Mark), and even "they sought to bring him in, and to place him before him" (Luke, who has already mentioned "on a bed"), may be explained by being different translations of an original Aramaic sentence. **And Jesus seeing their faith.** Including that of the paralytic, who, as we may gather from the obedience he afterwards shows, had agreed to and had encouraged the special efforts of his bearers. **Said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer** (θάρσει τέκνον). *Son.* So Mark, but Luke has "man" (ἄνθρωπε), which, though more usual in Greek (though still Hebraic, for ἀνήρ would have been in accordance with classical usage), is much more colourless. Τέκνον, as a term of address, is elsewhere in the New Testament used only where there is relationship physical (ch. xxi. 28; Luke ii. 48; xv. 31; even xvi. 25) or moral, especially that of pupil and teacher (Mark x. 24; cf. 1 Tim. i. 18; 2 Tim. ii. 1). It therefore implies that there is both sympathy and much common ground between the speaker and him whom he addresses. It is the antithesis of ch. viii. 29 (cf. further, *infra*, ver. 22). Thus it here served affectionately to encourage the sufferer in soul and body, preparing him to receive the announcement following. Matthew emphasizes its purpose by prefixing θάρσει. **Thy sins be**; Revised Version, *are*; expressing clearly that the words are the statement of a fact, not merely the expression of a com-

mand. **Forgiven thee**; Revised Version omits "thee" (genuine in Luke), with manuscripts (*ἀφίενταί σου αἱ ἁμαρτίαι*). Matthew and Mark use the present of general statement, Luke the perfect (*ἀφέωνται*, Doric; Winer, xiv. 3. *a*), to express a past fact of permanent significance. Observe the order of the Lord's assurance, as recorded in the true text. Courage, sympathy, forgiveness, and, only after all else, recalling individual sins. As the assurance of forgiveness is delightful to the soul, so is it often helpful to the body. Hence possibly our Lord's method in this case, for the man "inter spem metumque dubius pendebat" (Wetstein). Compare for the conjunction of the two, Jas. v. 15, and, as a still closer parallel to our passage, Talm. Bab., 'Nedarim,' 41*a*. "R. Hija bar Abba said, The sick doth not recover from his sickness until all his sins be forgiven him, for it is said, 'Who pardoneth all thy iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases.'" So also Qimhi (on Ps. xli. 5, "Heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee"): "He does not say, 'Heal my body,' for it is his sins that are the cause of his sickness, but if God heal his soul from its sickness, viz. by making atonement for his sins, then his body is healed."

Ver. 3.—**And certain of the scribes.** From St. Luke's account (ver. 17) we learn that the miracle took place before a large assembly of "Pharisees and teachers of the Law, who had come out of every village of Galilee, and Judæa, and Jerusalem." Yet even among these there was a division (*τινές*). **Said within themselves.** So Mark, "reasoning in their hearts." **This man** (*οὗτος*). The word seems to convey a notion of contempt and of vindictive joy that they have caught him (cf. Mark, *τί οὗτος οὕτως λαλεῖ;* and perhaps ch. xii. 24). **Blasphemeth** (*βλασφημεῖ*). In its fullest meaning; through assumption of Divine authority (so also ch. xxvi. 65; John x. 33, 36). "No passage of the Old Testament affirms that the Messiah himself will forgive sins. Thus Jesus ascribes to himself what even the highest Old Testament prophecies of the Messianic time had reserved to God; *e.g.* Jer. xxxi. 34; Isa. xliii. 25" (Kübel). Observe that Mark lays more stress upon the process of their thoughts, Matthew and Luke on the conclusion at which they arrived, Luke also indicating that the supposed sin had many parts (*λαλεῖ βλασφημίας*)—they thought, "Every word he has uttered is blasphemy."

Ver. 4.—**And Jesus knowing**; *εἰδώς* (but Textus Receptus, with margin of Westcott and Hort, and of Revised Version, *ἰδών*, "seeing"); parallel passages, *ἐπιγνούς*. The difference of form with agreement in sense points to varying translations of יָדַע (so Peshito, in each place). Perhaps the same cause may also account for the difference in the next words, *ἐνθυμήσεις, ἐνθυμεῖσθε*, but in the parallel passages, *διαλογίζονται, διαλογισμούς, διαλογίζεσθε* (cf. also ver. 8). (For similar instances of our Lord's knowledge, cf. ch. xii. 25; Luke vi. 8; ix. 47; John ii. 25; cf. further, *supra*, ch. viii. 10, note.) **Their thoughts, said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?** *Evil* (*πονηρά*). Does the plural point to stages in their reasoning? or is it merely used because he was addressing more than one person?

Ver. 5.—**For.** The expansion of his rebuke of their accusation, by his question and the command connected with it. **Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee** (Revised Version, *are forgiven*, omitting "thee"); **or to say, Arise, and walk?** The former, because the truth or otherwise of the latter is at once visible. Observe that the two alternatives cover the two realms of influence, the spiritual and the physical. Men will not believe profession in the former realm if it be unaccompanied by visible results in the latter.

Ver. 6.—**But that ye may know.** From his authority in the physical world they may have direct knowledge (*εἰδῆτε*) of his authority in the spiritual world. Observe that the claim is even in the so-called "Triple Tradition." **That the Son of man hath power** (better, *authority*, with Revised Version margin, and the American Committee) **on earth to forgive sins** (*ὅτι ἐξουσίαν ἔχει ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἀφιέναι ἁμαρτίας*). Observe (1) that our Lord does not say "I," but "the Son of man"; (2) that the emphatic words in the sentence are "hath authority," and "on earth." It would therefore appear as though our Lord wished to call the attention of those present to a phrase which they already knew, but did not rightly understand. He seems to point them to Dan. vii. 13, and reminding them that even there "one like unto a son of man" (cf. *supra*, ch. viii. 20, note) receives authority (*ἡ ἐξουσία αὐτοῦ ἐξουσία αἰώνιος*, ver. 14), tells them that this authority includes forgiving sins, and that this may be exercised not only in the future and in "the clouds of heaven," but now (*ἔχει*) and "on earth." Further, if, as seems likely, the phrase was understood to symbolize the nation, he desired them to see in himself the great means whereby the nation should rise to its ideal. If, as is possible, though hardly probable, this saying of our Lord's is chronologically earlier than ch. viii. 20, and therefore the earliest occasion on which he used the phrase, the almost direct reference to Dan. vii. 13 makes it the more interesting. **(Then saith he to the sick of the palsy)**

The thought of the sentence is continued, but as he now turns directly to the sick man, its form is altered. **Arise, take up.** The Revised Version, retaining the wrong reading, *ἐγερθείς*, inserts "and." **Thy bed** (ver. 2, note), **and go unto thine house.** Thus avoiding publicity.

Ver. 7.—**And he arose, and departed to his house.** Three stages, rising, leaving the crowded court, home-coming. Healed in soul as in body, he is fully obedient.

Ver. 8.—**But when the multitudes saw it, they marvelled**; *were afraid* (Revised Version); *ἐφοβήθησαν*. A more solely physical effect than the *ἐθαύμασαν* of the Textus Receptus. (For a similar instance of fear at miraculous events, cf. Mark v. 15.) Resch's supposition ('Agrapha,' p. 62), that the difference of words here and in the parallel passages is due to various translations of the Aramaic, or rather of the Hebrew according to his theory, is in this case not improbable (cf. *supra*, ver. 4, and Introduction, p. xiv.). **And glorified God** (cf. ch. xv. 31), **which had given such power** (*authority*, as ver. 6) **unto men** (*τοῖς ἀνθρώποις*); *i.e.* the human race. Observe that though the phrase recalls ver. 6, there is here no mention of forgiving sins: the multitudes appear to have thought only of authority to perform the miracle; further, that although the multitudes seem to have heard Christ's words, they did not understand his expression to refer to Messiah.

Vers. 9—17.—3. THE LIBERTY OF THE GOSPEL AS SHOWN BY CHRIST'S TREATMENT OF THE OUTCAST, AND HIS ANSWER TO THOSE WHO INSISTED ON FASTING. (Cf. ch. viii. 1, note.) (1) The call of a publican to be a personal follower (ver. 9). (2) His kindly treatment of publicans and sinners, and his apology for showing it (vers. 10—13). (3) His care for the freedom of his disciples from ceremonial bondage (vers. 14—17).

Observe in this section the signs of opposition (1) from the high-Judaic party, on a question of moral defilement (ver. 11); (2) from those who were professedly waiting for Messiah, on a question of ceremonial observance (ver. 14).

Ver. 9.—*The call of Matthew.* Parallel passages: Mark ii. 13, 14; Luke v. 27, 28. All three evangelists connect this with the preceding miracle, but in the parallel passages the name is given as "Levi," St. Mark adding, "the *son* of Alphæus." If the First Gospel were not written, in either Greek or Aramaic, by St. Matthew himself, but by a catechist of the Matthean cycle (*vide* Introduction, pp. vi., xvii.), it is possible that "Levi," as found in the source, may have seemed to the catechist disrespectful, and that he altered it to the title by which he had been accustomed to hear his master called. If, on the other hand, and as seems more probable, this Gospel was written by St. Matthew, his preference for "Matthew" rather than "Levi" may be due to its meaning (*vide* Introduction, p. xxi.). **And as Jesus passed forth** (Revised Version, *by*) **from thence.** Mark ii. 13 says that our Lord went out along the seaside, where "the receipt of custom" (*vide infra*) would naturally be. **He saw a man, named** (Revised Version, *called*) **Matthew** (*vide* Introduction, p. xx.). In the Greek "a man" is closely joined to "sitting at the receipt of custom," the words *Ματθαῖον λεγόμενον* appearing to be almost an afterthought. Not the name, but the man's occupation, was the important thing. **Sitting.** Still plying his irreligious trade. **At the receipt of custom**; *at the place of toll* (Revised Version). Perhaps a mere booth by the roadside for collecting the *octroi*-duty on food, etc., carried past. At the present day in Palestine "a booth of branches, or a more substantial hut, is erected at every entrance into the city or village, and there, both day and night, sits a man at 'the receipt of custom.' He taxes all the produce, piercing with a long, sharp iron rod the large camel-bags of wheat or cotton, in order to discover concealed copper wire, or other contraband" (Van Lennep, in Exell, *in loc.*). Schürer (I. ii. p. 67) shows that the customs raised at Capernaum in the time of Christ undoubtedly went, not into the imperial *fiscus*, but into the treasury of Herod Antipas. On the other hand, in Judæa at that time the customs were raised in the interests of the imperial *fiscus*. (On "publicans" generally, see ch. v. 46, note; and for further details, Edersheim, 'Life,' i. 515.) **And he saith unto him, Follow me.** No promise is given corresponding to that in ch. iv. 19. **And he arose, and followed him.** Perhaps the day's work was just over, or he may have left some assistant there.

Vers. 10—13.—*The feast with publicans and sinners, and Christ's apology.* Parallel passages: Mark ii. 15—17; Luke v. 29—32. All three evangelists give the essential features of the section, but Mark and Luke show more clearly that the feast was in the house of the new disciple, and Matthew alone gives the reference to Hosea.

Ver. 10.—**And it came to pass, as Jesus** (*he*, Revised Version) **sat at meat**; "Gr. *reclined*: and so always" (Revised Version margin); cf. ch. xxvi. 20. **In the house;**

Luke, "And Levi made him a great feast in his house." Whether or not this was the same as the τελώνιον, we have no means of knowing, but presumably it was not. **Behold, many publicans** (ch. v. 46, note) **and sinners.** The second term seems to include all who openly impugned or neglected the Law. It is, therefore, sometimes used with special reference to Gentiles (ch. xxvi. 45; cf. Gal. ii. 15). **Came and sat down with him** (Revised Version, *Jesus*, emphatic) **and his disciples.**

Ver. 11.—**And when the Pharisees.** Mentioned thus far only in ch. iii. 7 and v. 20. This is, therefore, the first time that Matthew speaks of them as coming into direct contact with Jesus. Although Mark (cf. Luke) says that the objection was raised by those among the Pharisees who were also scribes (*οἱ γραμματεῖς τῶν Φαρισαίων*), yet the difference of expression from that in ver. 3 must not be overlooked. There the fact that they were scribes, accustomed to weigh the statements of the Law about blasphemy, etc., was prominent in the mind of the narrator; here it is rather the fact that they were Pharisees, men who by their very name professed to hold aloof from those who neglected the Law. **Saw it.** They could freely come into the court of the house, and when there could both see and hear what was passing in the rooms that opened into it. **They said**; ἔλεγον: *dicebant* (Vulgate); "were saying." Their eager talk is brought vividly before us. **Unto his disciples.** Probably these were nearer to the Pharisees than Jesus himself was, or perhaps the Pharisees thought it easier to attack Jesus through them. On the naturalness of this remark in the mouth of Pharisees, *vide* Schürer, II. ii. p. 25. **Why eateth your Master** (διδάσκαλος); *Teacher* (Revised Version margin) is preferable, for both Pharisees and disciples realized that even Jesus' actions were intended to instruct his followers. But the reason for this action (*why*, cf. also ver. 14) they did not understand. It is possible that the order of the Greek points to irony on the part of the Pharisees. The man who presumes to be called *Teacher*, and whom the disciples accept as such, sets at defiance the primary rules of right and wrong. Professor Marshall (*Expositor*, IV. iv. p. 222) explains the variants "teacher" (here) and "drink" (parallel passages) by the original Aramaic word for "drink" (רוא) having been written here with the peculiar spelling of the Samaritan Targum (רבא). **With** (*the*, Revised Version) **publicans and sinners?** Who form but one class (*τῶν τελωνῶν καὶ ἁμαρτωλῶν*). (For the thought, cf. ch. xi. 19; Luke xv. 2; also Ps. ci. 5 [LXX.].)

Ver. 12.—**But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole.** Οἱ ἰσχύοντες (so also Mark) may include an *arrière-pensée* of moral self-assertion which St. Luke entirely loses by his alteration to *οἱ ὑγιαίνοντες*: cf. 1 Cor. iv. 10. **Need not; *have no need of*** (Revised Version). These are the emphatic words in the sentence. Christ takes the Pharisees at their own estimate of themselves, and, without entering into the question of whether this was right or wrong, shows them that on their own showing he would be useless to them. **A physician, but they that are sick.** "Sed ubi dolores sunt, ait, illic festinat medicus," Ephr. Syr., in his exposition of Tatian's 'Diatess.' (Resch, 'Agrapha,' p. 443).

Ver. 13.—The first half of the verse comes in Matthew only. **But go ye and learn.** A common rabbinic phrase based on the fact that the disputants would not always have the cumbrous rolls of Scripture actually with them. These Pharisees professed to be students of Scripture, but had not yet learned the principle taught in this passage. **What that meaneth, I will have** (*I desire*, Revised Version) **mercy, and not sacrifice.** *Mercy* (ἔλεος). In the original connexion of this quotation (Hos. vi. 6) the words are without doubt (but cf. Dr. Taylor's 'Gospel in the Law,' p. 10) an expression of God's desire that his people should show mercy rather than only perform external sacrifices, and this meaning is probably intended by our Lord here also. The connexion will then be either (1) "I wish you to show mercy rather than perform external actions, for only thus will you resemble me in my coming to call sinners;" or (2) "I wish you to show this mercy, and therefore I practise it myself." The former seems the more natural. It is, however, possible that our Lord disregards the original context of the words, and uses them only as a summary of an important truth, that God prefers to show mercy rather than to insist on sacrifice. This would make excellent sense here, viz. "Learn the true principle by which God acts, free grace, for it is on this that I have acted in coming to call sinners." (So nearly Dr. Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 3.) The sentence is quoted again in ch. xii. 7, where the original thought of the words seems more certainly applicable. **For I am not come**; *for I came not* (Revised Version). Christ refers to his historic coming in the Incarnation rather than to his abiding presence (cf. also ch. v. 17). **To call the righteous, but sinners** (*καλέσαι δικαίους ἀλλ' ἁμαρτωλούς*). The English generic article in the first term spoils the anarthrous expression of the Greek by lessening the contrast between the two classes. Dr. Taylor suggests the rendering, "not *saints, but sinners*" (*op. cit.*, p. 4). **To repentance.** Omitted by the Revised

Version and Westcott and Hort. From the parallel passage in Luke.

Vers. 14—17.—*Christ's care for the freedom of his disciples from ceremonial bondage.* He teaches that the standpoint of the Baptist was preparatory (ch. iii.), and was not intended to be a permanent resting-place.

Observe that of the three accounts St. Matthew's points out the most clearly that the objection originated with the disciples of John the Baptist. Perhaps St. Matthew found these possessing special influence in the part for which his Gospel was primarily intended. So also St. John thought it desirable to recall the teaching of the Master, that while he himself was the Bridegroom, the Baptist was only subordinate (John iii. 29). On the survival of the teaching of John the Baptist, and the greater importance of its professed adherents during the apostolic age than is usually supposed, *vide* Bishop Lightfoot, 'Colossians,' p. 163, edit. 1875.

Ver. 14.—**Then** (*τότε*). In this case the close chronological connexion with the preceding incident is confirmed by the parallel passages (especially Luke). **Came** (*come*, Revised Version) **to him.** They move forward among the crowd, and draw near to him (*προσέρχονται αὐτῷ*). **The disciples of John** (*vide supra*), **saying, Why** (cf. ver. 11) **do we and the Pharisees fast?** (cf. ch. vi. 16, note, Schürer, II. ii. p. 118). **Oft** (*πολλά*); Textus Receptus, and Westcott and Hort margin, with all the versions and the great mass of the authorities. Yet probably to be omitted, with Westcott and Hort, on the evidence of the Vatican manuscript, and the original hand of the Sinaitic. It may have arisen from a gloss on the *πυκνά* of Luke. **But thy disciples fast not.** The feast given by St. Matthew was evidently at the time of some fast observed by the stricter Jews.

Ver. 15.—**And Jesus said unto them, Can.** It is a moral impossibility (ch. vi. 24). **The children** (*sons*, Revised Version) **of the bride-chamber** (*οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ νυμφῶνος*). Edersheim ('Life,' etc., i. 663) points out that these are not the *shoshbenim*, the friends of the bridegroom, who conducted the bride with music, etc., to the house of her parents-in-law, and to the bride-chamber, and who naturally remained to take part in the wedding feast; for (1) the custom of having *shoshbenim* prevailed in Judæa, but not in Galilee; (2) Talm. Jer., 'Succah,' § ii. 5, expressly distinguishes between the two terms: "Those who are *shoshbenim*, and all the sons of the bride-chamber, are free from the obligation of booths (בושבתין וכל בני חופה פטורין מן סוכה)." They appear to be those, invited by either party, who come to take part in the wedding festivities. They are, therefore, in full sympathy with bridegroom and bride, and, like them, cannot but rejoice. **Mourn**; parallel passages, "fast," but Matthew's word, as less closely connected with the cause of the objection raised, seems the more original. **As long as the bridegroom is with them?** Nösgen sees in this a claim to be the expected Bridegroom of Israel (Hos. ii. 19, 20; Jer. iii. 1—14; Ezek. xvi. 8). **But the days will come.** Christ speaks with prophetic assurance of the coming of such a time (*ἐλεύσονται δὲ ἡμέραι*). Observe his consciousness alike of his position and of what is coming upon him. **When the bridegroom shall be taken** (*away*, Revised Version) **from them.** His removal shall be effected, not by his own action, but by external agents (*ἀπαρθῇ*). In these unsettled times, with their frequent though mostly unimportant popular risings, it cannot have been a very unusual thing for the bridegroom to be carried off, not indeed before the consummation of the marriage, but before the end of the week of festivities. **And then shall** (*will*, Revised Version; there is no trace of a command, Christ is but stating a fact) **they fast.** Christ here endorses the principle of Christian fasts (cf. ch. vi. 16), but regards them as springing, not from any legal obligation, but from personal grief, in this case at his absence (cf. John xvi. 20). The only later passages in the New Testament where Christian fasting is mentioned are Acts xiii. 2, 3; xiv. 23; 2 Cor. vi. 5; xi. 27. In the 'Didaché,' § 8, we have the earliest formal recognition of it as a practice. It is there forbidden to fast on the same days as the Pharisees. Observe that this verse was understood in Tertullian's time as expressly commanding a fast during the forty hours in which our Lord was in the grave ('De Jejun.,' § 2), and that, from Irenæus's expression in Eusebius ('Ch. Hist.,' v. 24), this fast had been kept almost from apostolic times.

Ver. 16.—**No man**; *and no man* (Revised Version); *οὐδείς δέ*. "And" is slightly adversative. They will indeed fast then, yet fasting does not belong to the essence of my teaching. To insist on fasting would only be right if my teaching came merely into mechanical connexion with the religion of the day. But this is not the case. (1) Treated as an addition, it injures the religion of the day (ver. 16). (2) Treated as something to be accepted by all Jews, regardless of their moral fitness for it, it is itself wasted,

and also ruins those who so accept it (ver. 17). The verses thus (1) answer the disciples of John the Baptist, that fasting must not be made compulsory for Christ's disciples; and (2) warn them solemnly that they themselves must become morally fitted to receive Christ's teaching. *No man;* emphatic. Christ wants to show them the irrationality of what they want him to do—enjoin fasting on his disciples. **Putteth a piece**—*patcheth a patch* (*ἐπιβάλλει ἐπίβλημα*)—**of new** (*undressed*, Revised Version) **cloth unto** (*upon*, Revised Version) **an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up** (*that which should fill it up*, Revised Version; *τὸ πλήρωμα αὐτοῦ*) **taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse** (*and a worse rent is made*, Revised Version). My teaching is intended to be more than a patch (however good a patch) sewn on to the religion of the day.

Ver. 17.—**Neither do men put new wine into old bottles;** *wine-skins* (Revised Version); cf. Job xxxii. 19. (For rabbinic comparisons of the Law to wine, cf. Dr. Taylor, 'Aboth,' iv. 29.) **Else** (ch. vi. 1, note) **the bottles** (*skins*, Revised Version) **burst.** The stress is on "burst;" the thought is therefore not yet of the bottles, but of the fate of the wine. **And the wine runneth out** (*is spilled*, Revised Version; *ἐκχεῖται*), **and the bottles** (*skins*, Revised Version) **perish.** It ruins the vessels in which it is placed (ver. 16, note). **But they put new wine into new;** *fresh* (Revised Version); *καινούς*. The change from *νέος* of the wine to *καινός* of the skins is maintained in all three accounts, *νέος* suggesting the latest vintage, *καινός* that the skins are absolutely unimpaired (cf. Trench, 'Syn.,' § lx.). **Bottles** (*wine-skins*, Revised Version), **and both are preserved.**

Vers. 18—34.—4. THE COMPLETENESS OF HIS HEALING POWER. (Cf. ch. viii. 1, note.) (1) As regards restoration to life and life-strength generally (vers. 18—26). (2) As regards the restoration of separate bodily powers (vers. 27—34): (*a*) sight (vers. 27—31); (*b*) speech, though, in this case, the dumbness was the work of an evil spirit (vers. 32—34).

Observe also in this section the reference to the effect of his work upon outsiders. (1) The spread of the fame of his work and himself (vers. 26, 31). (2) The wonder of the multitudes (ver. 33) [and the accusation of the Pharisees (ver. 34)].

Vers. 18—26.—*The raising of the daughter of a ruler* (*Jairus*, in the parallel passages), *and the healing of the woman with an issue.* Parallel passages: Mark v. 21—43; Luke viii. 40—56. Matthew's account is much the shortest.

Ver. 18.—**While he spake these things unto them.** Matthew only. All the accounts represent our Lord as teaching when Jairus came to him; but in the parallel passages he was on the seashore (equivalent to our ch. viii. 34; ix. 1). Matthew alone places his coming just after the question of the Baptist's disciples. Probably the words, "while he spake these things unto them," are not in their original connexion. **Behold, there came a certain;** *a* (Revised Version); *ἄρχων* [*εἷς*] *προσελθών* (for *εἷς*, cf. ch. viii. 19, note). **Ruler** (*ἄρχων*). From this expression alone we should understand Jairus to have been head of the board of elders for the general affairs of the congregation; but Mark's expression, *εἷς τῶν ἀρχισυναγώγων* (cf. Luke, *ἄρχων τῆς συναγωγῆς*), compels us to regard him as that elder who was appointed to care specially for the public worship, Mark's language probably meaning that he was one of the class of those who held this appointment. Sometimes the offices of *ἄρχων* and *ἀρχισυνάγωγος* were held by the same person, and this may, perhaps, have been the case with Jairus (cf. Schürer, II. ii. p. 64). **And worshipped him** (ch. viii. 2, note). **Saying, My daughter is even now dead.** Matthew, by compression, indicates what had happened before the interview was over. **But come and lay thy hand upon her;** in sign of personal relation and life-communication. Kübel (*in loc.*) has an interesting note on the laying-on of hands in the New Testament (cf. also Bishop Westcott, on Heb. vi. 2). **And she shall live.**

Ver. 19.—**And Jesus arose.** Matthew only. From the table, if Matthew's connexion is to be followed; from his seat by the seashore, if Mark's. **And followed him.** As he led the way to his house. The tense (*ἠκολούθει*) shows that our Lord had already started when the next incident took place. **And so did his disciples.** Mark substitutes "a great multitude," and adds that "they thronged him" (cf. also Luke).

Ver. 20.—(**And, behold, . . . that hour**). The Revised Version and the ordinary editions of the Authorized Version omit the brackets, as unnecessary. **And, behold, a woman which was diseased with** (*who had*, Revised Version) **an issue of blood** (*αἱμορροοῦσα*). Physically and (Lev. xv. 25) ceremonially unclean. **Twelve years.** The age of Jairus' daughter as recorded in the parallel passages. The coincidence led to its being remembered, and the number itself was the more noticeable as it seems to have symbolized the presence of God in nature (3 × 4).

came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment. *Hem; border* (Revised Version); τοῦ κρασπέδου: *fimbriam* (Vulgate). The *zizith*, "tassels or fringes of hyacinth blue or white wool, which every Israelite, by reason of the prescription (Numb. xv. 37, *sqq.*; Deut. xxii. 12), had to wear at the four corners of his upper garment," Schürer (II. ii. p. 112), who adds in a note, "The colour of the zizith is now white, while originally it was to be of hyacinth blue. The Mishna, *Menachoth*, iv. 1, already presupposes that both are allowed. They are also not now worn, as the Pentateuch directs, and as was still the custom in the time of Christ, on the upper garment (טַלִּית, ἱμάτιον), but on the two square woollen shawls, one of which is always worn on the body, while the other is only wound round the head during prayer. Both these shawls are also called Tallith."

Ver. 21.—**For she said within herself, If I may**; *do* (Revised Version). There is no thought of permission (ἐὰν μόνον ἅψωμαι). **But touch his garment, I shall be whole**; *saved* (Revised Version margin). The threefold σώζειν is suggestive. Observe that she is "saved" in spite of her superstition; God "pitieth the blind that would gladly see" (Hooker, 'Serm.,' ii. § 38).

Ver. 22.—**But Jesus turned him about.** The order of the words shows that the thought centres, not on the action, but on the Person. It marks the transition of the narrative from the woman to Christ. Further, "to understand the greatness of Jesus' love, consider how a Pharisee might have treated one ceremonially so unclean" (Kübel). **And when he saw her.** The parallel passages show that this was after his inquiry who it was, etc. **He said, Daughter, be of good comfort**; *good cheer* (Revised Version); Θάρσει, θύγατερ. *Daughter* contains the same thought as "son" in ver. 2. St. Matthew alone, as there, expands its purpose by prefixing θάρσει. Θυγατέρα δὲ αὐτὴν καλεῖ, ἐπειδὴ ἡ πίστις αὐτῆς θυγατέρα αὐτὴν ἐποίησεν (Chrysostom, *in loo.*). **Thy faith hath made thee whole**; *hath saved thee* (Revised Version). It is possible that the additional words recorded in the parallel passages, "Go in peace," point to more than only physical restoration. **And the woman was made whole** (*saved*, Revised Version margin) **from that hour.**

Ver. 23.—**And.** During the incident of the healing of the woman news had come (parallel passages) to the ruler that his daughter was actually dead, and that it was useless to trouble the Teacher any more. But man's extremity is ever Christ's opportunity. **When Jesus came into the ruler's house.** Accompanied by only Peter, James, and John (parallel passages), and the parents (Luke). **And saw.** Apparently from outside the room (cf. ver. 25). **The minstrels**; *flute-players* (Revised Version); τοὺς αὐλητάς. For musicians as mourners, cf. 2 Chron. xxxv. 25. The Mishna ('Kethub.,' iv. 4; *vide* Lightfoot, 'Hor. Hebr.,' *in loc.*) says, "Even the poorest among the Israelites [his wife being dead] will afford her not less than two pipes, and one woman to make lamentation." **And the people**—a mere *crowd* (Revised Version); ὄχλος—**making a noise**; *tumult* (Revised Version). There was confusion as well as sound, as Mark indicates still more clearly.

Ver. 24.—**He said unto them, Give place**; *withdraw* (ἀναχωρεῖτε). This is no room for mourners (cf. Acts ix. 40). **For the maid**; *damsel* (Revised Version), to assimilate this and ver. 25 to the other passages where κοράσιον is found. **Is not dead, but sleepeth.** Our Lord looks forward to the result of his coming. So also probably Acts xx. 10. To take our Lord's words here as a literal statement of a present fact, meaning that she was only in a trance, is to contradict the words of the messenger (parallel passages), our next succeeding clause, and Luke's addition to it, "knowing that she was dead." **And they laughed him to scorn.** Bengel suggests that they were afraid of losing the payment for their work.

Ver. 25.—**But when the people** (*crowd*, Revised Version; cf. ver. 23) **were put forth, he went in.** Till they were cast out he would not enter. They with their hired sorrow would disturb the reverential feelings essential to the performance of such a miracle. **And took her by the hand, and the maid** (ver. 24, note) **arose.** Matthew omits all mention of Christ's words to her, but his ἠγέρθη is, perhaps, a reminiscence of the command ἔγειρε.

Ver 26.—Matthew only. **And the fame hereof** (ἡ φήμη αὕτη) **went abroad into all that land.** Of no one miracle is this elsewhere affirmed. (For the fame of him generally, cf. ver. 31 and ch. iv. 24.) **That land.** Doubtless Northern Palestine. It marks the Jerusalem standpoint of the writer (Nösgen); *vide* Introduction, p. xix.

Vers. 27—31.—*Two blind men restored to sight.* Matthew only. (For the connexion, *vide* ver. 18, note.) Weiss (see Rushbrooke, p. 75, A; and 'Life,' iii. 221) compares the incident at Jericho, ch. xx 29—34 (parallel passages: Mark x. 46—52; Luke xviii. 35—43). The points of *similarity* are: (1) The number, two, but in the parallel passages only one; (2) the expression that Jesus was *passing by* (ver. 27; ch. xx. 30); (3)

they cry out and say, "Have mercy on us, O Son of David;" (4) our Lord, in his question, asks about what he should *do;* (5) lays stress on their faith (Mark and Luke); (6) and touches their eyes (ch. xx. 34). The points of *difference:* (1) The place, here in Galilee, there by Jericho; (2) here in the house, there in the road, but even here they begin to address him in the road; (3) no mention here that he stopped when addressed, as there (ch. xx. 32); (4) our Lord here asks about their faith, there about their wish. (5) Observe also that both his charge, "See that no man know it" (ver. 30), and the statement that they spread abroad the fame of him, would be quite inconsistent with the late date of the miracle recorded in ch. xx.

From a consideration of these details, the conclusion seems inevitable that we have, in fact, narratives of two distinct occurrences, but it is quite consistent with this conclusion to suppose that during the oral transmission of the narratives a certain amount of assimilation took place. Upon this supposition, it further appears probable that, as the narrative in ch. xx. was the better known, for it was in the Petrine cycle, our narrative became assimilated to it rather than the reverse. On the other hand, the number recorded in ch. xx. (not Mark or Luke) looks much like an assimilation to that of our incident (cf. the notes on the section ch. viii. 28—34, ver. 31, and the section vers. 32—34).

Ver. 27. — **And when Jesus departed thence.** As he was passing along on his way *thence*, i.e. from the house of Jairus, if the context be pressed. It should be noticed that "thence" (ἐκεῖθεν) is found also in Mark vi. 1, immediately after the healing of Jairus' daughter. There it refers to the neighbourhood generally. Possibly its presence in Matthew is ultimately due to his remembering it in the next succeeding section of the oral framework. **Two blind men followed him, crying** (*out*, Revised Version; κράζοντες, so also ch. xx. 30), **and saying, Thou Son of David, have mercy on us.** The Revised Version rightly reverses the order of the two last clauses; the stress is on their own needs, not on their faith in giving him such a title. The words are identical in ch. xx. 30. *Thou Son of David.* The thought has been brought out in the genealogy (ch. i. 17), and our Lord lays stress upon it in ch. xxii. 42, *sqq.* Observe that although the excited multitudes at Jerusalem shout out the title at the triumphal entry (ch. xxi. 9; cf. also 15), yet the multitudes in Galilee only suggest the possibility of his having a right to it (ch. xii. 23), and the only persons who use it when directly addressing him are a heathen woman (ch. xv. 22), and three, or perhaps four, blind men (here and ch. xx. 30, 31). With the remembrance of what was promised to take place in Messianic days (Isa. xxxv. 5), the blind would be especially likely to accord him a Messianic title (cf. also ch. xi. 5, note). *Have mercy* (ch. v. 9, note).

Ver. 28.—**And when he was come into the house.** Where he would be undisturbed (cf. ch. xiii. 36). On the later occasion (ch. xx. 32) Jesus stood still in the road. **The blind men came to him.** Close (προσῆλθαν αὐτῷ). **And Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this?** They had professed faith in him, yet their after-conduct (ver. 31) shows that it was none too perfect. **They said unto him, Yea, Lord.** *Said; say* (Revised Version); λέγουσιν. The evangelist uses the more vivid present whenever he can. So in ch. xx. 33 (though not in the parallel passages).

Ver. 29.—**Then touched he their eyes.** So also ch. xx. 34, showing his sympathy and helping their faith (ch. viii. 3); cf. also John ix. 6, and *supra*, ver. 18, note. **Saying, According to your faith** (ch. viii. 13, note) **be it** (*done*, Revised Version; γενηθήτω) **unto you.**

Ver. 30.—**And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straitly charged them** (ἐνεβριμήθη αὐτοῖς). The notion is of "coercion springing out of displeasure. The feeling is called out by something seen in another which moves to anger rather than to sorrow" (Bishop Westcott, on John xi. 33). **Saying, See that no man know it.** Partly to avoid publicity for himself, partly for their own sake, for even the recital of the Lord's mercies towards us often becomes an occasion of spiritual harm, since it is apt to degenerate into "display" with its attendant evils. Ἡμᾶς διδάσκει φεύγειν τὸ ἐπιδεικτικὸν ὡς αἴτιον τῶν κακῶν (Origen, in Cramer's 'Catena'). The other occasions (*vide* ch. viii. 4, note) on which a similar command was given seem all to belong, with this, to the earlier part of his ministry.

Ver. 31.—**But they, when they were departed; *but they went forth and*** (Revised Version). The very moment that they left the house (cf. ver. 32) they disobeyed him. Observe that the phrases used in this verse are possibly due to a reminiscence of the similar phrases found in Mark i. 45 of the leper. **Spread abroad his fame in all that country; *land*** (Revised Version); ver. 26, note.

Vers. 32—34.—*The demon cast out of the dumb man. The astonishment of the multitudes and their confession.* [*The accusation by the Pharisees.*] The whole narrative greatly resembles the cure of the blind and dumb man possessed with a devil (ch. xii. 22—24; Luke xi. 14, 15), as may be seen from the fact that the following words are common to both passages, the brackets indicating a want of exact correspondence in the original. "They brought to him one possessed with a devil, dumb, and the [dumb spake]. And the multitudes [said] . . . But the Pharisees, He casteth out the devils by . . . the prince of the devils."

One explanation is that the two narratives are taken from different sources, but represent the same incident; another, that as in vers. 27—31, so also here, the narratives of two similar incidents have become assimilated. At any rate, in the case of ver. 34 there has probably been assimilation, and that since the writing of the Gospel. For: (1) Ver. 34 is wanting in D, the Old Latin manuscripts *a* and *k*, Hilary and Juvencus, and is therefore rightly bracketed by Westcott and Hort as perhaps "a Western non-interpolation" (ii. § 240). (2) The verse seems to be hardly in complete accordance with the aim of the whole section, which ends much more suitably with the effect on the multitudes. In ch. xii. 24 the verse forms a climax (cf. ch. xii. 2, 10, 14). But here there has been no opposition mentioned since the very beginning of the chapter (for the disobedience of the blind men cannot be so called), so that the monstrous accusation comes in quite unexpectedly.

Observe that this is not a case in which subjective difficulties are in themselves a *primâ facie* argument for the genuineness of a phrase, for the early copyists troubled themselves very little about questions of the internal arrangement and the general aim of the sections.

Ver. 32.—(*And*, Revised Version) **as they went out** (*forth*, Revised Version; ver. 31). They were still on the threshold (*αὐτῶν δὲ ἐξερχομένων*). **Behold, they brought to him.** The rendering of the Revised Version, "there was brought to him," is awkward, but avoids the implication that the blind men brought him this fresh case. **A dumb man possessed with a devil.** In ch. xii. 22 the man was blind also.

Ver. 33.—**And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel.** In ch. xii. 23 they have advanced a stage further, and suggest that Jesus is Messiah ("the Son of David;" cf. *supra*, ver. 27).

Ver. 34.—**But the Pharisees said** (*vide supra*). If the verse be genuine here, the thought, of course, is that the only effect of Christ's miracles upon the Pharisees was to drive them to open blasphemy and wanton opposition to the evidence of plain facts, as is brought out at length in ch. xii. 24—32. **He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils**; *by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils* (Revised Version); which indicates the true order of the words in the Greek. *Through.* The Revised Version margin, *in*, is more literal. The Pharisees assert not only that Jesus effected this cure by the instrumentality of Satan, but by means of union with him.

Ver. 35—ch. xi. 1.—THE AGENCY THAT CHRIST ESTABLISHED TO ENCOURAGE AND GUIDE THE SPIRIT OF INQUIRY THAT HAD BEEN EVOKED, AND HIS COMMISSION TO HIS AGENTS. He spares no pains himself (ver. 35). Yet his work is insufficient, and he sends forth others (ver. 36—ch. x. 1). A parenthesis, the names of the agents (ch. x. 2—4). The commission to the agents (ch. x. 5—42). He still teaches and preaches (ch. xi. 1).

Observe that in this section we have not, properly speaking, an account of the call or choosing of the twelve (Mark iii. 13, 14; Luke vi. 12, 13), but of their appointment as missioners (parallel passages: Mark vi. 7; and especially Luke ix. 1). For (1) the call is placed much earlier, chronologically, in Mark and Luke; (2) ch. ix. 35 is equivalent to Mark vi. 6, long after the call of the twelve; (3) ch. ix. 36 (end) is equivalent to Mark vi. 34, where it refers to what took place immediately after the return from the mission; (4) the parallel passages agree that the charge was given at the mission itself, not at the call.

Further, it may even be doubted whether the twelve received the name of apostles at the call, whether, in fact, they did not rather receive it only after the commission related here. We find, indeed, that Mark (iii. 14; cf. Luke vi. 13) says, "whom he also named apostles," adding, "that they might be with him, and that he might send

them forth to preach;" but the title there may be entirely proleptic, and the description of their office partially so.

Parts of the section, *e.g.* ch. ix. 37, 38 and much of ch. x., are recorded in Luke as belonging to the mission of the seventy, but which is their original connexion can hardly be decided. Other parts seem to have been spoken originally on quite other occasions (ch. x. 17—22, [23], [34, 35 ?], 37, 38, 39, 40, 42). It would, therefore, appear that St. Matthew wished to lay stress on the appointment of agents and the kind of instruction that our Lord gave them, rather than to distinguish critically between the various agents employed and the particular instructions that Christ gave on each occasion when they were sent forth (see further on ch. x. 5).

Ver. 35.—Parallel passages: Mark vi. 6 (Luke xiii. 22). **And Jesus went about all the cities and** (*the*, Revised Version) **villages.** The Revised Version rightly restricts the "all" to the cities (*τὰς πόλεις πάσας καὶ τὰς κώμας*). It would have been impossible to visit all the villages. A village was distinguished from a city by being (1) unwalled (though occasionally towns were themselves unwalled); (2) dependent on the cities (cf. Schürer, II. i. p. 154, *seq.*). **Teaching,** etc. From this point the verse is identical with ch. iv. 23 (where see notes), except that the end of that verse, "among the people," is not found in the true text of our passage, but has been inserted thence. Its omission here and the alteration of the words, "in all Galilee," to "all the cities and the villages," are both due to the wider scope of what follows. Observe that in ch. iv. 23 our Lord's circuit is the occasion of crowds resorting to him, and serves as an introduction to a full account of his personal teaching, while here it is the occasion of his sending representatives, and serves as an introduction to his commission to them. As to the phrase, "healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness," notice that the recurrence of terminology (ch. iv. 23; x. 1) falls in with the oral theory, especially in its catechetical form (cf. 'Introduction,' p. ix.).

Ver. 36.—**But when he saw the multitudes.** The substance of this verse is found in Mark vi. 34 on the *return* of the apostles, equivalent to our ch. xiv. 13, *seq.* (cf. *supra*). According to the context, *the multitudes* here spoken of are those of the various cities and villages through which he had passed. **He was moved with compassion on** (*for*, Revised Version) **them** (*ἐσπλαγχνίσθη περὶ αὐτῶν*). After the vivid Hebrew metaphor (Gen xliii. 30), which the LXX. seldom ventured to translate literally, but which is common in the New Testament writings. **Because they fainted.** So the Received Text (*ἐκλελυμένοι*, cf. ch. xv. 32), but the Revised Version, with manuscripts, "were distressed" (*ἐσκυλμένοι*). *Σκύλλω*, which in the classics is equivalent to (1) "flay," (2) "mangle," is found only in the sense of (3) "trouble or harass," in the New Testament (Mark v. 35 [parallel passage: Luke viii. 49]; Luke vii. 6). **And were scattered abroad;** Revised Version simply, *and scattered.* (For the thought, cf. Ezek. xxxiv. 5; also Numb. xxvii. 17; 2 Chron. xviii. 16; and its parallel passage, 1 Kings xxii. 17.) The two participles express different aspects of their now normal and continuous state (*ἦσαν ἐσκυλμένοι καὶ ἐριμμένοι*). Yet the Authorized Version margin, "and lay down," is probably nearer the meaning of *ἐριμμένοι* here than the Authorized Version and Revised Version; cf. 1 Macc. xi. 4 ("They showed him the temple of Dagon burnt . . . and the bodies cast out"); Jer. xiv. 16 ("The people . . . shall be cast out in the streets of Jerusalem . . . and they shall have none to bury them"), where the thought is hardly "scattered," but "cast out and lying prostrate." So here the people are pictured as sheep harassed and prostrated by fatigue, etc.; cf. Vulgate, *vexati et jacentes.* **As sheep having no shepherd;** *not having a shepherd* (Revised Version); cf. the Old Testament passages just referred to.

Vers. 37, 38.—The utterance is given word for word (except one transposition) at the beginning of the address to the seventy in Luke x. 2. But while serving there as an introduction to the rest of the speech, the reason for it is so much more self-evident here that St. Matthew seems to have recorded it in its original connexion. Our Lord himself, feeling the shepherdless condition of the people, desires to call out the interest of his disciples in it. He wants them to realize both the need of the people and the possibility that lay before the workmen. Changing the metaphor, he bids them pray him, who alone has the right and power, to send more workmen to reap these fields.

Ver. 37.—**Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest**—of human souls (John iv. 35—38). **Truly.** So also the Revised Version; too strong a rendering of *μέν*. **Is plenteous** (cf. ch. x. 23; Bengel), **but the labourers are few.** Who besides himself? John the Baptist, some who had been healed, *e.g.* the Gadarene demoniac (Mark v. 20, pos-

sibly also the blind men of ver. 31), and perhaps a few unknown true believers. Not the twelve, for these are evidently distinguished, and only to be included under the labourers spoken of in the end of the next verse. If, however, the utterance was originally spoken to the seventy (*vide supra*), the reference would be to the twelve.

Ver. 38.—**Pray ye.** Express it as your personal need (δεήθητε, here only in the New Testament outside the writings of St. Luke and St. Paul). **Therefore.** Since more workers are so greatly needed. **The Lord of the harvest**; cf. Clem. Rom., § 34, who illustrates the thought by a most interesting composite quotation of Isa. xl. 10 (lxii. 11; Prov. xxiv. 12) and Rev. xxii. 12. **That he will** (omit with the Revised Version) **send forth.** (Ὅπως ἐκβάλῃ; *ut ejicial*, Vulgate [Wordsworth and White], *ut mittat*, Vulgate [ordinary edition].) The verb suggests alike his constraining power and their separation from their previous position (cf. ch. vii. 4). Mr. J. A. Robinson's note, however, in the Cambridge 'Texts and Studies,' I. iii. 124, shows that one must not lay much stress on the thought of constraint. **Labourers into his harvest.**

## HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—8.—*The cure of the paralytic.* I. THE SICK MAN BROUGHT TO CHRIST. 1. *His own city.* It had been Nazareth; now it was Capernaum. The Nazarenes had rejected him. He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief; he marvelled at their want of faith. Now he was in Capernaum; he was well known there, but not as he had been known at Nazareth. The Nazarenes had known him from childhood—all through those thirty years of quiet, humble holiness; he had lived among them like one of themselves, distinguished only by his goodness; he wrought no miracles then. But that quiet life was in one sense the greatest of miracles; it was stranger that the Son of God should live like ordinary men than that his path on earth should be surrounded with glory, marked by startling wonders. In Capernaum he was known as the great Preacher, the Wonder-worker, the loving, the compassionate Healer. All there believed in his power, not all had yielded their hearts to his love. It was now his own city, blessed with his presence, the highest of all conceivable privileges. 2. *The sick man.* He was paralyzed, quite helpless; apparently he had lost the power of speech. He could not come to Christ himself; he had to be carried. Four men brought him as he lay helpless on his bed. Probably he was still young: "child," the Lord calls him. It was a pitiable case, and he seems to have brought it upon himself; it was, we gather from Christ's words, the punishment of sin. How often sin brings chastisement now! We suffer justly; we receive the due reward of our deeds. Happy they whom suffering brings to Christ! 3. *The bearers.* The poor man had kind friends; they brought him. They had great difficulties; they could not come nigh to Christ for the press. They drew the sick man up to the roof; they uncovered it; they let him down into the midst before Jesus. It is a blessed task to tend the sick and suffering; it is a holy, Christ-like work. It is more blessed still to bring sinful souls to Jesus Christ, the great Physician. The Lord saw their faith. They must believe in Christ themselves who would bring others to him; we cannot help penitent sinners unless we ourselves have learned to hate sin, to overcome it by the power of faith, to live in the holy presence of Christ, breathing the atmosphere of his love. The Lord listens to intercessory prayer. Faith brings blessings not only on the believer, but on those for whom he prays. The centurion's faith brought healing to his servant; the faith of friends to the paralytic. But he too, it seems, believed. He could not come; he was willing, desirous, to be brought; he would not have been healed had he been brought by force. Jesus saw *their* faith—the faith of all, the sick man and his friends. Christians may help others; they may influence them by word, by holy example; but he that would be saved must himself believe. Each soul must know Christ itself; each soul must be brought into spiritual contact with the Saviour; each individual soul must have access unto God through him. 4. *The Saviour.* The Lord read the hearts of the bearers; he saw their faith. He read the heart of the paralytic; he saw his trembling fearfulness, his consciousness of sin. (1) "Child," he said, "be of good cheer." The poor man sadly needed encouragement; the Lord gave it at once; he had come to heal the broken-hearted. The poor man was humbled to the very dust; the Lord looked on him with a great pity. So he pities us in our sufferings now with

the same quick, tender compassion; his sympathy comforts, helps, encourages, the trembling penitent. (2) But there was behind the physical sickness its moral cause. The man had greatly sinned. The punishment had done its work; it had softened his heart; it had brought him to the feet of Jesus. The Lord knew the truth of his repentance. He waited not for the confession of the lips; perhaps the poor man could not speak. He pronounced at once the most blessed absolution, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." He is the same gracious Saviour now; he came to save his people from their sins. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

II. THE SCRIBES. 1. *Their silent accusations.* There were many Pharisees and doctors of the Law sitting there; they had been drawn by the fame of Jesus not only from Galilee, but even from Judæa and Jerusalem. They were watching our Lord, listening to him. He had spoken a great and awful word. They dared not condemn him openly; they saw his power, they feared the people; but they reproached him in their thoughts. He was guilty of blasphemy, they murmured in their hearts; he had dared to pronounce the forgiveness of the paralytic; he had assumed to himself the prerogative of God. Certainly God, and God alone, could forgive sins. 2. *The Lord's answer.* There were no spoken words, but he knew their thoughts. "He *saw* their thoughts," some ancient manuscripts read; their thoughts lay open to his all-seeing eye; he read them. He reads our thoughts now; he sees all the low, carnal, uncharitable thoughts which defile our souls, as he saw their thoughts then. They were thinking evil things in their hearts, accusing him of blasphemy, when they ought to have seen in the power of his works, in the perfect holiness of his life, the proof of his Divine origin; they were thinking in their unworthy jealousy, "It is easy to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee;" none can tell whether those great words truly convey forgiveness. Let him prove his authority; let him heal the paralytic.

III. THE MIRACLE. 1. *The word of power.* "Forgive us our trespasses," we say to our Father which is in heaven. "The Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins." "Cœlestem ortum hic sermo sapit," says Bengel very beautifully. He had power on earth to forgive sins, because he came from heaven; the Son of man could forgive, because he was in truth the Son of God. None could test that power; only the forgiven penitent could know in the depth of his heart the reality of his forgiveness; he could tell, and he only, in his inmost experience the blessed sweetness of that holy absolution. But the Lord would deign to reply to the unworthy questionings of the scribes; he would illustrate his spiritual authority by his power over outward things. He saith unto the man, "Arise!" It was a bold word, a strange thing to say to a helpless paralytic. But he had faith to be healed; his will exerted itself in obedience to the Lord's command. The muscles, so long useless, obeyed the mandate of the will. He arose before them all; he took up his bed, and departed to his house. So it is now in the history of conversions. Many souls have lost all spiritual energy; they are without spiritual force, spiritual activity; they have a vague wish for holiness, but it is only a weak, irresolute desire; an emotion rather than a resolve. But they feel at last the danger of sloth; Christian friends help them; they come, they are brought to Christ. He saith the word, "Arise!" A new strength flows in upon their weakened will—the strength which he giveth. In that strength they arise; they need no longer the help of others; they obey the Lord's life-giving command; they go forth, glorifying God. 2. *The wonder of the multitude.* They might well wonder; they had seen strange things that day. Their wonder, or their fear (according to the more ancient manuscripts), led them to glorify God. We see strange things now—sinners saved, souls drawn by the power of the cross to the Saviour's love. The miracles of grace are more wonderful than the miracles of power; they should lead us to glorify God, to glorify him in our praises, to glorify him in our lives.

LESSONS. 1. It was sin that brought suffering into the world. Suffering should show us the guilt of sin, and should lead us to Christ. 2. Christ is our Hope, our only Hope. We must come to him ourselves; we must help others to come. 3. Christ is full of compassion. He pities our sorrows; he forgives the sins of the penitent. 4. Praise him for his mercies; glorify God.

Vers. 9—17.—*St. Matthew.* I. HIS CALL. 1. *His occupation.* He was a publican,

a tax-gatherer. The whole class was hated by the Jews as symbols and instruments of a foreign rule; they returned the hatred and contempt with which they were regarded; they exacted more than was appointed them; they were guilty, most of them perhaps, of oppression, of fraud, of unjust accusation. But if all were hated, Hebrew publicans must have been looked upon with an especial hatred. They had sold themselves for gain to the detested Romans; they oppressed their own flesh and blood; they were regarded as traitors, almost as apostates. Such was Matthew, perhaps a Levite, certainly an Israelite, but a publican. 2. *The summons.* He was sitting at the receipt of custom, in the actual exercise of his hated calling, as the Lord was passing by. The Lord seeth not as man seeth. He had rejected the scribe who offered to follow him; now he called the publican. His calls are not determined by class, or occupation, or race; the accidents of the outward life do not influence the choice. He searches the hearts. He said unto Matthew, "Follow me." He himself is the Pattern for his apostles, his evangelists, his ministers. They must follow him, living in his presence; that Divine presence is the one source of strength and wisdom. They must imitate his holy example, his humility, his unselfishness, his constraining love. They who follow nearest to him in the path of holiness can best teach the lessons which he taught; for they learn of him deep lessons of spiritual experience; and, learning themselves from the great Teacher, they can teach others the same holy lessons. The publican felt that Divine call in the depths of his soul. He arose; he left all, St. Luke tells us—his old occupation, his old associations and companions. He followed Christ, to be from that time wholly his, to do his will, to preach his gospel; to write, led by the Spirit, the blessed history of his most holy life, his precious death. The publican became an apostle; he reached the highest rank in the Church of Christ. The last shall be first, and the first last.

II. THE FEAST IN HIS HOUSE. 1. *The company.* Matthew gave a farewell feast to his old companions. He was about to leave them now to devote himself wholly to the Saviour's service. He had known them long; he would not leave them without a token of good will, and he wished them to share, if it might be, in the great blessing which had changed the course of his life. He made a great feast; the Lord was the honoured Guest. He came in his condescending love, and sat down to meat in the publican's house. It was a strange gathering. Doubtless all the publicans of Capernaum were invited, and with them came many persons of doubtful reputation—many whom "the religious world" stigmatized with more or less reason as "sinners." The Lord Christ, the most Holy One, sat down among this motley throng, not counting the time wasted which was spent in social intercourse with them. It shocked all the prejudices of the time. He was recognized as a Rabbi, a great Teacher; and now he was hazarding his reputation by mixing with these common people. He was incurring the danger of Levitical defilement; he was countenancing by his presence hated occupations, unsatisfactory lives. 2. *The Pharisees.* They were offended. They could not have been at the feast; nothing would have induced them to eat with publicans and sinners; but they saw the company coming or going. They had not yet openly broken with our Lord; they regarded him doubtfully. He was a great Teacher, a Wonder-worker—that could not be denied; but he had said strange, bold things from time to time. He had not always followed the traditions so sacred in their eyes; and now he was outraging all their prejudices, violating all the accepted rules of religious society. They murmured against his disciples; they had not the courage, it seems, to rebuke the Lord himself, but they asked the disciples the meaning of this strange conduct. How can he do such things? He is bringing discredit on the whole class of rabbis. Why eateth your Teacher with publicans and sinners? *Your* Teacher, they said. He was not theirs; they could not listen to the teaching of One who set such an example. 3. *The Lord's reply.* He heard the controversy; he answered for his disciples. Perhaps they were perplexed; their old habits still had a strong hold over them. Years afterwards Peter incurred the rebuke of St. Paul for yielding to these Jewish prejudices. They knew not what to say, but the Lord answered for them. (1) "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." The words are spoken with a Divine irony. The Pharisees were whole, strong, and well, in their own estimate of themselves; they needed no physician, so they thought. They did not come to Christ as sinners; they came, indeed, but it was from curiosity

to hear the great Preacher, to know what his doctrine was; often from worse motives—to criticize, to judge, to condemn. They sought not his counsel. He could do them no good in their present frame of mind. But these publicans and sinners needed him; they were sick spiritually. Others knew it, and they knew it too; it was this very consciousness of sin and danger that brought them to Christ. Therefore he came to Matthew's feast. He sat down to eat with publicans and sinners, to draw them to himself, to teach and to save. The true disciple will follow Christ's example. He will try to obey the apostle's precept—whether we eat or drink, to do all to the glory of God. The true Christian may do much good in the freedom of social intercourse; he may thus sometimes reach men who cannot be touched by more formal ministrations; but it needs a true disciple, a man full of wisdom and of the Holy Ghost, thus to follow Christ. (2) He quotes the Scriptures. Mercy is better than sacrifice; love is holier than external obedience; outward forms, intellectual orthodoxy, will not avail for our salvation, if we have not that blessed grace of charity, without which all our doings are nothing worth. "Go ye and learn what that meaneth," the Lord said. They were teachers; they knew well the letter of the Scripture. They had missed its inner meaning. That meaning has been lost sight of again and again through the long range of history. The Christian must, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, keep that inner meaning steadily before his mind. The first of the commandments is love; all is vanity if we have not love. (3) This was the very purpose of the Lord's coming. It was not to call righteous men. His great act of Divine self-sacrifice would not have been necessary if men had been righteous. But "there is none righteous, no, not one." There were some who "trusted in themselves that they were righteous;" none who were such in the sight of God. He came to call sinners; therefore he sought them, he talked with them, he sat at meat with them. His perfect purity could not be marred by their companionship; rather he would cleanse them from their sins. Could he shun them, like the Pharisees? It would frustrate the very end of his incarnation. He was come to seek and to save that which was lost. 4. *The disciples of John.* They came with the Pharisees (Mark ii. 18); they, too, were startled by the Saviour's conduct, but especially by the absence of asceticism from his life and teaching. John came neither eating nor drinking; his disciples lived a life of rigid abstinence like their master. And now (1) they ask the Lord a question. They make their own practice a rule for others; a common mistake, the mistake against which St. Paul argues so strongly in Rom. xiv. and elsewhere. They thought so much of their frequent fastings that they even ranged themselves with the Pharisees in opposition to our Lord, or at least in distinction from his practice—a strange departure from their Master's teaching. How often men magnify small outward differences, to the disregard of deep and important agreement! (2) The Lord's reply. He does not answer the first part of the question, why they and the Pharisees fasted; he leaves that to their own conscience. He defends his own disciples. There could be no fasting among the festivities of a wedding. He was the heavenly Bridegroom come to take to himself a bride—the Church which he so greatly loved. His disciples were the friends of the Bridegroom, attending him as he came to fetch the bride. They could not fast while he was with them. But even now, in the midst of success and popularity, he saw the shadow of the cross. The Bridegroom would not always be with his friends; he would be taken from them. It is the first allusion in St. Matthew's Gospel to the coming end; it is very touching in its calm simplicity. They will fast then. Fasting is meaningless without mourning; outward self-denials are worthless if they are not the expression of inner sorrow. They will sorrow for the absent Bridegroom, mourning for the sins which have separated them from him. The soul that hath found Christ cannot but rejoice—in his presence is fulness of joy; but there must be seasons of sorrow even in the highest Christian life, when the burden of our sins is grievous unto us, and the remembrance of them is intolerable. Then shall they fast in those days; but their fasting will not be like the formal fasts of the Pharisees, but such as the Lord commended in the sermon on the mount. (3) Two similes. (*a*) An old garment must not be patched with new, unfulled cloth. The new piece is too strong for the worn garment; it will shrink, too, and rend it. Christ's religion is not merely Judaism with a few additions and improvements; it is a new dispensation. It comes from the same God; but it is fresher, stronger than the old. The old was good in its day, but now

the fulness of time is come; the marriage robe is ready; it is fine linen, clean and white, the righteousness of saints, which is the righteousness of Christ; it agreeth not with the old. (*b*) New wine must not be put into old wine-skins. It will ferment; it will burst the old skins, which have become hard and will not expand. The Pharisees with their effete ceremonialism cannot receive the gospel. He must be a new man who is to be filled with the Spirit. The new wine of the gospel lives and works; it does not suit the stiff, hard, dry, formal life of the Pharisee. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty; we have received not the spirit of bondage, but the Spirit of adoption, the free Spirit of sonship. But that free Spirit abideth not in mere formalists. His chosen home is in renewed hearts; in those who have been transformed by the renewing of their mind; in whom old things are passed away, and all things are become new.

LESSONS. 1. The meanest, the most despised, may walk very close with Christ; only follow him when he calls. 2. Pharisees could blame even Christ himself; we must not expect to escape censure. 3. Even good men are sometimes censorious; the Christian must answer gently, like his Lord. 4. Seek to be filled with the Spirit; desire the new wine of charity.

Vers. 18—26.—*The raising of the daughter of Jairus.* I. THE FATHER. 1. *His position.* He was a ruler of the synagogue, a dignitary of the Jewish Church. The Pharisees once asked in scorn, "Have any of the rulers believed on him?" Here was one who certainly believed. Possibly he may have been one of those elders of the Jews whom the centurion had sent to Christ. If so, he had seen both the power of Christ and his sympathy with sorrow and suffering. Now sorrow had come very near to him, and he sought for his own needs the Lord whom he had before entreated in behalf of another. Those who intercede for others are blessed in their own souls; mercy is twice blest. The Pharisees were beginning to hold aloof from Christ, to question his authority. A ruler might have felt some difficulty in preferring a request to him just then. Jairus thought nothing of such matters in the presence of his great sorrow. He came, perhaps to the publican's house, and, ruler though he was, he fell down at Jesus' feet and worshipped him. Sorrow often softens the proud heart, and brings the humbled soul to Christ; sorrow is a blessed thing if it leads to the feet of Christ, if it teaches us to worship. 2. *His prayer.* His little daughter (she was but twelve years old) was at the point of death—so near her end that he described her (according to St. Matthew's abridged narrative) as already dead. He thought the breath would go forth before he reached the Lord. He believed that Christ could help him even now. But the anguish of his soul was intense; he poured forth his prayer in the broken accents of grief (see Mark v. 23 in the Greek). "Come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live." It was wonderful faith; he believed that Christ could recall the parted soul, and restore his dead child to her father's arms. 3. *The Lord's readiness.* Jesus arose, perhaps from the couch in the house of Matthew, and followed Jairus from the house of feasting to the house of mourning. There are strange contrasts in human life. Here gladness, and there sorrow; here light and feasting and song, there wailing and the anguish of the bereaved, the death-agony and the faintness of departing life. The Christian should be prepared for both—to weep with those that weep, and to rejoice with those that do rejoice. He may take his part, like the Lord, in the innocent enjoyments of life; he must sometimes, like the Lord, contend earnestly for the faith; but, like the Lord, he should be ready to leave the festive table, or the disputes of controversy, to comfort the afflicted and minister to the dying. Therefore he should live always in the Spirit; therefore he should strive, whether he eats or drinks, or whatever he is doing, to do all to the glory of God. The disciples followed Christ from the house of Matthew to the house of Jairus; we should be ready always to follow him whithersoever he goeth.

II. THE AFFLICTED WOMAN. 1. *Her trouble.* She had long suffered from a wasting disease. For twelve years, the whole life of the little daughter of Jairus, she had been afflicted. She had tried every means of relief, she had applied to physician after physician, she had submitted to many painful remedies, she had spent all that she had; but she found no help—she grew worse. It is a sad history. There are many such now—long wasting sicknesses; vain efforts to recover health; hopelessness. But still,

as ever, there is the Saviour's ready sympathy. If he does not work outward miracles as of old, he works spiritual wonders still. He gives patience, peace, holy hope. He turns suffering into blessing. 2. *Her timidity.* She had heard of Jesus. He had done many mighty works. Now he was on his way to a yet more wonderful exercise of power. He had heard that the damsel was dead, yet he arose and went. What would he do? A great multitude followed him in intense, awful expectation. The poor woman mingled with the crowd. She knew that she was accounted unclean; she was full of shame and timidity; she feared to meet the look of Jesus; she came behind him in the press, and touched the hem of his garment. He might do something for her; he might heal her on his way to the house of Jairus. Something of the wondrous power that was to be exerted there might flow in upon her and stay her sickness. People hear of Christ now; they know what he has done, what he is doing for others; one miracle leads to another, one conversion to another. Circumstances differ. Some come straight to Christ, like Jairus; they open their grief to him, they bring him at once to their house, to their heart. Others are more fearful; they feel the defilement of their sin; they tremble. But they must come; none other can save them. They come, drawn perhaps by others, in the throng that follows Christ. They know not what to say; they cannot shape the longings of their hearts into words. They come behind him; they touch the hem of his garment; the Spirit maketh intercession for them with groanings that cannot be uttered. 3. *Her faith.* She said within herself, "If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole." Her faith was not like that of the centurion—there was, perhaps, something of superstition in it; she seems to have thought that the healing power diffused itself from the Person of our Lord, apart from the action of his Divine will. Her error somewhat resembled that of those who think that God can act only through the unconscious laws of nature, not by the conscious intervention of his almighty will. She was wrong. But he felt her presence, he knew her trouble and her faith; it was by the act of his will that virtue went out of him, and healed her sickness. So it is in the realm of nature. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without our Father. But if her faith was uninstructed, it was strong and living. His touch, she felt in her heart, would heal her sickness. Multitudes touched our Lord as they thronged round about him in the press; but one touched him with the hand of faith. That one he knew at once. He saw her not with the outward eye—she was behind him; but he knew her heart. "The Lord knoweth them that are his;" but many that say to him, "Lord, Lord," he hath never known. Various motives brought that crowd together—curiosity, excitement, and such-like. They thronged round our Lord, eager to see what he would do. "Master, the multitude throng thee, and press thee," said St. Peter. They followed him closely, watching him intently. We are not told that they received any benefit from their nearness to the Lord. Bodily presence was not enough; there was need of something deeper. There were many eager eyes; there was one faithful heart. People fill the churches now, they join in the services, they come to the Holy Communion. It is well, it is necessary; but something more is needful for salvation. They must put forth the hand of faith, they must touch the Saviour; then power will go forth from him, and heal the sickness of their souls. The poor woman came in deep humility, in weakness and trembling; so must the penitent come to Christ. She came behind him; she sought only to touch his garment; she was content with the lowest place. Only to touch his garment, only to feel his life-giving power—that was enough; it would take away her uncleanness, it would heal her sickness. 4. *The Lord's thoughtfulness.* He was bent on an errand of love. The poor father was in intense anxiety; the crowd was full of eager anticipation; but here was one who needed his help. He must stop, even on his way to raise the dead. Mark his calm, majestic collectedness. In his holy unselfishness he had time and thought for every suppliant. He was not vexed with interruptions, as we are apt to be; he waited on his way. The Lord has work for us every day; it is not always the work which we had marked out for ourselves. If it is his work, it is blessed. We must put aside our own plans, and do what he bids us. 5. *His inquiries.* He asked who had touched him. It was not for his own information; he knew the thoughts of all men. But he felt the touch of faith—the one touch in all that throng that arrested his steps and claimed his grace. It was well for her to know that it was his sovereign will, not any virtue inherent in the hem of his garment, that had wrought the miracle. It was

well, too, for the multitude to learn the great lesson that faith in Christ hath power to heal. 6. *His mercy.* He turned him about, he saw her. She came, fearing and trembling, and told him all. She feared that she had presumed too much, but the good Lord at once reassured her. "Daughter," he said (it is the only time, as far as the Bible tells us, that he used that endearing word), "be of good cheer." He comforted her in her trembling awe, as now he comforts the humble and penitent. And then came the blessed word, "Thy faith hath made thee whole." It was he who saved her; it is he who saves sinners now. But faith is the hand put forth to touch the Lord; faith is the instrument, Christ is the cause of our justification. The Lord puts great honour upon faith. He marvelled at the centurion's faith; it filled him with admiration. Let us pray, "Lord, increase our faith," that, like this poor woman, we may be made whole from that hour when with the hand of faith we touch the Saviour.

III. THE HOUSE OF JAIRUS. 1. *The Lord's sympathy.* He felt for the father's grief; he knew the anguish of his soul. "Be not afraid," he said, "only believe." Trust in Christ is the one only comfort in deep sorrow. "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me." He would not allow the curious, excited crowd to intrude upon the parents' grief. Only the Lord and the three most favoured apostles entered the chamber of death. The delicate tact of true Christian sympathy is a precious gift; we must learn it of the Lord. 2. *The preparations for the funeral.* There was an unseemly noise; hired mourners and minstrels were mingling the hypocrisy of grief with the real sorrow of the bereaved. The Lord reproved them. "She is not dead," he said, "but sleepeth." They misunderstood his words. They showed their want of feeling by laughter and ridicule in the presence of the dead. But he put them forth; they could not resist his simple dignity, his tone of tranquil authority. And now he was left alone with the chosen three, and the father and mother of the maiden. Christian funerals should be quiet, without display; they should be cheered with Christian hope. "She is not dead, but sleepeth." The Lord Jesus should be present. He will come if we ask him. His sympathy brings peace among tears, comfort, humble hope. 3. *The word of power.* He took the little hand; it was still and cold; it lay motionless in his. Death and life were brought into close contact; the dead maiden and the Lord, who is the Resurrection and the Life. He spoke but two words. There was no effort, no excitement, no display; only two simple words. But the parted soul heard; it returned at the Lord's command; the hues of health came back to the pallid cheeks, and the little maid arose. They were astonished with a great astonishment, but the Lord was still and calm. It was no wonder to him, for he is God Almighty. It was but an anticipation of what he will do hereafter on a vast and awful scale. "All that are in the graves shall hear his voice," as the maiden heard that day. We shall hear him then; we shall come forth; God grant it may be unto the resurrection of life!

LESSONS. 1. Come to Jesus in the hour of bitter sorrow; he will come to those who come to him. 2. He knows all our troubles, all our hidden griefs. "Be not afraid, only believe." 3. Be not content with outward forms; put forth the hand of faith, and touch the Lord. 4. "Arise!" he says. May he give us grace to listen now, to hear and live, that we may share the resurrection of the just!

Vers. 27—34.—*Other miracles.* I. THE TWO BLIND MEN. 1. *Their cry.* The day's work was not over. It had been a wonderful day, crowded with mighty deeds. The Lord was returning from the house of Jairus, his thoughts full, we may well believe, of sympathy with the sorrowing, of holy joy at their deliverance. But this world is a world of sorrow; sorrow in various forms meets us everywhere. Two blind men followed in the crowd. They could not see the gracious face of the Lord, but they had heard of his wondrous works. He who raised the dead could open the eyes of the blind. They followed in the crowd; they implored him as the Son of David. It was the first time, as far as we know, that men had so addressed him. They were blind, but they had the inner vision of faith. They saw that Jesus was the Christ that was to come. Faith is more precious than sight; it perceives the things unseen, the eternal verities of the spiritual world. "Have mercy on us!" they cried again and again. He seemed as though he heeded not. He passed on in silence, absorbed, it seemed, in holy meditation. 2. *Their perseverance.* He seemed not to hear them. He entered into

the house. Blind though they were, they found the way; they would not take an apparent refusal; they came to him into the house. It is an encouragement to persevering prayer. How often he seems not to heed us when we pray for light! We pray again and again, but the darkness is still upon our souls; we cannot see him. But we must pray on. He came to preach recovery of sight to the blind. He listens, though we think he heedeth not; in his own good time he will pour the light of his most gracious presence into the soul that once was dark. He heareth prayer. 3. *Their faith.* He asked them—Did they believe in his power? "Yea, Lord," they answered. The like question is often borne in upon our souls in times of darkness and distress. Oh that we could answer always with the unhesitating assent of those poor blind men! The Lord proved their faith; he touched their eyes; the touch was to heal them only if their faith was real; "according to your faith be it unto you." Their eyes were opened; they saw the holy Saviour; it proved his power; it proved the truth of their faith. Still he heals all who come to him in faithful prayer. He opens their eyes; they see him. "The world seeth me no more, but ye see me." 4. *The Lord's command.* He bade them tell no man. Sometimes he enjoined secrecy, sometimes he bade men tell what great things the Lord had done for them. His directions varied, doubtless, with the circumstances of the case, and with the spiritual condition of the individual. Perhaps it was premature to announce in that neighbourhood that he was the expected Son of David; perhaps he saw something of self-importance in the men; they would talk too loudly of the privilege bestowed upon them; they would glorify themselves rather than God. There are spiritual mercies, visions of Divine grace, of which it is best to be silent; there are sometimes temptations to vain-glory even in God's blessings. 5. *Their disobedience.* It was not right. They may perhaps have excused their conduct by attributing Christ's words to excessive modesty—modesty which might prompt him to conceal his good deeds, but ought not to prevent the recipients of his grace from making known their gratitude. But the Lord had "straitly charged them, saying, See that no man know it." Nothing could excuse disobedience to a commandment expressed so plainly, even sternly. The Lord knew better than they what was best for themselves and for others. Their duty was simply to obey him. Obedience is better than sacrifice. The surest proof of true gratitude is unquestioning obedience. "If a man love me, he will keep my words."

II. THE DUMB DEMONIAC. 1. *He was brought to Christ.* The blind men came; the demoniac was brought. He was helpless under the power of the evil one. He could not speak. It may be that in his heart he cried for mercy; it may be that the Lord accepted the faith of those who brought him, as he raised the daughter of Jairus, moved by her father's prayer. It is a blessed work of love to bring the helpless to Christ, to pray for those who cannot pray for themselves. Every soul is exceeding precious, even those who may seem the most degraded. 2. *The cure.* The Lord saw the cause of his dumbness, and at once cast out the evil spirit. The dumb spake. The people wondered; never had such deeds been done in Israel. They are still done in the Israel of God, blessed be his holy Name! The evil spirit checks the voice of prayer; he makes men dumb, so that they cannot speak to Jesus confessing their sins. But the Lord still opens the lips of the dumb, and their mouth showeth forth his praise. 3. *The blasphemy of the Pharisees.* Their opposition was increasing. They had blamed him for eating with publicans and sinners; they had accused him of blasphemy in their hearts; now they fall into deeper guilt. He came that he might destroy the works of the devil; he was doing so now. They said among themselves that his power over the devils was exercised through complicity with the prince of the devils. It was an awful sin. Small sins against the law of love lead on to greater. People indulge in fault-finding, in criticizing the conduct of others. They may go on to attribute the highest acts of Christian love to unholy motives—a deep and deadly sin in the sight of God.

LESSONS. 1. Persevere in prayer. Christ hath saved others; doubt not, earnestly believe; he will save all who come to him in faith. 2. Follow him in the crowd, in the house; pray everywhere. 3. Be watchful against vain-glory; the Christian life is hid with Christ in God. 4. Honour goodness in all men. To speak against the work of God the Holy Ghost is grievous sin.

VERS. 35—38.—*The missionary work of Christ.* I. HIS JOURNEYS THROUGH GALILEE.

1. *He went everywhere.* His activity was unceasing. He visited every city and village in that thickly populated district. It was a new thing in the history of the world—a Missionary of salvation sent from heaven, spending his time in ceaseless journeys, in constant wearying labour, and that not for gain, not for pleasure, but for love's sake, to win dying souls to God and heaven. It is a high example to the ministers of his holy Word and sacraments. 2. *His preaching.* He taught in the synagogues; they were still open to him. The Pharisees had for some time distrusted him; they were beginning to oppose him, but their opposition was not yet formal, decided. It expressed itself in angry looks, in words spoken among themselves. He was recognized as a Teacher, a Rabbi; he was honoured by the people. He was a welcome Preacher in every village synagogue. The Lord most holy was wont to preach in the smallest villages, in the humblest synagogues. His servants should imitate him in his humility, in his zeal for the salvation of the poorest and the most ignorant. He preached the gospel of the kingdom, the good news of the kingdom which was to spread over the whole earth, which was to be established in the hearts of men, which was in God's good time to be manifested in glory. It was good news then; it is good news now. The message is heard daily; people listen carelessly, without thought; but when God the Holy Ghost brings the Word home to the heart, it comes with all the freshness of a new life, a new hope; it is good news indeed. May he bring the gracious message to our souls! 3. *His care for the sick.* He healed every disease. His servants must care for the bodies as well as for the souls of his people; they must tend the sick and suffering, for so did Jesus Christ.

II. THE MULTITUDES. 1. *The Lord's compassion.* As he moved hither and thither, he saw the great masses of the people crowded together in those populous towns, neglected and uncared for. His heart was deeply moved, as many a good man's heart is moved by the like sight now. He was the good Shepherd. He saw the flock scattered here and there, some cast down, prostrate on the earth; some wandering, bruised, their fleeces torn (ἐσκυλμένοι) by wolves. There was no shepherd; the shepherds of Israel (Ezek. xxxiv.) were feeding themselves, and not the flock. They did not heal that which was sick, or bind up that which was broken, or seek that which was lost. The flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth. The Pharisees despised the poor and ignorant—the "people of the earth," as they called them. The good Shepherd came to seek and to save that which was lost. He is our great Example. 2. *His exhortation to prayer.* The figure is changed. Spiritual things are only inadequately expressed in human language; each parable, each illustration, brings out some new feature, a new side of the underlying truth. The people were described as God's flock; now they are his harvest. The harvest of souls is plenteous; all the world over it is growing, ripening for the great day. But the labourers are few. The harvest is the Lord's; all souls are his; it is he who sends the labourers, who casts them forth (as the word means) into the harvest-field by the energy of a Divine mission, by the call of the Holy Spirit. Only he can give that holiness, that zeal, that self-denying love for souls, without which they cannot fulfil their arduous task. Therefore he bids us pray. It is the Lord's harvest; he cares for it; yet, in the deep mystery of the relations between heaven and earth, there is need of human prayer. It must be so, or the Lord would not have enjoined it. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Nothing is beyond the reach of faithful prayer, for the Lord himself hath said, "All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." A supply of faithful ministers is of the very utmost importance for the well-being of the Church. Then we must pray for the ministers of God's Holy Word. It is in the strength of the prayer of the Church that they pursue their solemn work; when they fail, when they are wanting in faith, in humility, in love, in self-denying labour, the fault may lie in part with those who do not pray for them according to the Lord's commandment. He sends forth the labourers; pray for his blessing on them and on their work.

LESSONS. 1. The Lord's ministers must try by his gracious help to visit as he visited, to preach as he preached. 2. His sheep are very dear to him; his people must care for them. 3. All Christians must pray for the ministers of his Holy Word and sacraments.

## HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 2—8.—*Christ and the forgiveness of sins.* After the series of miracles of healing recorded in the previous chapter, the evangelist passes to the more directly spiritual work of Christ, and the transition is marked by an incident which combines both kinds of ministry.

I. THE WORLD'S FIRST NEED IS THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS. The sufferer was in a pitiably helpless condition—so helpless that he had to be carried to Christ. Yet the Saviour saw that his bodily weakness was of secondary importance compared to the spiritual paralysis of sin that benumbed his soul. His friends thought only of the physical trouble; but the keen eye of the Physician of souls penetrated through the superficial symptoms to the more terrible spiritual disease beneath. It would seem that the man himself felt this most acutely, and that Jesus, who could read hearts at a glance, perceived his deep yearning for forgiveness, and answered his unexpressed desire. It may be that his present condition was the result of some form of intemperance, was the natural punishment of his sins. But if this was not the case, there was, and there always is, a general connection between sin and suffering. However this may be, we all need to be delivered from our sins more than we need to be cured of any bodily infirmity. He alone who can save from sin is man's real Saviour.

II. CHRIST HAS DIVINE AUTHORITY TO FORGIVE SIN. He does not pray for the man's forgiveness. He grants the pardon himself. His action startled and alarmed the religious people in the assembly. Was not Jesus claiming a Divine prerogative? Now, one of their premises was perfectly sound. Only God has a right to forgive sin, and if a mere man claims to pronounce absolution in more than a general declaration of the gospel, *i.e.* as a direct act of forgiveness, he is guilty of blasphemy. We cannot both accept the gospel narrative and reject the Divinity of Christ without leaving the character of our Lord under suspicion of the gravest charges. There is no middle course here. A mild Unitarianism that believes in the Gospels and honours Jesus is most illogical. But knowing the character of Christ to be true and pure, must we not take his calm claim to forgive sins as an evidence of his Divinity?

III. CHRIST'S MISSION ON EARTH BRINGS THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS. This is a new note in religion. Forgiveness was known in the Old Testament (*e.g.* Ps. ciii. 3). But Jesus brings it with a fresh graciousness, with a new fulness and directness. 1. *By his incarnation.* It was as the "Son of man" that Jesus opened up the wealth of Divine forgiveness to us. The people marvelled at the power that had been granted "unto men." (1) In his human life Jesus shows us the sympathy of God. (2) He also reveals true purity, and so strikes a deep note of penitence, and brings us into the spirit that is capable of receiving pardon. 2. *Through his atonement.* This was not seen at first. It was enough to perceive the great fact—that Jesus brought forgiveness. But at the end of his life our Lord showed that his power to do this was confirmed by his death; that his blood was "shed for the remission of sins" (ch. xxvi. 28). Thus by the sacrifice of himself he reconciles us to God, and reconciliation is the very essence of forgiveness. 3. *In his present power.* He showed one phase of his power in healing the bodily disease of the sufferer. This was a sign of the healing power that cures spiritual evil. He is the present, living Saviour, who both heals and pardons by his word of grace.—W. F. A.

Vers. 10—13.—*Jesus the Friend of sinners.* The incident here recorded follows on the call of Matthew the publican. Our Lord had just appointed a member of an order usually regarded as hopelessly reprobate to be one of his apostles. It was natural that the publican's old associates should recognize this breaking down of old barriers, and flock to the feast which Matthew provided to welcome and honour his new Friend.

I. THE FACT. Jesus did eat and drink with men of questionable occupation, and even with those of notoriously bad character. He did not simply show himself kindly disposed towards such people. He associated with them. Many benevolent persons would wish them well, and some would support homes and refuges for the most miserable and degraded among them. But the Church of Christ has been slow in following her Master's example in showing real brotherhood for people under a social ban. The con-

duct of Jesus was new to the world, and it has been but rarely followed. Here is the wonder of his brotherly nature. He will take the lowest to the priceless privilege of his friendship.

II. THE COMPLAINT. This conduct of our Lord was regarded as scandalous by the religious people of his day, as similar conduct on the part of any good man who was daring enough to attempt it would be regarded by the religious people of our own times. It was not really suspected that he enjoyed the bad atmosphere of low society, but he was charged with courting that society in order to win popularity. Ungenerous people cannot conceive of generous motives. To them the grandest act of self-sacrifice must have some sinister aim.

III. THE EXPLANATION. Jesus associated with persons of bad character in the hope of raising them. He compared himself to a physician who does not pay his visits to healthy people. The doctor on his rounds goes to some strange houses. If he were but a casual caller, his choice of associates might raise a scandal. But his work determines his action. Though he has to handle and study what is very repulsive, science and humane ends elevate his treatment of it, and keep this pure. Christ goes first where he is most needed. Not desert, not pleasure, but need, draws him. When he comes it is to heal. His purpose sanctifies his association with persons of loose character. His one aim is to do them good.

IV. THE JUSTIFICATION. The religious people who accused our Lord had formed a totally false conception of the service which was acceptable to God. Jesus answered them out of their own Bible. There they might have read that what God required was not ceremonial offerings, but kindness to our fellow-men—"mercy and not sacrifice." Thus he turns the tables. These very religious people, his accusers, are not pleasing God. They are very particular about formal observances, but they neglect the weightier matters of the Law. Christ is truly doing God's will by showing mercy. God is love, and Divine love is never so gratified as by the exercise of human charity. Therefore it is quite in accordance with his Father's will that Christ shall call the sinners. His mission is to them. Those people who think themselves righteous cannot have any blessing from Christ. The self-righteous hypocrite is really further from the kingdom of heaven than the publican and the sinner.—W. F. A.

Vers. 16, 17.—*The new and the old.* This pair of homely parables illustrates the incompatibility of the old with the new from two points of view—first from that of the old, which is spoilt in the effort to patch it with the new; second from that of the new, which is lost through the attempt to confine it in the limitations of the old.

I. THE OLD IS SPOILT WHEN IT IS PATCHED WITH THE NEW. The shrinking of the patch of undressed cloth tears the old garment, and so makes the rent worse than it was before. There was a strictly Jewish Christianity in the early Church, really harder and narrower than old Judaism. It was not truly Christian, yet the grand old Jewish ideas were spoilt. At Alexandria, Greek thought degenerated in its association with biblical ideas. It would not accept those ideas in their fulness, and yet it tried to patch its old fabric with them. The consequence was its dissolution. When Protestantism is not a complete severance from Romanism, but a mixture with it, the result is that the advantages of both the authority of the old and the freedom of the new system are lost. All this is melancholy if we are attached to the old. But there is another way of looking at it. The new is revolutionary. When the old is worn threadbare, it is best to cast it aside. Although we cling to it affectionately, it may be well that it should be violently torn from our backs. The gospel will not be a mere patch laid on an ugly defect in our worldly character. It will tear that character to shreds. It is a mistake to hope to patch it. The Christian method is to cast it off entirely and put on a completely new garment—the new character, the new life in Christ.

II. THE NEW IS LOST WHEN IT IS CONFINED BY THE OLD. The new wine ferments and must expand. But the old wine-skins are hard and dry and inelastic, and they are not strong enough to restrain the powerful ferment. The result is a twofold disaster—they are burst, which may not be a very great evil if they are worn out; and the wine is spilt, which is a serious loss. The old is always trying to cramp and restrain the new. Judaism endeavoured to confine Christianity within its own hard limitations. People are constantly trying to force new ideas into old expressions. In practical

Christianity the attempt is made to confine the ferment of new enthusiasm within the walls of ancient order. Thus the Churches fetter the new fresh life of Christian experience. Perhaps they have some excuse for themselves. There is a rashness, a rawness, an unsettled ferment, about the new enthusiasm. Nevertheless, if this is real and living, they who resist it do so at their peril. They run a great risk of being themselves shattered in the process. The fact is new ideas absolutely refuse to be limited by old formulæ. New spiritual forces cannot be bottled up in antiquated customs. In personal life the new grace of Christ cannot be confined to the old ways of living. If those old ways are obstinate and still claim to rule the man, there will be a dreadful conflict. The only wise thing is to make a fresh start. Many a hopeful movement has been wasted by the attempt to limit it to the ideas and practices of the past. If men had more faith in God they would learn that he belongs to the present as well as to the past, and that therefore the present has equally sacred rights and promises.—W. F. A.

Vers. 18, 19, 23—26.—*The ruler's daughter.* I. THE APPEAL. 1. *The applicant.* A ruler. Rulers were slow to believe in Christ. But some from almost every class were found among his disciples. Distress breaks down pride and shatters prejudices. They who would never seek Christ in prosperity may be found crying out for his help in trouble. 2. *The object.* The ruler asks for his child a favour which possibly he would have been too proud to have sought for himself. Suffering children touch the hearts of all. One such here touched the heart of Jesus. 3. *The occasion.* The child is nearly dead. It looks as though the father had tried every other remedy before applying to the great Healer. Many will only turn to Christ as a last resort. Yet much distress would be saved if men and women would seek him first, not last.

II. THE RESPONSE. Jesus arose and followed the ruler. He had been seated before, for he had been teaching. The ruler had interrupted his discourse. But Jesus did not care for this; he was always ready to respond to the cry for help. We never read of his refusing to go anywhere but once, and then the invitation was to a king's palace, and the object of it was only the satisfaction of a superficial worldling's empty curiosity. All genuine appeals were met at once.

III. THE DELAY. Jesus was hindered on the way by another case of distress. This must have tried the poor father's patience most terribly, for it would have just given time for the sick child to die. And, indeed, this seems to have been the case. During the slow approach of Jesus the child died. But the poor suffering woman had as much claim on Christ as the great ruler. He is no respecter of persons. He is never in a hurry. He has time and sympathy for all comers.

IV. THE REBUKE. Jesus found the house in all the uproar that resulted from the performance of a band of hired mourners. This disgusted him. We should consider such a performance in the house of death most unseemly. To Christ it was worse. It was a part of that empty formalism that he met at every turn. Its hollowness and unreality offended him. Moreover, in so far as it had a meaning, this was not one that he could encourage. The wild abandonment of despair is not Christian. It is not the language of faith. Better is Job's calm expression of resignation, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord" (Job i. 21).

V. THE REVELATION. The damsel is not dead. To Jesus there is no death but sin and its doom. An innocent child's passing away is but a falling asleep. Christ has transformed death. The grim shadow has melted into an angel of God, who giveth his beloved sleep.

VI. THE SECLUSION. The great work of Christ cannot be carried out amid the uproar of the hired mourners. He shuns our noisy, fussy gatherings. Artificiality and pretence are quite incompatible with his presence. When he works wonders it is with those who believe in him.

VII. THE RESURRECTION. Jesus lays hold of the cold little hand of the dead child. In a moment his wonderful life-power thrills through her, and she sits up alive again. No need is too hard for him who could raise the dead. Even now his great compassion goes out to dead souls, and a touch of his hand brings life.—W. F. A.

Vers. 20—22.—*The healing touch.* This little incident inserted in the middle of the

story of the ruler's child, because the event occurred on the road to the man's house, reveals Jesus as the Friend of the obscure, the miserable, the lonely. On the way to help the little daughter of a great house, Jesus is arrested and deeply interested with the faith and cure of a poor and helpless woman.

I. THE WOMAN'S FAITH. 1. It is *modest.* She trembles at the idea of becoming conspicuous. In her deep distress she will but creep up in the crowd behind the great Healer and steal a blessing. Timorous souls are drawn to Christ. They will not come to the "penitent's bench" at a monster revival meeting. But they will seek Christ in their own quiet way. 2. It is *humble.* Who is she that she should claim the attention of Jesus Christ? An important citizen may call him into his house, but this poor obscure woman cannot even bring herself to speak to him. Yet Jesus had pronounced a blessing on the poor in spirit (ch. v. 3). 3. It is *unselfish.* This would seem to be a most unfortunate time for approaching Christ. He is just hastening to the house of an important personage where a little child is dying. To stop him now would be cruel to the child; it would be resented by her father. Suffering is often selfish. But the distressed woman will not hinder the good work Christ is about to perform by asking him to stay for her. 4. It is *ingenious.* It was a new idea to obtain a cure from Christ by a touch of his garment. The sufferer decides for herself that her novel method will be efficacious. There is room for freshness of thought in our relations with Christ. 5. It is *powerful.* This is what most strikes Christ. In spite of her modesty, humility, unselfishness, and the difficulty of her position, this woman determines to try to obtain healing. Faith is tested by the difficulties it overcomes. It may be that the least pretentious faith is the strongest. There is room for great faith in lowly circumstances. The heroes of faith are to be found among the obscure and humble.

II. HOW CHRIST TREATED HER. 1. He was *conscious of her touch.* There was no magic in his garment. The cure came from himself. We are blessed by Christ only when we come into personal relations with him. 2. He *took notice of her.* He turned and saw her. It interested him much that a humble woman should have so much faith in him. He is not satisfied that any should approach him solely for their own private advantage. He would know his people, and he expects them to recognize him. This cannot be because he craves the fame of miracle-working. On the contrary, he shrank from that and forbade the publication of his doings. But he desires to have a personal friendship between himself and all whom he blesses. 3. He *cheered her.* The poor woman was overwhelmed with shame, and addressing her in the utmost refinement of sympathy as "daughter," Jesus reassures her. There is a rough charity that wounds the spirit while it tries to benefit the body. But this is not found in Christ. He perfectly understands, he truly sympathizes, he encourages and gladdens the heart of the miserable. 4. He *commended her faith.* Jesus was always ready to perceive the good in people, to tell it out and rejoice over it. 5. He *healed her disease.* She had her wish granted, while she had more. Jesus gives what will really satisfy the need of his people, while his gracious recognition far exceeds the hopes of the humble.—W. F. A.

Vers. 36—38.—*The sheep and the harvest.* Jesus is moved with compassion at the sight of the multitude. There is always something pathetic in such a sight. The needs of the people made it especially so for Christ. To him the people are of deepest interest. His heart goes out, not to favourites, not to a few select, refined, or saintly souls, but to the multitude. As he gazes at the great moving mass of humanity, it calls up to his mind two images. First, it seems like a flock of sheep without a shepherd. Then it appears as a harvest-field waiting for the reapers.

I. THE PITEOUS HELPLESSNESS OF THE SHEEP. 1. *The sheep are without a shepherd.* There were official teachers, men trained in the Law and appointed to instruct the ignorant. But these men were not true pastors. They were well meaning, many of them. But they had no charm wherewith to draw the people; they did not know the green pastures and the still waters. Therefore Jesus found the people shepherdless. Without Christ the world is lost. No human leader is sufficient for its needs. 2. *The sheep are distressed.* They are trained to follow their leader. He knows where the best pasturage is; he can protect the helpless creatures from danger. Men and women need firm guidance, spiritual pasturage, and heavenly protection. We cannot

go as solitary pilgrims dependent on our own resources. 3. *The sheep are scattered.* They were not drawn together by the voice of a trusted shepherd. So they wandered foolishly and aimlessly. The world without Christ is disunited. In thought and conduct men wander from one another, and the social bond is broken when the Divine bond is disregarded. 4. *The sheep need a shepherd.* Jesus saw the need, and he came to supply it. Later in his ministry he proclaimed himself as the good Shepherd (John x. 11). Moreover, he expects his ministers to be first of all pastors to the people, feeding his sheep (John xxi. 17).

II. THE GLORIOUS PROSPECT OF THE HARVEST. The image changes. Instead of a scattered flock of bleating sheep spread over the hillside, we see waving fields of corn, ripe for the harvest, only needing the reapers to gather in its golden wealth. 1. *There is a harvest in the world.* This is a cheering thought. Regarded from one point of view, men are like sheep—their need is great; looked at from another standpoint, they are indeed a havest-field with boundless possibilities. When the industry of China, the speculation of India, the endurance of Africa, are won to Christ, and when the boundless energy of the West is all gathered into his garner, great will be the wealth of the kingdom of heaven. The world is worth winning for Christ. He counts his wealth by the souls he possesses. 2. *The harvest is plenteous.* (1) It covers a vast area. The greater part of the world is not yet Christian. (2) It includes a multitude of souls. Christ has not come to save a few; he aims at the plenteous harvest of many souls. (3) It contains many forms of good. There is great wealth in this harvest-field of the world. Christ would have the heroism, the industry, the art, the literature, of the world gathered into his kingdom. 3. *Many labourers are needed.* Jesus was the Sower (ch. xiii. 3). His disciples are the reapers. Never was so large a harvest-field open for the sickle as in our own day; never were so many labourers needed. The great want of the world is apostolic missionaries, men and women with the spirit of Christ in them. —W. F. A.

Vers. 1—8 (Mark ii. 1—12; Luke v. 17—26).—*The Lord of both lives.* Notice in introduction one of the simplest instances of the way in which the three very various accounts of our Lord's life and works supply one another, add greatly to our information, and form a network of evidence of the authenticity of the narrative which it would seem impossible to gainsay. Observe—

I. THE GRACIOUS ACTION TAKEN BY THE SAVIOUR SO PROMPTLY ON THE FIRST SIGHT OF FAITH. Notice the fact that *the forgiveness of the sins* of the paralytic took precedence of the healing of his disease. Was this due to the specialty of the occasion, the large attendance of doctors of the Law and Pharisees? Was it due exclusively to something that the eye of Jesus saw in the spiritual condition of the paralytic—in that his heart's deepest *desire* was for forgiveness; or that there was special fitness in him to stand as an example, to all time herein, of one blessed to take the supreme good first, and find "all" the rest "added to him;" or to the sovereign and unerring will *inscrutable*?

II. A REMARKABLE AND REMARKABLY SIMPLE INSTANCE AND ILLUSTRATION OF FAITH WITH WORKS AND OF FAITH SHOWN BY WORKS. These works of themselves spoke for the faith that was behind them, as also for the intense desire that gave such definite outline to it. "Their" faith, no doubt, designates that betokened by the conduct of *all* concerned—the paralytic himself, *and* those who were hands, arms, and feet to him. The "works" of themselves asked help of the mighty Helper. And they showed the undoubting persuasion on the part of those who put forth their strength, and on the part of him, of whose suggestion perhaps it all came, where, and where alone, that help was to be had.

III. THE UNDOUBTED BLASPHEMY HEARD ON THIS OCCASION, BUT LAID ON THE WRONG PERSONAGE. The enemies of Christ, as they stood around, understood *aright* what he had done, what he had said, and to what the deep implication of these amounted. But they took up the position that he had *not* done what he said, and *could* not do it, and that *therefore* he committed blasphemy in uttering it. Their hostility was a *foregone* conclusion, and had it not been so, there would have been reason on their side; and the language of Christ, and his action immediately following, *allow* this, within certain limits, for he remarks on the exact position, and offers and

gives a proof. But their unbelief and disbelief were already deep-rooted in their heart —that "thinking evil in the heart," which he so distinctly saw, so pronouncedly marked.

IV. CHRIST'S CONDESCENDING AND MOST COMPLETE VINDICATION OF HIS LANGUAGE AND HIMSELF. The *practical* test he challenges, with dignity surpassing that of Elijah on Carmel! He does not *volunteer* it, but bids them "stand still, and *see* the salvation of the Lord." And they *do* see it! Whether they will even *now* believe is another thing. Certain as it is that they have not made their own the beatitude, "Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed," have they even entitled themselves to hear it said, "Because thou hast seen, thou hast believed"?

V. THE ATTITUDE AND DOCILITY OF THE PEOPLE, AS THESE RISE UP IN JUDGMENT AGAINST THE DOCTORS OF THE LAW AND PHARISEES. They "marvel;" they "glorify God;" and this not as the only Object of adoring praise and worship, but also as "the Giver of such power to men;" and they are "filled with fear." And they make confession, unstinted, undisguised, of the impression they have received: "We never saw it on this fashion;" "We have seen strange things to-day."—B.

Ver. 9 (see also Mark ii. 13, 14; Luke v. 27, 28).—*The sudden but safe call.* In introduction show that the three evangelists all place this call of Matthew in the same order, viz. after the healing of the paralytic, but go on *at once* to the account of the "great feast" which he gave, and which was attended by the "disciples" of Christ. This feast, we learn from the narrative of Mark and Luke, belonged to a little later period, when Jesus had crossed to the other side of the lake. The occasion of it is there identified by the application of Jairus, spoken of in our present chapter (ver. 18). Notice—

I. THE DOUBLE NAME, THE NATION, AND THE EMPLOYMENT HITHERTO OF THE "MAN" NOW CALLED TO DISCIPLESHIP. Dwell on the change herein, and the contrast of his business—how possible, with God's grace and the Holy Spirit's might to alter and to renovate, such changes are; how welcomely the change was ever traced in this instance; how blessed hereafter was its course and success; and how divinely refreshing to the Church of the present day to read of, to hear of as a modern spiritual miracle, and to know in all the practical reality of this typical original case.

II. THE SUDDENNESS OF THE CALL. Such suddenness not unsafe with Christ, the omniscient; Christ, who knew all that was in man, at the helm. Guard against human haste, human incaution, human confidence. "Lay hands suddenly on no man" is the text for *man*, but not needed for the "chief Shepherd," "the Shepherd and Bishop of souls," the "great Shepherd of the sheep."

III. THE SWIFT OBEDIENCE, THE READY HEART, THE UNDELAYING AND UNRESERVING SELF-SURRENDER OF THE MAN CALLED. All this was an auspicious omen, so far as it went. Illustrated by the future, it was all a perfect vindication of the foreknowledge and the grace of him who called.—B.

Vers. 10—13 (see also Mark ii. 15—22; Luke v. 29—39).—*The model readiness of mercy.* Learn that—

I. THE MOST UNUSUAL PLACES AND THE MOST UNUSUAL TIMES ARE, ACCORDING TO THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST, TO BE UTILIZED FOR THE SEEKING AND CONVERTING OF THE MOST UNUSUAL CHARACTERS, AND THOSE WHO MAY BE APPARENTLY OF THE MOST HOPELESS KIND.

II. THAT BY THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST NO LIMIT MUST BE SET TO THE CONDESCENSION —WHENEVER EVEN IT MAY MOST REALLY MERIT THAT DESCRIPTION—OF THE MAN WHO WOULD EMULATE THE CHARACTER AND THE WORK AND THE METHODS OF THAT MODEL PHYSICIAN OF SOULS.

III. THAT AS THE SUPREME NEED OF THE SOUL IS MERCY, SO ALSO THE SOVEREIGN QUALIFICATION OF HIM WHO WOULD BE ITS PHYSICIAN IS READINESS TO MERCY—TO FEEL IT AND TO SHOW IT.

Contrast the "having mercy" and the requiring of sacrifice.—B.

Vers. 14—17 (see also Mark ii. 18—22; Luke v. 33—39).—*Human disfigurings of the Church's order and discipline.* Observe—

I. THE FORESHADOWING FOUND HERE OF THAT LONG HISTORY OF HUMAN INTERFERENCES WITH THE UNWRITTEN BUT SIMPLE MANIFEST ORDER OF THE CHURCH'S LIFE AND PRACTICE AS GUIDED EVEN BY REASON.

II. THE FORESHADOWING HEREIN OF HUMAN RENDINGS OF THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH IN MATTERS NOT OF DOCTRINE NOR, JUSTLY SPEAKING, OF DISCIPLINE.

III. THE FORESHADOWING OF HUMAN DISFIGURING ON A MOURNFULLY LARGE SCALE OF THE BEAUTY OF THE CHURCH'S FORM AND APPEARANCE BEFORE AN EVER-CRITICAL AND SCEPTICAL WORLD.—B.

Vers. 18, 19, 23—26 (see also Mark v. 22—24, 35—43; Luke viii. 41, 42, 49—56).—*The advance of faith upon sense.* In introduction, point out this narrative as a typical instance of the advantage of comparing the different accounts of the three evangelists. Note in this case the very graphic rehearsal of St. Mark, and how still St. Luke has to add to it. Also point out the fine corroborating, not invalidating, witness to truth offered by the variation of St. Matthew's "even now dead," St. Mark's "on the point of death," and St. Luke's "lay a-dying." Notice—

I. WHAT SYMPATHY AND WHAT ACTIVE EXERTION THE GENUINE ACCENT OF WOE AWAKENS IN CHRIST. He heard it, and arose and followed it.

II. THE UNLIMITED CONFIDENCE WHICH CHRIST ADVISES TO FAITH, AND WITH WHICH HE AUTHORITATIVELY INVESTS FAITH, AS AGAINST THE PHENOMENA OF THE BAREST SENSE. These latter *may seem* uncontradictable, but it is the other which *is* incontestable.

III. THE GRACIOUS CONDESCENSION WITH WHICH CHRIST WILL PAUSE TO RECKON AND ARGUE WITH ERROR, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT IS NATURAL ERROR, OR CAN CHARITABLY BE COUNTED SUCH, AND THE ERROR OF IGNORANCE AND OF THE UNTAUGHT MANY, RATHER THAN THAT OF PERVERSENESS, AND OF THOSE WHO LOVE DARKNESS RATHER THAN LIGHT.

IV. THE PORTION OF PRICELESS BLESSING, THAT IS TO THE PRAYING FATHER INDEED, AND TRUSTING MOTHER INDEED, AND TO ELECT DISCIPLES INDEED, AT THE MAJESTIC GIFT OF THEIR SAVIOUR.

V. THE SOLEMN SUGGESTION OF THE INEFFABLE MYSTERY OF THE WITNESSES OF THE FINAL WAKING OF THE DEAD.—B.

Vers. 20—22 (see also Mark v. 25—34; Luke viii. 43—48).—*The easy overflowing of the grace of Christ when in contact with faith.* In introduction, point out that the *form* of the approach of this woman, her own idea of doing nothing beyond touching the hem of a person's garment, and her fright when she had been discovered as doing even *that*, were presumably due just to the fact that her disease was one that rendered her ceremonially unclean, and which forbade her to touch another person. She thought she saw her way possibly out of this by touching only the hem of only a garment. Notice—

I. THE ILLUSTRATION HERE AFFORDED OF HOW THE SOUL, DRIVEN BY WANT, BY WOE, BY SIN, NEED NOT BE DRIVEN WITHAL TO RECKLESSNESS, BUT CANNOT DO BETTER THAN UTILIZE ITS DRIVENNESS OF STATE IN THE DIRECTION OF THE QUEST OF HELP BY METHODS EVEN THE MOST UNUSUAL.

II. THE ILLUSTRATION HERE AFFORDED THAT WHERE EVERY LOOPHOLE, EVERY AVENUE, MAY SEEM CLOSED, IT MAY BE SAID TO BE ALWAYS TRUE THAT THERE IS ONE LEFT—THAT ONE THE RIGHT ONE, AS THE ONLY ONE—IT NEEDS TO BE SOUGHT, AND IT IS THEN TO BE FOUND.

III. THE ILLUSTRATION HERE AFFORDED OF THE SUPREME EASE WITH WHICH THE OVERFLOWING GRACE OF CHRIST LENDS ITSELF TO THE SLIGHTEST CONTACT OF FAITH, WITH THE RESULT OF INSTANTANEOUS CREATION OF LIFE—OTHER CONTACT UNFRUITFUL.

IV. THE ILLUSTRATION HERE AFFORDED OF THE PRACTICALLY ASSURED VERDICT OF CHRIST, THAT HIS GRANDEST ACHIEVEMENT IN SAVING A BODY IS INCOMPLETE ESSENTIALLY WITHOUT THE SOUL SAVED ALSO.

V. THE ILLUSTRATION HERE GIVEN OF CHRIST'S EARTHLY BENEDICTION UPON SUCH BODY AND SOUL TOGETHER MADE NEW.—B.

Vers. 27—31.—*The blindness of sense vanquished by the sight of faith.* In intro-

duction, dwell a moment on the frequency of the allusions to the blind, and to Christ's giving of sight to them. Show how it accords with the typical statement of Christ's work, which also had travelled down from the prophetic "Go and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see," etc. (Luke vii. 22), compared with "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight *to* the blind," etc. (Luke iv. 18). Also in what natural harmony it is with alike the delicacy of the sense, the sadness of the deprivation, and the too familiar woe that bears the description of blindness or darkness. Note that there follows in this same Gospel a far more graphic description of the prayer to Christ of two blind men (ch. xx. 30—34), which invites correspondingly fuller treatment. But that as *this* account is given us, in a word that knows no *vain* repetition, nothing that can be styled correctly repetition at all, it must have its specific value and its own significance of lessons amid other features that may show it common with other accounts. Observe, then, that we have here—

I. THE SOUND OF AN APPLICATION, A PETITION, AN ENTREATY, THAT NO DOUBT MUST HAVE TAKEN ITS RISE ORIGINALLY ON THE SUGGESTION OF RUMOUR, AND ABOUT WHICH THERE IS SO MUCH UNCERTAINTY AS TO WHETHER IT IS THE PRAYER OF FAITH, THAT THE MERCIFUL ONE WHO "WAITS TO HEAR PRAYER" DOES ALSO GRACIOUSLY WAIT TO TEST WHETHER THAT SOUND OF PRAYER IS PRAYER INDEED. For what multitudes of us, for what multitudes of occasions in our life, for what multitudes of the lip-offerings of our prayers, is that very test needed!

II. THE TEST ITSELF REVEALED WITH ITS SIMPLEST MACHINERY, OF THREE DEGREES, SHOWN IN THE DELAY AS THE TWO BLIND MEN "FOLLOWED HIM, CRYING;" AS THEY FOLLOWED HIM, STILL APPARENTLY VOUCHSAFING NO PARTICULAR ATTENTIVENESS, INTO THE REPOSE AND CALMNESS OF THE HOUSE; AND AS FINALLY THEY ARE CONFRONTED WITH THE DETERMINING QUESTION, "BELIEVE YE THAT I AM ABLE TO DO THIS?"

III. THE CONFESSION OF FAITH—WITH HONESTY AND TRUTHFULNESS ALL-UNCHALLENGED BY THE OMNISCIENT KNOWER OF THE HEART.

IV. THE NO DELAY OF MERCY, WHEN THE FIT QUALIFICATION TO RECEIVE THE BENEFIT OF IT IS ONCE ASCERTAINED. There is *no* delay now; no "making of clay," no application of any outer material. This is only *the touch*, that touch of energy, of omnipotent efficacy, the omnipotent efficacy of light and life.

V. THE IMPETUOUSNESS OF GLADNESS CONQUERING THAT FAR MORE ACCEPTABLE GRACE, VIZ. THE EXACT AND EXQUISITE OBEDIENCE THAT SHOULD BE THE GROWTH OF THE HEART'S DEEPEST THANKFULNESS, AND THE BOUNDEN OFFERING OF A SAVED SOUL'S PUREST GRATEFULNESS.—B.

Vers. 32, 33 (see also Luke xi. 14, 15).—*The tyrannous intrusion.* Note, in introduction, that the words of the passage quoted above from Luke xi. 14, 15, though given in a different connection, certainly seem to describe one occasion with that before us, or *vice versâ*. If this be not so, the present passage is isolated, and has no parallel in either of the other Gospels. The blasphemy of "some of them," however—those "some" apparently the Pharisees—is treated of at length in a subsequent chapter of the present Gospel, and in both of the other Gospels. The present passage is allowed by very leading commentators to be distinct from such a one as that recorded in Mark vii. 31—37, and can scarcely be thought to be simply included in those sacred descriptions, that tell generally how the grace and power of the Lord healed *many* dumb and deaf and blind; and therefore needs its own consideration in this present place. Notice—

I. THE OBJECT OF PITY THAT WAS BROUGHT BEFORE CHRIST—A MAN DUMB, NOT BY NATURAL DEFECT, NOT BY FORCE OF DISEASE, NOT BY REASON OF ACCIDENT, BUT BY THE TYRANNOUS INTRUSION INTO HIS BODILY ORGANIZATION OF A DEVIL WHOSE MALIGNITY TOOK THE DIRECTION OF INFLICTING DUMBNESS ON THE VICTIM. Whether this possession and other similar were a result and forestalled punishment of excess of immoral vice of their own, or of "their parents," on the part of those of whom we read from time to time; or whether really vicarious suffering, in days that were marked by the lowest social degradation, and could not justly be fixed on the individual sufferer as the meriting cause; or whether it were all to be safely described, as to the

end, that the works of God might be manifested, it seems impossible to assert. The barest facts of these cases of possession are terrible, and for the fidelity with which they are portrayed, they are indisputable. They must be accepted even if they lay only on the page of profane history, instead of on the specially tested, the microscopically examined, pages of sacred history.

II. THE "MERCIFUL AND GRACIOUS" METHOD OF TREATMENT OF THAT MOURNFUL OBJECT OF PITY ON THE PART OF CHRIST. It is the method of One who takes in the whole situation; who regards it *as it is* now; who recognizes who the invisible enemy is, and what the sting of his enmity; who delays not to confront his odious challenge, nor delays by a moment remedy and rescue for the sufferer.

III. THE SWIFT AND SUPREME EASE WITH WHICH THE MIGHTY ONE EXPOSES THE WORK OF THE EVIL PRESENCE; AND DISPLAYS TO MANIFESTATION ITSELF THE GRACE OF HIS OWN PRESENCE. *Now* "he did not strive nor cry; neither was his voice heard in the streets;" *but* the voice of the dumb *was* heard, and the voice of an acclaiming, admiring, blest multitude was heard! And the crown was already being raised that should be placed on the brow of that King of kings.—B.

Vers. 36—38.—*The mournful picture redeemed by compassion.* Notice, in introduction, how the language which here describes the compassion that moved the vast heart of Christ leads us to most grateful apprehension of the sweet condescending sympathy (not only of Jesus Christ with humanity, but) of Jesus Christ's humanity with our own. How delicately in touch with this latter is it said that the fountains of compassion in that vast heart were freshly opened, freshly drawn upon, as Jesus "*saw*;" saw "*the multitudes*;" saw the multitudes all "a-faint;" "scattered abroad;" "saw" a picture—a picture that arrested the eye, that rivetted the thought, that stirred the heart! Yes, a picture; but one that was mournful, and that made mournful exceedingly—this its subject, "as sheep having no shepherd." Notice, then—

I. HOW THE LONGEST LABOUR, THE HARDEST TOIL, THE MOST TRIED PATIENCE, THE KEENEST SENSITIVENESS AS TO PERVERSITY, BLINDNESS, HARDNESS OF HEART, NEED NOT STAUNCH DRY A CHRISTIAN COMPASSION, BUT MUST NEEDS MAKE IT FLOW THE MORE FREELY FORTH.

II. HOW THE BEHOLDING AND THE MOVED CONTEMPLATIVE BEHOLDING OF THE MOUNTAIN MASSES OF HUMAN SIN, WANT, MISERY, SHOULD HAVE FOR THEIR LEGITIMATE CHRISTIAN ACTION, NOT DESPAIR, NOT DESPONDENCY, NOT SO MUCH AS ONE FOREBODING, FEARFUL DOUBT, BUT THE CALMEST CONVICTION THAT THEY STRETCH A VAST AND A HOPEFUL HARVEST-FIELD BEFORE THE AGONIZED EYE.

III. HOW THIS HARVEST-FIELD IS ONE TO BE WORKED IN, AND REAPED, NOT BY THE ANGELS, BUT BY MEN; WHO MUST BE PREPARED TO BE "LABOURERS," AND MUST BE LABOURERS, AND MUST BE APPLIED FOR BY PRAYER ON THE PART OF THOSE WHO ARE ALREADY THE INSUFFICIENT LABOURERS, TO HIM, WHO WILL BE FOUND TO BE, AND WHO IS, THE LORD OF THE HARVEST.—B.

Vers. 1—17.—*At Capernaum.* The choice of Capernaum as suitable centre justified by results. Rapid spread of our Lord's fame. Eager crowds gathering from far and near. Picture scene: Here, father carrying drooping child; there, little girl with blind father; camel bearing woman bowed with infirmity; sick of all kinds brought by friends; crowd ever increasing; silence broken only by occasional yell of a possessed one or moans of sufferers. Crowds waiting before daylight, but Jesus not there—gone to a desert place to pray. His approach suddenly announced by one on the edge of the crowd; wonder and awe as he passes to the house, stretching out hands of effectual blessing. Two results of this crowding of multitudes: 1. Jesus obliged to seek a more retired place. 2. Incident of text. Four friends, believing that he whom they have carried far will be able to walk back if they can lay him before Jesus. Overcome obstacles, removing a few large, uncemented tiles of roof—a liberty pleasing to our Lord as a tribute to him and proof of their faith. Common experience to ask one thing and receive another. Perhaps this man had an inward conviction that spiritual gifts were the greater. Scribes cavil at "Thy sins be," etc.; begin to suspect evasion; therefore Jesus does work that *can* be tested by their senses. Two points unusual: Our Lord accepted test tacitly proposed, and the miracle convinced

the witnesses. Miracles evidences of revelation because themselves parts of it, not mere signs. God could not reveal himself except by miracle. Historical fact that nature has never done so. Revelation not so much *accompanied* by as *consisting* of miracles. Such a revelation authenticates itself, proves itself such because giving higher and worthier idea of God.

I. CALLING OF MATTHEW. His office odious to Jews, both as representing foreign government and from oppressive system of farming taxes. Evil effects of such system seen now in Egypt and elsewhere. No loss to government by Matthew thus suddenly throwing up office, he having already paid the sum. Possible, but rare, for good man to be in such a calling. Our Lord does not defend his calling of Matthew on that ground. He chose his followers among the unsophisticated, or those who had not yet found their good. Probably some previous acquaintance with Matthew. Matthew perhaps gradually dissatisfied with himself. Among such the Lord is found. His unanswerable reply to Pharisees, "They that be whole," etc. To those sick in body, in heart, in spirit, he offers himself; to the heavy-laden, disappointed, broken, sinful, one unfailing Friend, bent on bringing them into his own peace and holiness and joy. Are there none here who will at length listen to his call, "Follow me"? Follow by keeping him always in view, thinking of him, doing his will.

II. MATTHEW'S FEAST. In the joy of his heart inclined to be lavish. From being despised, hated, suddenly chosen as friend and companion by greatest and worthiest. Cherished money-bags contemptible in presence of Christ and his love. Pharisees not in sympathy. It might be a fast-day; much might be involved. It was thin end of wedge—a party forming, not fettered by mechanical rules, but allowing the spirit naturally to express itself. Suitable, therefore, that this, our Lord's first *recorded* teaching to a mixed multitude, should deal with this new thing. He lays down the principle that underlies all outward observance, viz. that the state of mind gives it appropriateness and virtue. Further explained in two parables. In every generation can be seen this Pharisaic spirit—deep-seated hatred and fear of change. Men who have never gone deep enough to distinguish between essential and accidental, saying, "If there *is* new life, let it be kept in the old forms." To do so were to destroy both. These parables fit a most important principle. Had Matthew fasted at this time, his new love and energy would have been wasted instead of utilized, and fasting (the old bottle) become for ever distasteful to him. As it was, he would fast again when he felt it suitable. New ways sometimes preferred by new converts. If love to Christ and sound moral conduct go with the changes, no need to fear them. But our Lord had also a word of apology for conservatism of Pharisees: "No man, having drunk old wine," etc. Natural to prefer the old. So with many of the best of men. For few attain to the complete magnanimity and truth of the Lord. "Oh that patrons of old ways understood Christ's wisdom, and that patrons of new ways sympathized with his charity! . . . When will young men and old men, liberals and conservatives, broad Christians and narrow, learn to bear with one another; yea, to recognize each in the other the necessary complement of his own one-sidedness?" (Bruce).—D.

Ver. 36—ch. x. 42.—*Mission sermon.* The spring of all missionary effort and of all healthy propagandism of one's religion is compassion for men. To the eye of our Lord the multitudes of that teeming Eastern population seemed as sheep torn by wild beasts and scattered, with none to defend them. The crowds were greater than he could alone overtake. The instructions given to the twelve were of permanent significance.

I. THE SPHERE IN WHICH THEY WERE TO LABOUR. Not among Gentiles, but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. The Jews were the medium appointed by God for diffusing the knowledge of salvation through the world; and the success of the gospel among other nations would much depend on its acceptance by the Jews. Also the apostles were not yet sufficiently disentangled from Jewish prejudices to move freely or without danger among Samaritans and Gentiles. The principles here indicated are that if one race is more likely than another to prove helpful in diffusing the gospel, to that race should it first be carried. A man must sow in the best soil he can. And, second, the missionary must consider the kind of work and the sphere for which he is best adapted.

II. THE NATURE OF THEIR WORK was indicated by the communication of the gift

of healing, and by the commission, "As ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand." They were themselves in many respects uninstructed, but they were to tell of the acts and character of Jesus, and they were themselves to do similar works. The aim of the missionary must still be to proclaim and exhibit the kingdom of heaven. Preaching would receive irresistible confirmation by fact could they show in their renovated life the reality of Christ's power to create a kingdom of heaven upon earth. A great obstacle to Christian missions lies in the fact that missionaries cannot point to such evidence either in the lives of professing Christians abroad, or in our national acts and ways, and on the face of our society.

III. THE METHOD OF PROCEDURE. They were in the first place to make no provision for their maintenance. This was possibly to prevent their taking money from those they healed, and so seeming to rank with exorcists and strolling magicians; probably also to train them to faith in our Lord while absent from him. He meant, by their present experience, to lead them to the conviction that he was able to provide for them. Again, he warns them not only against carefulness, but against fearfulness. He could not only provide for, but defend, his servants. When they saw their preaching producing unexpected results, and bringing them into collision with men in power and with the prejudices of the people, they might begin to accuse themselves. Therefore does he furnish them beforehand with all needed consolation in the word that in that experience they were but reproducing his own. "It is enough for the servant that he be as his Master, and the servant as his Lord." And as their motto to guide them they were to take the words, "Be ye wise as serpents, and harmless as doves;" and, adds our Lord, "Beware of men." This rule guided his own conduct. He knew when to speak and when to be silent. And so he says—Do not count upon candour, patience, generosity, or trust to simple straightforwardness and the power of truth. Be on your guard, but do not let yourselves be betrayed into trickery or double-dealing. Wise as serpents, you must also be guileless as doves. Choose the right time and way to deliver your message, but never be led into suppressing the truth, or pretending to believe what you do not. It may be a question whether mission work in some countries does not offer, to the candidate for the ministry, a field of labour in which he will have less cause for fear or care than in the Church at home. To any one who has a distaste for the controversies which have grown up from a long Church history, there is something immensely attractive in the idea of working a virgin soil, where nothing need be dealt with but the central facts of our religion, "Jesus Christ, and him crucified." To any one who wishes to be wholly unhampered, that he may give himself, without bond or prepossession, to be moulded by Christ himself, and to adopt his methods pure and simple, the work of the missionary presents attractions which cannot be offered at home. It is to be remarked of this first mission that none of the dark forebodings of our Lord seem to have been fulfilled at this time; but, on the contrary, they returned in such a state of exultation that our Lord saw they needed to be sobered rather than to receive further encouragement. He took them apart into a desert place to rest awhile. When the seventy returned our Lord took occasion to admonish them that the true ground of satisfaction was not that the devils were subject to them, but that their names were written in the book of life. So the twelve required to hear over again the words of the sermon on the mount, "*Many* shall say in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not cast out devils in thy Name, and in thy Name done many wonderful works? Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." That is to say, the apostles, in common with all who are engaged in similar work, had need to be reminded that they may be useful in bringing others into the kingdom and yet themselves be outcasts; that success in Christian work is no criterion of their own state. We have not the temptation to self-confidence which the apostles had, but there does arise in us a state of mind which requires these sobering words of our Lord. When we have a craving to evince our loyalty to Christ by some extraordinary sign, to do some striking and conspicuous work that would at once dissipate for ever all suspicion about our own connection with him, we need to be reminded that our *first* work is to purify our personal life, our domestic habits, our business relations, and so we shall learn to face the further opportunities of being helpful that may be presented to us.

The important question for us is—What was involved in the reception of the apostles

and their message? How did the knowledge and acceptance of what they proclaimed operate to make men holy? The people had very erroneous ideas about the kingdom, but our Lord lays down the rule, "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me;" that is, he that admits true teaching regarding the kingdom receives the King, accepts Christ; and he that does so accept God is reconciled to the highest and best—is a saved man. He was at no pains to correct their crude ideas about heaven and hell, but he made light of nothing which threatened to obscure the distinction between sin and righteousness. The matters with which we have immediate concern are—What ought man to be? and—How can he become what he ought? And the acceptance of Christ as King appointed by God operated to make men holy by quickening and intensifying all their previous trust and hope, and by setting vividly before them what a son of God really was. In all essentials this original gospel was identical with that preached to us. Entrance to the kingdom is not given by way of reward bought by submission to Christ, but true submission to Christ necessarily communicates that kind of character which he requires. To be in the kingdom is to be among the things that endure. Choose Christ as your King, and you are brought into a connection which lends reality and consistency to your whole life. Recognize that your life has its source in Christ. God has so ordained it that our spirits should be fed from a personal source, not by books, not by laws, not even by hopes, but by personal intercourse with a person fit to sustain, to enlighten, to sanctify, to guide us. If we desire to be made such as God sees we might be, we must ceaselessly press on to further knowledge of what he means by being our King.—D.

Vers. 1—8.—*Soul-searching.* At the request of the Gadarenes Jesus crossed over. He does not obtrude his blessings on the unwilling. We do not read that he ever after visited them. Coming to his own city, Capernaum, where residence gave him citizenship (ch. iv. 13; viii. 14; Mark'ii. 1), "they brought to him," etc. (vers. 2—8).

I. JESUS SEES THE FAITH OF THE CONTRITE HEART. 1. *He saw the faith of those who carried the paralytic.* (1) This was obvious in the simple fact of their seeking his healing power. Faith is seen in works (Jas. ii. 17—22). (2) It was obvious, moreover, in their earnestness. For, obstructed by the crowd, they broke up the roof and let down the bed whereon the sick of the palsy lay (see Mark ii. 4; Luke v. 19). (3) They brought him because he could not come of himself; and Jesus honoured *their* faith. So does he honour the faith of those who bring their children to him in baptism or in prayer. (4) The faith which secured healing, however, was not of necessity that which brought forgiveness (see *e.g.* Luke xvii. 12, etc.). 2. *In the paralytic Jesus discerned a deeper faith.* (1) Disease is the general effect of general corruption, not always the particular effect of particular sin (cf. Exod. xv. 26; Deut. xxviii. 21). (2) Oftentimes it is this also. Disease is often the natural consequence of sin. And God has often visited individuals with disease as a temporal judgment upon sin (cf. Numb. xi. 33; xii. 10; 1 Kings xiii. 4; 2 Kings v. 27; Luke i. 20; Acts xiii. 11; 1 Cor. v. 5; xi. 30; 1 Tim. i. 20). (3) Hence the Jews commonly connected suffering with sin (cf. John v. 14; ix. 2, 34). This man evidently took his sin to heart, and his affliction may have deepened this oppressive sense. No man is fit for forgiveness who does not with the heart believe himself to be a sinner. Heart-faith in sin is repentance. Spiritual disease is invariably the result of spiritual evil. Diseased action is the result of corrupt motive. (4) This man, moreover, discerned in Jesus not only the Healer, viz. of the body, but also the Healer, viz. of the soul. No man is fit for forgiveness who does not with the heart accept Jesus as the Christ (see Rom. x. 9, 10). (5) All this heart-faith Jesus saw when he proceeded to say, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven." The pardoning voice of Jesus in the believing heart brings "good cheer" evermore.

II. JESUS SEARCHES THE THOUGHTS OF THE EVIL HEART. 1. *He read the evil thoughts of the scribes.* (1) He saw that they "said within themselves, This man blasphemeth." Blasphemy consists in: (*a*) Attributing unworthy things to God. (*b*) Denying worthy things of God. (*c*) Attributing to others or arrogating the attributes of God. (2) If Jesus were not Divine it would be blasphemy in him to affect to forgive sins. The offended only can forgive the sins of the offender (cf. 2 Sam. xii. 13; 1 Kings viii. 39; Isa. xliii. 25; Jer. xvii. 10; Mark ii. 7). (3) The sin in the thought

of the scribes was that they did not apprehend the Divinity of Christ. His miracles, together with the prophecies concerning Messiah, should have convinced them of this. 2. *He proved to them his Divinity.* (1) By discovering their secret thoughts. In those passages which challenge to God alone the prerogative to forgive sins, the reason urged is that God alone can search the heart (2 Chron. vi. 30; see places referred to above). (2) This knowledge is a mark of Messiah (cf. John ii. 15; xvi. 19, 30; Rev. ii. 23). Therefore the rabbins by this test confuted the claims of Barchochebas. "Bar Cozeba," says the Talmud, "reigned two years and a half. He said to the rabbins, 'I am the Messiah.' They replied, 'It is written of Messiah that he is of quick understanding, and judges (Isa. xi. 3); let us see whether this man can tell whether one is wicked or not, without any external proof.' And when they saw that he could not judge in this manner, they slew him." (3) He proved his Divinity by reasoning upon his miracle-working. "For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins are forgiven; or to say, Arise?" If you concede the power of healing with a word, you must concede the Divinity of the Worker, and therefore should concede also that the Son of man has power on earth to forgive sins. (4) He confirmed his reasoning by miracle. "But that ye may know that the Son of man," etc. Here was a Divine work to confirm a Divine claim. An impostor might say, "Thy sins are forgiven," for the result is not so obvious; but were he to say, "Arise!" he must have power, else he will be instantly rejected.

III. THE PRESENCE OF THE HEART-SEARCHER IS FEAR-INSPIRING. 1. *The fear of the forgiven is reverential.* (1) The sense of sins forgiven brings Christ very near. It brings him near in his Godhead. For who can read the heart but God (1 Cor. ii. 10, 11)? (2) It intensifies sincerity. In the near presence of the essential truth there is every discouragement to falsehood. Divine good can only dwell in Divine truth. (3) Gratitude is kindled in the presence of love. The forgiveness of sins does not consist in pronouncing them pardoned, but in removing the sinful inclination from the heart, and replacing it with the passion for goodness. As between sin and suffering there is an intimate connection, so is there an important relation between the pardon of sin and the healing of diseases (cf. Ps. xli. 3, 4; ciii. 3; Jer. xxxiii. 24; xxxviii. 17; ch. viii. 16, 17). 2. *The fear of the sinner is awful.* (1) The awe is salutary to the thoughtful. "When the multitudes saw it, they were afraid, and glorified God, which had given such power to men." "Power on earth to forgive sins," viz. "because he is the Son of man" (cf. John v. 22, 27). The union of the Divine and human in the Person of the Lord is the source of his saving power. "Power on earth." Here sin is committed. Here sin is forgiven. Christ, who has all power in heaven, has therefore all power also on earth. (2) To the gainsayer the awe is confounding. The scribes were silenced. The day of judgment in the presence of the Heart-searcher came into their very soul. How senseless is the sinner who thinks he sins securely when unseen by men!—J. A. M.

Vers. 9—13.—*The sinner's Friend.* In the paragraph preceding we have notable examples of the heart-searching powers of Jesus. These powers he manifested again, when, in going forth, he saw Matthew at the receipt of custom, and called him. The sequel proved the wisdom of his election.

I. JESUS, IN HIS CONDUCT, SHOWED HIMSELF THE SINNER'S FRIEND. 1. *He called a publican into his discipleship.* (1) Publicans were hated by the Jews as representatives of Roman oppression. For they were public tax-gatherers, or rather farmers of the revenue. "The publican's trade is dirty and sordid" (Artemidorus). "There is no sinful calling but some have been saved *out of it*, and no lawful calling but some have been saved in it" (Henry). (2) They were hated because many of them were extortionate in their exactions. So common was this that it became a saying that "all publicans are thieves." None are too vile to be reclaimed by Christ. (3) Publicans were particularly obnoxious to the Pharisees because of their commerce with the Gentiles in the pursuit of their calling. Hence "publicans and sinners" are familiarly associated (cf. ch. v. 46 with Luke vi. 32; see also ch. xi. 19). Hence also Pharisees would have no communion with publicans. It was a maxim with the orthodox, "Take not a wife from the family of a publican" (Theocritus). Yet from this despised and hated class Jesus called Matthew to be one of his beloved and trusted disciples. 2. *He ate with publicans and sinners.* (1) Gentiles, who came not under obedience to

Moses, were accounted sinners (see ch. xviii. 17; xxvi. 45; Rom. v. 8; Gal. ii. 15). Some of these may have been at Matthew's feast. If so, then Jesus in eating with them would portend the calling of the Gentiles, as also did the favour he showed to the centurion and to the Syro-phœnician woman. (2) Jews who were lax in respect to the ceremonies of the Law, as well as those who violated its precepts, were by the Pharisees accounted little better than heathen (see ch. viii. 30). (3) Another class of "sinners," no less obnoxious to the Pharisee, were those who, while they honoured the Law, paid little respect to the traditions of the elders. Such sinners might be morally superior to the Pharisees who despised them. (4) In eating with sinners Jesus did not evince sympathy with sin. Had he done so he would not have been the Friend of sinners. Those are not friends of sinners who encourage them in evil. His sympathy was for their souls. Christ comes to those who welcome him, and to none is he more welcome than to those who feel themselves to be sinners. 3. *He encourages his disciples to go and do likewise.* (1) The sensual man enters the company of sinners for gratification. In this sense the holy Jesus could never join them. Neither in this sense could he encourage his disciples to join them. (2) The spiritual man enters the company of sinners to do them good. There is no heart so vile that the Lord will not enter it when invited (cf. Rev. iii. 20). (3) The self-righteous man shuns the "sinner" from contempt. This unworthy feeling Jesus would discourage in his disciples. Therefore he had them with him to eat with the despised. (4) The man of the world will shun the company of notorious sinners for the sake of reputation. Such a motive is hypocritical. Jesus would have his disciples true men. There is no fear for the reputation of any man anywhere if he be in the company of Jesus.

II. JESUS IN DEFENCE OF HIS CONDUCT SHOWED HIMSELF THE SINNER'S FRIEND. 1. *He rested his defence upon the mind of God.* (1) Had man remained innocent he would have required neither mercy nor sacrifice. Man being fallen mercy is required; and sacrifice is instituted for the sake of mercy. To set forth the mercy of God in Christ's sacrifice of himself for us. To beget mercifulness in the heart of the believer. Mercy is the end, sacrifice the means, and the end is preferable to the means. (2) Hence God will have mercy rather than sacrifice. He prefers mercifulness to ritual (see 1 Sam. xv. 22; Ps. l. 13, 14; Isa. i. 11; Luke vii. 22, 23; Joel ii. 13; Hos. vi. 6; Mark xii. 33). (3) The Lord willed mercy; but the Pharisees chose sacrifice, in a very different sense, however, from that in which Jesus came to offer himself instead of the many "burnt offerings" previously required. When Jesus spake, sacrifices were being offered in the temple by a disobedient and gainsaying people who had little respect for mercy. In such sacrifices God had no pleasure. (4) Another kind of sacrifice will surely come in the day of vengeance (see Ezek. xxxix. 17—19; Zeph. i. 7, 8; Rev. xix. 17). But this is the "strange work" of God, to which he greatly prefers the mercy in which he "delighteth." 2. *He rested his defence also upon his special mission.* (1) In coming into the world Messiah says, "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared for me" (cf. Ps. xl. 6—8; Heb. x. 5—10). (2) Where should the Physician be but among the sick? This was a home-thrust; for the Pharisee recognized a teacher of the Law as a "physician of the soul." (3) Jesus came into a world of sinners. All men need healing. (4) But men must acknowledge their need. The whole need not a physician. The self-righteous are outside the mission of Jesus. The most inveterate disease is that in which the sinner imagines himself a saint, and therefore will not seek the Physician of souls.

III. BY THE HAPPY ISSUE JESUS PROVES HIMSELF THE SINNER'S FRIEND. 1. *The worthiness of the sinner is seen in the promptness of his obedience.* (1) Matthew arose at once responsive to the call. Who amongst us has yielded obedience to the earliest call of Christ? (2) Though conversion may at last take place, yet how much happiness and glory are forfeited through delay! (3) How fatal are delays! 2. *The worthiness of the sinner is seen in the completeness of his devotion.* (1) Jesus found Matthew in the midst of his business. Satan calls the idle to temptation. Christ calls the active to holy service (cf. ch. iv. 18—22). Matthew, like Saul of Tarsus, "conferred not with flesh and blood" (Gal. i. 15, 16). (2) Matthew renounced a lucrative employment to embrace a life of poverty and persecution. There are better things than money. Yet the sacrifice shows up the man. 3. *The worthiness of the sinner is seen in saintly zeal.* (1) In giving a great feast, Matthew sought no personal glory.

It is from other evangelists we learn that Matthew gave it (see Mark ii. 15; Luke v. 29). (2) He gave it in honour of Christ. He gave it also in the interests of humanity. The service of Christ is the service of humanity. Humanity is blessed when brought under the influence of Jesus. (3) When Matthew invited Jesus he invited the disciples of Jesus also. Those who welcome Christ to their hearts will welcome his disciples. 4. *The worthiness of the sinner is honoured in the confidence of the Saviour.* (1) He is called to righteousness—the righteousness of faith. Matthew never forgot that he had been a publican (cf. 1 Tim. i. 13). (2) Obedience, devotion, and zeal will be rewarded. Matthew was subsequently elected into the apostleship (ch. x. 3). He was, moreover, distinguished as the first evangelist. The publican is immortalized through his connection with Jesus.—J. A. M.

Vers. 14—17.—*Consistency in diversity.* Three classes of persons made up what might be called the religious community of Palestine, viz. the Pharisees, the disciples of John, and the disciples of our Lord. The ground of the question here was why one of these should neglect what the others preached as a religious duty. The answer here teaches—

I. THAT THERE IS A MORAL FITNESS IN RELATION TO CIRCUMSTANCES. 1. *Fasting might be proper to the disciple of John.* (1) "John preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." Fasting, which is a sign of grief, is fitting to one who mourns for his sins. So John himself "came neither eating nor drinking" (ch. xi. 18). His habit as a Nazarite was in keeping with his doctrine and dispensation. (2) Rejoicing in an unpardoned penitent would be incongruous. But unpardoned, however penitent, he must be who remains a disciple of John as distinguished from the disciples of Jesus. The new piece on the old garment would look badly. (3) John, as Grotius notes, was now in prison. This circumstance would give additional consistency to the fasting of his disciples. But the case was different with the disciples of Jesus, who had their Master with them. 2. *Fasting might be proper to the Pharisee.* (1) The ostentatious fast would be consistent in the hypocritical Pharisee who disfigured his face that he might secure applause of men (see ch. vi. 16). (2) But some of the Pharisees were probably sincere men. To such there would be a fitness in their fasting. For the spirit of the Pharisee was the spirit of the Law, *i.e.* the "spirit of bondage to fear." Who could consistently rejoice within the roar of the thunders and clang of the great trumpet of Sinai? (3) Neither the ritual of Leviticus nor the traditions of the elders can deliver the Pharisee from the yoke of terror. 3. *But fasting might be improper to the disciple of Jesus.* (1) Christ is the Bridegroom of his Church (cf. Ps. xlv. and Song of Sol.; also 2 Cor. xi. 2; Eph. v. 23, etc.; Rev. xix. 17). (2) Individual disciples are the "sons of the bride-chamber," the chosen friends of the Bridegroom. (3) It would be unfitting in them to mourn while the Bridegroom was with them—during the festivities of the marriage. These festivities usually lasted seven days (see Judg. xiv. 17). The Spirit of Jesus is the spirit of love. With love is joy and peace. (4) Jesus was not with the Pharisees or these disciples of John as the Bridegroom with the sons of the bride-chamber. For they were the sons of the bondwoman (Gal. iv. 25, 31). (5) These disciples are herein significantly rebuked for their fasting in the presence of Jesus by the use of a simile which John used when he came into the presence of Jesus (see John iii. 29). The sorrows of penitence in the presence of Jesus should be turned into the joys of salvation. These disciples of John had degenerated from the spirit of their master. Note and avoid tendencies to formality as tendencies to degeneration.

II. THAT THE MORAL FITNESS OF CIRCUMSTANCES IS FATAL TO UNIFORMITY. 1. *Obviously so, because circumstances are ever varying.* (1) Minor circumstances are infinitely various. Yet may these be generally ranged under two classes (cf. Eccles. vii. 14; Jas. v. 13). In the text they are distinguished as mourning and rejoicing, fasting and feasting. (2) No man, therefore, should make himself the standard of religion for his fellows. Herein the disciples of John and the Pharisees erred. The new wine of the gospel could not be restrained in the old wine-skins of the Law. It must have the elastic wine-skins of new forms suitable to its expansive genius. 2. *Christians have their seasons of mourning.* (1) Of the Bridegroom himself the only record of his fasting is that which took place when he was in the wilderness. (2) In

that experience Jesus personated the condition of his Church during his absence from her in heaven. She was destined to mourn in the wilderness, suffering from Satan fierce assaults of persecution and temptation. First from the Jews; then from the Romans; then from the apostasy; perhaps finally from the rising spirit of infidelity. (3) Individual Christians also have their seasons of temptation (cf. 1 Cor. iv. 11; 2 Cor. vi. 5; xi. 27). In such seasons they have their voluntary fasts (cf. Acts x. 30; xiii. 2, 3; xiv. 23; 1 Cor. vii. 5). 3. *When the Bridegroom returns mourning will end.* (1) Then will come the festivities of the Church's wedding (see ch. xxv. 10; Rev. xix. 7). The joys of the millennium will run into those of the new heavens and earth. (2) Individual saints have their interludes of joy as well as of sorrow. Darkness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. (3) After the night of trial which ends in the sleep of death, comes the joy of the bright morning of the resurrection.

III. THAT CONSISTENCY MUST BE SOUGHT IN DIVERSITY. 1. *It is unnatural to seek it in uniformity.* (1) Uniformity is too often mistaken for unity. Things may be turned out of the same mould in infinite number, but neither is the conformity nor the number unity. (2) There is in nature a unity which certainly consists not in uniformity. For no two blades of grass are exactly alike. (3) The unity of nature rather lies in its diversity, for it is in the diversity of things that they become mutually useful. So it is in morals. (4) Acts of uniformity can never give unity. 2. *The unity of truth is in the spirit of love.* (1) The unity of nature is a spirit of harmony. (2) So truth must be maintained amongst Christians in loving concession. The old piece must be sought for the old garment. Fresh skins must be sought for new wine. (3) The duties of religion should not be made a subject of strife and contention amongst religious persons. The spirit must not be sacrificed to the letter. (4) Note: "The quarrel with Christ was brought to the disciples (ver. 11); the quarrel with the disciples was brought to Christ (ver. 14). This is the way of sowing discord and killing love, to set people against ministers, ministers against people, and one friend against another" (Henry).—J. A. M.

Vers. 18—26.—*Concessions to faith.* While Jesus discoursed upon consistency in diversity, and the concessions of love, an occasion arose for the exemplification of his teaching. "While he yet spake," etc. Note here the gracious concessions of Jesus to the weakness of the ruler's faith, and learn—

I. THAT JESUS RESPECTS THE FAITH WHICH, THOUGH WEAK, IS YET TRUE. 1. *The ruler's faith was halting.* (1) His was not at the first a faith for the raising of the dead. Had it been so, it would have been remarkable; for, up to this time, Jesus had not raised the dead. The words, "even now dead," conveyed the sense of "at the point of death" (cf. Mark v. 23; Luke viii. 42; see also Bloomfield, *in loc.*). (2) His faith had respect simply to the recovery of the sick. Jesus had abundantly established the fame of his power to work miracles of healing. To have doubted here would have been unreasonable and criminal unbelief. How far is our unbelief unreasonable and criminal? (3) The ruler's faith cannot be compared with that of the centurion (see ch. viii. 5—13). The centurion did not consider himself worthy that Jesus should come under his roof. Discerning the Divinity of the Miracle-worker, he saw no need for his corporeal presence. The ruler's weaker faith required that Jesus should enter his dwelling and lay his hand upon his little daughter (cf. 2 Kings v. 11). (4) When the centurion believed, there were no examples of miracles of healing wrought at a distance. The ruler had the centurion's example. 2. *Yet the ruler's faith was true.* (1) His coming to Jesus evinced this. Trouble, it may have been, drove him to Jesus; but he came. Many there were who, notwithstanding the fame of Jesus, yet came not to him. Still there are many who remain in their moral maladies rather than come to Jesus for salvation. (2) His appeal also evinced it. His worship was more than the customary Eastern manifestation of respect. He knelt to him, and pleaded importunately for his dying child. Those who would receive mercy from the Lord must give him honour. 3. *Jesus respected this sincerity.* (1) Jesus could have healed the damsel at a distance (cf. John iv. 46—53). The ruler had not faith for this. So, in concession to his weakness, Jesus went with him to his house. In like manner Jesus honours the sincerity of the penitent sinner, meeting him on his way. (2) Note here the principle that grace is through faith. "According to your faith, so be it unto you."

Had the ruler a firmer faith, it would have prevented the death of his child. Yet did not Jesus resent this halting by abandoning his case. Never will Jesus forsake the seeker who does not first forsake him.

II. THAT JESUS WILL STRENGTHEN THE WEAK, TRUE FAITH. 1. *By the stronger faith of others in his company.* (1) The ruler saw the noble faith of the poor woman who "said within herself, If I do but touch his garment, I shall be made whole." The *conception* was creditable. She believed in that fulness of his grace presaged in that oil of gladness which flowed down to the skirts of Aaron's robe (cf. Ps. cxxxiii. 2; John i. 16). (2) Her faith was admirable in *action.* She made her way through the crowd and touched the fringe of his garment. Yet it was her *spiritual* contact with Christ that saved her. The physical, however, was a sign of the spiritual (see Eph. ii. 8). (3) In that touch there is a sermon. The poor woman, through her malady, was ceremonially unclean, and whoever she touched was made unclean (see Lev. xv. 25). The doctrine of salvation through the vicarious sin-suffering of Jesus is set forth. The same was set forth again when Jesus took the dead hand of Jairus's daughter (ver. 25). The Levitical priesthood leave the dead in their uncleanness. The unclean are not forbidden to come to Jesus. (4) How encouraging is his commendation! "Daughter, be of good cheer; thy faith hath saved thee." The believer is comforted in the assurance of adoption. 2. *By encouragements personally given.* (1) Messengers of discouragement came to the ruler from his house. The report was, "Thy daughter is dead." The advice accompanying it was, "Why troublest thou the Master any further?" (see Mark v. 35). "A man's foes"—often unwillingly, however—"are they of his own household." When Jesus works Satan counterworks. (2) "But Jesus, not heeding the word spoken, saith to the ruler of the synagogue, Fear not, only believe" (Mark v. 36). Jesus had not raised the dead before this. But the dead had been raised by the old prophets in the Name of the Lord. Why should not the Lord also raise the dead in his own Name? (3) Thus by works and by word was the faith of the ruler strengthened by Jesus that it might also be honoured. How faith may turn calamities into blessings!

III. THAT JESUS YIELDS NO CONCESSIONS TO UNBELIEF. 1. *He discovered the unbelief of the professional mourners.* (1) He found these in the ruler's house. Flute-players and wailers were making a tumult. The true mourners were silent. Deep grief is still. How unseemly are many of the customs of society! (2) The professional weepers were ready to laugh. When Jesus said, "Give place"—you are out of place here—"for the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth," they "laughed him to scorn." They had no doubt that the damsel was dead. This fact was strongly testified in the professional scorn. (3) The laughter of scorn is the reasoning of unbelief. The senseless can laugh when they cannot reply. The professionals were too carnal to apprehend the spiritual meaning of the Saviour's words. 2. *He ordered that the unbelievers should be turned out.* (1) He would not have his miracle-working hindered by their unbelief. It would be the first step to a revival in some Churches if the unbelievers could be expelled. (2) He would not have unbelievers honoured as witnesses of glorious works. Pearls should not be cast before swine. (3) In the resurrection at the last day the wicked will be treated with ignominy. The sceptical scorners will then awake out of the dust to "shame and everlasting contempt" (cf. Dan. xii. 2). 3. *The faithful only shall have honour from Christ.* (1) The witnesses chosen were the ruler and his wife, and the three favoured disciples—Peter, James, and John (see Mark v. 37—40). These disciples were afterwards chosen sole witnesses of the Transfiguration, and of the agony in the garden. (2) To them Jesus verified his deep words, "The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth." Bodily death is not essential *death*, but in his hands is *sleep.* To sleep is a common euphemism for death, and in Scripture points to a resurrection. (3) From the *bed* the daughter of Jairus was raised; the widow's son from the *bier* (Luke vii. 14); Lazarus from the *grave* (John xi. 44). "An ascending scale of difficulty, which has one stage more—the final summoning of all the dead by the same voice of quickening" (Trench). (4) The faithful will not only be witnesses, but also partakers of the better resurrection.—J. A. M.

Vers. 27—31.—*Companionship.* Here we meet two men in company, between whom there are notable points of agreement.

I. THEY ARE COMPANIONS IN BLINDNESS. 1. *In community there is sympathy.* (1) Their common *blindness* probably brought them together. They were in a condition to enter into each other's feelings. (2) So is there sympathy in the blindness of *ignorance.* Ignorance as to truth, ignorance as to goodness. The ignorant are at home with their kind. (3) So in the blindness of *error.* Hence the grouping of heretics into communities. (4) So in the blindness of *falsehood.* This is especially wilful and malignant. Against the clearest evidence for the Messiahship of Jesus the Pharisees closed their eyes (cf. John ix. 41). The miracles they could not deny they attributed to Satan rather than accept the inference that naturally followed from them (see ver. 34). 2. *In sympathy there is power.* (1) There is the power of *opportunity.* For sympathy brings contact. It also conciliates confidence. (2) Then there is the power of the *strongest will.* The pliant are led by the resolute. Note: Men of strong will should be good and true, not only for their own sake, but also for the sake of those they will lead. The pliant should especially be careful as to the company they keep.

II. THEY ARE TOGETHER IN SEEKING SIGHT. 1. *They seek it from the same Source.* (1) "Have mercy on us, thou Son of David." Note: (*a*) It was the received opinion of that time in Judæa that Messiah should be a Son of David (cf. ch. xxii. 42; John vii. 42). (*b*) Jesus was confessedly of that royal lineage (cf. ch. i. 1; xii. 23). (2) The Source of life is also the Source of light. Jesus had just raised to life the dead daughter of the ruler; now these blind men come to him for sight (cf. John i. 4; viii. 12; ix. 5, 6). 2. *They seek it by the same means.* (1) Not by works. They cried to the Son of David for *mercy.* In seeking mercy they disclaimed personal merit. They cried as beggars. (2) But by faith. Mercy was promised with the Son of David (see Ps. lxxii. 12, 13; Luke i. 78). Mercy in particular for the opening of blind eyes (see Ps. clxvi. 8; Isa. xxxv. 5; xlii. 6, 7). (3) They cried with the same voice. "Have mercy on *us.*" Each cried for the other as well as for himself. (4) They followed with the same persistency. They were fervent, incessant, importunate. So must those be who would receive spiritual sight. (5) Yet their faith came by hearing. They could not witness the works of Christ. Like the Gentiles, they received the gospel through testimony. 3. *They seek it with the same encouragement.* (1) Jesus encouraged them by his *silence.* They followed him through the street, crying for mercy. If he did not answer them immediately, he did not drive them away. Note: The sight-seeker should never despair. (2) For his silence Jesus had good reasons. Perhaps he was influenced by the reason which afterwards led him to impose silence upon the men (ver. 30). Perhaps the seekers were not yet in the moral condition to profit by the miracle to the utmost. Note: There is encouragement to persistency in the reserve of Christ. (3) Jesus encouraged them by his *speech.* "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" This question brought their faith to the very point. They now relied upon his power. Then he touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith so be it unto you." Herein he affirmed but did not restrict his gift.

III. THEY ARE COMPANIONS IN THE BLESSINGS OF VISION. 1. *They see the natural light.* (1) Revealing scenes of beauty and distortion. (2) Opening new sources of instruction. (3) Discovering unimagined avenues of delight, and perils to be avoided. (4) The miraculousness of their cure was evinced not only in its suddenness, but also in that their eyes were able at once to bear the light of day. 2. *They see the spiritual Light.* (1) They see the Son of David. This great sight prophets and kings desired to see (ch. xiii. 16, 17; Luke ii. 26; x. 23, 24). This sight these men, too, desired to see, but could not for their blindness, though they were in his very presence. How many in Christian lands are spiritually in this case! (2) Truth is to the intellect and heart what light is to the eye. The giving of spiritual vision is a blessing as much greater than the natural as spirit is nobler than matter—as the eternal surpasses the temporal.

IV. THEY ARE COMPANIONS IN DISOBEDIENCE. 1. "*Jesus strictly charged them, saying, See that no man know it.*" (1) He had already wrought miracles sufficient in Capernaum to convince those who sincerely desired to know the truth. (2) Greater publicity might intensify the malicious resentment of those who would not accept the truth. (3) It might encourage that mistaken popular feeling which would have him as a civil prince. (4) The inhibition had its lessons of humility and the obedience of

gratitude. 2. "*But they went forth and spread his fame in all that land.*" (1) For this disobedience there is no defence. The command was express. They had no business to judge differently from Christ. (2) Honour pursues those who fly from it. "Honour is like the shadow, which as it flies from those that follow it, so it follows those that flee from it" (Henry).—J. A. M.

Vers. 32—34.—*Two devils.* We have just seen two blind men in agreement. We are now introduced to two devils in diversity. Here is the dumb devil. Here also is the devil muttering blasphemy.

I. HERE IS A COMPARISON OF TWO SAD CASES. 1. *The dumb demoniac.* (1) Here is a man bodily in the hands of a demon. So completely is he in the power of the evil spirit that his self-control is lost. What an emblem of the helplessness of those who are morally "carried captive by the devil at his will"! (2) He is "dumb." (*a*) He has no voice for *prayer*. (*b*) He has no voice for *praise*. (*c*) He has no voice for *testimony*. (3) God had not opened his mouth. No other power was competent. 2. *The blaspheming Pharisee.* (1) He had a voice to impeach the Holy One as a sinner. (*a*) Because he did the best works on the best of days. (*b*) Because he condescended to eat with publicans and sinners. (*c*) Because he did not fast in deference to rabbinical tradition. (*d*) Because he proved that he has power on earth to forgive sins. (2) In all this the devil was concealed. For wherein does this voice essentially differ from that of the Gadarene demoniacs who cried, "What have we to do with thee, thou Son of God?" (ch. viii. 29). Malignity is no less devilish because masked as piety. (3) The blasphemy of the Pharisee advanced to refer the miracles of Christ to diabolical agency. (*a*) The miracles as facts could not be disputed. It is too late in the day for the modern sceptic to dispute them. (*b*) The Pharisee had no other way in which to evade their evidence but to trace them to the worst possible authorship. (*c*) The malignity of Beelzebub is in the libel. And how much better is the sceptic who traces the miracles of Christ to natural causes? Is not the influence of Satan still hidden under what are called natural disorders?

II. THE MORE SUBTLE PROVES THE SADDER. 1. *The dumb devil is driven out.* (1) The demoniac is brought to Jesus. He cannot come of himself. (2) He is brought in the arms of compassionate faith. The devil cannot resist the power of faith, though exercised by third parties. Let not the righteous relax the effectual fervent prayer. (3) In response to prayer the demon is expelled. Behold, the dumb has found his voice. Saul of Tarsus in conversion found his voice in prayer (see Acts ix. 11). Praise is the companion of prayer (Ps. li. 15). 2. *The multitudes marvel.* (1) No wonder they should, for here were four stupendous miracles wrought in one afternoon. (*a*) The healing of the profluvious woman. (*b*) The restoring of Jairus's daughter to life. (*c*) The imparting of vision to two blind men. (*d*) And now the expulsion of the dumb devil from the demoniac. (*e*) To these he immediately added many more (ver. 35). (2) They express their admiration in the exclamation, "It was never so seen in Israel." And if not in Israel, where, then? For the Hebrews, themselves a miraculous people, were of all peoples the most favoured by the working of miracles amongst them. 3. *The blaspheming devil holds his own.* (1) The Pharisees never came to Christ. They were wilfully, therefore hopelessly, wicked. (2) By their wickedness they prevented the astonished multitude from accepting their Messiah. (3) The bad influence of the Pharisees is seen in the apostasy of the Hebrew nation to this day.—J. A. M.

Vers. 35—38 and ch. x. 1.—*The compassion of Jesus.* This comes remarkably before us in this paragraph. We have it in both its aspects, viz. the human and the Divine. Note, then—

I. THE HUMANITY OF THE COMPASSION OF JESUS. 1. *His compassion was moved by the multitudes he saw.* (1) God, who is compassion itself, cannot be subject to emotion. Divine emotion in Scripture teaching is the human emotion which has a Divine source, as when we are sensible of the working in us of a Divine compassion. Such was the human compassion which, in the highest perfection, moved the heart of Jesus. (2) It moved him as he considered the multitudes of men he met with in his itineration of the cities and villages (ver. 35). To him they were more than the

multiplication of mere units. More than mere "hands." He viewed them as multitudes of rational, capable, responsible, immortal beings. 2. *His compassion was moved by the condition in which he found them.* (1) They were "distressed" physically and spiritually. (*a*) By disease and sickness. (*b*) By demoniacal possession. The demoralization of the nation as described by Josephus was fearful. (2) They were "scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd" (cf. 1 Kings xxii. 17). (*a*) Not that they were without synagogues. It was in visiting synagogues Jesus saw the multitudes. In the abounding of Churches there may yet be a famine of the Word of God. (*b*) Not that they were without scribes. These were in every city, yet they despised and neglected the flock (cf. Jer. xxiii. 1, etc.; John vii. 49). (*c*) Human traditions were substituted for the Divine Word. To this day Jewish teachers combine to make void the Word of God through their traditions. So do apostate Christian teachers. (3) The multitudes were like the harvest ready for the reapers, but no reapers were there to gather in the precious grain. It was "plenteous," but ready to shed and spoil and rot upon the ground. 3. *His compassion moved him to prayer.* (1) Jesus spent the whole night in prayer for the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (2) He moved his disciples also to pray. They were too modest to record whether they also had spent the whole night in prayer. (3) The burden of the prayer was that the Lord of the harvest would send forth labourers into his harvest. Note: It is the purest compassion to benefit the souls of men. Other things will follow (cf. 1 Kings iii. 13; Ps. xxxvii. 35; ch. vi. 33; 1 Tim. iv. 8). Does a truly human, Christ-like compassion so intensely move us as to lead us to pray and labour for souls?

II. THE DIVINITY OF THE COMPASSION OF JESUS. 1. *This brought him down from heaven.* (1) His incarnation was in pursuance of the anti-mundane covenant (see Heb. x. 5—7). (2) Compassion moved him (see Isa. lix. 16; John iii. 16, 17; xv. 13). 2. *It is manifest here in the authority of his preaching.* (1) He preached the "gospel of the kingdom." His own kingdom. That kingdom in which he himself is King. (2) The authority of his preaching was from himself. For he spake "not as the scribes." Not even as the inspired prophets. As the Fountain of all holy inspiration. (3) In the Divine sense the compassionate Jesus is still going through cities and villages preaching his gospel. 3. *In the miracles by which he attested it.* (1) They were Divine. (*a*) Evincing power over visible nature. (*b*) Dominion over the invisible world. (2) They were wrought immediately by him. In his own Name. 4. *In his delegation to his disciples of authority to preach.* (1) He instructed them first to "pray the Lord of the harvest that *he* send forth labourers into his harvest." In which note: (*a*) That the harvest is the Lord's. (*b*) That he only can qualify and commission true labourers—labourers worthy of the work. (2) Then he acted himself as Lord of the harvest, calling and commissioning the twelve (cf. ch. x. 1; Eph. iv. 11). (3) Christ sent forth those whom he moved to pray. Prayerfulness is a preparation for the ministry. How earnestly should the flock pray for true pastors! 5. *In his delegation to his disciples of miracle-working power.* (1) He made them masters of disease and sickness. Also of evil spirits. Note: (*a*) "Unclean spirits" are distinguished here from "all manner of disease and all manner of sickness." (*b*) The design of the gospel is to vanquish the devil and cure the maladies of the world. (2) The mastery with which the disciples were invested was not to be exercised in their own, but in their Master's Name. (3) There is, therefore, no comparison between the sense in which Jesus commissioned his disciples, and that in which Moses appointed Joshua or Elijah called Elisha to be their successors. (4) Though the call to the ministry is Divine, to despise human learning is fanaticism.—J. A. M.

Ver. 2.—*The claim to forgive sin.* "Thy sins be forgiven thee." There is an important distinction between the claim to forgive sin, and the claim to declare sins forgiven. The Christian priest does not claim the power to forgive sin; he does claim the authority to declare sins forgiven. Which of these Christ claimed may be disputed, but it is clear that the scribes present understood him to claim "power to forgive;" such a claim alone could be regarded as "blasphemy." But, strictly treated, our Lord's words do no more than *declare a fact.* Jesus treated the powers he possessed as Divine powers entrusted to his charge; what he asserts is that these powers concern two spheres, that of the body and that of the soul; that of sickness and that of sin, which

is the real root of sickness. These men who brought their friend for healing, showed, by their devices and their energy, such faith in Jesus as a Healer of bodily diseases, that they were in a fit state of mind to receive the higher truth concerning him. "To him that hath shall more be given."

I. THE POWER TO DEAL WITH SIN IS CHRIST'S SUPREME TRUST. "The Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins." Our Lord's healing of bodily disease then took men's chief attention, and often prevented their heeding his spiritual work. This is true still. Jesus is now regarded as a Friend of the suffering, and this is pushing out of view his real work as the Saviour of sinners. Miracle for healing disease was not, and is not, man's supreme need. God would not bow the heavens and come down to effect merely that object. Genius, science, and skill suffice for effective dealing with such things. The Incarnation is relative to sin. The true miracle is the supernatural dealing with sin; the Divine removal of its penalties; the Divine restoration of the conditions it has broken up; the Divine deliverance from its power. Jesus has the miraculous power to save men from their sins.

II. THE POWER TO DEAL WITH THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN IS CHRIST'S ILLUSTRATION OF HIS POWER TO DEAL WITH SIN ITSELF. The Jews connected suffering with sin as its cause. They were so far right, and only went wrong when they tried to explain individual cases. Christ never healed for the simple sake of healing; the influence of the act on his higher work in souls was always in his mind.—R. T.

Ver. 4.—*The sin of thinking evil.* "Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?" Thought-reading may be made a plaything, and it may be developed into a science. It is a commonplace faculty which every one possesses, in greater or less degree, and which every one more or less efficiently cultivates by the practice and experience of life. The mother reads the thought of her child; the wife the thought of her husband; and the friend often *guesses*, as we say, the thought of his friend. This ordinary power our Lord possessed, and the faces and movements of his disciples must often have suggested to him what was in their minds. This, however, may not be felt to explain all the instances that are recorded, and we may well assume that our Lord had a Divine power of thought-reading, and it included not only the thought, but also the tone and character and quality of the thought. Here our Lord reproves the spirit of the thought rather than the thought; the suspicious temper, which prefers to light upon an evil explanation rather than a good one, and assumes that every one must mean to do the bad thing. The apostle makes a special point of "charity" that it "thinketh no evil." And the sin is so common that a familiar proverb has been fashioned to warn us against it, "Honi soi qui mal y pense"—"Evil be to him who evil thinks." The loving, trustful temper will ensure kindly thoughts, and the suggestion of *good* motives wherever possible.

I. THINKING EVIL AS AN ACT. It is an act that Jesus here reproves. These scribes heard words which were strange to them, and found a claim made which they could not understand. What, then, should they have done? Plainly they should have taken the matter into quiet consideration; gathered up what might help to explain it, and formed a careful and wise judgment. What did they do? Thought too quickly; let bias and prejudice guide thought; encouraged the evil suggestion that came; allowed themselves to feel pleasure in the assumption of bad motives. When a judgment has to be made of persons or of motives, it should never be made hurriedly; because at first we seldom can get into consideration the entire circle of grounds on which a judgment should be based. It is the easiest thing to "think evil;" it may be the right thing to "think good." If these scribes had thought more, they might have thought good.

II. THINKING EVIL AS A HABIT. This it readily grows to become. This involves distortion of the mental faculties. The soul sees through coloured glasses, and never sees the *truth*. Suspicion becomes a mood of mind; and with those who have *fixed* this habit, no man's character is safe.—R. T.

Ver. 9.—*Making surrender for Christ's sake.* "And he arose, and followed him." It is necessary to examine the customs of the East in order to estimate fairly the nature of the surrender that Matthew made. We need not set before our minds a call

to a man in a modern counting-house or tax-collector's office. Probably the special duty of Matthew (or Levi) was to collect tolls from the fisheries on the lake, and from the merchants travelling southward from Damascus. Very possibly he was one of the higher officials, and his subordinates did the actual work, and would continue to do it when he went away. Compare the grades of officials in a modern custom-house. If Matthew was alone, we have only to think of an open shed, which shaded him from the sun. He would have his money upon his person, and he would not be likely to leave it in the shed. Van Lennep tells us that "some articles of produce are taxed as they are brought into the town. A booth of branches, or a more substantial hut, is erected at every entrance into the city or village, and there, both day and night, sits a man at the 'receipt of custom.' He taxes all the produce, piercing with a long, sharp iron rod the large camel-bags of wheat or cotton, in order to discover concealed copper wire or other contraband." This leaving the custom-house should be compared with leaving the fishing, by the sons of Jona and Zebedee. How far it involved a surrender of his means of living we are not told.

I. MAKING SURRENDER AS CHRIST MAY REQUIRE. Here Christ called for an immediate following, which involved leaving at once Matthew's ordinary occupation. Compare the cases of would-be disciples given in ch. viii. 19—22. Those men could not surrender just as Christ required. Matthew could, and did. We are sure that Christ requires (1) the surrender of everything that is positively evil; (2) the surrender of everything that would hinder full service; (3) the surrender of everything that cannot be carried over and used in Christ's kingdom. It is not to be thought representative that our Lord required some disciples to leave their avocations. He may still do so, but the usual rule is, "Let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God."

II. MAKING SURRENDER AS OUR OWN HEARTS MAY IMPEL US. This is illustrated in the feast which Levi made of his own free will. Christ made no demand for that surrender. If a man be true-hearted, the limitations under which he will put himself may be more severe and searching than any under which Christ puts him.—R. T.

Ver. 11.—*Our Lord's chosen associates.* "Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?" The speakers were Pharisees; they were not guests, they were only watchers. Such feasts are very open and free, and persons are allowed to come in, and even to take part in the conversation, who do not share in the food. An Eastern traveller says, "In the room where we were received, besides the divan on which we sat, there were seats all round the walls. Many came in and took their place on those side-seats, uninvited and unchallenged. They spoke to those at table on business, or the news of the day, and our host spoke freely to them." These Pharisees were very particular about the company they kept, and especially about the persons with whom they ate. They represent the mischievous influence of class-feeling. They do more than that. They represent the loss of power which all men must suffer who make themselves, their feelings, their preferences, the first consideration.

I. OUR LORD DID NOT CHOOSE HIS ASSOCIATES BECAUSE HE LIKED THEM. That may be a proper ground on which to select our private friends. It is not proper for one who has the *trust* of power which he is to use. Whether he likes it or not, that man must find the sphere in which he can best use his powers. No man ever did really noble work in the world until he learned to put his *likes* on one side, and just do his duty. But such a man is almost sure to find that a new set of likes grows up round his duty. The refined person does not like rough and rude associations. And the folk that Christ companied with could not have been very pleasing to him. The elegancies and proprieties and gentlenesses of refined society would have suited him better; and we can quite imagine the circle he would have preferred.

II. OUR LORD CHOSE HIS ASSOCIATES IN ORDER TO DO THEM GOOD. He chose them as a teacher chooses his class, he seeks those who need his teaching. As a doctor chooses his patients, he seeks those who need healing. As a Saviour chooses his subjects, he seeks sinners, who need delivering from their sins. Mrs. Fry, for her own sake, would have sought and enjoyed cultivated society. Mrs. Fry, with a conscious power of ministry, sought out the miserable and degraded prisoners. According to our *trust* we must choose our associates. If we were here on earth only to *enjoy*, we might properly prefer luxurious Pharisees; but seeing we are here to stand

with Christ, *and serve*, we had better, with him, find out the "publicans and sinners." —R. T.

Ver. 15.—*Moods of religious life.* The immediate connection of our Lord's words should be noticed. His answer is sufficient for the occasion, but it carries deeper and wider applications. Whenever the soul is full of the felt presence of God, it can go by itself, in gladness and freedom, without any fastings or forcings of will. But when the sense of God's presence is lost, the soul should gird itself up, in sacrifice and self-discipline, to win back the lost blessedness.

I. THE BRIDEGROOM'S PRESENCE, AND THE STATE OF FEELING AND CONDUCT SUITABLE TO IT. The disciples had Christ present in human body. We envy them the material realization; it was a bridal-time. And yet the inward sense of Christ's presence is a higher and better thing. (Illustrate from Longfellow's 'Footsteps of Angels.') Though we have, as we say, *only* the spiritual presence of Christ, we are not left without both inward and outward signs of the reality of that presence. *Inward.* (1) Rest of soul; (2) freedom from doubts and fears; (3) communion of spirit with spirit. *Outward.* (1) Vigour and energy in the efforts to live a right life; (2) pleasure in scenes that help to communion with Christ; (3) love of the brethren. What is suitable to the Bridegroom's presence? No mournings; no fastings; no forcings of will. The soul is moved freely by inward inspirations. We should feel the "liberty of love;" a quiet, intense joy, finding expression according to disposition.

II. THE BRIDEGROOM'S ABSENCE, AND THE STATE OF FEELING AND CONDUCT SUITABLE TO IT. "Then they fast." Illustrate, condition of disciples between Ascension and Pentecost. For us Christ is never absent in fact; he may be in feeling. Though matter of feeling only, we are not left without signs of the absence. Especially in lost impulse to goodness. (Illustrate, failing vitality in the body.) What is suitable to the Bridegroom's absence? Apply to those who feel the Bridegroom is gone, and: 1. Do not even mourn. (Illustrate, John Bunyan's 'Holy War,' Mansoul hardened.) 2. Only mourn. Mansoul sorrowing. 3. Fast as well as mourn. Mansoul putting away its evils, sitting in sackcloth, and sending messages after the lost prince. Are we jealous, as we should be, about keeping ever with us the sense of the Bridegroom's presence?—R. T.

Ver. 16.—*New truth in new settings.* "They put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved." Oriental bottles are skins of sheep or goats. Old bottles would crack and leak, under pressure of the fermentation of new wine; new skins would expand under such pressure. The old wine-skin of Judaism had become stiffened with age, and even worse stiffened by the efforts of the rabbis to keep it in good condition. Christianity could not keep within its narrow limitations. This is the first reference of our Lord's words; but he illustrates a fact of permanent interest.

I. NEW TRUTH IS ALWAYS COMING INTO THE WORLD. Practically new truth is. The critical philosopher may question whether such a thing as "new truth" is possible. Truth new to an age is possible. Truth of science may exist, but it is new when it is first brought to human apprehension. And even old truths become new when they are revived after being lost to the world for a while. What may be firmly declared is that primary truths of morals and religion must be old as humanity. The Puritan father assures us that

> "The Lord hath yet more light and truth
> To break forth from his Word."

But whatever breaks forth will only be *new to us.* Still, the interest of each age lies in the new truth, scientific, moral, religious, that it may reach. It is said that so much is now being discovered, scientific and even biblical works that are ten years old are out of the running. Athenians ever inquired for "something new;" moderns are well-nigh surfeited with things new. Show in what senses Christ brought new truth concerning God and man. Show that the range of truth, in any age, seems new when compared with the range of truth in a previous age; though it may be really no more than the uprising into view of neglected parts of the great circle of truth.

II. NEW TRUTH IS ALWAYS CALLING FOR NEW SETTINGS. The teachers of new

truth want to express it in their own way. This occasions most of the controversies of our time. The conservative among us do not object to the new truth (if it is *truth* they cannot object to it), but they want it expressed in the terms that are familiar to them. They want the gentleman of to-day dressed according to the age of wigs and buckles. The liberty Christ claimed for himself, and for his disciples, was liberty to get new wine-skins for the new wine. And the modern Christian teacher asks permission to put his new truth in appropriate new settings.—R. T.

Ver. 21.—*Faith marred by superstition.* "If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole." "The woman's touch was an ignorant and superstitious appeal to the mercifulness of Christ." As viewed by Christ, the *faith* shown in the touch was of much greater importance than the superstition which connected blessing with the touch. Our Lord could easily look over the superstition, and accept the faith. "She did not think of a *will* that seeks to bless and save, but of a physical effluence passing from the body to the garments, and from the garments to the hand that touched them." "Even the ignorance and selfishness of the woman did not neutralize the virtue of her simple faith. It was not, of course, through her superstitious touch that she was healed, but through the faith that prompted the touch; a faith full of defects,—ignorantly conceived, secretly cherished, furtively put forth, openly exposed, humbly confessed, as if it had been a sin,—but yet, because a true faith, graciously accepted, rewarded, and perfected." In the woman's case we may see represented the religious experience of many. See the four stages of the woman's experience.

I. SHE KNEW HERSELF TO BE A SUFFERER. Some diseases carry on their work for a long time in secret. There is hope when they reveal their working, and set us upon finding remedies. It is a great thing to know our true moral condition, (1) as sinners, exposed to the *wrath* of God, on account of our bad past; (2) as diseased, and in an actual present state of corruption. The realities of our sin and danger are far more serious than we feel them to be.

II. SHE TRIED TO GET CURE, BUT TRIED IN VAIN. She had been to many physicians, and had spent all that she had. So the awakened soul will try to use means and to cure itself, (1) by goodness; (2) by wrestlings with sin; (3) by devotions; (4) by rites and ceremonies. These are its "many physicians," all helpless in treating soul-diseases.

III. SHE HEARD OF JESUS, AND SOUGHT HIM OUT. We can only imagine *what* she heard, but we can clearly trace the *influence* of what she heard. It gave faith in Christ such a power as even enabled it to triumph over diffidence and superstitions; or, rather, enabled it to carry its superstitions along with it.

IV. SHE FOUND HEALING AND LIFE FLOW FROM CHRIST. Because her touch was to him a touch of faith, and of faith so really strong and sincere that he did not care to notice the strand of weakness that ran through it.—R. T.

Ver. 25.—*Restoration with a word.* "Took her by the hand, and the maid arose." This is the first instance of our Lord's dealing with *death*, which represents the extreme effect of sin. "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death;" "The wages of sin is death." If our Lord had not delivered from the power of physical death, it would have been open to his enemies to say that the supreme evil of humanity he had failed to reach. That reproach cannot be made, for our Lord recovered one who had only just died; one who was being carried out for burial; and one who had lain in the grave four days. And he himself burst asunder the bands of death, when they had been fastened upon him. But the point which is more especially presented to view, in this incident, is the glorious *manner* in which our Lord dealt with death. There is a revelation of his glory and claim in the calmness of his mastery over the supreme human foe.

I. HE RESTORED THE DEAD WITHOUT MAKING EVEN A SHOW OF AGENCIES. Here is a striking fact, which has not been duly noticed. In opening blind eyes Jesus used agencies—he made clay and anointed the eyes—but in neither of the cases of restoring the dead did he use any agencies. This comes to be more striking when we contrast the cases in which the great prophets, Elijah and Elisha, dealt with the dead. Elijah stretched himself upon the dead child three times. Elisha went "up" to the chamber

"and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands, and stretched himself upon him." The contrast is even seen in the matter of prayer. Elijah cried unto the Lord; and his prayer is given. Elisha prayed unto the Lord. But in two of the cases our Lord did not associate *even prayer* with the putting forth of his power to recover the dead.

II. HE RESTORED THE DEAD BY THE POWER OF A SIMPLE COMMAND. In this case our Lord's actual words are given, "Talitha cumi." At Nain, he simply said, "Young man, I say unto thee, arise." At Bethany the words of power were, "Lazarus, come forth." What is clear is that Elijah and Elisha acted as servants; Jesus acted as *Master*. He claimed, and he exerted, power and authority over death. It had to take the place of one of his servants, respond to his commands, and do his bidding.

What, then, must he be who can thus deal with the one power which man has, by the experience of long ages, learned to regard as irresistible?—R. T.

Ver. 29.—*According to faith.* This expression was connected with a miracle of healing. Not all Christ's gracious deeds are recorded in our Gospels. Some are fully detailed. Some are briefly sketched. Some are merely summarized. The reason for the difference of treatment may be found in the degree in which any miracle afforded illustration of truth. This is not one of the fully developed cases, but it yields one point. Blindness is a common affliction in the East. Christ had just wrought a miracle. Its proper result was reached, for others were led to believe in Christ. These two blind men heard what Jesus had done, so they sought his help for themselves. He tests their faith, and gives accordingly. Why did Christ always require, and work for, faith? Because he healed diseases for the sake of healing souls. Calling out faith was healing the soul's sickness. The word "faith" often bewilders; better call it "trust." That is a simpler word, and helps us to connect religious faith with everyday faith. The spirit of trust is the spirit that puts us ready to receive God's best blessings. But the text must not be read as if it meant that the conditions of blessing are all rearranged by Christ, and that we can have anything we like from God, *if only we believe enough.*

I. HELPED TO TRUST; THAT IS THE BEGINNING OF CHRISTIAN LIFE. Take the familiar command, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," and put "trust" for "believe," then it means, "Give the whole matter of your soul's salvation into his hands." That is the beginning.

II. LEARNING TO TRUST; THAT IS THE GREAT WORK OF CHRISTIAN LIFE. There is a constant tendency to fall back on self-confidence, which needs to be watched and resisted. There is a constant demand for the culturing of weak trust into strength. All Christian discipline means development of trust.

III. ACCORDING TO TRUST; THAT IS THE LAW OF DIVINE BLESSINGS IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. Because that is the guarantee that gifts will be well used. If we were utterly self-willed, we should fling back the gift. Just in the measure of our self-will we are likely to use unworthily the gift. So far as we can trust, we are likely to use it rightly. Open souls welcome spiritual blessings.—R. T.

Ver. 35.—*Christ's day-by-day duties.* The more special and public acts and events of a man's life gain place in his biography, but the commonplace, everyday associations of a man give the true impression of him. It is said that "no man is a hero to his valet;" but he ought to be. The routine life of a man should be the best revelation of the man. We may dwell on the greater scenes of our Lord's life, and learn much; but we know him imperfectly until we fairly estimate how he bore the strain of daily, commonplace duties. Four terms are used to describe our Lord's everyday life.

I. JOURNEYING. He "went about all the cities and villages." Galilee was very thickly peopled at this time. Josephus exaggerates, but he says of Galilee, "The cities here lie very thick, and the very many villages here and there are everywhere so full of people, by the richness of their soil, that the very least of them contained about fifteen thousand inhabitants." He reports two hundred and forty cities and villages in the district. This gives us an idea of our Lord's active labours. Notice that (1) he was concerned for the *village* as well as for the town; (2) that such itinerating work is bodily exhausting; (3) that constant fresh scenes and associations destroy soul-

quietness, and make the due maintenance of the spiritual life exceedingly difficult. We may sympathize with Christ.

II. TEACHING. We now know that the afternoon service at the synagogue was conducted somewhat as a Bible-class, those present asking questions and giving answers. In such scenes our Lord naturally took his place as Teacher. Scripture was the text-book. Note that our Lord sought to arouse the activity of men's minds. He wanted *intelligent* religion. Teachers find in him their Model.

III. PREACHING. This term represents the morning service in the synagogues, when announcements and expositions were given, but no response from the people was looked for. Preaching may be said to include three things: (1) heralding; (2) expounding; (3) persuading. Christ had a message; he opened up the Scriptures (as at Nazareth, see Luke iv.); and he could persuade to the acceptance of the truth. But teaching and preaching make heavy demands on spiritual strength.

IV. HEALING. This is always to be regarded as auxiliary and illustrative work. Needful in those days, in order to call attention to the new Teacher, and awaken interest in him. It did for that day what newspapers and advertisements will do for great leaders and teachers nowadays.—R. T.

Vers. 36—38.—*The impressions produced by multitudes.* "When he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion." Notice how his daily work of healing must have brought Christ sympathetically near to all the sorrows of men. Illustrate from the itinerating work of the Eastern hakim, or physician. It is usual to bring out all the sick of a district when the hakim arrives. Compare the crowds in our market-places round the quack-medicine vendor.

I. THE IMPRESSION MADE ON CHRIST BY THE SIGHT OF MULTITUDES. Show the effects which great crowds produce on *us*. They greatly excite us; but when we regard them as religious men they greatly depress us, for they convince us that large masses of humanity are yet unreached by the redeeming and elevating influences of Christianity. Show the effects that great crowds produced on *Christ*. 1. Sympathy with bodily needs. (As in the case of feeding the five thousand.) 2. Compassion for soul-suffering. (Regarded as "sheep having no shepherd.") 3. Our Lord seems to have been specially distressed, because they thought so much of *body*, and were ready to sacrifice so much for it, and yet scarcely knew of the wants of their soul—of the "hunger of the soul."

II. THE LESSONS FOR THE DISCIPLES WHICH OUR LORD'S IMPRESSIONS SUGGESTED. 1. That there was abundant room for spiritual work. 2. That the multitudes of men form the Lord's harvest-field. 3. That there is still no proper correspondence between the harvest and those who labour at its ingathering. The harvest is *wide* and *great*; the labourers are but *few*. 4. That they should think and pray about this divergence, and so very possibly come to hear the Divine call to go into the harvest-field.—R. T.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER X.

For introductory notes to this chapter, see ch. ix. 35.

Ver. 1.—Parallel passages: Mark vi. 7; Luke ix. 1. The prayer (ch. ix. 38) is answered in the persons of those who were taught to pray. Christ establishes his new agency. **And when he had called unto him.** From the circle of the bystanders. **His twelve disciples.** Who had already been chosen to be specially with him (cf. ch. ix. 35, note; and ch. v. 1). *Twelve.* To be heads of the tribes of the new Israel (Rev. xxi. 14; cf. Jas. i. 1; ch. xix. 28). Observe that the office of the tribes of the covenant nation corresponded to the symbolism of the number 12 (3, Deity, × 4, world = Church). **He gave them power;** *authority* (Revised Version); *ἐξουσίαν*: the greater including the less. So Mark, but Luke expands to *δύναμιν καὶ ἐξουσίαν*. *Against; over* (Revised Version); simple genitive (so Mark). **Unclean spirits** (ch. iv. 24, note). *Unclean.* As belonging to the unholy, non-theocratic kingdom, the realm of darkness. "Hence also unclean animals (ch. viii. 31, *sqq.*; Rev. xviii. 2) and places (ch. xii. 43, *sqq.*) have a kind of natural relationship with such spirits" (Kübel). **To cast them out.** Their authority was to extend to this (*ὥστε ἐκβάλλειν αὐτά*, cf. Mark

iii. 15). **And to heal.** Probably connected, not with ὥστε, but with ἐξουσίαν (cf. Luke). Observe that nothing is said of their receiving authority to convert. This God himself keeps. But they can remove all hindrances other than those purely subjective and spiritual, whether the objective hindrances be intruding evil spirits affecting body and mind or only bodily diseases. **All manner,** etc. (ch. ix. 35, note).

Vers. 2—4.—THE NAMES OF THE AGENTS. Parallel passages: Mark iii. 14—19; Luke vi. 13—16 (cf. Acts i. 13). This Commentary upon St. Luke deals so fully both with the list as a whole and with the separate names that it will not be necessary to say much here. Observe that the general agreement in arrangement points to some common basis underlying all four accounts; also that of these the one found in the Acts is the briefest, giving little more than the bare names; and that that found in our Gospel, on the contrary, is the fullest, containing, with two exceptions (*vide infra*), the details mentioned in one or other of the parallels, and adding two of its own. It mentions, in one instance or more, the parentage (Zebedee, Alphæus), the relationship ("his brother . . . his brother"), the birthplace (Kerioth), the earlier occupation and religious standpoint ("publican . . . Zealot"), and, with a bare hint at the beginning (*vide infra*), but a clear statement at the end, the after-history ("first . . . who also betrayed him") of the apostles. The two omissions are the fact that our Lord added the names of Peter (parallels, but really given earlier, John i. 42) and Boanerges (Mark).

Ver. 2.—**Now the names.** In the parallels part of the word "names" is found as a verb, "whom also he named apostles;" *i.e.* the naming there refers, not to the individuals, but to their office. Is the form found in our Gospel an "accidental" rearrangement due to a reminiscence that the word "name" occurred in the earliest source, or is it possible that the two facts are connected, and that the individuals received a new name when they definitely entered on a new office? That they should have received a new name seems *à priori* not improbable, but the evidence is very slight. "Peter" is a clear case, for though the name was given earlier, it would receive a new application now, and perhaps was now again expressly given (cf. parallel passages); and other cases may be St. Matthew (*vide* Introduction, p. xxi.) and possibly St. Bartholomew and St. Thaddæus. Mark expressly says that the term "Boanerges" was given to the sons of Zebedee; but as there is no evidence that either St. James or St. John was afterwards known by this name, it need not have been a name in the same sense in which the others were. Observe the formal order of the first words of this verse (*τῶν δὲ δώδεκα ἀποστόλων τὰ ὀνόματά ἐστιν ταῦτα*). Did the author of the Gospel take them from the heading of a section that already contained the names in order? If so the δέ would probably not have existed there, and it is worth noting that the original hand of D, the manuscript that is of special value for Palestinian tradition, omits it. **Of the twelve** (ver. 1, note) **apostles** (ver. 5, note) **are these: The first.** This, perhaps, refers to the order of call, Luke v. 1 (Nösgen), but more probably to the leading position that St. Peter held among the twelve. On this leadership, cf. the fragmentary excursus by Bishop Lightfoot, printed in 'Clement of Rome,' ii. 487 (1890). **Simon.** His Hebrew name was Simeon (שִׁמְעוֹן, Acts xv. 14, and 2 Pet. i. 1, in the Received Text and Westcott and Hort margin), but his Gentile name (ch. iii. 1, note) was Simon, this good Greek name being chosen as almost identical in sound. It occurs frequently in the Palestinian Talmud (סימון). **Who is called Peter.** In common Christian parlance (ch. iv. 18; cf. ch. xvi. 18).

Ver. 3.—**Bartholomew.** Nathanael (John i. 45, equivalent to *Theodore*) was so common a name (cf. Numb. i. 8; 1 Chron. ii. 14; xv. 24; xxvi. 4; 2 Chron. xvii. 7; xxxv. 9; Ezra x. 22; Neh. xii. 21, 36), that for further identification a patronymic ("son of Tolmai," Ptolemy) was used, which in this case (as in the case of a Bartholomew mentioned in 'Pesikta Rabbathi,' § 22, p. 113, edit. Friedmann; cf. also Levy, *s.v.* תלמין), superseded the proper name. **Thomas.** "As Thomas (Δίδυμος), 'the Twin,' is properly a surname, and this apostle must have had some other name, there seems no reason for doubting this very early tradition [Eusebius, 'Hist. Eccl.,' i. 13, and probably the Old Syriac of John xiv. 22, *et al.*] that he also was a Jude" (Bishop Lightfoot, 'Galatians,' p. 257, edit. 1869). The 'Clem. Hom.,' ii. 1, give Eliezer as the name of the other brother. **Matthew the publican** (Introduction, p. xx.), **James the son of Alphæus.** (On the possibility of the name and the person being identical with the Clopas of John xix. 25, cf. Bishop Lightfoot, 'Galatians,' p. 260.) **And Lebbæus, whose surname was Thaddæus;** *and Thaddæus* (Revised Version); as also Mark, while Luke and Acts i. 13 read "Jude [*the brother*, Authorized Version,

but better *the son*, Revised Version] of James," which was doubtless his proper name. If the word "Thaddæus" (תדאי) was, as seems likely (for Edersheim's connexion of it with *todah*, "praise," is based on what is apparently a mere play of words in Talm. Bab., 'Sanh.,' 43*a*), originally a pet-name (*Schooskind*, "Bosom-child," Weiss, Nösgen) from תַּדְיֵי, "the female breasts," it is intelligible that he or others would prefer the somewhat synonymous "Lebbæus" (לֵב, "heart"), which might mean "child of one's heart," but more probably "courageous," found in the "Western" text. The similarity of sound would help towards this, even if another derivation that seems possible, "the Fiery" (from לָבָה, "kindle"), be the true one. In the latter case the appellation, "Jude the Zealot" (Old Latin), may rest on something more than a mistaken interpretation of the parallel passage in Luke. In Westcott and Hort, 'App.,' it is said that "this name [Lebbæus] is apparently due to an early attempt to bring Levi (Λευείς) the publican (Luke v. 27) within the Twelve, it being assumed that his call was to apostleship; just as in Mark ii. 14 Λευείς is changed in Western texts to Ἰάκωβος, because τὸν τοῦ Ἁλφαίου follows, and it was assumed that the son of Halphæus elsewhere named as one of the Twelve must be meant. The difference between the two forms of the name would be inconsiderable in Aramaic, *Levi* and *Levi* or *Lebi* or *Lebbi*; and Λεββαῖος might as easily represent *Lebbi* as Θαδδαῖος *Thaddi*."

Ver. 4.—**Simon the Canaanite.** *Simon the Cananæan* (Revised Version); ὁ Καναναῖος (cf. Φαρισαῖος, Σαδδουκαῖος, *vide* Bishop Lightfoot's 'Revision,' p. 138, edit. 1871) representing *Ḳănn'ān* or *Ḳān-'ān* (קנאן), the Aramaic for "Zealot" (parallel passage in Luke; Acts i. 13), the name given to members of the extreme nationalist party founded about A.D. 7 by Judas of Gamala, a city that appears to have lain near the east coast of the sea of Galilee (*vide* Schürer, I. ii. 225). **And Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him**; *delivered him up* (Revised Version margin), which seems more in accordance with παραδίδωμι, for, unlike "betray," and usually προδίδωμι, this does not in itself connote treachery.

Ver. 5*a*.—Parallel passages: Mark vi. 7, 8; Luke ix. 2. **These twelve Jesus sent forth**; ἀπέστειλεν (cf. John xvii. 18). Till now they had formed an inner circle of μαθηταί (ch. ix. 35, note), but now they begin their work of carrying Christ's message to others. "Ἀποστέλλω corresponds with the idea of our own words 'despatch' and 'envoy,' and conveys the accessory notions of a special commission, and so far of a delegated authority in the person sent" (Bishop Westcott, on John xx. 21, Add. Note). Bengel suggests (on ver. 1) that the twelve were not all absent at once, but were sent out in relays; but Mark vi. 30 is against this opinion (cf. also Luke xxii. 35). On the New Testament conception of the name and office of an apostle, cf. Bishop Lightfoot's classical note in 'Galatians' (pp. 92—101, edit. 1869). **And commanded them, saying**; *charged them* (Revised Version). Important as the charge is, its necessary subordination to the fact that they were sent is expressed by the very form of the sentence (ἀπέστειλεν . . . παρήγγειλας).

Vers. 5*b*—42.—CHRIST'S COMMISSION TO HIS AGENTS. The connexion and development of thought in this important charge is exceedingly difficult to perceive, and has been understood in many ways. Perhaps that most generally accepted in this country is Alford's, according to which the charge is divided into three sections—the first (vers. 5—15) referring to the mission to the cities of Israel; the second (vers. 16—23) to the general mission of the apostles as developing itself, after the Lord should be taken from them, in preaching to Jews and Gentiles, ending with the close of the apostolic period in the narrower sense (ver. 23 referring primarily to the destruction of Jerusalem); the third (vers. 24—42) spoken directly of all the disciples of the Lord, concluding with the last great reward.

But this threefold historical arrangement seems to be little more than fanciful, the basis of truth underlying it probably being that the charge in its present form is due to the writer of the Gospel (not to our Lord directly), who desired not only to record what our Lord said at the time of this mission, but also to incorporate other sayings of his that bore upon similar work, and thus to give such a summary of our Lord's utterances as would be of special use to preachers of the gospel, irrespective of place or time.

Observe that ch. v.—vii. referred to believers in their private capacity—laying stress on the relation that they were to hold to the religion of the day—while this chapter refers to them as representing Christ to the world. The original basis of the commission was addressed to men called to give their whole time to this work, but as the chapter stands it applies to all believers in their

capacity of witnesses for Christ. The ministerial function of preaching committed to men selected for it is only an accentuation of one of the duties expected from all Christ's followers.

The development of thought in the chapter appears to be as follows:—

1. The external conditions of conveying Christ's message, with special reference to the immediate occasion (vers. 5*b*—15).

2. The internal conditions (vers. 16—39). (1) Vers. 16—23: Though surrounded by enemies, you must conduct yourselves with calmness (ver. 19); with endurance (ver. 22); with wisdom (ver. 23). (2) Vers. 24—33: Remembering that fellowship with me in suffering is essential to fellowship with me in glory. (3) Vers. 34—39: Such fellowship with me will cost separation from the dearest on earth, yet its reward is great.

3. Final encouragement (vers. 40—42).

Vers. 5*b*—15.—*The external conditions of conveying Christ's message, with special reference to the immediate occasion.* Our Lord points out (*a*) the sphere of their work (vers. 5*b*, 6); (*b*) the substance of their message (ver. 7); (*c*) its accompanying signs (ver. 8); (*d*) the external means and methods that they should employ (vers. 9—15).

Ver. 5*b*.—Matthew only. The sphere of their work. The reasons for the limitation here expressly enforced are: (1) That it was only right that the proclamation of the coming of Messiah should be thoroughly made to the Jews first. Had they accepted it, they would have become the great factors in the evangelization of the Gentiles (cf. Rom. xi. 12, 15); as they rejected it, it was necessary that the offer should, apart from them, be made to others (Acts xxviii. 28). (2) The apostles were as yet in no fit state spiritually to carry the message beyond their own nation, and the facts which they were in a position to proclaim might, when proclaimed alone, have proved a stumbling-block to the after-acceptance by Gentiles and Samaritans of a fuller and therefore truer message (cf. ch. xxviii. 18, *sqq.*; Acts i. 8). Therefore they are now bid perform their present duty without turning away from it, and, as we may add, without anticipating their entrance upon a wider sphere. **Saying, Go not.** This would be outside your course (ἀπέλθητε). In the Greek, however, the following words receive the emphasis. **Into the** (*any*, Revised Version) **way of the Gentiles** (εἰς ὁδὸν ἐθνῶν). (1) These words are generally understood to mean "into any road that would lead to Gentile lands or districts." So Tyndale, "Go not into the wayes that leade to the gentyls." (For this genitive of direction, cf. ch. iv. 15; Jer. ii. 18, and perhaps, Judith v. 14.) (2) Weiss, 'Matthäus-ev.,' takes them as equivalent to "into any street in a heathen land," making the genitives, ἐθνῶν and Σαμαρειτῶν, both possessive. There are serious objections to these two interpretations; to the first, that the genitives are then used in different senses; to the second, that it suggests something altogether outside the Israelitish border. (3) Is not a third interpretation possible—to consider that our Lord had in his mind the parts of towns, otherwise Jewish, which were inhabited by heathen, just as, in the days of Omri and Ahab, such parts were assigned to Syrians in Samaria, and to Israelites in Damascus, or in modern times to Jews in Christian towns? We have not, indeed, direct evidence of Gentiles, during the time of our Lord, thus living in separate streets, but with the Jewish aversion to even letting them houses and to having more to do with them than possible (cf. Schürer, II. i. 51—56), it would seem probable that, without any formal arrangement being made, the result would be separation of this kind. It is true that ὁδός is not used elsewhere in this sense in the New Testament, but a comparison of passages in the LXX. seems to justify our so interpreting it. For רחוב, in 1 Kings xx. 34, means such streets, and the LXX. for this is ἐξόδους (ἔξοδον, Luke), yet רחוב, in the sense of "streets," is often elsewhere rendered by ὁδοί (Jer. v. 1; vii. 17; Ezek. xi. 6; Nah. ii. 4; iii. 10). Compare especially 2 Sam. i. 20, "in the streets of Ascalon," where, for the common text, ἐν ταῖς ἐξόδοις Ἀσκάλωνος, Lucian's reads, ἐν ταῖς ὁδοῖς Ἀσκάλωνος. The expression thus means—Go not off into any quarter (of such towns as you may come across) inhabited by Gentiles, and (both in complete parallelism and with perfect accuracy, for Samaritans dwelt alone) into any city of Samaritans enter ye not. **And into any city.** In the Greek both clauses are in the same order, the verb coming last. It will be noticed that the Revised Version has transposed both for the sake of uniformity. **Of the Samaritans.** By *descent*, a mixed race, from the intermingling of the remnants of the Israelitish population more especially with the heathen colonists introduced by the Assyrians (2 Kings xvii. 24, *sqq.*); by *religion*, so far Israelite as to have accepted the Pentateuch, and to have maintained the observance of circumcision, the sabbath, and the annual festivals. Both sides of their

connexion with Israel seem to have contributed to their being placed by the Mishna between Jews and Gentiles (cf. further, Schürer, II. i. 5, *sqq.*). **Enter ye not.** A slight turning away would sometimes bring them to Gentile quarters; but into a Samaritan town they would have definitely and purposely to enter. Observe that our Lord himself so far extended his own practice as not to refuse to take the opportunity of preaching to a Samaritan woman when it presented itself, and further followed up the work thus begun by continuing two days in her village (John iv. 40). But the nature of the exception proves the rule.

Ver. 6.—**But go.** On your daily journeying (*πορεύεσθε*, present). **Rather.** With conscious preference. **To the lost sheep of the house of Israel.** Thus also he describes his own mission (ch. xv. 24). The words recall Jer. l. 6 (xxvii. 6, LXX.), "My people hath been lost sheep." Observe that our Lord implies a special relation of Israel to God (for the house has its owner) which was lacking in the case of all other nations. Yet, their proper teachers having proved faithless, they were now as shepherdless as these (ch. ix. 36). *Lost.* Notice here the basis of the parable related in Luke xv. 4—7; cf. ch. xviii. 12, 13 (ver. 11 of the Received Text is a gloss), where the term "wandering" is not so strong (Bengel).

Ver. 7.—Parallel passages: Luke ix. 2 (the twelve); x. 9 (the seventy; observe that the substance of the proclamation was to be the same). **And as ye go.** For your journey is not to one place, but many. **Preach.** Aloud and publicly. **Saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.** That which men had so long been desiring (*vide* ch. iii. 2; iv. 17) was now near. But had it not come (ch. xii. 28; xi. 12)? Not in full realization. But its near realization was then a possibility, and was only not brought about because, as a nation, they rejected him who introduced it.

Ver. 8.—We have here the details of the orders summarized in ver. 1. The details are not given in Luke ix. 1, 2 or x. 9. **Heal the sick, etc.** According to the true order of these commands, solely physical ills are mentioned first in their partial (*sick*) and in their final effect (*dead*); then physical and ceremonial pollution (*lepers*), which forms a transition to the mention of ills primarily spiritual, even though they ultimately affect the body (*devils*). On the good that might be expected from their performing these miracles, cf. Thomas Scott (in Ford), "Men will never believe that we really intend the good of their souls, if they do not find that we endeavour to do them good, disinterestedly, in temporal things (John iv. 15)." **Freely** (*vide infra*) **ye have** (omit "have," with Revised Version) **received.** Blessings of the kingdom, but especially authority and power for this work (ver. 1). **Freely give.** All that is needed to carry that authority into effect—whatever toil and energy in soul and body the occasion may demand. The clause comes in Matthew only, but comp. Acts xx. 35. Observe Christ's recognition of the tendency of human nature to traffic in the holiest things. Did Judas take the warning at all to heart? (For the thought, cf. Wisd. vii. 13; Lev. xxv. 37, 38.) *Freely.* Gratuitously (*δωρεάν*); comp. Rev. xxi. 6; xxii. 17; Rom. iii. 24 (on God's side); 2 Cor. xi. 7; 2 Thess. iii. 8 (on man's side).

Vers. 9, 10*a*.—Parallel passages: Mark vi. 8; Luke ix. 3 (the twelve); x. 4 (the seventy); cf. also our Lord's reference in Luke xxii. 35 to the mission of the twelve. **Provide**; *get you* (Revised Version, Authorized Version margin). There is no connotation of foresight in the word itself, but only of acquisition. Observe that the apostles are not forbidden to take what they already have. Lightfoot, 'Hor. Hebr.,' shows that travellers ordinarily took with them a staff, a purse, shoes, a wallet, and sometimes a book of the Law. **Neither gold, nor silver, nor brass.** The *brass* would be the copper coinage of the Herods (examples are figured in Smith's 'Dict. of Bible,' ii. p. 413), which alone might be struck by them; or some of the Greek imperial coins, especially those struck at Antioch. The *silver*, either Greek imperial tetradrachms or Roman denarii of a quarter their weight, didrachms having fallen into disuse; only certain free cities were allowed to coin silver. The *gold*, as Palestine was a subject province, must have been coined at Rome, for she retained the coining of gold entirely in her own hands (cf. Madden's 'Coins of the Jews,' pp. 107, 290, ff., edit. 1881; and R. S. Poole, in Smith's 'Dict. of Bible,' *s.vv.* "Money," "Stater;" further, see ver. 29). **In your purses**; literally, *girdles*, which in the East often serve as purses. This prohibition may have been suggested by the last words of ver. 8, but can hardly refer to them. It seems to regard the journey only (cf. parallel passages). **Nor scrip**; *no wallet* (Revised Version). At the present time, "all shepherds have them, and they are the farmer's universal *vade-mecum*. They are merely the skins of kids stripped off whole, and tanned by a very simple process" (Thomson's 'Land and the Book,' p. 345, edit. 1887, where a picture of one is given). But they might be made even of fish-skin (Mishna, 'Kelim,' xxiv. 11). Because of 1 Sam. xvii. 40, an haggada says that David's money was stamped with a staff and wallet on one side, and a tower on the other ('B'resh. R.,' § 39, in Levy, *s.v.*

תרמיל). **For your journey.** The clause is to be joined with "scrip" only. **Neither two coats.** A second for sabbaths and festivals. For the rabbinic rule insisted upon a different coat for these days from that ordinarily worn. To the objection of poor disciples, that they had but one garment for sabbath and week-day alike, R. Samlai said that they must at least change the way in which they wore it (Talm. Jer., 'Pea.,' viii. 7 [8], in Hamburger, 'Realencycl.,' ii. p. 642). **Neither shoes.** The parallel passage, Mark vi. 9, has, "but *to go* shod with sandals" (Revised Version). This is, perhaps, a case of verbal inaccuracy, but as it is impossible to suppose that our Lord can have wished his disciples to go without the ordinary protection to the feet, or that the author of this Gospel, accustomed, on any theory, to Eastern modes of life, can have intended to credit him with such a wish, some other explanation of the verbal discrepancy must be looked for. The true explanation is probably this—The rabbis insisted so strongly on a man never appearing barefooted: "Let a man sell the beams of his house and buy shoes for his feet" (Talm. Bab., 'Sabb.,' 129*a*), that it is very possible that a second pair was often carried in case of need. It is this that our Lord forbids. On the other hand, Jews did not carry one pair for sabbath and another for week-days (Talm. Jer., 'Sabb.,' vi. 2). Some commentators escape the difficulty by distinguishing between "shoes" and "sandals;" but it is very doubtful if the usage of the words is always so exact that one term excludes the other. **Nor yet staves;** *nor staff* (Revised Version). The plural, both here (Stephen) and in Luke ix. 3 (Received Text), is a clumsy attempt to harmonize with Mark vi. 8, where our Lord bids the twelve take nothing "save a staff only." The difference between the two reports of our Lord's words has been magnified by many commentators into a contradiction. But this is not the true state of the case. For it would be so extraordinary and apparently so useless an order to forbid their having a staff, that it is hard to suppose this to have been the meaning of his words as reported here. His thought in vers. 9, 10 is rather that they were to make no preparation, for their wants should be supplied, and that even if they had not a staff they were not to take the trouble to procure one. St. Mark's account only so far differs that he assumes that they will at least have a staff already. Observe, however, that no stress can be placed on the difference of the verbs here and in Mark, for in this respect Mark and Luke agree.

Vers. 10*b*.—**For the workman;** *labourer* (Revised Version); thus connecting the utterance closely with **ch. ix. 37, 38. Is worthy of his meat.** The disciples may therefore expect that it will be provided for them by those to whom they minister (Luke x. 7, of the seventy), and indirectly by the Master whom they serve (ch. ix. 38). *Meat; food* (Revised Version). In all but most highly organized systems of society, this is an important (frequently the most important) part of the day labourer's wages. Hence not unnaturally "wages" is found in the form of the sayings given by St. Luke (x. 7) and St. Paul (1 Tim. v. 18). Probably our Lord's words became a current proverb in Christian circles, the original word "food" being modified to suit the more general circumstances of life. Clem. Rom., § 34, recalls the Matthæan form, "The good workman receiveth the bread of his work with boldness." Epiphanius gives a kind of conflation, containing the further thought that if the workman receives his food he must be content: "The workman is worthy of his hire, and sufficient to him that works is his food." Resch ('Agrapha,' pp. 97, 140) connects this form of the saying with the practice of giving only food to the travelling "apostles" and prophets of the sub-apostolic age ('Did.,' § xi.). Professor Marshall (*Expositor*, IV. ii. 76) suggests that if our Lord's original word was מזונה, it would explain the origin of both Matthew and Luke; but it seems very doubtful if it really ever means "wages." Two patristic remarks are worth quoting: the first from Origen ('Cram. Cat.'), "In saying τροφήν ('food') he forbade τρυφήν ('luxury');" the second from St. Gregory the Great (in Ford), "Priests ought to consider how criminal and punishable a thing it is to receive the fruit of labour, without labour."

Ver. 11.—Parallel passages: Mark vi. 10; Luke ix. 4 (the twelve); x. 5—8 (the seventy). Matthew alone mentions the command to inquire who is worthy. **And into whatsoever city or town;** *village* (Revised Version); cf. ch. ix. 35, note. **Ye shall enter, inquire;** *search out* (Revised Version). Much more is implied than merely asking some chance passer-by (cf. ch. ii. 8). **Who in it is worthy;** *i.e.* equivalent by moral rate (ἄξιος)—in this case to the privilege of your lodging with him; elsewhere to the offer of peace (ver. 13), to the favour of an invitation (ch. xxii. 8), to walking with Christ clothed in white (Rev. iii. 4), to punishment (Rev. xvi. 6). **And there abide till ye go thence;** *go forth* (Revised Version); *i.e.* finally (ver. 14). The object of this command, which was reckoned so important as to be recorded in all three parallel passages (*vide supra*), is to prevent partly favouritism and rivalry, partly waste of time. For "when a stranger arrives in a village or an encampment, the neighbours, one after another, must invite him to eat

with them. There is a strict etiquette about it, involving much ostentation and hypocrisy; and a failure in the due observance of this system of hospitality is violently resented, and often leads to alienations and feuds among neighbours. It also consumes much time, causes unusual distraction of mind, leads to levity, and every way counteracts the success of a spiritual mission" (Thomson, 'Land and the Book,' p. 347); cf. St. Luke's "Go not from house to house" (x. 7). It is, on the other hand, quite unnecessary to see here, with Meyer and Weiss, a prohibition to go to the synagogues or indeed to anywhere else where they could gain a hearing during their stay. Our Lord is referring only to lodging and food (Luke x. 7).

Vers. 12, 13.—Parallel passage: Luke x. 5, 6 (the seventy). Your very entrance is to be an occasion of imparting spiritual blessing if the house be receptive of it.

Ver. 12.—**And when ye come**; *and as ye enter* (Revised Version); synchronous with the moment of your entrance (cf. Luke xvii. 12). **Into an house**; *the house* (Revised Version); *i.e.* of him who is worthy. **Salute it.** With the usual greeting of "Peace" (Judg. xviii. 15; 1 Sam. xxv. 5, 6). Observe that Christ practised what he preached (John xx. 19 [Luke xxiv. 36]).

Ver. 13.—**And if the house.** Not the householder alone (ver. 11), but he and his family as a whole. **Be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.** It is tempting to see in these words a promise that your activity shall at least issue in increased blessing on yourselves, but it can hardly be pressed so far. It rather means that failure to impart blessing shall not bring spiritual loss to yourselves. "The dove returned to the ark again when it found the earth under water" (cf. Gurnall, in Ford).

Vers. 14, 15.—If rejected, bear your solemn witness to the fact, for to reject you brings awful consequences.

Ver. 14.—Parallel passages: Mark vi. 11; Luke ix. 5 (the twelve); x. 10, 11 (the seventy). **And whosoever shall not receive you**—on your formal request as heralds of the kingdom—**nor hear your words** (ch. vii. 24, note), **when** (*as*, Revised Version, ver. 12, note) **ye depart** (*go forth*, Revised Version) **out of.** At the moment of going out (cf. ver. 12), ἐξερχόμενοι ἔξω (ch. xxi. 17; Acts xvi. 13), in this case finally. **That house or** (*that*, Revised Version) **city.** "The house," rightly further defined by "that" in English, comes in Matthew only; "that city" comes also in the parallel passage, Luke ix. 5 (cf. the parallel passages, Mark vi. 11; Luke x. 10), and therefore belongs to the source used by St. Matthew. **Shake off the dust of** ("off," ἐκ, Westcott and Hort, margin) **your feet.** Treating it as a heathen place, whose pollution must be shaken off. For the very dust from a heathen land was to be reckoned as polluting, since, as Rashi says on Talm. Bab., 'Sabb.,' 15*b* (cf. Lightfoot, 'Hor. Hebr.,' *in loc.*), "It may be doubted, of all the dust of a heathen land, whether it were not from the sepulchre of the dead." (For the apostolic fulfilment of our Lord's injunction cf. Acts xiii. 51 and xviii. 6; see also Neh. v. 13.)

Ver. 15.—Parallel passage: Luke x. 12 (the seventy). Similar words are used by our Lord in his apostrophe of Capernaum (ch. xi. 24, where see note). The combination in Luke x. 11 and 12—15 of *both* the contexts is an instructive warning against accepting the present position of our Lord's sayings as the final indication of the occasion upon which they were delivered. **Verily.** (For the idea of acquiescence that always underlies this word—even in the case of so solemn a matter as the present—comp. ch. v. 18, note.) **I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha.** Whose inhabitants were the typical example of the worst of sinners (Deut. xxxii. 32; Isa. i. 10; Ezek. xvi. 46; Rev. xi. 8). "The men of Sodom have no part in the world to come" (Mishna, 'Sanh.,' x. 3). **In the day of judgment.** Luke has "in that day;" cf. ch. vii. 22. In the only two passages in the LXX. (Prov. vi. 34; Isa. xxxiv. 8) where, as it seems, our phrase occurs, it refers, not to the judgment of all, good and bad alike, but to that of the wicked alone. So also in 2 Pet. ii. 9; iii. 7; and possibly also in ch. xii. 36, but not in 1 John iv. 17 (the only passage where it is not anarthrous). **Than for that city.** Observe that this verse implies that the wicked dead are still in existence, and are waiting for their final judgment; also that in the judgment of the wicked there will be degrees of punishment.

Vers. 16—39.—*The internal conditions of conveying Christ's message.* The subdivisions of this section are after ver. 23 and ver. 33 (cf. ver. 5*b*, note).

Vers. 16—23.—You will be in the midst of foes, and simplicity must be accompanied by prudence (ver. 16, a summary of all); you will be ill-treated publicly (vers. 17, 18), but must conduct yourselves with calm faith that you will be guided in your defence (vers. 19, 20), with endurance of family and universal enmity (vers. 21, 22), with common

sense in avoiding unnecessary danger, for wherever you go you will find work to be done (ver. 23).

Ver. 16.—16*a*, parallel passage: Luke x. 3 (the seventy); 16*b*, Matthew only. **Behold.** He calls their attention. **I send you forth.** *I* (ἐγω), with the full consciousness of all that will befall you; *I*, whose message you will carry, whose character you will represent. In this *I* lies the germ of vers. 40—42. **As sheep in the midst of wolves.** The 'Midrash' on Esth. viii. 2 (Parasha x.) uses the same phrase of the position of Israel amidst a hostile world (cf. Edersheim, 'Life,' i. 645), adding, "How great is that Shepherd who delivers them and vanquishes the wolves!" 'Clem. Rom.,' ii. § 5, has an interesting addition, "The Lord saith, Ye shall be as lambs in the midst of wolves. But Peter answered and said unto him, What then, if the wolves should tear the lambs? Jesus saith unto Peter, Let not the lambs fear the wolves after they [the lambs] are dead." **Be ye therefore.** Prove yourselves to be (γίνεσθε). **Wise.** Prudent (φρόνιμοι). **As serpents.** N*, with Ignat., 'Polyc.,' § 2, has the singular, perhaps taking it generically, or perhaps not without reference to the phrase in Gen. iii. 1, "The serpent was more subtle," etc. (ὁ δὲ ὄφις ἦν φρονιμώτατος, κ.τ.λ.). The prudence of the serpent is specially apparent in the quickness of its perception of danger and the rapidity with which it escapes from it. Kübel gives ch. xxii. 23, *sqq.*, 34, *sqq.*; John ii. 24; xi. 9, 10, as examples of this proper prudence in the case of our Lord. **And harmless as doves.** *Harmless;* rather, *simple*, with Revised Version margin, for ἀκέραιος is literally "unmixed," "unadulterated" (cf. Bishop Lightfoot, on Phil. ii. 15), and emphasizes the idea of simplicity of character. It is thus not active, but passive. Comp. 'Shir. R.' (Cant. ii. 14), "With me they [Israel] are simple [תמימים; cf. the *'Etz Ya'akob*, which refers to Hos. vii. 11] as doves, but among the nations of the world they are subtle as serpents" (cf. ch. iii. 16, note).

Ver. 17.—Vers. 17—22 are remarkable as being practically identical with Mark xiii. 9—13, to which the parallels are Luke xxi. 12—19 and ch. xxiv. 9—14. It is hard to resist the conclusion that St. Matthew (1) has incorporated into the present address of our Lord's on missionary work warnings actually given in his great address at Jerusalem on the fall of the city and the end of the world; and (2) to some extent repeats these warnings in their proper place. (For the further parallel of vers. 19, 20 to Luke xii. 11, 12, *vide in loc.*; cf. also the note on "and they will scourge," in this verse.) **But beware.** Apparently in contrast to being only "dove"-like; but it is no wonder that the connexion with ver. 16 should be rather harsh if the passage be really taken from a later speech ("But take ye heed," etc., Mark xiii. 9). **Of men.** Generically (τῶν ἀνθρώπων), regarded as one hostile body (cf. Meyer). The culminating point of that opposition to God which is innate in fallen humanity is found in the deification of the Roman emperors (cf. Bishop Westcott's essay on the Two Empires, § 3, in his Epistles of St. John). **For they will deliver you up to the** (omit "the," with the Revised Version) **councils** (εἰς συνέδρια, ch. v. 22, note); "Synedria, ubi proceres conveniunt; synagogæ, ubi etiam populus" (Bengel). **And they will scourge you in their synagogues** (the order of the words is reversed in the Revised Version). With this compare ch. xxiii. 34, where our Lord says, "Therefore, behold, I send [ἰδοὺ, ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω: cf. ver. 16, note] unto you prophets . . . and some of them ye shall scourge in your synagogues, and (cf. ver. 23, *infra*) persecute from city to city." Is our present passage a reminiscence of this also? For the fulfilment of this prophecy cf. Acts xxii. 19 (xxvi. 11). Farrar ('St. Paul,' i. App. xi.) thus summarizes the enactments on Jewish scourging as recorded in the Mishna ('Makkoth'): "Even a single Jewish scourging might well entitle any man to be regarded as a martyr. Thirty-nine blows were inflicted, unless, indeed, it was found that the strength of the patient was too much exhausted to admit of his receiving the full number. Both of his hands were tied to what is sometimes called a column, but which was in reality a stake a cubit and a half high. The public officer then tore down his robe until his breast was laid bare. The executioner stood on a stone behind the criminal. The scourge consisted of two thongs, one of which was composed of four strands of calf's skin, and one or two strands of ass's skin, which passed through a hole in a handle. The executioner, who was ordinarily the *Chazzan* of the synagogue, could thus shorten or lengthen them at will, so as not to strike too low. The prisoner bent to receive the blows, which were inflicted with one hand, but with all the force of the striker, thirteen on the breast, thirteen on the right and thirteen on the left shoulder. While the punishment was going on, the chief judge read aloud Deut. xxviii. 58, 59, 'If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, the Lord thy God; then the Lord will make thy plagues ["strokes"] wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed.' He then read Deut. xxix. 9, 'Keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them, that

ye may prosper in all ye do;' and lastly, Ps. lxxviii. 38, 39, 'But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath.' If the punishment was not over by the time that these three passages were read, they were again repeated, and so timed as to end exactly with the punishment itself. Meanwhile a second judge numbered the blows, and a third before each blow exclaimed, '*Hakkehu*' ('strike him'). . . . The severity of the pain may best be estimated by the brief addition, '*If the criminal die under the infliction*, the executioner is not accounted guilty unless he gives by mistake a single blow too many, in which case he is banished.'"

Ver. 18.—**And**; *yea and* (Revised Version); καὶ . . . δέ. **Ye shall be brought.** Transposed in the Revised Version with the following words, because the stress of Christ's saying lies, not on his followers being brought to trial, but on the high position of their judges. This marks both the extreme importance that their enemies will attach to them, and the lengths to which these will go. **Before governors**; *i.e.*, probably, representatives of others in supreme power. Such were Felix and Festus, the prætors at Philippi (hardly the politarchs at Thessalonica, for this was a free city), and Gallio at Corinth. But perhaps ἡγεμών is here used in the narrower sense of procurator, in which case of the above names only the first two ought to be mentioned, for Gallio was a proconsul (ἀνθύπατος). **And kings.** The supreme authorities themselves. So especially Nero (2 Tim. iv. 16), and even Herod Agrippa II. (Acts xxv. 13, *sqq.*), for he was autocratic in his kingdom, save that he owed allegiance to the power that gave it to him. **For my sake** (ch. v. 11, note). St. Peter ("for the Lord's sake . . . king . . . governors," 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14) possibly refers to this utterance, but by using the singular, "king," recalls more definitely the one political organization with which his readers would be brought into contact in Asia Minor, the Roman emperor and his representatives. **For a testimony against** (*to*, Revised Version) **them and** (*to*, Revised Version) **the Gentiles.** *Them.* Not the Jews (Bengel, Meyer, and perhaps also the Revised Version), but the governors and kings. For (*a*) the parallel passage, Mark xiii. 9, omits "the Gentiles;" (*b*) the parallel passage, ch. xxiv. 14 (*vide supra*), runs, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world [possibly, too, the word employed, οἰκουμένη, has special reference to the Roman empire] for a testimony unto all the Gentiles." Both passages show that the Lord is not here thinking of the Jews, but only of the Gentiles and rulers from among them. *Against; to.* A witness to these Gentile rulers of what the gospel really does for men, and of their consequent responsibility; cf. ch. viii. 4, note; also the parallel passage, Luke xxi. 13. Eusebius, referring to our Lord's words, gives a striking illustration in his 'Mart. Pal.,' vi.

Vers. 19, 20.—For these two verses, compare (besides Mark xiii. 11; Luke xxi. 15; *vide supra*, ver. 17) Luke xii. 11, 12, with which there is doubtless a common basis. As the two verses do not seem to have in Luke xii. a very close connexion with their context, it is probable that there also, as here, they are taken from a speech of later date. **But when they deliver you up, take no thought**; *be not anxious* (Revised Version); ch. vi. 25, note. So also Luke xii. 11; but Luke xxi. 14 goes further, and forbids the disciples to "meditate beforehand how to answer." Bengel says here, *Una, non curandi, cura sit.* **How or what.** The general direction or the actual matter. **Ye shall speak**—*i.e.* in defence, as defined in Luke xii. 11; xxi. 14—**for it shall be given you in that same** (omit "same," with the Revised Version) **hour what ye shall speak.** And if in similar extraordinary circumstances, the Christian may expect similar extraordinary help. The omission of this clause by some Western authorities is probably due to the fact that the next verse also begins with "for," and contains a promise that much resembles this. **For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you** (cf. Gen. xli. 38). Observe: (1) The thoughtful reminder, "your Father," whose children you have become (ch. v. 16, note), and whose protection you may look for. (2) It is not said that the Father, but that the Spirit speaks (cf. Acts iv. 8; xiii. 9; and, for Christ speaking, 2 Cor. xiii. 3). (3) The phrase is quite compatible with, but would hardly have then been understood as expressing, the personality of the Holy Spirit. (4) Though the promise would doubtless hold good, and that in a special degree, for the most important of all "defences," the writing of Holy Scripture, yet even there it did not preclude the use of human means (Luke i. 3).

Ver. 21.—The persecutors shall be found among those most closely connected with you by blood and natural affection. Observe that our Lord does not mention this until he has reminded them that they are connected by still deeper family ties with One above. The thought and partly the language of vers. 21, 22 comes in 4 Esdr. vi. 24, 25, "Et erit in illo tempore debellabunt amici amicos ut inimici . . . et orit, omnis qui derelictus fuerit ex omnibus istis quibus prædixi tibi, ipse salvabitur et videbit salutare meum et finem sæculi mei [v. l. vestri]."

The author is speaking of the signs of the end of the world. It seems probable that he was acquainted with some form of the original discourse of our Lord in Mark xiii. 12, 13 (see ver. 17, note). (For other references somewhat similar cf. Schürer, II. ii. 155.) **And** (δέ). In contrast to the preceding encouragement (Kübel). **The brother.** The omission of the article by the Revised Version throughout this verse is justified, not only by grammar, but also by the consideration that it thus becomes less possible to interpret the phrase of a false "brother" in the Church. **And the father the child.** Philip II. of Spain is reported to have said of the Protestants, "If it were my own son, I would bring the faggot." **And the children shall rise up against** their parents. The verb (ἐπαναστήσονται) is perhaps a reminiscence of Micah vii. 6, other words of which are quoted below (ver. 35). The plural suggests the plurality of cases. **And cause them to be put to death**; *put them to death* (Revised Version margin); but perhaps through the agency of others. Observe that more direct cruelty is predicated of the children than of the brothers and fathers. Past kindness received will go for nothing.

Ver. 22.—**And ye shall be hated.** For no little time (ἔσεσθε μισούμενοι). "*Suffering* sometimes becomes as a reward for *doing*. You read of the heifers which brought home the ark out of the Philistines' country, that, when they brought the ark home, the Israelites took the heifers and offered them up to God, as a sacrifice (1 Sam. vi. 14). 'Why so?' saith one. 'It is an ill requital to the heifers.' No; the heifers could not have so high an honour put upon them (Phil. i. 29; Acts ix. 16; xxi. 13)" (Wm. Bridge, in Ford). **Of** all men (ver. 17, note). As with the old Israel, so also with the new (cf. Kübel). **For my name's sake** (ch. vi. 9, note). **But he that endureth to the end** (Revised Version adds, *the same*) **shall be saved** (so ch. xxiv. 13). The emphatic insertion of οὗτος points out both the absolute necessity of endurance and the certainty of blessing to him who shows it (cf. 2 Tim. ii. 11). *To the end* (εἰς τέλος); *i.e.* not to the end of the time during which persecution shall last (εἰς τὸ τέλος), but to completeness in the endurance required (cf. John xiii. 1 [Bishop Westcott's note]; 1 Thess. ii. 16). *Shall be saved.* In the fullest sense (cf. the parallel passage, Luke xxi. 19).

Ver. 23.—Matthew only; but even this verse is not free from what appear to be reminiscences of the words recorded in ch. xxiv. 14, 16). **But when they persecute you in this city.** Act wisely (ver. 16); flee to another city; you will find work there. **Flee ye** (cf. ch. xxiii. 34, and *supra*, ver. 17, note) **into another**; *into the next* (Revised Version); εἰς τὴν ἑτέραν. There are occasions when the duty is rather to spread the message than to seal it with death or to have one's lips closed by imprisonment. But only "he that is spiritual" (1 Cor. ii. 15) will be able to understand which course of action the special circumstances require. Our Lord's example (ch. xii. 15) was followed by Christians in the earliest (Acts viii. 1; ix. 25, 30; xiv. 6; xvii. 10, 14) and in later times (*e.g.* Polycarp, A.D. 155; Dionysius of Alexandria, A.D. 249—251; Cyprian, A.D. 250; Athanasius, A.D. 340). Codex Bezæ and some Western authorities, including Tatian's 'Diatess.,' add, "And if out of this they persecute you, flee into another;" but this is a not unnatural gloss upon the true text. **For verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over; *through*** (Revised Version); οὐ μὴ τελέσητε: literally, *have completed*, like the harvest (Ruth ii. 23). **The cities of Israel** (cf. ver. 6) **till the Son of man** (ch. viii. 20, note) **be come.** The mere fact that there was no persecution of the kind just spoken of until after our Lord's death in itself refutes the opinion (found, perhaps, in Tatian's 'Diatess.,' "Donec venero ad vos;" *vide* Resch, 'Agrapha,' p. 270) that these words refer to his rejoining his disciples on their mission (ch. xi. 1; cf. Luke x. 1). They may, perhaps, refer to his coming in the fall of Jerusalem, but rather look forward to his complete return in his second advent, as apparently Agathangelus, in Resch, *loc. cit.* (cf. also p. 404), understands them. The cities of *Israel* are named because work among the Jews lay at the basis of the commission. If an exact fulfilment of the words is demanded, it is perhaps to be seen in the fact that there will be some Jews unconverted until the Lord's return.

Vers. 24—33.—*Fellowship with me in suffering is essential to fellowship with me in glory.* (1) Fellowship in suffering (vers. 24—31). (2) The result of confessing or of denying Christ (vers. 32, 33).

(1) *Fellowship in suffering* (vers. 24—31). (*a*) You must not expect better treatment than your Master (vers. 24, 25). (*b*) But opponents are not to be feared (vers. 26—28), because (*α*) they are powerless to really injure (vers. 26—28*a*); (*β*) there is a greater Object of fear (ver. 28*b*). (*c*) Who cares minutely for all his creatures, and much more for you (vers. 29—31).

Vers. 24, 25.—Matthew only; but comp. John xiii. 16 and xv. 18—21; the latter passage is a commentary. In Luke vi. 40 there is close verbal similarity, but the thought is completely different. For there

our Lord means that a disciple shall not escape the moral loss that his teacher incurs; on the contrary, when fully instructed, he shall be as his teacher is, in the same evil state. But here he is giving encouragement—whatever treatment a disciple receives he is, if his Teacher received it also, not to count it a strange thing (1 Pet. iv. 12).

Ver. 24.—**The** (*a*, Revised Version) **disciple.** The absence of the article lays more stress on the man's position as disciple. **Is not above.** The emphasis of the sentence is upon the denial of such a possibility (*οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ μαθητής*). **His master**; *teacher* (Revised Version margin); *διδάσκαλον*. **Nor the** (*a*, Revised Version) **servant** (*bond-servant*, Revised Version margin) **above his lord.**

Ver. 25.—**It is enough** (*ἀρκετόν*); ch. vi. 34, note. It will quite content him; it is sufficient for his aims and wishes (Heb. xiii. 5; John xiv. 8). So Talm. Bab., 'Berach.,' 58*b*, R. Ula comforts Rab Hisda for the desolation of a friend's house which he formerly knew in its prosperity, by reminding him that the temple too is in ruins, and "It is sufficient for the servant that he be as his master (דיו לעבד שיהא כרבו)." **For the disciple.** Here (unlike ver. 24) pictured before the mind. **That he be.** Eventually (*ἵνα γένηται*). (For the weakened telic force of *ἵνα* here, cf. Ellicott on 1 Cor. iv. 3.) **As his master, and the servant as his lord.** That the pronoun was added to "lord" in ver. 24 was perhaps due to the unconscious desire on the part of the reporter to avoid any possible ambiguity arising from the familiar phrase *ὁ κύριος*: in these two clauses the insertion of the pronoun is rather due to the fact that "disciple" and "servant" are both defined by the article. **If they have called.** A typical example of the treatment his disciples will sometimes receive—complete rejection of their message, with deliberate accusation of the worst of crimes. Observe that it is implied that the opprobrious term had already been used of our Lord, although St. Matthew has not yet related it (ch. xii. 24). (On ch. ix. 34, cf. note there.) *Called.* By no mere chance expression, but by purposely giving him the title (*ἐπεκάλεσαν*); cf. Heb. xi. 16. **The master of the house.** Heb. iii. 2—6 may be compared, even though not Christ but God is there probably spoken of as the owner of the house. **Beelzebub**; "Gr. *Beelzebul*; and so elsewhere" (Revised Version margin). The original meaning of the title was probably "Lord of flies" (*zebub*, 2 Kings i. 3), or possibly "of bees" (*zebul*, equivalent to *zebur*, cf. Neubauer, 'Stud. Bibl.,' 1st series, p. 55); but there cannot but be here a play upon the sense, "Lord of the dwelling" (*zebul*, *e.g.* Isa. lxiii. 15), and probably a further reference to the similar sound *zebel*, Neo-Hebr. for "dung" (cf. 2 Kings xvii. 12, and Wetstein's curious note in Delitzsch, on Job xxx. 12).

Ver. 26.—Vers. 26—33, parallel passage: Luke xii. 2—9, where it follows the warning against the leaven of the Pharisees. A similar saying to ver. 26 (parallel passage: Luke xii. 2) is also found in Mark iv. 22 (parallel passage: Luke viii. 17). Though the two sayings are probably distinct, yet it is very possible that one may have been modified from the other in being reported. **Fear them not therefore.** These words are in Matthew only. *Therefore.* Since the Master bore such treatment. **For.** Hardly—Fear them not, for your secret disloyalty will one day be known; but—Fear them not so as to conceal your faith and principles, for these are of supreme importance; inner character is everything. This connexion seems to be more close than to read into the words a reference to the ultimate success of the gospel or to the unreality of those things that now terrify you. **There is nothing.** Even your own relation to me (cf. ver. 32). **Covered, that shall not be revealed**; *uncovered.* The cloak over it shall be drawn back. **And hid, that shall not be known.** It shall not only be stripped of its disguise, but also itself be brought out to light and its true character perceived.

Ver. 27.—The parallel passage, Luke xii. 3, is verbally similar, but of reverse meaning. In Matthew it is a charge to the disciples to proclaim publicly what Christ tells them privately; in Luke it is a statement that what they say privately shall be proclaimed publicly. St. Luke gives only another side of the preceding verse; St. Matthew, a fresh point. The connexion with ver. 26 is—Do not cover up your relation to me, but say out bravely the message that I give you. **What I tell you.** There is no limitation to the time. Those who believe in the present life of Christ and in the reality of present communications from him cannot fail to see here both the true source of their messages as preachers and the necessity of faithfulness to those messages. Observe that the stress is not upon the personality of the Speaker, but upon the communication (*λέγω*, not *ἐγὼ λέγω*). **In** (*the*, Revised Version) **darkness . . . in** (*the*, Revised Version) **light.** Both are pictured to the mind. **And what ye hear in the ear** (*εἰς τὸ οὖς*). Possibly a reference to the habit of Jewish rabbis sometimes whispering their teaching in the ear of an "interpreter," who repeated it aloud for all to hear (cf. Lightfoot, 'Hor. Hebr.'), but more probably only the common figure of speech for secret instruction; cf.

Talm. Bab., 'Berach.,' 22*a*, "Nahum of Gamzo, whispered it to R. Akiba, and R. Akiba whispered it to Ben Azai, and Ben Azai went out and taught it to his disciples in the street." Compare also the Old Testament phrase, "uncover the ear" (1 Sam. ix. 15, used of God; xx. 2, 12, 13, used of man). That **preach ye**; *proclaim* (Revised Version); κηρύξατε. **Upon the house-tops.** Lightfoot ('Hor. Hebr.') thinks that this is an allusion to the minister of a synagogue blowing a trumpet on the roof of a high house to announce the sabbath; but that was a mere signal of a fact (σαλπίζω), not the articulate expression of a communication (κηρύσσω). The phrase much more probably alludes to the fact that the roofs in Eastern cities are the common place for conversation, and to the rapidity with which an announcement there made spreads throughout the town.

Ver. 28.—**And.** Restating ver. 26*a* from a different point of view. **Fear not**; *be not afraid of* (Revised Version); μὴ φοβηθῆτε ἀπό. So Westcott and Hort, with B (*sic*) and two or three other authorities. The Revised Version (cf. Authorized Version parallel passage, Luke xii. 4) expresses the greater difference from vers. 26 and 28*b* (φοβηθῆτε ἀπό with genitive, a Hebraism expressing avoidance, shrinking, cowardly dread; φοβηθῆτε with accusative, concentration of regard) at the expense of the lesser (φοβηθῆτε, general command, or perhaps "never once fear;" φοβεῖσθε, "ever fear," habit). **Them which kill the body.** So R. Akiba refused to give up studying and teaching the Law when it was forbidden on pain of death (Talm. Bab., 'Berach.,' 61*b*). **But are not able to kill the soul** (ch. vi. 25, note). **But rather fear. Always** (φοβεῖσθε). Fear; yes, but the right object (φοβεῖσθε δὲ μᾶλλον, not μᾶλλον δὲ φοβεῖσθε), and that intensely (*vide supra*). **Him which is able** (τὸν δυνάμενον). Mere power; but in the parallel passage in Luke, authority. The reference is, of course, to God (cf. Jas. iv. 12). **To destroy** (ἀπολέσαι). The class of words to which this belongs denotes "utter and hopeless ruin; but they convey no idea whether the ruined object ceases to exist or continues a worthless existence" (Professor Agar Beet, in *Expositor*, IV. i. 28). Professor Marshall, in *Expositor*, IV. iii. 283, thinks Luke's variant, "to cast," indicates that our Lord originally used an Aramaic word that properly meant "to set on fire." **Both soul and body in hell** (ch. v. 22, note).

Ver. 29.—**Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing?** The form of the saying in Luke xii. 6 is practically equivalent ("Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings?"); for sparrows are so common and cheap that if a man buys two farthings' worth he gets one thrown in. "At the present day the markets of Jerusalem and Jaffa are attended by many 'fowlers,' who offer for sale long strings of little birds of various species, chiefly sparrows, wagtails, and larks. These are also frequently sold ready plucked, trussed in rows of about a dozen on slender wooden skewers, and are cooked and eaten like kabobs" (Tristram, in Smith's 'Dict. of Bible,' iii. 1366, where is added an interesting account of the various methods of catching them). *A farthing* (ἀσσαρίου). This might either be one of the coins of the Herods (ver. 9, note), or, as it seems, a "second brass" Antiochene *as* (cf. Madden, 'Coins of the Jews,' p. 301, etc.). **And one of them shall not fall**—*and not one of them shall fall* (Revised Version, more idiomatically)—**on the ground.** Dead. In the parallel passage in Luke, more generally, "Not one of them is forgotten in the sight of God," even in life. Origen and Chrysostom read, "fall into the snare" (cf. Amos iii. 5). **Without** (ἄνευ). Χωρὶς would deny merely physical connexion (cf. John xv. 5), and the sentence would then imply that God *causes* their death; ἄνευ is only negative, and the sentence implies that their death is not outside of his knowledge and care. In Amos iii. 5 the thought is that for every event there is a cause; here that every event is taken notice of by God. Sennacherib's boast (Isa. xxxvi. 10) contained a truth other than he intended. **Your Father.** For this and nothing less is God's relation to you. There is a Talmudic tale told in various forms, of which the earliest seems to be that R. Simon ben Jochai, after hiding thirteen years in a cave, saw from the entrance of it a fowler snaring birds, but that these could not be taken if the Divine voice (*Bath Qol*) said, "Released" (*dimus, dimissus*). "A bird," said the rabbi, "perishes not without God, much less a man," and he returned to the city (Talm. Jer., 'Shebiith,' ix. 1).

Ver. 30.—**But the very hairs of your head.** "Your" emphatic, in contrast to the care bestowed on sparrows. (For the thought, compare not only the parallel passage, Luke xii. 7, but also Luke xxi. 18; Acts xxvii. 34.) **Are all numbered.** Perhaps long since (ἠριθμημέναι εἰσίν). When Job complained the Lord answered him, "Many hairs have I made on man, and for every single hair its own pit, that not two hairs should draw their sustenance from one pit... shall I make no mistake about this, and yet make a mistake in thy name and spell it not *Ijob* (Job, איוב), but *Ojeb* (enemy, אויב)?" (Talm. Bab., 'Baba Bathra,' 16*a*).

Ver. 31.—The minuteness of this care forbids you to fear; it is clear from it that you are worth more than even many sparrows. **Fear ye** (the Revised Version omits *ye*) **not. The absence of** ὑμεῖς lays all the

more stress on the verb. **Therefore.** As the hairs of your head are all numbered; the following words are thus epexegetic. **Ye.** Emphatic here; ye who are God's sons. The thought is stronger than even that of the "faithful Creator," in 1 Pet. iv. 19. **Are of more value than many sparrows.** So, too, any man than a sheep (ch. xii. 12).

Vers. 32, 33.—(2) *The result of confessing and of denying Christ.* (Cf. ver. 24, note.)

Ver. 32.—**Whosoever;** *every one . . . who* (Revised Version); ch. vii. 24, note. **Therefore.** Summing up the thought of vers. 24—31, that he who suffers with Christ is only receiving such treatment as he ought to expect, and is never forgotten. **Shall confess me** (*ὁμολογήσει ἐν ἐμοί*). *Ὁμολογεῖν ἐν* occurs only in this verse (twice) and in the parallel passage, Luke xii. 8 (cf. Bishop Westcott, on 1 John ii. 23). Though the exact phrase is doubtless due to Hebrew influence (cf. Ewald, § 217, *f.* 2), yet its choice here is determined by an instinctive feeling that it expresses the union of him who confesses with him who is confessed, while the plain accusative makes no such implication, but only sums up the confession. Bishop Westcott ('Canon,' p. 275, edit. 1870) quotes Heracleon's comment on Luke xii. 8. "With good reason Christ says of those who confess him *in me* (*ὁμολογήσει ἐν ἐμοί*), but of those who deny him *me* (*ἀρνήσηταί με*) only. For these even if they confess him with their voice deny him, since they confess him not in their action. But they alone make confession *in* him who live in the confession and action that accords with him; *in* whom also he makes confession, having himself embraced them, and being held fast by them" (Clem. Alex., 'Strom.,' iv. 9, Fragment 50 in Mr. A. E. Brooke's edition of Heracleon). **Before men** (*τῶν ἀνθρώπων*); ver. 17, note, and ch. vi. 1, note. **Him.** Not in any position of emphasis in the Greek. **Will I confess also** (cf. Rev. iii. 5) **before my Father.** Not merely "the Father," but him who is in the closest relationship to me; the thought is of salvation as well as of creation. **Which is in heaven.** In nature, love; in position, majesty and omnipotence.

Ver. 33.—Besides the parallel passage, Luke xii. 9, cf. the similar thought in Mark viii. 38 (parallel passages: Luke ix. 26; ch. xvi. 27). **But whosoever shall deny me before men.** Kübel compares St. Peter's words, "I know not the man" (ch. xxvi. 74). **Him will I also deny.** The emphasis is on "deny" (cf. 2 Tim. ii. 12; Ign., 'Smyrn.,' § 5). **Before my Father which is in heaven.**

Vers. 34—39.—*Fellowship with me will involve separation from the dearest upon earth, yet the reward is great.* (Cf. ver. 5, note.) The progress of thought in these verses seems to be as follows: Do not be surprised at the contradiction that appears between my teaching and the immediate result; I allowed for this when I began my work (ver. 34). There will, indeed, be separation in the closest earthly ties (vers. 35, 36). But my claims are paramount (vers. 37, 38). And on your relation to them depends everything hereafter (ver. 39).

Ver. 34.—Parallel passage: Luke xii. 51. **Think not.** Christ here removes another mistaken opinion (ch. v. 17, note). There the mistake was about his relation to the Law; here about the immediate result of his coming. The Prince of Peace did not come to cast in peace as something from outside. It would show itself eventually, but from within outwards. That which he cast from without was *fire* (Luke xii. 49), *a sword* (*infra*). Chrysostom ('Hom.,' xxxv.) points out, among other illustrations, that the confusion of tongues at the Tower of Babel was better than the peace which preceded it, and itself produced a better peace. **That I am come;** *that I came* (Revised Version); cf. further, ch. v. 17, note. **To send peace** (*βαλεῖν εἰρήνην*). The verb was probably chosen because in the other form of the utterance Christ had already said *πῦρ βαλεῖν*, where the figure is of throwing a firebrand (Luke xii. 49). By a natural transition, that phrase led to the thought of "throwing" peace or a sword. St. Luke, on the contrary, softened the metaphor to *δοῦναι*. **On** (*the*, Revised Version) **earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.**

Ver. 35.—Parallel passage: Luke xii. 53 (cf. *supra*, vers. 21, 22). **For I am come;** *I came* (Revised Version). Notice the threefold *ἦλθον*. Christ would leave in his hearers' minds no room for thinking that he was ignorant of what the immediate result of his coming would be. **To.** A mere infinitive, not even with *τοῦ*, much less *ἵνα* with subject. The result is not in any sense the final cause of his coming. **Set a man at variance against** (*διχάσαι . . . κατά*). By the preposition is implied enmity, by the verb complete severance. For relation to God is the great line of cleavage, and that not only in God's sight, but in outcome of character. **His father.** From this word till the end of ver. 36 our Lord adopts Micah's (vii. 6) description of a general time of distrust for his own picture of the discord introduced by his coming. The wording is hardly taken from the LXX.

Ver. 36.—No parallel passage in the

Gospels. **And a man's foes shall be they of his own household** (*καὶ ἐχθροὶ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου οἱ οἰκιακοὶ αὐτοῦ*). Ἐχθροί is predicate. His very household (not to be limited to servants) turns against him.

Vers. 37, 38.—Parallel passage: Luke xiv. 26, 27, where the saying is spoken to the multitudes—presumably its original occasion. Ver. 37: A man must place me before his nearest ties. Ver. 38: Yea, must receive his cross (however it is brought to him), and with it follow after me. Observe the shadow of the cross upon our Lord's mind.

Ver. 37.—**He that loveth.** Natural and spontaneous love (*ὁ φιλῶν*), father . . . mother . . . son . . . daughter. No mention of wife, brothers, sisters, as in the parallel passage in Luke, perhaps because not mentioned in our vers. 35, 36. **Is not worthy of me.** And of all that I can be to him. Observe Christ's consciousness of his own worth. **And he that loveth son, etc.** A separate clause, because of the difference between the love of child to parent and that of parent to child. The latter is the stronger. The clause is omitted in B*, D, and two or three lesser authorities, but probably through *homoioteleuton*.

Ver. 38.—Besides the parallel passage, Luke xiv. 27 (*vide supra*), cf. also (for vers. 38, 39) ch. xvi. 24, 25 (parallel passages: Mark viii. 34, 35; Luke ix. 23, 24). **And he that taketh not**; *doth not take* (Revised Version), which calls attention to the change to the more definite mode of expression (*ὃς . . . λαμβάνει*). *Taketh.* Receives in submission when given him; contrast *ἀράτω*, "take up from the ground" (ch. xvi. 24), and *βαστάζει*, "bear" (Luke xiv. 27). **His cross.** A reference to the custom (*vide* Meyer) of criminals carrying their cross before they were crucified upon it. If, therefore, the figure may be pressed, the reference here is to the bearing of trials, even though they are such as point forward to greater trials in the future. Observe the torture and the ignominy of the trials that Christ expects his followers to be prepared for. **And followeth after me.** For Christ's journey ended in nothing less. **Is not worthy of me.** "And having been a little chastised, they shall be greatly rewarded: for God proved them, and found them worthy of himself" (Wisd. iii. 5). Compare the reply of St. Thomas Aquinas to our Lord in vision after he had completed his "Summa:" "*Thoma, bene scripsisti de me; Quam recipies a Me pro tuo labore mercedem? Domine, non nisi Te*" (Archbishop Vaughan's 'Life of St. Thomas,' frontispiece).

Ver. 39.—Besides ch. xvi. 25 and parallel passages (*vide supra*), cf. also Luke xvii. 33 and even John xii. 25. Observe that in our chapter vers. 37, 38 are equivalent to Luke xiv. 26, 27; vers. 38, 39 to Luke ix. 23, 24; ver. 39 to Luke xvii. 33. A comparison of the various passages leads to the inference that the original occasion of vers. 37, 38 was that of Luke xiv. 26, 27, and the original occasion of ver. 39 was that of ch. xvi. 25. Thus our passage is a compendium, and ch. xvi. 25 is either a modification by our Lord of an earlier thought, or, more probably, another "setting" of the utterance in place of something that corresponded to it. Luke xvii. 33, on the other hand, may be a modification by our Lord, or an insertion made in the process of the composition of the Gospel. **He that findeth**; *found* (Revised Version margin); *ὁ εὑρών*: but unnecessarily, the statement is timeless, and the inherent thought of completion is contained also in our present tense. *Findeth*; after expenditure of trouble, and so ch. xvi. 25 with parallel passages, "wish to save," and Luke xvii. 33, "seek to gain." Observe also the idea of acquiring for personal use common both to *εὑρίσκειν* and *περιποιεῖσθαι* (Luke). The phrase, "find the soul," occurs only here (twice) and ch. xvi. 25*b*; cf. Heb. x. 39. **His life** (ch. vi. 25, note). As the full development of personality in true independence and energy is the aim and the promise for hereafter, so its shrinking and weakening by sin ends in loss of moral independence and mental worth. **Shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.** He shall acquire that personality of his with all its inherent germs of power fully developed (cf. Luke xxi. 19; Heb. x. 39; cf. also the apocryphal *logion*, *Ζώζου σὺ καὶ ἡ ψυχή σου*, Resch, 'Agrapha,' p. 145). In Talm. Bab., 'Tamid,' 32*a*, Alexander the Great asks "the elders of the south" ten questions, among them, "What shall a man do that he may live?" They answer, "Let him put himself to death." "What shall a man do that he may die?" "Let him make himself alive." But though there is so much verbal similarity, it may be doubted whether Rashi is not right in explaining the passage as a merely worldly wise warning against provoking the envy of others by pride and ostentation.

Vers. 40—42.—*Final encouragement.* The evangelist takes the main idea of these verses from our Lord's words to the seventy (Luke x. 16), but moulds it in the form of his later saying, ch. xviii. 5 (cf. especially the parallel passage, Luke ix. 48, also Mark ix. 37). He further adds (ver. 42) other words also spoken later (Mark ix. 41; cf. ver. 42 there with our ch. xviii. 6).

In these verses the discourse returns to the immediate occasion, the mission of the disciples. Christ shows his personal interest in their work; his messengers' cause is his. He says, "I reckon treatment of you as treatment of me; ay, and he that sent me reckons it as treatment of himself" (ver. 40). This principle as to the treatment of representatives holds good throughout. Not every one can be a prophet, but those who help him shall share his reward. Not every one shall acquire the technical name of "righteous," but those who help such a man shall share his reward (ver. 41); even the smallest kindnesses shall not be unrewarded (ver. 42).

Ver. 40.—**He that receiveth you receiveth me.** "A man's messenger is as himself" (Mishna, 'Berach.,' v. 5). Yet, as Bengel says, "*Non modo tantundem est, ac si me reciperet: sed revera me recipit.*" Ford quotes from Tertullian ('De Orat.,' § 26), "A brother that hath entered into thine house, dismiss not without prayer. 'Thou hast seen,' saith he, 'thy brother; thou hast seen thy Lord.'" The same *logion* is found twice in Clem. Alex. (cf. Resch, 'Agrapha,' p. 296). (For an extension of the thought to bishops, cf. Ign., 'Eph.,' § 6.)

Ver. 41.—Matthew only. The whole verse recalls Jewish Christianity; it was hardly likely to have been remembered outside Jewish Christian circles. **He that receiveth a prophet.** One upon whom the mantle of the old prophets might in any sense be said to have fallen. The saying was probably *recorded* with special thought of the Christian peripatetic "prophets," who are brought before us so vividly in the 'Didaché.' **In the name of a prophet** (εἰς ὄνομα προφήτου). In late Hebrew and in Aramaic the word for "name" passed into little more than a preposition, just as the word for "face" had already passed (and so the Greek, ἐν ὀνόματι, Mark ix. 41). Here, however, this is hardly the case, the word appearing to retain its idea of both name and corresponding position. The preposition may mean *either* receive him into the position of a prophet, *i.e.* into the treatment with which a prophet should be received; *or*, simply, receive him at the rank and standing of a prophet (Acts vii. 53). Anyhow, it is in contrast to receiving him out of mere human compassion or ordinary friendliness. The reception is to have regard to that which the name implies, for the sake of the cause that the prophet represents. **Shall receive a prophet's reward**; *i.e.* shall share in the reward of that work in which by his kindness to the prophet he so far takes part. Thus the widow of Sarepta shared in the blessing given to Elijah (1 Kings xvii. 10; cf. also 2 Kings iv. 8, *sqq.*). (On *reward*, see ch. v. 12, note.) Observe that not the action, but the motive for the action, is made all-important. It is a matter of faith, not of works (cf. Nösgen). **And he that receiveth a righteous man.** *A righteous man*; i.e. one who is punctilious in performing all the details of the revealed will of God (ch. i. 19, note; Acts xxii. 14; Jas. v. 6). This word also is used in a quasi-Jewish sense, and points back to the time when Jewish Christians performed, not only the law as expounded in the sermon on the mount, but also those external rites and observances which had been commanded them as Jews (Acts xxi. 20). Among such Jewish Christians some would be especially noticeable for their regard to these things (*e.g.* James the "Just," or "Righteous"), and it is to one of these that the epithet here refers.

Ver. 42.—Parallel passage: Mark ix. 41, where it will be observed that the following verse is parallel to ch. xviii. 6 and Luke xvii. 2 (cf. *supra*, ver. 40). **One of these little ones . . . a disciple.** It is evident, from a comparison of ver. 41, that the two titles refer to one and the same person. Christ, using his own term, calls his followers "little ones;" using the term of others, he calls them "disciples." *Little ones.* Partly a word of personal endearment (cf. ch. xxv. 40); partly a comparison with those mentioned in ver. 41. He is now speaking of one who is not distinguished from other believers by the reception of extraordinary Divine gifts, or by special zeal and holiness, but is only an ordinary disciple. In ch. xviii. 6 the term is used directly of children, but in Luke xvii. 2, and probably in Mark ix. 41, 42, it is used metaphorically. **A cup of cold water only.** Observe that "if the 'cup of cold water' is not to lose its reward, it must be proffered when he who gives it has nothing better to give" (H. Melvill, in Exell, on ver. 41). **In the name of a disciple** (ver. 41, note). **Verily I say unto you, He shall in no wise lose his reward** (cf. Heb. vi. 10). *Lose* (ἀπολέσῃ). Does the Western reading, "His reward shall in no wise perish," indicate the *unending* duration of heavenly bliss, or is ἀπόληται there a synonym for the πταίσῃ of Ecclus. ii. 8? Observe that if the original Aramaic were יְיבַד אגריה, it might be understood in either way (cf. references in Levy, 'Chald. Wörterb.,' *s.v.* אבד).

## HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—4.—*The mission of the twelve.* I. THE CALL. 1. *The number.* He called unto him his twelve disciples. He had many more. He called these twelve. There seems to be a symbolical meaning in the number. We see plainly in the Book of the Revelation that twelve is the number of the Church. Three is the signature of God; four of the world; twelve, the product of three and four, points to God as entering into relations with the world, making a covenant with the Church which he hath called to himself out of the world. Twelve was the number of the Jewish Church, the Church of the twelve patriarchs; it is the number of the Christian Church, the Church of the twelve apostles. Then there is a meaning in the number; it seems to imply that God was entering into a new covenant with mankind—a covenant which was to find its consummation in the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God, which hath twelve gates, twelve angel-guardians, twelve foundations; the length and breadth and height of which are each twelve thousand furlongs. Twelve implies a covenant; the chosen disciples were the ministers of that covenant, "able ministers of the New Testament." Thus the very number of the apostles reminds us that we are brought by the grace of Christ into very close relations with God, into a new covenant with God. 2. *The name.* They had been disciples, now they became apostles. It is the first occurrence of that higher title in St. Matthew's Gospel. The Lord sent them forth; they became his ambassadors, his messengers, his missionaries. They had been disciples for some time; they had been called on various occasions; the calling of five out of the number has been already related by St. Matthew. They did not cease to be his disciples, his pupils. We learn of him all our life long; he hath the words of eternal life; we can never learn enough. But now they were to go forth to preach in his Name. It was a solemn mission. Before sending them (Luke tells us) "he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." We should learn from his example to pray long and earnestly for those who are to be ordained to any holy function in his Church. But as yet this mission was preliminary only, and confined within narrow limits. The apostles did not receive their full commission till the Lord had risen from the dead; it was sealed by the descent of the Holy Ghost on the great Day of Pentecost. But from this time they were apostles, the messengers, the angels of Christ upon earth; as the holy angels are the messengers of our Father which is in heaven. His ministers must have the like credentials now. "How shall they preach, except they are sent?" It is from him that the mission comes; he gives the zeal, the energy, the love. His ministers must stir up the gift of God that is in them, remembering always the solemn responsibilities of their high and holy calling. 3. *The gift of power.* The Lord gave his apostles power over evil spirits, and power to cure diseases. The age of miracles has passed away, but still he giveth power. Christianity is not a mere republication of the moral law; it is a religion of power, because its living centre is not a theology, but a Person, the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, who gives the sacred gift of the Holy Ghost to his chosen. The gift of the Holy Ghost is a gift of power—power to overcome the wicked one in our own hearts, power to preach with energy and burning zeal, power to cast out evil spirits by word, by holy example, by earnest preaching, by the ministration of the holy sacraments.

II. THE LIST OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES. 1. *They were sent out two and two.* Christ would have his servants work together; it is not good to be alone. Christian sympathy, communion with like-minded friends, help the Christian warrior in his daily strife against sin. Christians need that mutual help. Even St. Paul, who lived so very near to Christ, who could say, "To me to live is Christ," longed always for sympathy, and felt loneliness a great and bitter trial. 2. *The order of the twelve.* They were equal, though we notice a certain gradation of order. St. Peter is first in all the lists; yet when St. Paul was admitted into the apostolic college, though he spoke of himself as the least of the apostles, one born out of due time, he claimed equality with the first chosen twelve; he was not, he said, a whit behind the very chiefest of them; he withstood even Peter to the face. Three of the twelve were very highly favoured—Peter, James, and John; they only witnessed the first miracle of raising the dead and the glory of the Transfiguration; they only attended Christ in the

great agony of Gethsemane. Of the three, John was the most loved of the Lord, yet Peter was in some sense first; perhaps his character, perhaps the Lord's choice, brings him again and again to the front. There must, for the sake of order, be some subordination among the servants of Christ, but the truest distinction is that of holiness. "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;" "He that shall humble himself shall be exalted." The lowliest here shall stand nearest to the Lord in heaven. There is a true and noble ambition; it is the ambition to please God the best, to follow closest to Christ, to be first in humility, in self-sacrifice, in holy, self-denying love. 3. *Some of them are well known, some unknown.* Some of them exhibit to us a clear, distinct personality; of some we know very little; one or two are names to us, and nothing more. All are known to God. He "knoweth them that are his;" "I know mine own, and mine own know me; even as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father." God's saints, happy in that knowledge, seek not to be known of men. God's providence orders their circumstances. They may be as a city set on a hill, known of all men; they may be hidden from the sight of men in the quiet corners and byways of life. It matters little; whether their outward life is private or public, their soul liveth with God. For a time the Lord Jesus was the central figure in the Holy Land. "The world is gone after him," the Pharisees said. But he had lived during the far larger portion of his earthly life unseen and unknown to the world, a poor man in an obscure town. That obscure life was very beautiful and noble in the sight of God and the holy angels; for it was a life of perfect holiness and self-sacrifice. The hidden saints of God may be among his holiest, his best beloved; "unknown, and yet well known." They fill no space in the world's history; their very names are forgotten here. But they are not forgotten in heaven; they are written there in the Lamb's book of life. It is good to be unknown here. It must be very hard in the high places of life to preserve a clear, calm spirit; to walk humbly with God; in the world, but not of the world. Some can do it by the grace of God; with God all things are possible. Some men in high place are by his grace more lowly minded than those who rank far beneath them; the danger is great, but the grace of God is greater. Simon Peter had great faults; but he may have been more lowly in heart than the unknown Simon the Canaanite; he may have illustrated in his life his own lesson, "Be clothed with humility." 4. *One was a traitor.* They were only twelve; the Lord had chosen them to be with him. They had the unspeakable privilege of his teaching, his example, his society, living always in familiar intercourse with him. One would think it almost impossible to cherish selfish thoughts and motives in the presence of that unearthly goodness. But in that little company there was a traitor. Outwardly, he was very near to Christ; inwardly, there was a great gulf between them. The heart of man is deceitful above all things; in the midst of spiritual privileges it may be wholly estranged from God. In the visible Church the evil are ever mingled with the good. There was one traitor among the chosen twelve; there will sometimes be worldly and wicked men in the ministry of the Church, sometimes in its highest places. We must not be offended; it is what we are taught to expect.

LESSONS. 1. The Lord sends forth his servants; they must remember that their mission is from him, and look to him for wisdom and for power. 2. They must not seek great things for themselves, but be lowly, like their Lord. 3. The sacred office has its own temptations; sometimes they are very great. Spiritual fellowship with Christ is the one only safeguard.

Vers. 5—15.—*The Lord's charge to his apostles.* I. DIRECTIONS FOR THEIR IMMEDIATE MISSION. 1. *It was to be confined to the house of Israel.* This was a temporary limitation; it was wholly removed at the ascension. The Lord himself entered into the city of the Samaritans; he healed the daughter of the Syro-Phœnician woman. But for the present the apostles were to preach only to the Jews; it was necessary that the gospel should be first offered unto them; they were the covenant people, the children of the kingdom. The Holy Land was to be the centre from which the light of the gospel was to be diffused throughout the world. The light must be kindled at the centre first; a Church must be formed in the birthplace of the faith; then the messengers of Christ were to go forth for the evangelization of the world. The gospel must be preached at home first; then comes missionary work. Each disciple must be a witness for Christ

first in his own immediate circle, then let him enlarge his efforts. There are lost sheep at home, in our own households, among our own friends and neighbours. God's providence has placed them nearest to us; our first duty is to them. 2. *Their preaching.* "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." It had been first the announcement of John the Baptist, then of the Lord himself; now his apostles were to re-echo the solemn message. The kingdom was at hand, not yet fully organized, only in its infancy; but it was in the world. The heavenly King was come; his kingdom was close at hand; men who would share its blessings must press into it. 3. *Their power.* The Lord had given them power to work miracles of mercy; they must exercise it. We must care for men's bodily wants as far as God gives us the means, not only for their spiritual needs. The apostles had received freely, without price, the gift of power from Christ; they must give, as they received, freely, without price. St. Peter obeyed the Lord's commandment when he refused to receive money from Simon the sorcerer in exchange for spiritual power. 4. *No provision needed for their journey.* The workman is worthy of his meat; the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel. The apostles were to be supported by those to whom they ministered the bread of life; but they were to look for no more than that daily bread for which the Lord encourages us to pray. They were to trust in God for the supply of their daily needs; they were not to provide money; they were to go lightly clad, without the encumbrance of baggage. The Lord gave different rules afterwards (Luke xxii. 36). The directions here were of temporary force; to require literal obedience to them would savour of the fanaticism of the scribes and Pharisees. But in the spirit they are of perpetual obligation. Christ's ministers must be disinterested; they must labour not for the sake of earthly rewards, but for the love of souls, for the love of Christ; they must cast all their care upon Christ, knowing that he careth for them.

II. DIRECTIONS FOR THEIR SOJOURNING IN THEIR VARIOUS STATIONS. 1. *They were to choose pious households.* They must begin in each town or village with those who were most likely to listen to their message. A pious household would be a fit centre from which the good tidings might spread throughout the neighbourhood. There they should remain. They were not to wander from house to house in search of pleasant places; they were to be content to stay where God's providence had first directed them. 2. *They were to bring the message of peace.* "Peace be unto you!" was the common formula of Oriental salutation. The Lord would not have his servants neglect the ordinary courtesies of social life. "A servant of the Lord," Stier writes, "is truly courteous, for he has learned to be so in the high court of his King." But the salutation becomes a Christian blessing in the mouth of the Lord, or of his servants speaking in his Name; its brings peace to the household that is worthy of peace. Words of blessing do no good to the unbelieving and the unworthy. But they are not lost; the blessing returns upon him who utters it in faith and love. Christian love is very precious; every deed and word and thought of love are registered in heaven; not one is lost. If there are some who harden their hearts and will not receive the benefit, it returns in multiplied blessing upon the faithful servant of the Lord. 3. *The danger of rejecting the gospel message.* The Jews were accustomed to shake off the dust when they returned from foreign journeys; the dust of heathen countries defiled the Holy Land. The apostles were to do so when they left households or towns which refused to receive them and to hear their words. The action was symbolical; it was to be done in sadness, not in anger; it implied separation; it was the last solemn appeal, a warning of the coming judgment. Still Christ's ministers must observe their Lord's injunction—not, indeed, in the letter, but in the spirit; still they must announce to the wicked the Lord's most awful warning, "O wicked man, thou shalt surely die." If they speak not to warn the wicked, he must die; but his blood will be required at their hand. The Lord himself ratifies the awful sentence. He looks forward to the judgment of the great day. It shall be more tolerable then, he says, for Sodom and Gomorrha than for those who have heard the gospel and rejected it. There are degrees of guilt, and there are degrees of condemnation. Sin against light is far more guilty than the sin of ignorance; the greater the light, the greater the guilt, if when we have the light we come not to the light, but walk still in darkness, loving with a strange perversity darkness rather than light.

LESSONS. 1. Do not neglect home duties; care first for the souls which God has put

within your influence. 2. Christ's ministers must seek souls, not riches; his people must give freely to supply their needs. 3. Christians must be courteous in their intercourse with one another. 4. The message comes from God; those who reject it incur a most awful danger.

Vers. 16—23.—*The future mission of the apostles.* I. THE COMING PERSECUTIONS. 1. *The Lord warns his apostles beforehand.* "Behold, I send you forth." He looks forward to their future work in the world when they should have received the full apostolic commission; he prepares them for the dangers of their office; he reminds them of its dignity, of the source from which the commission comes. "I send you." The pronoun is emphatic: "It is I, the Lord, who send you." This thought should strengthen his servants in trials and difficulties. Their mission came from Christ. "I send you." The word reminded them of their apostleship; of its dignity and its duties. They were sent by Christ. But they would be sent into the midst of dangers; they would be like sheep in the midst of wolves—as harmless, as helpless. Their task seemed hopeless. A few weak men were sent to grapple with all the might of the heathen world. Their case seemed desperate; success seemed impossible. But it was the Lord who had sent them; here was their hope and strength. 2. *He tells them how to conduct themselves.* They were not to court martyrdom. They were to be wise, prudent, careful not to give unnecessary offence. Their lives were precious; they were to preserve them by all lawful means. St. Paul's conduct in heathen countries was regulated by this precept of the Lord's. The town-clerk at Ephesus said of him and his companions that they were not robbers of temples nor blasphemers of the Ephesian goddess. They did not put themselves into unnecessary danger by shocking the prejudices of the heathen. But they were to copy the wariness, not the guile, of the serpent. They must be harmless as doves; or rather, as the word means, simple, sincere, pure as doves. They must be genuine, truthful, free from the mixture of selfish motives. Such should be the conduct of Christ's ministers now. They need prudence in dealing with men—zeal without discretion often interferes with the success of their work; but they must always be truthful and single-hearted. 3. *The sufferings that awaited them.* They would be scourged by the Jews; they would be brought before Gentile governors and kings. The Lord began early to prepare his disciples for persecution. It is what no earthly teacher would have done—only the Son of God. The crown would indeed be theirs, but the cross must come first. Their sufferings would be a testimony, proving to Jew and Gentile the depth, the reality of their faith, the power of God which strengthened them. Christian patience, Christian meekness, show the mighty influence of the grace of God. They testify for God far more effectively than words.

II. THEY MUST TRUST, AND NOT BE AFRAID. 1. *They were not to be anxious to prepare their defence.* Christ does not forbid thoughtfulness. He uses the same word here which he used in the sermon on the mount: "Take no thought for the morrow." They must not be anxious; they must not allow their minds to be distracted with care about the matter or the manner of their answers. The Christian must be always trustful; he is in the hands of God. He must keep his heart free from distressing anxieties; the peace of God should dwell there. 2. *The reason.* The martyrs of the Lord would have the promised help of God the Holy Ghost. He would strengthen their heart in the hour of danger with his most gracious presence. He would teach them what to speak; nay, he would so fill their inmost being, that the words which seemed to be uttered by his servants would be in truth the words of God. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit removes distracting cares, and fills the heart with joy and peace in believing. He inspired the saints and martyrs in the olden times. He cleanses the hearts of the faithful by his holy inspiration now, and gives them words when they are called to speak for the glory of God and for the good of souls. God's ministers are not apostles; they must give time and thought and study for the preparation of their sermons. We must not offer to the Lord our God that which hath cost us nothing. Still, they must look for the help of the blessed Spirit. He will teach them (if they come to him in the earnest prayer of humility and faith) what they ought to speak; and that the more, the nearer they walk with God.

III. THE CRUELTY OF THE IMPENDING PERSECUTION. 1. *The breaking of family ties.* The preaching of Christianity would introduce a new element of division into the

world. Households would be divided; natural affection would be overpowered by fanaticism. Christians would be the objects of universal hatred, and that for his Name's sake. The teaching of Christ—holy, heavenly, severe—would excite the intense hatred of the worldly and the self-indulgent. The presence of Christ upon earth would stir up the evil one to a wild fury of hatred; he would let loose all the wicked passions of men, to destroy, if it were possible, in blood and fire the Church which Christ was come to establish. It was a strange prospect for the Founder of a new religion to set before his followers. Only he who is the Truth would have drawn such a picture, so dark, so unattractive to poor, weak human nature. 2. *The reward of faithfulness.* "He that endureth to the end shall be saved." He that abideth faithful amid the storm of popular hatred, he that flinches not in danger, in agony, in the fear of death, he shall be saved from sin, from everlasting death; he shall be brought safe through trials, persecutions, suffering, into the blessed Paradise of God. This was the hope of the martyrs of the Lord. It is our hope now in sorrows, in bereavement, in pain of body and anguish of soul—the high and holy hope of everlasting life with God in heaven. 3. *Flight in persecution sometimes a duty.* The flight of the holy family into Egypt was necessary for the salvation of mankind. Flight from present danger sometimes preserves God's servants for other and more successful work. They were not to court martyrdom unnecessarily. Their harvest was the world. If they could work no longer safely in one place, there was work to be done for God elsewhere. It might be needful for the good of the Church that they should continue in the flesh. Let them be willing to die or live as best might please the Lord, as best might help on the great work of winning souls. They need not fear that the work would be marred by their flight. It was long and toilsome, not to be wrought out in a few years. They themselves (the apostles, to whom the Lord was speaking) would not have gone over all the cities of Israel till the Son of man should come, to end the old dispensation, and to establish the new, in the destruction of Jerusalem. Their successors would not have preached the gospel through all the kingdoms of the earth till he should come again in power and awful majesty to judge the world. There is always work for Christian men to do. Then work while there is time; work wherever the Lord calleth you. He is the Lord of the harvest; he appoints to every man his work.

LESSONS. 1. Let the ministers of Christ in all their trials remember their mission. It is he who sent them; he will give them strength. 2. They should be prudent; they must be sincere and truthful. 3. Let them expect opposition; Christ hath warned them. 4. They must not be over-anxious how to speak; they must trust; they must look for the promised help of the Spirit. 5. They must work where God's providence sends them. They must bear the cross now, looking onward to the crown.

VERS. 24—42.—*General rules for all the Lord's disciples.* I. THE CONFLICT. 1. *They must be patient, looking unto Jesus.* He is our Example, our Master, our Lord. He is in all things above us immeasurably and beyond comparison—in his Divine power and majesty, in his transcendent holiness, in his perfect love. "He was despised and rejected of men." His people must expect the like. We are his disciples, his servants. The great aim of our life should be to be like him; to draw nearer and nearer, though always at an infinite distance, to that Pattern of exalted goodness. We must not look for the high places of the world, when the Lord endured the cross. We must not look for praise, when he was so cruelly insulted. We must expect our best deeds to be misrepresented. Men ascribed the Lord's miracles of love to the agency of Satan. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master. It is good for Christians to be blamed, to be despised, to be slandered. It is a discipline of meekness; it leads them to look into their hearts, to see their own sins and shortcomings; above all things, it makes them like their Master; it brings them, if they take it patiently, into nearer relations with their suffering Lord. 2. *The duty of holy boldness.* Suffering becomes a blessing if it makes men like their Lord; *therefore* they must not fear. "Fear not" is the Lord's commandment, his word of gracious encouragement. (1) Fear not the misrepresentations of men. In the great day the secrets of men's hearts will be revealed: the falsehood, the malice, the hypocrisy, the wickedness, of the persecutors; and the faith, the purity, the gentleness, the charity, of the Christian. Men will be seen then as they really are. The mask will be torn from the hypocrites; unreality of

every kind will be exposed. "Therefore," the Lord says, "be real; be true to your God and to yourselves; speak out, and fear not." The Lord had prepared them for their work in private, in a little corner of Palestine. They were to make his teaching public. He was to teach them secretly, in their hearts, by the guidance of his Spirit leading them into all truth; they were to proclaim openly and fearlessly the gospel message for the conversion of the world. (2) Fear not them which kill the body. An agony of persecution was at hand; the Lord prepares his servants for it. "Fear them not," he says; "they cannot hurt the soul; their power cannot reach beyond the grave." But there is a holy fear, a fear which is the beginning of wisdom, a fear which casts out all other fears—the fear of God. The power of the persecutors is but for a moment. His is the kingdom and the power and the glory for ever and ever. They can kill the body only; fear them not. He can destroy both soul and body in hell; fear him. This is not the fear which hath torment. It is not a slavish fear; it is that deep, loving reverence which gives true dignity to the Christian life; which leads the believer to try always to realize the awful presence of God, to fear to displease him, to walk before him in lowly, reverential obedience. This fear is not cowardice; it is the highest courage. It strengthened the martyrs of the Lord in their cruel trials, in torture and in death. It strengthens true Christians now. 3. *The duty of trustfulness.* God's mercy is over all his works. He cares for all his creatures, even the smallest, the most insignificant. Much more does he care for those precious souls for which the Redeemer gave himself to die. The smallest circumstances of our lives are not beneath his notice. The very hairs of our head are all numbered. All the little trials, difficulties, vexations, of our daily lives are known to him. Therefore let us trust in that almighty Protector who notes the fall of every little sparrow. "Fear not," saith the Lord. Fear not persecutions; fear not sickness, pain, death; none of these things can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Right dear in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.

II. THE END OF THE CONFLICT. 1. *The recognition of the conquerors.* It cost much to confess Christ before men in the days of fiery trial; even now it is not always easy. It is to own him as our Master and our Lord; not as the many who say to him, "Lord, Lord," but as the few who confess him in their lives. The whole life—both the outward life of word and deed, and the inward life of thought and motive—must be ordered by the obedience of Christ. Both are alike open to the searching eye of God; both must evince the confession of the heart that Christ alone is Lord. The whole life must draw round him as its Centre; it must own him by ready, cheerful submission to him as its only King. The reward is great; such men he will confess before his Father. In the glory of the great day, before the assembled universe, the almighty Judge, the most holy Saviour, will own them as his true sheep, his chosen, his redeemed. It is a lofty hope; may it be ours! 2. *The rejection of the disobedient.* Those who deny him, he will deny; not those who, like Peter, having once denied, have repented in true contrition, but those who deny him in their lives, though they may profess that they know him; those who show no obedience, no love, no self-denial—those he will deny. Their profession may be loud, their display of religion may be great, but he will deny them before his Father. He knoweth their hearts; they are not his. 3. *The conflict will be bitter.* The Lord is the Prince of Peace; the angel-anthem that celebrated his incarnation dwelt on the gift of peace. But "glory to God" came first. "'Glory to God in the highest,'" says Stier, "necessarily precedes 'peace upon earth.' The second cannot be attained but through the first, and the conflict which secures it." Peace on earth was the object of the Lord's coming; but the sword was to come first. "The wisdom that is from above is *first* pure, then peaceable." The purity of Christ's holy teaching, its absolute originality, its utter difference from the established modes of faith and worship, would excite a violent opposition. The zeal of Christians would arouse the zeal of persecutors; there would be sharp divisions even in the family circle. Sometimes it is so now; it is a bitter trial. 4. *Christ must be first in our love, whatever the cost.* He set nothing above our salvation; we must set nothing above his love. Human love is very precious, but not so precious as the love of Christ; all other loves must be subordinated to that one highest love. In truth, they love their earthly friends the best, who, loving Christ above all, love mother, or wife, or child in Christ and for Christ according to his will. But the whole heart must be given to Christ,

who gave himself for us. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart." It is the first of all the commandments, the deepest and the holiest. 5. *The cross.* For the first time we meet with that great word—that word once so hateful, now so sweet and holy. The Lord looks forward in prophetic vision; he sees himself bearing the cross; he sees his faithful followers, each with his cross, moving onwards in long procession to the glory-crown. His words must have seemed very dark and strange. The apostles looked up to him with the utmost reverence; and now he, their King, spoke of the cross, that thing so utterly loathsome. He said that they must take it up; he called it *their* cross. He implied that he himself would bear it. They could not have understood him then; they knew afterwards. We know his meaning. There is no crown without the cross; no heaven without self-denial for Christ's sake. 6. *The true life.* This life is dear to us; the life to come should be dearer far. Our present life is continued in the life beyond the grave. Our personality is one; our life here and hereafter is one life under two very different forms. Here is the Christian paradox: he who finds loses, he who loses finds. He who sets his love upon this earthly life and takes not up his cross loses that higher life. His life continues itself, but it becomes death, utter death, to all that makes life worth living. He who loses finds; he who counts all things else as dross that he may win Christ, finds Christ, and finds in him the true life, the life that dieth not.

III. CONCLUSION. 1. *The dignity of the apostolic office.* (1) *They were the ambassadors of Christ.* They represented him; they carried his message. More than that, the Lord was ever with them. Therefore to receive them in Christian love and hospitality was to receive the Lord Christ himself. He cometh with his true servants; he fills their hearts, he inspires their words. Therefore let us receive them in love, that, receiving them, we may receive into our hearts him who sent them. He himself is the Apostle and High Priest of our calling. "He that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me." (2) *So are prophets and righteous men.* All Christ's true servants bear witness for Christ, some by their words, some by the silent eloquence of a holy life; all bring a blessing with them to such as are worthy. They who receive a prophet because he is a prophet, and so speaks for God; they who receive a righteous man because he is righteous, a servant of the Lord, shall receive the reward of the prophet, or righteous man. In honouring them, they are honouring God; in helping their work, they are helping the work of God. How these words of Christ ought to stimulate us to assist all faithful missionaries, all earnest, self-denying men of God! When we help them with our alms and prayers, we are sharing their work, making it in a measure our own work; and (the Lord himself tells us) we shall share their reward. 2. *The dignity of all Christians.* All belong to Christ—not only apostles and prophets and righteous men, but also the little children whom the Lord Jesus loved so well, whom he took up in his arms and blessed, whom he bade us bring to him. They are his; therefore the gift of love given to them because they belong to Christ shall not lose its reward. The smallest deed of holy love is precious in the sight of him who is love. Let us care for the little children; let us tend the sick and forsaken; let us teach the ignorant. Orphanages, children's hospitals, Sunday schools, are good and Christian institutions. They who help the little ones because they belong to Christ shall not, the Lord hath said it, lose their reward.

LESSONS. 1. We must be content to be despised as the Master was despised; the disciple is not above his Master. 2. Fear God; fear nothing else; be bold in bearing witness for the truth. 3. God cares for us all in our little trials; we should bring them all before him in trustful prayer. 4. What must be the unutterable blessedness of those whom Christ will confess in the last day? Confess Christ now. 5. The cross is the very emblem of our religion; we must take it up, looking unto Jesus.

## HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 1.—*The twelve apostles.* The commission of the twelve follows immediately on the expression of our Lord's compassion for the forlorn flock without a shepherd, and his more cheering view of the multitude as a ripe harvest-field only waiting for the reapers. They were the first response to the prayer for more labourers.

I. GOD WORKS THROUGH HUMAN AGENTS. The Old Testament had its prophets, the New its apostles. The sheep are scattered if true pastors are wanting; the harvest is unreaped if labourers are not forthcoming. Even the Incarnation did not dispense with a various human agency. Although the Word was now made flesh and dwelt among us, even this human brotherhood of Christ did not make the mission of apostles superfluous. Christ trained twelve men to carry on his work after his brief earthly life was over—nay, to help him while he was on earth himself, preaching the gospel, and healing the sick. To-day Christ seeks for apostolic men to spread his kingdom through the world.

II. CHRIST'S DISCIPLES MUST BECOME APOSTLES. First the twelve were learners, then they became teachers. He who sits at the feet of Christ must listen to the Master's word that bids him rise up and go forth to minister to others. The true Christian is at heart a missionary, and his evangelic spirit will be seen in his active life. If Christ calls any to himself, it is that he may send them forth for the good of the world. Christ lived for men; apostles lived like him for others. So should all Christians live.

III. THE APOSTLES MUST RECEIVE THEIR COMMISSION FROM CHRIST. The twelve were selected from among the followers of Christ. They followed him before they went forth from him. We must come to Christ ourselves before we can be sent out by him. The missionary must be a Christian. Moreover, the closeness of our personal following of Christ is the measure of our power for his service. They are his truest apostles who walk most closely in his footsteps. In the special mission of Christian work it is necessary to be authorized by Christ. All are not called to the highest office, but all are called to some service, and even the lowest ministry in the kingdom is not possible to those who have not listened for the voice of Christ and endeavoured to obey him.

IV. THE SERVANTS OF CHRIST ARE ENDUED WITH POWER FROM ABOVE FOR THEIR MINISTRY. Christ gave a miracle-working faculty to the twelve, so that if they were to do his work they might have some of his power. It would be cruel to send a soldier to the wars without supplying him with ammunition. We do not receive the miraculous gifts, and we do not need them, because our circumstances and our commission differ from those of the apostles. But some grace is needed for every Christian work; without it the ablest and most devoted would fail. Therefore he who gives the command supplies the grace. Christ has now ascended up on high to give gifts unto men (Eph. iv. 8—12), and to different men different gifts—as to the twelve, who were variously gifted, yet each of whom had some power for his special mission.—W. F. A.

Ver. 6.—*The lost sheep of the house of Israel.* When our Lord first sent forth his apostles, he directed them to confine their ministry to their fellow-countrymen. Their very number, twelve, would suggest a relation to their people, as though one were chosen for each tribe. Let us consider the significance of this arrangement.

I. SPECIAL PRIVILEGES WERE GIVEN TO THE JEWS. This is not a delusion of their own national pride; it does not depend on their claim to a leading place; it is manifest in history. The fact is apparent in the very existence of the Old Testament; in the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem, a Jew among the Jews; in the appointment of twelve Jews to be the pillars of the Church; in the preaching of the kingdom first among the Jews; in the formation of the first Christian Church of Jewish members, and in the city of Jerusalem. Plainly Israel was favoured, as St. Paul himself asserts (Rom. iii. 2). There are many favoured people in the present day. All Christendom has privileges from which the heathen are excluded by their ignorance. England is a highly favoured land. Nevertheless, God is no respecter of persons, because (1) privilege is given for the sake of service, and (2) at last each will be judged according to his light.

II. CHRIST DESIRES THE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL. Undoubtedly the work of the apostles was directed in the first place to saving the Jews. We are thereby encouraged to carry on Christian missions among the Jews. To each race some especial gift is allotted; to Israel is given in a pre-eminent degree the genius for religion. Failure, disappointment, oppression, and, in some cases, wealth and worldly prosperity, seem to have buried the talent. Yet it is Israel's natural heritage. If it could but be brought forth and used, the Jews might yet develop into the missionaries of the world.

III. CHRIST SEEKS THE RECOVERY OF THOSE WHO HAVE FALLEN AWAY FROM EARLY PIETY. They are lost sheep to whom the apostles are sent. The most degraded Israelites are to be the chief objects of the mission. In the past God showed wonderful patience with Israel; even now at the eleventh hour he yearns over the nation, hungering for its salvation. They who have once known God are never forgotten by him. Fallen Christians are not cast off by their Master. Though they have wandered far from him, he has gone out into the wild to seek them. None are so wretched as lost *sheep*; none so guilty as those who have known the privileges of the fold and yet have forsaken it. Still, even to such the gospel is preached; nay, to them it comes first of all. Christ most earnestly longs for the recovery of fallen Christians.

IV. CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY WORK SHOULD BEGIN AT HOME. Jesus, a Jew, first sought the blessing of Jews. He wept over Jerusalem, and longed to save the great city of his people (Luke xix. 41). London is our Jerusalem, England is our holy land. Our first duty is to raise the fallen in our midst. We cannot forget "Darkest England" while we rightly send missionaries to "Darkest Africa." No claims on the Church are so imperative as those of her own home missions. It is a shame and a scandal that any such missions should be needed in the Christendom of these late ages; but while the heathen swarm around our very doors, living ever within the sound of church bells, our first duty is to these unhappy people, our near brothers and sisters. The recovery of lost sheep at home will not hinder missionary work; it will check that paralysis at the heart which is the most deadly foe of foreign missions.—W. F. A.

Ver. 16.—*Serpents and doves.* No two creatures are more opposite to one another in nature. The serpent eyes the dove with greedy desire; the dove looks at the serpent with the fascination of horror. The serpent is the symbol of the evil spirit; the dove is the symbol of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, each has exemplary lessons to teach, and the most dove-like soul will be imperfect if something of the serpent is lacking.

I. ALL THE WORLD IS FULL OF EXAMPLES FOR CHRISTIAN CONDUCT. We must be struck with our Lord's freedom in the use of materials for illustrating his teaching. Seeing truth clearly, and living in a spiritual atmosphere of purity, he was in no danger of being misled by the errors and evils around him; he was able to find the good in everything—even to suck honey, so to speak, from the deadly nightshade. The truer and loftier our soul is, the wider will be the range from which we can derive a wholesome diet. It is only the sick man who must be shut up in a hospital, and it is only the sick soul that craves conventual seclusion for the preservation of its purity. Jesus could even go beyond the darker side of nature and find emblems in evil men. He compared himself to a thief (ch. xxiv. 43, 44). He bade his disciples imitate an unjust steward (Luke xvi. 2, etc.). But we want the Christ-spirit to see "good in everything," and to extract the soul of goodness from things evil without carrying away some of the evil. A degraded nature sees evil everywhere—contrives to obtain the poison of the asp even from the innocent dove, finds Delilah in a Madonna.

II. THE SERVANT OF CHRIST NEEDS VARIED GRACES. 1. *The wisdom of serpents.* In Egyptian symbolism, which gives us serpents coiled about the throne of a sovereign, and, indeed, in the practices of nations in all quarters of the globe, we see the repulsive reptile regarded as of threefold significance—as the emblem of eternity, as the representative of guile, and as the incarnation of evil. It is the second of these characteristics that our Lord here selects. We know that he never encourages deceit. But mental alertness, keenness of observation, and nimbleness of thought are invaluable gifts even for Christian work. We should consecrate intelligence in the service of Christ. There is no virtue in dulness. Stupidity is not sanctity. 2. *The harmlessness of doves.* This is a negative quality. But it is not less important than the positive intelligence. The shaft of wit may wound where no unkindness is intended. A serpent-like subtlety of mind is a most dangerous faculty. It is valuable; but it is only safe when it is balanced by a dove-like gentleness of disposition. 3. *The combination of varied graces.* The point of our Lord's recommendation is in the union of two very different characteristics. The common danger is that we should select one to the neglect of the other. There are men of mind who lack heart, and there are affectionate creatures who weary us with their senseless ineptitude. The serpent

is an awful ideal if it is selected by itself. Its prophet is Machiavelli, and its hero Mephistopheles. But the dove alone will not suggest the most perfect saint; its gentleness may be feeble. Yet too often people choose one or the other as their ideal of perfection. Christ blends the two in himself; he is skilful in confounding the clever scribes by keen replies, and he is meek and gentle, harmless and undefiled.—W. F. A.

Ver. 28.—*What to fear.* Fear has a place in the economy of life, but the common mistake of people is to put it in the wrong place. We have dangers, but not where we commonly look for them. There is a needless fear which should be discouraged, and there is a necessary fear which has to be cultivated.

I. THE DISCOURAGEMENT OF NEEDLESS FEAR. 1. *In what it consists.* This is the fear of man. The apostles were sent out as sheep among wolves. The gathering opposition of the authorities of Israel against their Master was likely to turn against them also if they showed themselves zealous in advocating his cause. The fear of the disciples under these circumstances would be a type of worldly fear. With us this is not the dread of martyrdom; it is a horror of ridicule, a terror of being despised by fashion. 2. *Why it is stimulated.* There was real danger to the apostles. Men can kill the body, and Christ does not deny this obvious fact. He does not offer his disciples a smooth course; on the contrary, he distinctly affirms that he has come to send a sword (ver. 34). 3. *How it is discouraged.* Various considerations prove this to be a needless and even an unworthy fear. (1) The example of Christ. He is ill used. Why should the disciples complain if they receive the same treatment as their Master (vers. 24, 25)? (2) The future revelation. Hidden things will be made manifest. Then the true life which seems to end in darkness will be brought to light and fully vindicated. It is hard to die under false opprobrium; but this is not the end. There will be a final declaration and justification of the wronged (vers. 26, 27). (3) The limit of man's power. He can kill the body, but he cannot touch the soul. Epictetus's master cannot destroy his slave's liberty of soul. The Christian's persecutor may rob him of his brief bodily life, but not of his eternal spiritual life. (4) The merciful care of God, who sees every sparrow that falls and counts the very hairs of our head, watching the least-valued creatures, observing the least minutiæ of his children's condition (vers. 29, 30). This we must take on faith; for the sparrow falls in spite of God's watchfulness. But Christ, who knows God, assures us that it is so; and if God is infinite it must be so. (5) The guilt of cowardice. Dare we shrink from confessing Christ for fear of man? Such conduct will merit his rejection of us (vers. 32, 33).

II. THE CULTIVATION OF LEGITIMATE FEAR. 1. *The object of this fear.* This is the awful destroyer of souls—he who goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. There is a childish fear of the devil that haunts the minds of superstitious people—a terror that sat like a nightmare on the people of the Middle Ages. Such a fear is but physical. But that which Christ would inculcate is moral—the dread of sin. Our great enemy is the spirit of evil, and he attacks us whenever we are tempted. Christ wants us to have a horror of doing wrong. 2. *The grounds of this fear.* (1) Soul-destruction. Man can but kill the body; sin kills the soul. This is the peculiar effect of wickedness. If it only brought pain, the infliction might be a merciful chastisement, leading us to repentance. But it does far worse; it kills the soul. The wages of sin is death; the broad road leads to destruction; evil conduct paralyzes our better self, saps our higher energy, robs us of our faculties, blinds, crushes, deadens the life within. (2) Future ruin. The power of man only appertains to earth; the results of sin are seen after death. Therefore we do well to be on our guard, not with abject terror, but seeking security in Christ.—W. F. A.

Ver. 34.—*Christ sending a sword.* Jesus Christ came as the "Prince of Peace," and his advent was heralded by angels, who sang of "peace on earth." When one of his disciples drew a sword to defend him, he bade the man put it back in its sheath, saying, "They that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (ch. xxvi. 52). His kingdom is not of this world, and because it is not, he told Pilate that his servants would not fight (John xviii. 36). How, then, can he speak of sending a sword?

I. HISTORICALLY, THE ADVENT OF CHRIST PROVOKES OPPOSITION. We know that swords were drawn against the disciples of Christ. James the son of Zebedee heard a warning in these words of Christ that was subsequently verified in his own person—though as yet he knew it not—when Herod slew him with the sword, and he became the first martyr-apostle. Our Lord foresaw persecution and predicted it. But this was not contrary to his peace principles. His disciples did not fight; and neither he nor they provoked antagonism by showing a quarrelsome spirit. The sword was wholly in the hands of the enemies of the new faith. It was not a sword of equal warfare, but a sword of cruelty, tyranny, persecution. Yet Christ did not draw back from the prospect of it, nor did he permit any compromise on the part of his disciples. Truth must be spoken, errors must be exposed, sin must be denounced, at any cost. Let the Christian be prepared for opposition. If all men speak well of him, let him search his conduct to see whether he has been faithful, or whether perchance he may have been speaking smooth things for the sake of ease and comfort.

II. SOCIALLY, THE COMING OF CHRIST STIRS UP DISCORD. This is a sad picture of the sword cutting into the home and separating child and parent (ver. 35). We know that no family is so united as a truly Christian family. Christ consecrates and strengthens home-life. He does not require us to renounce home-ties in order to follow him. How, then, does he come to describe the hideous picture of family quarrels brought about by his coming? We know that his words came true in many a Jewish home where a son or a daughter confessed Christ. They are applicable to-day in Hindoo families that have been reached by missionary influences. Even in England a true, brave confession of Christ may bring great trouble in a worldly home, the habits of which are distinctly unchristian. The explanation is that Christ must be first, and that no domestic claim can excuse us for disloyalty to him. In order that the home may be ultimately glorified as the dwelling of Christ, it may have to be first of all saddened as the scene of discord. The larger society is broken and disturbed by Christian influences, and the trouble must go on till society is Christian.

III. SPIRITUALLY, THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST BRINGS A SWORD. The Word of God is sharper than a two-edged sword (Heb. iv. 12). The gospel of peace first brings warfare into the soul. It cuts through old habits; it opposes darling sins; it sets up a new standard at variance with what was loved in the past. The old Adam will not die without a struggle; he fights against the new man. Thus the heart of the Christian becomes a battle-field. To refuse to resist temptation for the sake of peace and quiet is to be unfaithful to Christ, who only gives peace through a faithful endurance of conflict.—W F. A.

VERS. 40—42.—*Receiving Christ.* Jesus concludes his charge to the twelve on the eve of their mission with words that have more reference to others, with a promise of blessing to those who shall give a good reception to the apostles. Earlier he said that if any rejected the messengers of Christ they were to shake off the very dust of their feet as a testimony against the inhospitable people; and now he concludes his address by cheering words on the other side, generously recognizing a friendly reception of his disciples. Local and temporal as was the immediate occasion of our Lord's remarks, they are evidently of lasting application.

I. THE BROTHERHOOD OF CHRIST LEADS HIM TO REGARD KINDNESS TO HIS DISCIPLES EXACTLY AS THOUGH IT WERE OFFERED TO HIMSELF. He is not the Oriental monarch treating his subjects as a race of slaves. He is completely one with his people. Whatever hurts them hurts him; whatever cheers them pleases him. There is a Christian solidarity. The benefit or injury of one member affects the whole body (1 Cor. xii. 26). But if other members of the body are thus affected, much more will the Head, which is in direct communication with the whole, be affected. 1. This is meant as *a great encouragement for the servants of Christ.* They are not deserted by Christ; he is in all their work, and he feels keenly every kindness or unkindness offered to them. 2. This suggests how we may all have *the unspeakable privilege of receiving Christ.* Not only a prophet or an apostle, but a little child, may bring Christ to our home. Receiving the least of Christ's disciples for his sake, we receive him.

II. THE CONDITION OF RECEIVING CHRIST IS RECEIVING HIS DISCIPLES IN HIS NAME. 1. *Receiving Christ's disciples.* He does not speak here of indiscriminate hospitality,

nor of the neighbourly love which he elsewhere commends. Here is a specially Christian action. Much is made in the New Testament of brotherly love—love to fellow-Christians. It is a great privilege to be able to help one of Christ's own little ones. 2. *Receiving them in Christ's Name.* Thrice does our Lord refer to the conditions of "the name"—"the name of a prophet," "the name of a righteous man," "the name of a disciple." This points to a set purpose in the hospitality. The prophet is received as a prophet because we wish to honour prophets; the righteous man as a righteous man because we desire to help the righteous; the Christian disciple as a disciple, for Christ's sake. This is more than mere kindness; it is a distinct recognition of the claim of Christ. We are encouraged to show kindness for Christ's sake, that we may please him—receiving the envoy for the sake of the King.

III. THEY WHO THUS RECEIVE CHRIST'S DISCIPLES ARE DOUBLY REWARDED. 1. *In receiving Christ.* They are treated just as though they had shown hospitality to the Lord Jesus Christ himself. But the reward of such hospitality is in the very coming of Christ. When he entered the house of Zacchæus salvation came there. To have Christ within us is to have a better blessing than could be got out of all the wealth of the Indies or all the joy of a Christless paradise. 2. *In receiving God.* This thought is nearly akin to the teaching of the Fourth Gospel (see John xiv. 9, 10). We do not merely receive Christ as a brother-man. Beneath the veil of the humanity of Jesus the very glory of God enters the soul. Thus he who receives a child for Christ's sake is blessed by having God in his heart, and then his heart becomes a heaven.—W. F. A.

Vers. 1—42 (see also Mark vi. 7—13; Luke ix. 1—6).—*The "commanding" of the twelve.* This was a grand historic occasion indeed. The honoured but ever-comparatively feeble and now dimmed, dying, or dead schools of the prophets are to be succeeded by a scion of Christianity that marks at one and the same time its noblest and most amazing human institution, and Heaven's most condescending gift and human trust. Now begins "the great company of preachers" of the New Testament. They began with twelve; they very soon grew to seventy; and authorized provision was made by him who first called them, and first "gave them commandment" for their indefinite, "innumerable" increase, by the one method of prayer, *their* prayer to the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his "great" harvest. With what sublimest of simplicity is it said in the first verse of the following chapter, "When Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples"! The commandments were not ten, and, whatever their number, neither were they like those ten master-instructions of the old covenant, and of all time, till time shall end. These commandments breathed the very breath of love, of sympathy, of help. They were charged with trust, and that trust nothing short of Heaven's own-confided trust. The endowments of mighty powers of gift and of grace were enshrined in them. A glorious honour gilded them with deep, rich light. But throughout them, without a break, there ran the "commandment" that meant caution, warning, an ever-present dangerous enemy, thick dangers through which to thread the way. For *this* necessity, protection and even the very essence of inspiration were the promises vouchsafed. In some analysis of this "commanding of his disciples" we notice—

I. FIRST OF ALL, CHRIST'S PARAMOUNT AUTHORITY IN REGARD OF THE PERSONS WHOM HE COMMISSIONS. Once "*he* called" them; now "*he* calls them to him;" *he* "sends them forth;" and before they go, *he* "commands" them, and "*he* gives them *power*." Of this authority two things must be said, and unhesitatingly. *First*, that what it seemed and what it was to these original twelve disciples, such it ever has been since, and still is, toward those who are their true successors, whether they are the successors of such as Peter and John, or of such as Judas Iscariot. *Secondly*, that the authority in question is one unshared and undivided, except as it is shared and divided, in whatever mysterious way and in whatever unknown proportion, with those very persons themselves, who either first pushed in to volunteer the solemn responsibility, or put themselves in the way to court it and to consent to accept it. The ordination of Judas Iscariot is not less a fact than that of St. Peter; *and so* has it likewise travelled down the ages of Christendom to this hour. Before this phenomenon we justly quail, and just are we dumb; but we cannot *deny* it.

II. CHRIST'S PARAMOUNT AUTHORITY IN RESPECT OF THE PRINCIPLES UPON WHICH

THOSE HE COMMISSIONS ARE TO FULFIL THEIR ALLOTTED WORK. These are such as follow: *Firstly*, absolute independence of any supposed dictation on the part of those to whom their mission is. *Secondly*, absolute undoubting reliance on himself for guidance and protection, and in the last resort for all that is necessary for "life." *Thirdly*, the exclusive use and encouragement of *moral* influence over and among those who are to be visited and preached to, and whose spiritual and bodily sicknesses and diseases are to be ministered to. A most interesting and significant exemplification of this same principle is to be observed in the direction given to the disciples to accept hospitality; not only this, but to lay themselves open to the offer of it; nay, to inquire for it, but *never* to force it. And this exemplification is perhaps yet more powerfully established in the *external* symbolic, but still moral condemnation, directed to be expressed towards those who refused to "receive them," as also to "hear their words." *Fourthly*, throughout all that might seem to merely superficial observation special and artificial and supernatural—a religious and grateful obedience to what wise nature and true reason must dictate. They are sent forth "by two and two" (see St. Mark's account; see also of the seventy, Luke x. 1). This is (1) for the manifest and natural advantages of conversation and mutual support; as also for the yet greater gain of complementary support; that is, that where the characteristics of one lay in one direction, those of the other lying in another direction, would contribute largely to the whole stock. So Bunyan, in his great Master's track, herein sets off his two pilgrims, and they remain together to the end—men of the most diverse character and most diverse Christian adaptabilities. And (2) for the almost creating, but at any rate the setting high honour on the observing of the relation so novel then—spiritual brotherly affection, *Christian* brotherly affection. How many causes and motives may unite, have united, men together "by two and two"! How rare *this* once was! how grand has been its career since! What diverse ages—age itself with youth itself; what diverse characters—the gentlest and meekest with the strongest and impetuous—the enumeration were almost endless—has Christian work, the simplest work "for Christ's sake," bound together in alliance as indissoluble as sacred! *Fifthly*, the practical memory of the fact, that as Christ's supreme, final ministry has for its achievement the redemption of soul and body, so that of his apostles, follow it however humbly, at however great a distance, is for the healing of the sicknesses of the body as well as of the sin of the soul. Perhaps it may be said that in nothing has the career of Christianity more vindicated its worthiness than in this—in that, without a "miracle" worked by human intervention for eighteen centuries, those institutions, and that individual charity, that come of the very breath of Christ's own Spirit, have achieved a stupendous mass of mercy for the body of men down those centuries bereft of literal miracle, that leaves far, far behind all the glories of the miracle age. *Sixthly*, that there should be an order, however inscrutable for its method, and however inscrutable for its justification (as men would be sure to say or to think), according to which the nations of the world were to be visited with the proclamation of the "kingdom of heaven nigh at hand," and with the priceless blessings of that kingdom. Note how *facts* have been bearing this out in complete harmony with it all the time, since those words fell on the ears of the disciples, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not." The enfranchising word has, it is true, gone forth in one respect to the very opposite effect now. It went forth round the whole world as Jesus ascended. *But* what a history to muse, to wonder over, "to be still and wait," and to pray over—the sure but *unknown* growth and devious spread of the kingdom! The "*way*" of that kingdom as it travelled *after* the "beginning at Jerusalem," past and present, and perhaps for long yet to come—it must be said even of *it*, as of him, who only knows and who only governs it, "Thy way is in the sea, thy path in the mighty waters, thy footsteps not known." Our voice, our mission, our commission, is, beyond one inglorious doubt, to *all the world*; but who is it teaching and constraining and compelling the *order* of our doings and of our goings in this grand enterprise? Surely an order there *is!* We do not stumble on in guilty darkness; we do not hurry on by mere "good luck;" neither do we march on as an army in its strength and in our own strength. We are practically as surely bound by the unseen hand that guides and threads our way over the world as were the first disciples by this spoken *word*. We ought, after praying to know it, to follow the one as implicitly as the disciples did the

other. *Seventhly*, the principle distinctly laid down that spiritual work is worthy of its reward. St. Paul (1 Cor. ix. 11—18) enlarges on this very principle. The ministers of Christ were to hold that it was the duty of the people to support them. What must be the deeper departure from right of those who rob, or would wish to rob, what has *been* given, and given from age to age, cannot be imagined; *this* is not even contemplated here. Let it be distinctly asked on *what ground*, on *what authority*, the spiritual labourer is "worthy of his meat" at the hands of that world which does not in the ordinary sense ask his labour or for long time value his works, the reply is that it is on the ground of the paramount authority, the authority of Christ. But the dictum of Christ on this thing must *especially* apply to those who "are worthy," who would wish to rank themselves among "the worthy," and profess to belong to his kingdom. *Eighthly*, the highest sanction of the principle of unstinted, ungrudging "freeness of giving," in what *they* have to give, on the part of the ministers of Christ, who themselves undeniably have received so freely.

III. CHRIST'S FOREKNOWLEDGE OF THE COURSE OF HIS CHURCH AND KINGDOM; AND THE HOSTAGES HE GIVES HEREIN OF HIS OWN ABSOLUTE AND INTRINSIC AUTHORITY, BY THE BOLD AND FULL DESCRIPTION OF THAT COURSE, AS IN THE FULLEST SENSE THAT OF A DEEP REVOLUTION, A REVOLUTION THAT WOULD REND TO THEIR FOUNDATIONS THE STRONGHOLDS OF HUMAN SOCIETIES, HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS, WITH ALL THEIR LONGEST CUSTOMS AND FIEROEST PREJUDICES.

IV. THE CALM, IMMOVABLE INTREPIDITY OF ATTITUDE AND OF SOUL THAT IS TO MARK THOSE WHO SHALL SEEM THE CHIEF ACTORS IN THIS MORAL REVOLUTION. This is to rest upon: *Firstly*, the forearmedness of forewarnedness. Knowledge of themselves, of the enemy, and of him who fights *by* them, *in* them, *for* his own grand works; and who will not fail to fight *for* them, *by* himself, and all necessary unseen power. *Secondly*, the confidence that the Spirit of the Father shall be with them, and speak in and for them at each time of need. *Thirdly*, in memory of that Master, who is "above the servant"—a memory that has often shown itself so *omnipotent* an impulse and source of strength. *Fourthly*, with ever-present memory of the *infinite disparity* between the ultimate sanctions involved, viz. that of those who can kill the body but can no more, and of him who indeed can kill both, but of whom it is in the same breath said—He notices the fall of a sparrow, and counts the hairs of the head of his servant. *Fifthly*, that noblest incentive of the safest ambition that was vouchsafed in the words of incredible condescension, "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me." This for some and all. And *sixthly*, also for some and all the words of tenderest promise, "Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward." Thus forewarned, thus forearmed, thus taught, thus given to fear with godly fear, and stimulated thus with promise and present assurance, it might well be that human "weakness" should be, as it was, as it often *is*, "made perfect in strength."—B.

Vers. 2—15.—*Christ's charge to his apostles.* After a night spent in prayer, Jesus called his twelve disciples and constituted them into an apostolic college. With his commission he gave them his charge. Notice—

I. THE PERSONS COMMISSIONED AND CHARGED. 1. *They were twelve in number.* (1) Perhaps in correspondence to the twelve tribes of Israel, to whom they are first to preach (cf. ver. 6; ch. xix. 28; Luke xxii. 30). (2) As the sons of Jacob were the fathers of Israel according to the flesh, so are the twelve apostles the fathers of Israel after the Spirit. (3) Twelve is a remarkable number in relation to the things of Christ (see Rev. vii. 4; xii. 1; xiv. 1; xxi. 12, 14). It has, therefore, been distinguished from the "number of the beast" as the *number of the Lamb*. (4) In this number the apostles of Christ ever remained. For Paul (not Matthias) filled the place forfeited by Judas. The election of Matthias took place before the outpouring of the Spirit, and of the apostleship of Matthias we read no more (see Introduction in Mosheim). 2. *Their names are given in order.* (1) Peter stands first in the lists (ver. 2; Mark iii. 16; Luke vi. 14; Acts i. 13). He was the first called to a constant attendance upon Christ, though Andrew had seen Jesus before Simon (cf. Luke v. 3—10; John i. 40, 41). But he had no authority over his brethren, or it had surely

been mentioned; neither had he any authority over the Church in which his brethren did not share. James the son of Alphæus presided in the council at Jerusalem (see Acts xv. 19). The New Testament gives no countenance to the papal claims. (2) In the groups we find brothers together. Peter and Andrew; James and John; James the son of Alphæus, and Lebbæus, or Jude. "God here unites by *grace* those who were before united by *nature*." Nature must not be deemed a hindrance to grace. (3) Last in the lists is the name of Judas Iscariot. He has the unenviable distinction of "the traitor." Unworthy persons may be found in the holiest societies on earth.

II. THE CHARGE. 1. *As to the apostles preaching.* (1) To whom were they to go? (*a*) Not to the Gentiles. (*b*) Not to the Samaritans. (*c*) They were to limit their preaching to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" (cf. Isa. liii. 6; Jer. l. 6; ch. viii. 12; Rom. ix. 1—4). The gospel must first be preached to the Jews (cf. ch. xv. 24; Rom. xv. 8). The restriction, however, was temporary (see Acts i. 8; iii. 26; xiii. 46). (2) What gospel were they to proclaim? (*a*) The gospel of the "kingdom." Its spiritual nature. Spiritually, as well as literally, they were to "heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils." (*b*) Its near approach. "At hand," viz. when the Spirit should be given on the Day of Pentecost. (*c*) Therefore the need of preparation for it, viz. by repentance (cf. Mark vi. 12). 2. *As to its authentication.* (1) To this end miraculous powers were conferred upon the apostles. These were to continue with them. Unless in the spiritual sense, neither did they raise the dead nor cleanse the leper until after the resurrection of Christ. (2) These they were to exercise freely, without restriction and without reward (see 2 Kings v. 15, 16, 26). Herein they differed from the exorcists mentioned by Josephus ('Ant.,' lib. viii. c. 11). 3. *As to their maintenance.* (1) This they were to receive from those to whom they should minister (vers. 9—12; see also 1 Cor. ix.; Gal. vi. 6; 1 Tim. v. 17). They must be under no necessity otherwise to earn their living. (2) Where hospitably entertained their peace was to come. "Peace be to this house" was their salutation (see Luke x. 5). "Great is peace," say the rabbins, "for all other blessings are comprehended in it" (cf. John xiv. 27; Phil. iv. 7). (3) When inhospitably treated they were to "shake off the dust of their feet," viz. as a witness against them before God (see Neh. v. 13; Acts xiii. 51; xviii. 6). See that you refuse not the gospel message, for the case of the rejecter is fearful. 1. This sin is worse than that of the men of Sodom (Ezek. xvi. 48, 49). Who sin against the clear light of revelation are more guilty than those who offend against the dim light of tradition. 2. The full judgment upon sin is reserved to the last great day. (1) The men of Sodom have yet to appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. The severest *temporal* judgments upon sinful men do not satisfy the claims of the offended justice of God. (2) Terrible as their case will be, it will be more tolerable than that reserved for the rejecters of the gospel of Christ.—J. A. M.

Vers. 16—23.—*Sheep and wolves.* The charge of Christ to his evangelists is here continued. Though addressed in the first instance to the twelve, it is by no means limited to them. We may learn—

I. THAT THE DISPOSITION OF THE WORLDLING TOWARDS THE CHRISTIAN IS WOLFISH. 1. *It is a disposition of hostility.* (1) The wolf is the natural enemy of the sheep. The carnal mind is enmity against God. So is it enmity also against what is God-like. (2) Hence the hatred of the world against Christ (John xv. 25). A heathen philosopher in commending virtue said, "Were it to become incarnate, such would be its loveliness that all the world would worship it." The experiment was tried. Instead of worshipping, they murdered Christ. (3) So for Christ's sake (ver. 22) the wolfish world has also hated Christians. It appears by the Apologies that the ancient Christians were liable to be condemned by those who were wholly ignorant of their principles or manners (Tertullian, 'Apol.,' c. iii.; cf. 1 Kings xviii. 17; 1 Cor. iv. 13). 2. *Its hostility is nerved by cruelty.* (1) The hostility of the wolf to the sheep is relentless. Its eyes, teeth, talons, and muscles are fitted to destroy, and its feet are "swift to shed blood." (2) With cruelty the wicked pursued Christ. Herod (see ch. ii. 13, 16), Pharisees, and rulers plotted his destruction. With the utmost cruelty they executed their purpose. Witness the scourge, the thorn, the cross. (3) So likewise did the wolves pursue his disciples. Paul, who had scourged others, was himself five times

beaten in the synagogues (cf. Acts xxii. 19; xxvi. 11; 2 Cor. xi. 24). The disciples had also to stand before "governors and kings" (see Acts xxiii. 11; xxv.; xxvi.). In the prediction that these humble men should ever stand before proconsuls and kings tributary to the Romans, we see a miracle of prescience. 3. *The cruelty is aggravated by treachery.* (1) "Beware of men," viz. who have the wisdom of the serpent and not the harmlessness of the dove. "Men," viz. more venomous, cunning, and deadly than serpents.

> "O shame to men! *devil* with *devil* damn'd
> Firm concord holds, *men* only disagree
> Of creatures rational; though under hope
> Of heavenly grace; and, God proclaiming peace,
> Yet live in hatred, enmity, and strife
> Among themselves, and levy cruel wars,
> Wasting the earth, each other to destroy!"

(2) "Brother shall deliver up brother," etc. (ver. 21). Unnatural was the treachery of Judas. Yet was he the type of the nation whose name he bore. And men, disguising the venom of the serpent and the rapacity of the wolf under the blessed name of Christ, have been the treacherous foes of his true sheep. (3) This treachery has used the synagogue—the pretext of religion. It has used the civil court—the pretext of justice. "The secular arm" was the weapon of the wolf disguised in fleece (cf. Eccles. iii. 16).

II. THAT THE DISPOSITION OF THE CHRISTIAN SHOULD BE SHEEP-LIKE, BUT NOT SHEEPISH. 1. *The sheep is the Christian's type.* (1) The sheep is an emblem of *innocence.* The Christian is innocent, being justified in the blood of Christ. He is, moreover, sanctified by the Spirit of Christ. (2) The sheep is also an emblem of *patience.* The Christian has his perfect Example in Christ. The "Lamb without spot or blemish;" the "Lamb of God." Brought "as a lamb to the slaughter," and "as a sheep before her shearers." 2. *To the innocence of the sheep he must add the wisdom of the serpent.* (1) The serpent is a symbol of wisdom. Not because the animal is pre-eminently sagacious. It is not so. But because the *devil* enshrined his subtlety in a serpent (see Gen. iii. 1). The devil was that (תנין) *certain* serpent which was "more subtle than any beast of the field"—the animal serpents not excepted. (2) We need the *sagacity* of devils to cope with their *subtlety.* Paul displayed this (see Acts xxiii. 6, 7). (3) Christ is our grand Exemplar here also (see ch. xxi. 24, 25; xxii. 15—22). 3. *To the wisdom of the serpent we must still add the simplicity of the dove.* (1) The dove is an emblem of the Holy Spirit of grace and truth. Noah's dove resting on the ark was a figure of the Holy Spirit resting upon Christ. So likewise upon the believer taking refuge in Christ, viz. from the floods of judgment. (2) The harmlessness of the dove saves the Christian from that cunning of the serpent by which he is wise to destroy. The dove must influence when the serpent directs. The "wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable" (Jas. iii. 17).

III. THAT THE SHEEP OF CHRIST ENJOY THEIR SHEPHERD'S PROTECTION. 1. *They go forth under his commission.* (1) To preach the gospel of the kingdom (ver. 7). A glorious mission. A mission in some form entrusted to every true disciple. "Ye are my witnesses." (2) To gain valuable experience. Experience in patience, stability, endurance (vers. 21, 22). The active graces may be cultivated in sunshine. Passive graces are developed in clouds and storms. In the passive graces Christian character is perfected (cf. Heb. ii. 10; Jas. i. 4). 2. *They go forth with his Holy Spirit.* (1) That Spirit was their Counsellor in the streets. As the wisdom of the serpent leads him adroitly to shun danger by quickly retiring into his hiding-place, so were the disciples counselled to avoid the persecutor by passing on to another city. Note: (*a*) The vain spirit which courts cheap martyrdom is discouraged here. It is prudence and humility to avoid persecution when charity and righteousness oblige not the contrary. (*b*) There is no countenance here given to the spirit of the hireling who for love of life or property would abandon the flock of Christ to the wolf. Christ's soldiers may quit their ground, but not their colours. (2) The Spirit of Christ is also their Counsellor in the civil courts (vers. 19, 20). If the twelve had plenary inspiration giving them words for their personal defence before judges, how much more so when writing the Scriptures! (3) The Spirit of Christ is with his servants working miracles

(ver. 8). Moral miracles are the "greater works" which still attend the Word. 3. *They are encouraged by the promise of reward.* (1) The Son of man shall come (ver. 23). He shall come in judgment upon the nation. He shall come in judgment upon the world. The former is a presage of the latter. (2) He shall come quickly. So quickly that nothing is gained by remaining in a city to contend with persecutors. Jerusalem was destroyed before all the cities of the land were visited by the twelve. So is life too short to overtake all the work to be done in the world. The gospel of the kingdom shall only be preached as a witness before the end of the present dispensation (cf. ver. 18; ch. xxiv. 14). (3) Then shall the faithful be "saved" (ver. 22). At the destruction of Jerusalem the Christians, by their flight to Pella, were saved. So at the last day the Lord will take them to himself.—J. A. M.

Vers. 24—33.—*Fearless witnessing.* The Christian is Christ's witness. He has to testify for Christ of his Person, offices, and work. He has to testify for the salvation of the believer; to the condemnation of the rejecter. To the rejecter the testimony is unpalatable and rouses resentment. This is often fierce and deadly. To face this resentment requires courage. In the text the witness has the encouragement, viz.—

I. THAT THE POWER OF THE WICKED IS LIMITED. 1. *They have the disposition to destroy.* (1) This was evident when they called the Master of the house Beelzebub. This was in the highest possible degree to call good evil. (2) It was further evident when they crucified the Just One. In so far as they were able they murdered God. (3) "The disciple is not above his Master." He has no reason to expect a different treatment from the wicked. 2. *But their power reaches only to the body.* (1) So far as killing the body, they prevailed against Christ. So far they prevailed against his martyrs. (2) "But they are not able to kill the soul." Unless the soul consents to its own injury, it cannot be harmed. The soul is killed only by being separated from God. No power can pluck us out of the hand of God. (3) Note: The soul does not sleep when the body dies. 3. *Therefore God only is to be feared.* (1) He can kill the body as certainly as the wicked can. He can, moreover, kill the soul as certainly as the wicked cannot. He can destroy both in Gehenna; and so destroy as to perpetuate punishment (see Ps. xc. 11; 2 Thess. i. 9). "Men think that death is an end of their troubles, whereas it is only the beginning of them. It is the lot of the wicked that they live in death, and suffer as it were a continual death" (Philo). (2) God is to be feared still by those who love him. It is not hell-fire we are to fear, but God. The love of God redeems from slavishness his fear. (3) Those who fear God truly need not fear man. The fear of sinning arms us against the dread of sinners. Even the heathen could nobly set a tyrant at defiance, saying, "You may abuse the case of Anaxarchus; you cannot injure Anaxarchus himself." Seneca undertakes to make it out that you cannot hurt a wise and good man, because death itself is no real evil to him. (4) It is enough that the disciple be as his Master. The honour of suffering with Christ is glorious (ch. v. 10; Rom. viii. 17; xiii. 5; 2 Cor. xii. 10; Phil. i. 29; Jas. i. 12; 1 Pet. ii. 19, 20; iii. 14; iv. 14). Wakefield renders Juvenal thus:—

"If ever call'd
To give thy witness in a doubtful case,
Though Phalaris himself should bid thee *lie*,
On pain of torture in his flaming bull,
Disdain to barter innocence for life;
To which life owes its *lustre* and its *worth*."

II. THAT THE FAITHFUL ARE UNDER THE PROTECTION OF A SPECIAL PROVIDENCE. 1. *The providence of God is everywhere.* (1) It is behind all *mechanical* forces. Gravitation brings the sparrow to the ground; but it does not fall without our Father. The statement is not that the sparrow does not fall without his *notice*, but that it does not fall without *him*. Without the constant active presence of God in nature there would be no gravitating force. (2) It is behind all *living* forces. If the sparrow descends to the ground for food, it is because God is there to provide the food, and also to give the creature the power of volition (cf. ch. vi. 26; Luke xii. 6). 2. *It is specially concerned for the servants of Christ.* (1) He who feeds his sparrows will not starve

his saints. Man, in the estimation of his fellow, is of more value than many sparrows. But how enormous is the contrast between the farthing that will purchase two sparrows and the price paid by God for the redemption of one human soul! (2) But amongst men the believer engages a peculiar loving care of God, and most of all when he is faithfully witnessing for Christ. "The very hairs of your heads are numbered" (cf. ver. 30; Luke xxi. 18). (3) How different is this doctrine of Christ from that of Pope, who says—

> "He sees with *equal* eyes, as God of all,
> A *hero* perish or a *sparrow* fall"!

Or of Hume, who says, "In the sight of God every event is alike important; and the life of a *man* is of no greater importance to the universe than that of an *oyster*"! 3. *What, then, has the servant of Christ to fear?* "Nothing can harm us"—even the killing of the body—"if we be followers of that which is good."

III. THAT THE FAITHFUL SHALL BE EVERLASTINGLY REWARDED. 1. *There is a coming day of revelation.* (1) "There is nothing covered that shall not" then "be revealed." In the day of judgment the malignity of the hypocrite who called the Master of the house Beelzebub will come out to the day (Eccles. xii. 14). (2) So will the fidelity of Christ's slandered witnesses. Already, even in this world, those who once were counted the offscouring of all things are justified and revered. What an anticipation this of the honour of the saint before an assembled universe! 2. *The day of revelation will be a day of retribution.* (1) The confessor will be confessed. The confession will be the prelude and passport to the bliss of heaven. (2) The denier will be denied. The truth itself will condemn those who dishonour it. The denial of the wicked will be the prelude to his destruction in both soul and body in Gehenna. 3. *Therefore let the witness for Christ be fearless.* (1) What Christ tells him in the darkness of parable, that let him speak in the light of clear testimony. What he hears in the ear of privacy he is to proclaim as from the house-top, publicly and openly. The trumpet should have a certain sound. (2) What the apostles delivered they received. They received it in privacy, not for themselves, but as "stewards" to dispense "the mysteries of God" (Eph. iii. 1—12; Heb. ii. 3). "We preach not ourselves." —J. A. M.

Vers. 34—42.—*The mission of the gospel.* These verses conclude the charge which Christ gave to his disciples when he commissioned them as evangelists. Having instructed them how they were to behave (vers. 5—15), warned them of the hostility they should encounter (vers. 16—23), and encouraged them to be fearless (vers. 24—33), he now enlightens them concerning the mission of their message.

I. IT WAS DESTINED TO DISTURB THE OLD FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY. 1. *The family is the foundation of old Adam's kingdom.* (1) The distinction of sex is everywhere. It exists in man; also in animals; in plants. In the poles of magnetism; in the dualities everywhere present in nature, principles analogous to sex appear. (2) The offspring of sexual union stand in natural relationships. Thus the household or immediate family is expressed in the terms "parents and children," and "brothers and sisters." This is the first circle, and within it are close endearments. (3) In the multiplication of families grow up communities, nations, and races. The aggregate of these constitutes the one vast family of man. 2. *Sin has demoralized this institution.* (1) By the first transgression the current was poisoned at the fountain. The family is infected in its birth. The race is universally depraved. (2) Out of the depraved heart rises the demoralized life. First come disintegrations through individual selfishness and ambition; then confederations of evil. (3) From the family these strifes work outward, giving rise to litigations and violence, heartburnings and revenges. Standing armies are at length maintained by a grinding taxation to wage destructive wars. 3. *In grappling with these frightful evils the gospel stirs up new strifes.* (1) It sets up a new rallying-point. It asserts the paramount claims of Christ. He claims a love superior to that which is nourished in the family (ver. 37). He imperiously requires in homage to his love the sacrifice of all selfish interests. (2) Those who rally round Christ are naturally opposed and hated by those who cleave to the old evil traditions. And the battle begins in the household. The unconverted father is against the

converted son, the unconverted mother is against her converted daughter, and so the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law. The battle of principles comes into closest quarters in the house; so a man's bitterest foes are those of his own household. (3) The hostility rages there even when it is not intended. "The father," says Quesnel, "is the enemy of his son, when through a bad education, an irregular love, and a cruel indulgence, he leaves him to take a wrong bias, instructs him not in his duty, and fills his mind with ambitious views. The son is the father's enemy, when he is the occasion of his doing injustice in order to heap up an estate for him, and to make his fortune. The mother is the daughter's enemy, when she instructs her to please the world, breeds her up in excess and vanity, and suffers anything scandalous or unseemly in her dress. The daughter is the mother's enemy, when she engages her to comply with her own irregular inclinations, or to permit her to frequent balls and plays. The master is the enemy of the servant, and the servant that of his master, when the one takes no care of the other's salvation, and the latter is subservient to his master's passions." (4) But the sword is also cast upon the earth (ver. 34). For what are the broad principles of "liberty, equality, and fraternity," properly understood, but noble Christian principles? Yet in the hands of vicious visionaries and atheistical theorists they are so prostituted as to become the motives to insurrections, revolutions, and the fiercest wars. Wars of religion and wars of ideas!

II. IT WAS DESTINED TO RECONSTRUCT SOCIETY UPON A NEW AND PERMANENT BASIS. 1. *Of this new world Jesus is the Head.* (1) In respect to this he is styled the "second Adam;" "the Beginning of the [new] creation of God;" "the Firstborn of every creature," viz. in this "new creation." (2) Coming under his blessed influence we are constituted "new creatures." He is the Archetype of the new world as Adam was of the old. So "as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." (3) But while the principle of union with Christ is as real as that of natural families, its essence is different. It is individual and spiritual. Hence Jesus never married. In his kingdom there is neither male nor female. In the resurrection they shall neither marry nor be given in marriage, but they shall be as the angels of God. (4) The kingdom of Messiah shall last for ever. 2. *The principle of the new world is love to Christ.* (1) He has a right to our supreme love as our Creator and Redeemer and King. Who but God could justly use such language as "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me"? (ver. 37; cf. Deut. xxxiii. 8, 9). (2) He claims to be loved in his representatives. "He that receiveth you receiveth me." The treatment shown to an ambassador is in fact shown to his sovereign. (3) This love to Christ, who is himself the Impersonation of love in truth, is the reversal of all selfishness. It requires the lifting of the cross (ver. 38). The cross here is whatever pain or inconvenience, even to the sacrifice of life, cannot be avoided but by doing some evil or omitting some good. The figure is used in prophetic anticipation of the manner in which he should die (cf. Rom. vi. 6; Gal. v. 24). 3. *Hence the promises of the kingdom are to the loyal.* (1) "He that findeth his life shall lose it." Love is life. The love of self and the world is the life of the unregenerate. The love of Christ is the life of the new birth. He that allows self-love to rule in his heart must lose the love of God, which is the life of heaven. He that saves his life by denying Christ shall lose it eternally (see John xii. 25). Tertullian notes that when the heathen judges would persuade Christians to renounce their faith, the terms they commonly used were "Save your life;" "Do not throw your life away." (2) "He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." What a man sacrifices to God is never lost, for he finds it again in God. The Lord never permits an evil to befall us unless to prevent a greater, and to do us good. (3) "He that receiveth a prophet"—one who teaches the truth—"shall receive a prophet's reward." He receives truth in the love of it, which is its own reward. The prophet shall pray for him (see Gen. xx. 7; 1 Sam. vii. 5; Job xlii. 8; Jas. v. 14—18). The hostess of Elijah was rewarded in her meal and oil. The rabbins say, "He that receives a learned man or an elder into his house is the same as if he had received the Shechinah." (4) Even a cup of cold water given in the name of a disciple to the humblest follower of Christ will be rewarded. Love cannot be willed into existence; but it may be wrought into existence. If we give God obedience he will give us love. Love is heaven. Heaven is love.—J. A. M.

Ver. 1.—*The power to impart power.* "He gave them power." It does not strike us as remarkable that, being what Jesus was, he should have power over sickness, disease, disability, and even death. But it certainly is unusual, remarkable, and most suggestive, that our Lord was able to give his power to others, and enable others to do the healing work that he did. There have been men with a genius for magic. They *had it*, but they were never able to impart it. There have been men with a strange and mysterious gift for healing disease. They *had it*, but they have never been able to impart it. No master ever yet gave his power to his disciples. He can teach them, guide them, and even inspire them. He cannot *give himself to them.* But this is precisely what Jesus could do and did.

I. THE LIGHT THIS THROWS ON CHRIST'S DIVINE NATURE. It may be fully argued and illustrated that "power belongeth unto God," and can only come to man directly from him. Man's gifts are Divine gifts; man's endowments are Divine endowments; man's genius is Divine inspiration. It is an accepted truth that God only can "forgive sins;" it should be an equally accepted truth that God only can "impart power." But here we have Jesus doing as simply as possible what we feel is alone in the power of God to do. We say he has the trust of miraculous gifts; but that is only half the truth. He has the gifts in such a way that he is able to give the gifts, in trust, to others. No argument for the essential Deity of Christ ("God manifest in the flesh") could be so effective as this impression produced on us by the fact that he had "the power to impart power."

II. THE LIGHT THIS THROWS ON CHRIST'S CONTINUING WORK. We may be helped in our endeavour to understand that work by seeing that he still has the "power to impart power," and that he is actually imparting power to his people. Christ gives soul-healing from the diseases of sin; Christ quickens life from the death of trespasses and sins. He is come that we might "have life, and have it more abundantly." We can partly apprehend his work in *souls* by watching his work in bodies when he was here. But see how much more vivid and forcible the illustration becomes when we see that he can repeat his power. He can give life to men in such a way as will make those men what he himself is—life-givers. Quickening men so as to make them healers and saviours is Christ's continuing work.—R. T.

Vers. 2—4.—*Representative Christian characters.* No doubt the number twelve was chosen by our Lord because twelve had been the number of the tribes of Israel. Very possibly a critical estimate of those two sets of twelve would bring to view this very interesting fact—the heads of the twelve tribes represent the different types of ordinary humanity, they classify human character; and the twelve apostles represent the different types of Christianized humanity, or of human character as influenced by Christian principles and the Christian spirit. This line of thought would yield some fresh and striking results. In the lists of the apostolate there is an evident division into three classes, each containing four persons. The late T. T. Lynch gave, in a very suggestive way, the marked characteristic of each class or group; but the individuality of some of the apostles is not strongly enough marked, in the gospel narrative, for us to make a more precise analysis of character with any confidence. Those gifted with unusual powers of insight into character may differentiate the individuals from the slight hints that remain, but we may only venture to estimate the groups.

I. THE BORN LEADERS. Simon, Andrew, James, John. Two sets of brothers, and the only brothers in the apostolic company. Natural leaders, for it is evident they were *master*-fishermen, managers of their business. Their gift of leadership Christ took over for service in his kingdom. Simon was more prominent than Andrew, and the fact that James was the first martyr suggests that he was more prominent than John; and so we get this conclusion—two, Simon and James, were leaders by *force* of character; two, Andrew and John, were leaders by *gentleness* of character. Those two kinds of leaders are always found.

II. THE BORN DOUBTERS. Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew. The Gospels give illustrations of their questioning, critical disposition. They could not receive anything without well looking round it, and seeing it on all sides. Such men have their mission in the world. Faith is always in danger of becoming superstition, and the born doubters are always compelling us to look to the *grounds* of our faith.

III. THE BORN WORKERS. James, Thaddæus, Simon the Canaanite, Judas Iscariot. These were good "seconds;" men who could carry out, in all practical detail, what was arranged by the leaders. Not thinkers, and so not doubters; men who wanted something to do, and found themselves satisfied with the doing. Such men are still among us.—R. T.

Ver. 5.—*Limited commissions.* "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not." We may find reason for this limitation of the sphere of the apostles in the fact that this was strictly a *trial-mission*, in which they were to learn how to fulfil the larger mission which would be entrusted to them by-and-by. When the war-ship is nearly ready for sea, it is required to make a trial-trip; but then its course is strictly defined and limited. But there is something more than this suggested. Our Lord really taught, by these limitations, that every man's work is strictly defined. He should spend his strength on work within his bounds; and neither worry himself, nor let any one else worry him, by pressing claims outside his bounds. One of the great sources of Christian fretfulness is the pressure of claims on men beyond their proper spheres. The man who is only a popular preacher is worried by people because he does not *teach*. The man whose gift is teaching is worried because he does not preach the gospel, and save souls. The truth is that every man has his limited commission. Each one has no business with Gentiles or Samaritans. Each one has his proper sphere with *his Israel*, and he is wise if he keeps to it.

I. CHRISTIAN COMMISSIONS ARE LIMITED. The honour of doing a whole thing was never given to a single Christian yet. No man ever yet either sowed or harvested God's entire field. Parts of work are given to individuals. Pieces of the field are given to each. We are seldom, if ever, wise when we go stepping over our borders, breaking down the fences that hedge round our particular work. Within our limits there is sphere for all our powers.

II. CHRISTIAN COMMISSIONS ARE VARIED. These particular men were to go to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel;" but other men were to go to the "Gentiles;" and yet others to the "Samaritans." These were to go and preach; others following them would have to teach. Some have just to *live* for Christ; some have to *sing* for him, to *write* for him, to *suffer* for him. Happy they who can say, "This one thing I do."

III. CHRISTIAN COMMISSIONS ARE UNITED. In the Divine thought and plan they fit into each other, like the strangely shaped puzzle-pieces, and make up the great whole of service for Christ. This workman and that should be doing well his own piece of work, and so the building will be surely growing into a "holy temple of the Lord."—R. T.

Ver. 8.—*The free use of freely given powers.* "Freely ye have received, freely give." Some of our Lord's directions were suitable only for the occasion, and only after much forcing can they be made illustrative of permanent principles; but our text gives succinctly the absolute law on which Christian work must be done and always done. We are monuments of mercy; we must be dispensers of mercy. We are saved by grace; we must be ready to save and help others, "hoping for nothing again," "without money and without price." St. Paul is the most striking after-instance of this law. He was, if we may so say, jealous, in quite an exaggerated way, of the freeness of his gospel service. It was with difficulty he could be persuaded to receive a *gift;* he never did receive a *payment*. And our Lord most resolutely refused to associate his acts of grace and power with money matters. Foreshadowings of this feeling may be found in Elisha, who utterly refused to take any acknowledgment of his cure from grateful Naaman. It is not necessary to controvert the doctrine that "the labourer is worthy of his hire," or that "they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel," or that they "who are ministered unto in spiritual things should minister in carnal things." The point is that if a man becomes conscious of any gift or power unto edification which has come to him by sovereign grace, that man will find his true joy in using his gift freely, "not seeking a reward."

I. OUR GIFTS ARE NOT OURS. This is the point which needs to be brought home to us. Men have no *possession* in their abilities. They have no right to trade with them for their own benefit. Our gifts are *trusts*. We trade with them for our Master, and

the products of the trading should be such spiritual things as honour him. "What hast thou that thou hast not received?"

II. OUR GIFTS COST US NOTHING. Reference is to spiritual gifts. God distributeth to every man severally as he will. One talent, two, or ten, according as he pleases. No man can purchase, or earn, or win, a spiritual gift. This Simon Magus learned by a most severe rebuke.

III. OUR GIFTS MUST BE USED FOR NOTHING. Our characteristic spiritual power, to help, heal, inspire, or comfort others must *never be sold*.—R. T.

Vers. 13, 14.—*The responsibility of opportunity.* This direction may be stated in a plain way thus: "Give every man a chance, and let it rest with him whether he takes advantage of it." Moral work can never be done by force. Persuasion of will there should be; constraint of will there should never be. The gospel is to be preached, proclaimed, heralded, to all nations, but it must rest with men themselves whether it shall prove to them a "savour of life unto life, or of death unto death." Here our Lord gives a great missionary law. Keep men's responsibility for moral decisions. Put the truth before them. Speak the message to them. Use all persuasion with them. But if they will not receive your words, pass on to those who will.

I. EVERY MAN HAS HIS MORAL OPPORTUNITY. Just as every man, sooner or later, gets his life-chance. This is enshrined in the familiar Shakesperian sentence about "a tide in the affairs of men." In business matters we often say, "He lost his chance." The story of heart-experiences would probably reveal that every man, once at least in his life, stood on the very threshold of the kingdom, and decided whether he would or would not step across. Men's condemnation is this—the gate of the kingdom was opened for you, and you would not enter in.

II. IT IS OUR DUTY TO PROVIDE MORAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR FELLOWS. This we do by preaching the gospel to them; by personal influence and persuasion. God makes man his agent, "co-worker together with him," in making supreme moral opportunities for his children. This is the responsibility of the regenerate.

III. THE MAN HIMSELF MUST DEAL WITH THE OPPORTUNITY. As is illustrated in the passage, the apostle may come to a man's door, and his asking hospitality may be the man's opportunity; but the man must decide whether he will let the apostle in. There must be no dealings with men which even seem to weaken the sense of personal moral responsibility. A common saying illustrates this—

> "If you will not when you may,
> When you will you shall have nay."

IV. OUR OBLIGATION IS ENDED IN PROVIDING THE OPPORTUNITY. We are responsible for skilfully providing it; for wisely following it up, and for persistently renewing our effort to present it. But we are not responsible for results following. The man must bear them.—R. T.

Ver. 16.—*The law of safety for Christian workers.* It is a law which regulates their own conduct. "Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." Living creatures are recognized figures of moral qualities. How the serpent comes to be the figure of wisdom, with the peculiar characteristic of subtlety, is a subject for dispute. Van Lennep, writing concerning Asia Minor, says, "The serpent has not the reputation of being 'cunning' or 'wise,' nor are such characteristics suggested or sustained by any facts known in Western Asia. Nevertheless, its subtlety has passed into a proverb, doubtless by reason of the Mosaic account of the fall of our first parents, and this is now as generally current among both Christians and Moslems as it was among the Hebrews in the days of our Lord." There is a kind of paradox in thus associating the serpent and the dove, which is designed to be suggestive and inspirational.

I. OUR SAFETY DEPENDS UPON OUR GUILEFULNESS. This sounds bad. Guilefulness, in the sense of "hypocrisy," receives Christ's most withering denunciations. No such guilefulness can be commended here. But there is a guilefulness which is really "prudence," and this may very naturally be suggested by the quiet, gliding motion of the serpent. There is a simplicity which is foolishness. There is a simplicity which is prudent, watchful of occasions, skilful of adjustments, knows when to act and when

to refrain, when to speak and when to keep silence. That "guilefulness" is the practical skill of ordering wisely our life. A company of hermits discussed which of the virtues was most necessary to perfection. One said chastity, another humility, another justice. St. Anthony said, "The virtue most necessary to perfection is *prudence;* for the most virtuous actions of men, unless governed and directed by prudence, are neither pleasing to God, nor serviceable to others, nor profitable to ourselves." In doing God's work opposition is often needlessly provoked by our imprudence.

II. OUR SAFETY DEPENDS UPON OUR GUILELESSNESS. The dove is the emblem of innocence, artlessness. It has no schemes, no under-intentions, no reserve. What it is you know. All its ways are transparent. If the apostles acted so as to produce the impression that they had ends of their own to serve, they would have set people on the watch lest the apostles should take advantage of them. St. Paul says, "We seek not yours, but you." Prudence and simplicity, guilefulness and guilelessness, can therefore go together, hand-in-hand.—R. T.

Ver. 21.—*The mission of religious persecution.* In warning the apostles that their mission would involve persecution, our Lord clearly showed that such persecution was in the Divine plan, and, if in the Divine plan, it had its mission; it would prove to be a blessing; it was indeed a "blessing in disguise." The calamitous and distressing side of religious persecution has been so often dwelt on that it may be well to "turn the shield," and look on the brighter side. Religious persecution has its important uses and ministries; in one form or other it has been found in every age, and the Church of every age has been the better for it. This does not excuse persecutors or relieve their guilt; but it does bring to us a fuller sense of the Divine overruling of even evil things. The forms that persecution took in the early Church may be illustrated. Tacitus tells us that "the Christians were convicted of enmity to the human race."

I. RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION HAS ALWAYS BEEN A TEST OF SINCERITY. It finds out those who only profess, and those who profess because they possess. Only the men in earnest abide the stress of persecution. A man must care about a thing if he is willing to suffer for its sake. Persecution is a natural process of separating tares from wheat. How many unworthy ones would be in Church relations if religion involved no strain! There is testing social persecution nowadays.

II. RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION HAS ALWAYS BEEN AN AGENT IN CLEARING DOCTRINE. All sorts of ideas, good, indifferent, and bad, are being constantly taught. They would grow into doctrines if they were not subject to some clearing process. A man will suffer for what are deep convictions, but a man will not readily suffer for his fanciful notions. Many an error has been cleared away in times of persecution, but no truth was ever then lost.

III. RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE GREAT INCENTIVE TO ZEAL. Ages of peace too often become ages of ease and indifference. Aggressive Christianity is found in vigour only in persecuting times. Strikingly illustrated in Madagascar. Enterprise, energy, faith, flourish in times of pressure and peril.

IV. RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION HAS ALWAYS PROVED A GREAT HELP TO BROTHERHOOD. The sufferings of some, the perils of all, throw each upon the other's keeping. The story of persecuting days is a delightful record of sweet charities and loving helpfulness in the Christian brotherhood.—R. T.

Ver. 25.—*The common lot of master and servant.* Point out the connection in which this text stands. Christ illustrated what was his claim on men, and what was involved in becoming citizens of his kingdom, by sending out his apostles on a trial or model mission. He corrects certain wrong impressions and false expectations in this passage. Those apostles will not meet with all the success they anticipate. They will repeat his own story of thankless labour and reproach.

I. THE IDEA OF A TRUE LIFE IS LIVING OVER AGAIN THE LIFE OF CHRIST. The disciples of Christ are expected to reproduce their Master's ideas, principles, and even actions; but their own personal stamp is to be quite plain on all their reproductions. A worthy servant does, both consciously and unconsciously, what he sees his master do. Jesus Christ is our Lord and Master in such a sense as makes him our ideal of what the true and noble life is. Reproducing him may be said to involve: 1. *Looking*

*at life in the light in which Christ looked at it.* It is not for self, it is not for any earth-ends. It is for God, and for God as the Father-God. The true imitation of Christ is the sway in our lives of those principles that ruled his. Wherever we may be, the Christly spirit may be in us, and may be glorifying all our relations. 2. *Uttering the Christly spirit by lip and life as he did.* Loving words and loving deeds expressed Christ's loving thought and purpose. While motive is the most important thing, it can never be separated from fitting action. 3. *Bearing the earthly disabilities of a Christly life as he did.* The same, or similar, disabilities come to Christians in every age as came to Christ. The variations we notice are on the surface, and belong only to forms and features. "The light shines in darkness," and is similarly affected by the bad atmospheres. Misunderstandings, reproaches, persecutions, abound still. "If reproached in the name of Christ, happy are ye." Take St. Paul's life, and show how his troubles repeat Christ's, with characteristic variations.

II. THIS IDEA OF LIFE TRUE HEARTS WILL FIND EVER-SATISFYING. The feeling of the Divine worth and beauty of that blessed life of Jesus will ever grow on us as we come into spiritual communion with it. And to reproduce it, to work it out in our own lives, will engage all our thought, and use up all our faculty, in a delightful way What is the fact? Do men learn of Christ from our Christ-likeness?—R. T.

Ver. 29.—*The Lord of the sparrows.* The connection of this illustration should be noticed. Our Lord bids the first missionaries stand even on the house-tops, and freely speak out his message; but he, in effect, adds, "In doing this you will meet with dangers not a few. You will meet with enemies, some of whom will not stop short—if only their power will reach so far—of bloody issues. But fear not. You are watched and protected at every step, and come life, come death, you are safe." Van Lennep tells us that the edge of the house-top is the favourite station for the sparrows. "There they sit, or hop about and chirp, sharpen their little bills, or carry on their little quarrels; and when the coast is clear in the yard below, down they fly in a body to pick up any crumbs or scraps of food they may chance to find." Sparrows are sold at the smallest price fetched by any game. It was also the smallest living creature offered in sacrifice under the Mosaic dispensation. It was the gift for the poor leper.

I. GOD'S TENDER MERCY IS OVER ALL HIS WORKS. "His way is to look at the lowliest creatures and things as carefully, as paternally, as to the noblest and highest. To him there is nothing great, nothing little. He has a record of all the birds that fly. Sparrows on the earth are as numerous as stars in heaven, 'and not one of them is forgotten before God.' They build their nests in his sight; they hatch their young, and send forth their families every year; and God knows each one—whither it flies and where it rests; and not one of them falleth to the ground by shot of fowler, or spring of cat, or cold of winter, nay, one of them shall not hop down on the ground (so some understand the meaning of the term) without your Father" (Dr. A. Raleigh).

II. GOD'S TENDER MERCY IS OVER ALL HIS CHILDREN. It is an argument from the less to the greater which is suggested. We see it and feel its force at once when we apply the argument in our common home relations. If the house-mother tends so carefully the canary bird in the cage, how much more will she tend carefully and lovingly the child in the cradle! If we are of more value than many sparrows, we may have the fullest confidence that God's dealings with us fit to our value.—R. T.

Ver. 32.—*He that knows Christ will confess him.* In these days there are many among us who are, at heart, disciples of the Lord Jesus, but who shrink from confessing him before men. Their character and conduct have been long watched by those about them, and the signs of Divine change and renewal have been recognized. And yet they remain but "secret disciples." Like one who is introduced to us by St. John, who chose the quiet night hour, when the city hum was stilled, and only a stray traveller passed along the street, and he could hope to be unrecognized. There are many who have to be classed with Nicodemus. Quiet, timid souls, half afraid of their own thoughts, they seek Jesus, as it were, by night. To such this text appeals. To confess Christ would be the very thing to help them realize their condition. Confessing ought not to be a difficult thing. No man need hesitate to acknowledge that he loves the loveliest and serves the holiest.

I. IN WHAT WAYS DOES CHRIST EXPECT YOU TO FULFIL THIS DUTY? 1. Whatever form or order Christ's Church may take, it always has some way in which open and public confession can be made. In *that way* the duty comes home to us, according to the Church to which we belong. Somehow Christ must be openly and publicly acknowledged before witnesses. 2. You must help in Christian service, and so confess Christ's Name. If you are made "a new creature in Christ Jesus," be sure that he has some work for you to do, some place for you to occupy, some mission for you to accomplish. 3. You must live such a godly life as shall of itself constantly confess Christ. If you do not check the movements of heart-piety, you will find it wants to push out into the light and show itself in holy living. When the spring is purified, all the rivulets that run from it flow clear and pure. When the leaven is put in the meal, it will not keep still until the whole is leavened. Let religion have as much room and power as it may please. Do not let timidity, any more than sin, or passion, or evil habit, check it from its natural and befitting expressions.

II. BY WHAT HINDRANCES MAY YOU BE KEPT FROM OBEDIENCE? 1. The sense of responsibility attaching to making public profession. But that is to forget that responsibility ennobles a man. 2. A sense of personal unworthiness because Christian experience seems so limited. 3. A fear of the possibility of dishonouring Christ by backsliding and sin. But that is to mistrust God's power to keep you unto the end. —R. T.

Ver. 38.—*Cross-bearing.* Confusion of mind is caused by associating this figure with our Lord's crucifixion, or with the fact that he was required to carry his cross to the place of crucifixion. It cannot be too clearly pointed out, that our Lord used the figure to illustrate his teachings before his disciples had formed the faintest idea that he was to be crucified; and yet he must have meant them to understand him. They did understand. Cross-bearing was a commonly used figure of the day, and stood for "doing a thing that was disagreeable to do, or bearing a thing that was painful to bear, because it was *right*." In that sort of sense Christ used it in our text. "Christian duty, sometimes painful, involves crucifixion of self, sacrifice of natural feelings." Dean Plumptre says, "These words would recall to the disciples the sad scenes which Roman rule had made familiar to them—the procession of robbers or rebels, each carrying the cross on which he was to suffer to the place of execution. They would learn that they were called to a like endurance of ignominy and suffering." It is, however, better to preserve the familiar proverbial character of our Lord's allusion.

I. EVERY CHRISTIAN MAN HAS HIS CROSS. Every individual has his cross. We all have to say, again and again, "Things will not be according to my mind." Becoming a Christian may alter our crosses, but it is pretty certain to multiply them. The more active and enterprising a Christian is, the more, and the weightier, will be his crosses. They will always be marked by their demand on the Christian to do what he *ought* rather than what he *likes*. A cross is that which puts a man on self-restraints and self-denials.

II. EVERY CHRISTIAN MAN IS REVEALED BY THE WAY IN WHICH HE DEALS WITH HIS CROSS. 1. He may *spurn* it. 2. He may *leave* it. 3. He may *lift* it. He is disloyal if he spurns it. He is negligent if he leaves it. He is true-hearted if he lifts it. This leads on to the thought that if "cross-bearing" is discipline, and may even be stern discipline, it is always sanctifying. Cross-bearing may even be figured as the "highway of holiness."—R. T.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER XI.

Ver. 1.—Matthew only. **And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end.** The same formula recurs in ch. vii. 28; xiii. 53; xix. 1; xxvi. 1. In all five cases it marks the end of important speeches. (1) The sermon on the mount (ch. v.—vii. 27); (2) the charge to the disciples (ch. x. 5—42); (3) the parables (ch. xiii. 1—52); (4) discourses to the disciples (ch. xviii.); (5) prophecies about the end of the world, etc. (ch. xxiv., xxv.). (Cf. Introduction, p. iii.). for the bearing that this has upon the

sources of the Gospel.) **Of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence.** Whence? We have no knowledge. Perhaps the place had been named in the original context, from which the discourse was derived. Ch. ix. 35 suggests that it was some place on his journey (cf. Alford), but our verse in itself implies rather some fixed centre of work, *e.g.* Capernaum. **To teach and to preach in their cities.** If he ceases to speak at length, it is that he may begin more aggressive work (cf. ch. vii. 28, 29; xiii. 53, 54). *Their.* It is hardly by accident that the word recurs, with the same reference, as it seems, to the Jews generally, in the passages just quoted (cf. ch. xii. 9, note).

Vers. 2—24.—JESUS THE ONE THAT SHOULD COME.

(1) Vers. 2—6: The Baptist's question, and its answer: the Coming One has come.

(2) Vers. 7—15: Jesus' recognition of the greatness of John as herald.

(3) Vers. 16—19: Yet both John and he himself are rejected.

(4) Vers. 20—24: Woe on those who disregard the signs of God's work.

Vers. 2—6.—*The Baptist's question, and its answer.* Parallel passage: Luke vii. 18—23.

Ver. 2.—**Now when John had** (omit, with the Revised Version) **heard in the prison;** *i.e.* Machærus (Schürer, I. ii. 27; comp. ch. iii. 1, note; xiv. 1, note). Matthew alone tells us that he was already in prison. **The works of Christ;** *of the Christ* (Revised Version); τοῦ Χριστοῦ. Not the proper name, but the official title (ch. i. 16, 17, notes). The title may be merely due to the evangelist's narrative, or may represent the actual terms in which the message was brought to John. It brings out the pathos of the situation. John had prepared the way of the Christ, and had at the baptism taken part in his anointing. Yet of all the works that the Christ now did there was none to set his kinsman and herald free. **He sent two of his disciples;** *by his disciples* (Revised Version). Possibly the slight difference between διά, the true reading here, and δύο, which is genuine in Luke, points to the common source (observe here a Greek source) having been written, but with the close similarity in sound this need not have been the case. Observe that the true reading lays slightly more emphasis on the fact of the inquiry coming from John himself (*vide infra*). "Sent by" is the equivalent of the Hebrew שלח ביד (Exod. iv. 13; 1 Sam. xvi. 20; 1 Kings ii. 25; comp. also Rev. i. 1).

Ver. 3.—**And said unto him.** The question was brought from John; the answer is sent back to him (ver. 4). This points to the cause of the question lying ultimately, not with his disciples, but with himself. Although John might justly fear that they would follow him rather than Jesus (cf. ch. ix. 14, note), yet he seems to have made this inquiry for his own sake. He who stood on the Jewish side of the threshold of the kingdom (ver. 11) did not understand the methods by which the King was acting, and thus his faith was tried (comp. Tertullian, 'Adv. Marc.,' iv. 18). In this he recalls his great prototype, whose plans seemed to have failed and his boldness to have done no good (1 Kings xix. 13, 14). To both the answer implied that success was assured to quiet spiritual work. **Art thou** (emphatic) **he that should come?** *he that cometh* (Revised Version); ὁ ἐρχόμενος (comp. ch. iii. 11, note). The title was probably derived from Ps. cxviii. 26, and would become the more known from the LXX. of Hab. ii. 3 (comp. Heb. x. 37), and perhaps also from a directly Messianic interpretation of Gen. xlix. 10. **Or do we look for.** The word (προσδοκῶμεν) contains no thought of looking about for, but only of earnest expectation. **Another?** Ἕτερον, and so in Luke vii. 19; but ἄλλον in Luke vii. 20 (where, however, Westcott and Hort margin reads ἕτερον). Observe that in both records the evangelist's own summary of John's message speaks of a difference in kind, but that in the form given by the messengers (Luke vii. 20) it is only a matter of a second person coming (comp. Gal. i. 6, 7; 1 Cor. xii. 8, etc.; xv. 39, etc.). John's disciples, that is to say, are represented as failing to catch the point of their master's question whether he must look, after all, for a Messiah who acts differently from the way in which Jesus acts.

Ver. 4.—**Jesus;** *and Jesus* (Revised Version, with even the Received Text). **Answered and said unto them.** He makes no verbal self-defence, but appeals to the effects of his work. Observe that a similar appeal to effects of the same character as those mentioned here — restoration to normal powers and bringing spiritual truths home to the poorest—is still the great argument for the Messiahship of Jesus. **Go;** *go your way* (Revised Version); πορευθέντες (cf. ver. 7). **And show John again;** *and tell John* (Revised Version); for ἀπαγγέλλω does not in itself contain the idea of bringing word in answer to an inquiry, but merely emphasizes the source or place from which the message comes (ch. viii. 33; cf. Bishop Westcott on 1 John i. 2, 5). **Those** (*the,* Revised Version) **things which ye do hear and see.** Observe that in Luke (1) the

order of the verbs is reversed; (2) the tense is not the present, as here, but the aorist, the miracles being regarded from the point of time when the disciples had returned to John. The present tense in Matthew brings out what St. Luke had already indicated by his preceding explanatory verse that the messengers arrived when the Lord was actually performing miracles.

Ver. 5.—**The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear** (*and*, Revised Version), **the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.** The first and the last of the examples selected by our Lord are fulfilments of prophecy (Isa. lxi. 1). Observe that (1) the words are taken from the LXX. (εὐαγγελίσασθαι πτωχοις . . . τυφλοῖς ἀνάβλεψιν), which, perhaps, represents a different reading from the Massoretic text (cf. Cheyne, *in loc.*, 'Critical Note'). (2) Our Lord reverses the order of the expressions, taking the restoration of sight to the blind as the commencement of a series of physical miracles, and thus making spiritual work the climax. (3) He does not quote Isaiah's phrase, "liberty to the captives," although the quotation of its context could not but suggest it to John, the reason being, it would seem, that he desired to call John's attention away from the more political part of Messiah's work to that which alone forms the basis of permanent political improvement—the restoration of the individual. (4) In accordance with this is the fact that when he was laying stress on the character of his adherents as the one qualification for sharing in his kingdom, he alluded to the same passage of Isaiah (*vide* ch. v. 3—5). John was not wholly emancipated from the Jewish tendency to regard the external results of the kingdom; our Lord's mind dwelt rather on the internal results. Although John's difficulty had been felt when he heard of the works (ver. 2, note), our Lord only said in reply, "Tell him of my works." It was an old message, and yet a new one. In the nature of those works, when fully understood, lay the true solution of his difficulty. Observe that here also Christ adds a Beatitude (ver. 6). *The blind* (ch. ix. 27, note), *and the lame.* The "and" is doubtless genuine here, its omission in some manuscripts being due to the parallel passage in Luke. Observe the rhythm, "blind and lame," "lepers and deaf," "and dead and poor." Perhaps this is the result of oral transmission. *The lame walk* (Isa. xxxv. 6). *The dead are raised up.* "Quod novissime factum erat juveni Naimitico" (Bengel; and so Ellicott, 'Hist. Lects.,' pp. 181, 183, edit. 1861). *The gospel; good tidings* (Revised Version text [not margin], probably to suggest to English readers the reference to Isa. lxi. 1).

Ver. 6.—**And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended** (ch. v. 29, note) **in me**; *shall find none occasion of stumbling in me* (Revised Version). But exhibits perfect trust under delay and disappointment (Jas. i. 12).

Vers. 7—15.—*Jesus' recognition of the greatness of John as herald.* Vers. 7—11: parallel passage: Luke vii. 24—28.

Ver. 7.—**And as they departed**; *and as these went their way* (Revised Version). Fulfilling his command (ver. 4). If we may combine the language of St. Matthew and St. Luke ("when the messengers of John were departed"), we may say that they had left the circle immediately round our Lord, but were hardly further than the outskirts of the crowd. **What went ye out into the wilderness to see? *to behold*** (Revised Version); θεάσασθαι (cf. θέατρον). It almost suggests that they went out as though to see a spectacle. They were stirred by no deeper motive. Bengel compares John v. 35. **A reed shaken with the wind?** If the reed referred to by our Lord was the papyrus, which still grows freely in certain parts of the Jordan valley, the description of this plant in 'Rob Roy on the Jordan,' ch. xvii., is specially interesting: "There is first a lateral trunk, lying on the water and half-submerged. This is sometimes as thick as a man's body, and from its lower side hang innumerable string-like roots from three to five feet long, and of a deep purple colour. . . . These pendent roots . . . retard much of the surface-current where the papyrus grows. . . . On the upper surface of the trunks the stems grow alternately in oblique rows; their thickness at the junction is often four inches, and their height fifteen feet, gracefully tapering until at the top is a little round knob, with long, thin brown, wire-like hairs eighteen inches long, which rise and then, recurving, hang about it in a thyrsus-shaped head." He also says, "The whole jungle of papyrus was *floating upon the water*, and so the waves raised by the breeze were rocking the green curtain to and fro." This explained "a most curious hissing, grinding, bustling sound, that was heard like waves upon a shingly beach," as "the papyrus stems were rubbing against each other as they nodded out and in." It is, however, much more probable that the reed referred to was "the *Arundo donax*, a very tall cane, growing twelve feet high, with a magnificent panicle of blossom at the top, and so slender and yielding that it will lie perfectly flat under a gust of wind, and immediately resume its upright position." It grows especially on the western

side of the Dead Sea (cf. Tristram, 'Natural History of the Bible,' p. 437, edit. 1889). To our Lord's question no answer was needed. John had rejected the overtures of the nationalists (John i. 19—21), and had not feared to rebuke a king (ch. xiv. 4).

Ver. 8.—**Behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses.** Menahem the Essene was by the wish of Herod the Great made deputy to Hillel in the Sanhedrin, but afterwards left his office. "Whither did he go out? Abai said, He went out to destruction. Rabba said, He went out for the service of the king. There is also a Baraitha [*i.e.* an 'uncanonical' Mishna] to this effect, that Menahem went out for the service of the king, and there went out with him eighty pairs of disciples clothed in Syrian robes" (Talm. Bab., 'Chagigah,' 16*b*, edit. Streane). It has been conjectured, though hardly on sufficient evidence, that our Lord was thinking of this case; but the Talmudic passage at least illustrates the gorgeousness of the apparel of the courtiers, and suggests the luxury of living that St. Luke speaks of ("They which are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in kings' courts"). It is, however, only fair to Menahem to say that Grätz ('Geschichte der Judäer,' iii. p. 230, edit. 1877) is able to suppose that he merely went back again to his solitude.

Ver. 9.—**But what went ye out for to see? A prophet?** *But wherefore went ye out? To see a prophet?* (Revised Version). **Yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet.** Our Lord accepts their estimate of John, but says that it is insufficient. He thus passes on to show the relation in which John stood to himself. John was more than a prophet such as they thought of, for he was "the subject as well as the vehicle of prophecy" (Alford), and was the immediate forerunner of the great King. *More than; much more than* (Revised Version). Περισσότερον is probably neuter, for this not only agrees with τι, but emphasizes the thought more than the masculine (cf. ch. xii. 6, note).

Ver. 10.—**For.** Omitted in the Revised Version. It is here an explanatory gloss, though genuine in ch. iii. 3. **This is he, of whom it is written.** Our Lord justifies his assertion of John's unique position. **Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.** Mal. iii. 1, not from the LXX., but freely from the Hebrew, which runs, "Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me." Observe in Matthew (1) "thy way" (2) "before thee," instead of "before me;" (3) the first clause is made to end with nearly the same phrase as the second. Matthew's form is the more rhythmical, perhaps because of oral repetition (cf. Introduction, p. x.). Luke (vii. 27), save for the omission of ἐγώ, is the same; Mark (i. 2) only omits ἐγώ and "before thee." Christ does not hesitate to apply to himself a prophecy of the coming of God, nor did the early Church shrink from recording this of him. Such an application of an Old Testament passage Bengel calls "luculentissimum argumentum Deitatis Christi." (On this subject, cf. Bishop Westcott, Add. Note on Heb. iii. 7.)

Ver. 11.—**Verily.** Matthew only. This solemn asseveration (ch. v. 18, note) would the more remind them of their duty towards John; and, if its force may be extended to the next clause, call their attention the more forcibly to his being only the herald of better things. **I say unto you, Among them that are born of women** (Job xiv. 1) **there hath not risen.** These last words have the emphasis in the Greek, οὐκ ἐγήγερται, *i.e.* to work and energy as a prophet (Luke vii. 16; ch. xxiv. 11, 24). **A greater than John the Baptist.** This seems almost less praise than ver. 9. But our Lord probably intended to tacitly meet the objection that Moses or Abraham was to be listened to rather than John (cf. ch. iii. 9, note). **Notwithstanding** (*yet*, Revised Version) **he that is least** (*but little*, Revised Version, ὁ δὲ μικρότερος: cf. μείζων, ch. xviii. 1) **in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.** The weakest Christian is greater in privileges than the greatest of the Old Testament saints. John could preach repentance, but the joys of redemption he knew nothing of. He is therefore judged according to the rule, "Minimum maximi majus est maximo minimi" (cf. Holtzmann, 'Hand-Commentar,' p. 134).

Ver. 12.—It is curious that in St. Luke's account of this speech of our Lord's he should omit our vers. 12—14 (on ver. 15, see note there), thus leaving out all Christ's plainer and more direct teaching about the relation of John to himself. St. Luke places (xvi. 16) our vers. 12 and 13 in what appears to be merely a cento of sayings. Possibly the original occasion has been recorded by neither evangelist, but in Matthew the passage certainly brings out the thought upon which our Lord was insisting on this occasion. **And.** Slightly adversative (δέ), for there is a change of subject. Christ urges his hearers to more definitely range themselves under his banner. **From the days of John the Baptist until now.** Yet this was not more than a few months! Possibly the sentence had become modified in oral teaching, so as to include many years, say up to A.D. 50 or 60. St. Luke's ἀπὸ τότε is easy enough. Observe the implied success of John's work as herald. He so prepared the way that men were eager to enter the kingdom which

he had said was at hand. **The kingdom of heaven.** The realm ruled over by Messiah, of which the then community of believers was the earnest (*vide* Introduction, p. xxv.). **Suffereth violence** (*βιάζεται*). In Luke it is middle, "Every man entereth violently into it;" and though it is certainly passive here, St. Luke's phrase compels us to understand the reason of the violence to be entrance into the kingdom. The kingdom is not ill treated, but it is as it were taken by storm (Meyer). Nösgen strangely understands the phrase to mean that the kingdom is set forward with power, and he would apparently see in "the violent" a special reference to our Lord and John. **And the violent**; *and men of violence* (Revised Version); *καὶ βιασταί*: only they; men whose mind is made up and who care not what force and power they employ to attain their object. **Take it by force**; *ἁρπάζουσιν αὐτήν*, "grasp it for themselves," like rough and violent bandits seizing their prey. Weiss sees in this verse blame of the politico-Messianic endeavours to hasten the completion of the kingdom. This explanation is good in itself (cf. John vi. 15), but disconnects the verse from its context. Our Lord is describing the energy with which some souls are pressing in, and urging the need of such energy if salvation is to be obtained.

Ver. 13.—**For.** It is only right that there should be such a seizing of the kingdom of heaven, *for* in a certain sense the function of the prophets and the Law ceased with John. **All.** Not one alone, but all, however various their teaching. **The prophets and the law.** In Luke (xvi. 16) the Law is mentioned first, because the context is there dealing chiefly with the Law. Here our Lord has said that John was more than a prophet, and he naturally continues to speak of prophets first. The mention of the Law comes in almost as an afterthought, and yet without it the Jews might have fallen back on the Law when the prophets failed them (cf. ver. 11, note). **Prophesied.** Including the ideas both of predicting Messiah and of making known the will of God (cf. ch. v. 19, note). **Until John.** The message of the written Word was considered as active—the prophets and the Law still spoke—until, in fact, he came who was the close of that epoch.

Ver. 14.—In Matthew only. **And if ye will receive it.** Our Lord gives the information plainly, but doubts if it will be of any use to them. *Will* (*θέλετε*). For the reception of a truth depends upon the attitude of the will. In this case to acknowledge John as Elijah would mean to accept the present consequences of that reformation which Elijah was to bring about (Mal. iv. 6). **But** "the human will has a natural disinclination to cultivate and sharpen the conscience in combination with the knowledge of the law, has no desire to look into this mirror, and men as a rule desire to have quite a different picture of themselves from that which conscience shows them" (Martensen's 'Christian Ethics,' i. § 119). *It.* My statement. Not *him*, i.e. John, with Revised Version margin. **This** (*αὐτός*). He and no other (ch. i. 21). **Is Elias.** In spiritual work, not in identity of person (John i. 21). (On the Jewish expectation of the return of Elijah, see Lightfoot, 'Hor. Hebr.,' on ch. xvii. 10.) **Which was for to come**; *which is to come* (Revised Version). The phrase *ὁ μέλλων ἔρχεσθαι*) is perhaps best understood, not as an independent remark by our Lord about Elijah, but as a current saying, representing the popular expectation of him, and adopted by our Lord, who gave it his own interpretation. It can hardly point also to a yet future coming of the prophet. But compare Bishop Westcott, on John i. 21, and Schürer, II. ii. 156.

Ver. 15.—**He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.** A solemn exhortation, often spoken by our Lord at the close of an utterance. See ch. xiii. 9 (equivalent to Mark iv. 9), 43; Mark iv. 23; Luke xiv. 35 (comp. Mark viii. 18; Luke ix. 44; Rev. ii. and iii.; xiii. 9). It means—You are all formed by nature to learn God's commands; answer, therefore, to your powers, and obey him. See Ps. xl. 6 (cf. Heb. x. 5).

Vers. 16—19.—*Yet both John and he himself are rejected, though the results of their efforts were such as to fully justify the apparent difference of their methods.* Parallel passage: Luke vii. 31—35.

Vers. 16, 17.—**But.** In contrast to the obedience asked for in ver. 15, this generation closes its ears. **Whereunto shall I liken.** A common rabbinic phrase, which is often found in the fuller form recorded in Luke, "Whereunto shall I liken . . . and to what are they like?" (see ch. vii. 24, note). **This generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.** There are two ways of understanding the illustration which our Lord here uses. (1) Many modern commentators (*e.g.* Meyer; Trench, 'Studies,' p. 148) insist on the grammar and on the historical order in which the complaints are made, and believe that the Jews correspond to the pipers and the mourners, while it is John that refuses to rejoice, and our Lord that will not be sad. (2) But the more

usual interpretation is preferable. For (*a*) in an illustrative saying one has chiefly to regard its general sense; (*b*) in vers. 18, 19 the action of John and of our Lord in "coming" corresponds to the activity of the children; (*c*) this interpretation seems much more in accordance with the context. The verses are therefore to be understood as meaning — John mourned in urging repentance, our Lord rejoiced in gospel liberty and preaching, but both alike were only ridiculed by the Jews. *Markets; market-places* (Revised Version); for there is no thought of the children helping their elders in traffic. *And calling* (*which call*, Revised Version) *unto their fellows.* Addressing them, but not necessarily noisily (Luke vi. 13; xiii. 12).

Ver. 18.—**For John came neither eating** (ch. iii. 4) **nor drinking** (Luke i. 15), **and they say, He hath a devil**; *i.e.* he is possessed of strange and melancholy fancies (see Bishop Westcott on John vii. 20).

Ver. 19.—**The Son of man** (ch. viii. 20, note) **came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold** (ἰδού, simply demonstrative, as in the LXX. of 1 Sam. xxiv. 12; 2 Sam. xxiv. 22) **a man gluttonous** (*a glutonous man*, Revised Version, for the Greek, ἄνθρωπος φάγος, merely reproduced the original Semitic order), **and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners** (ch. ix. 10, note). *A friend.* The idea of affection, which through common use of the words has fallen so much into the background both in the Greek φίλος and our English "friend," is brought out clearly in the Syriac *roh'mo*, which is, perhaps, the very word that our Lord spoke. **But**; *and* (Revised Version); καί: *i.e.* and yet, whatever you may say. **Wisdom**; *i.e.* the Divine wisdom, by which all creation was made (Prov. viii. 22—31; Wisd. vii. 22), and which is the source of all true understanding (Prov. viii. 12—16), particularly of the will of God (Wisd. vii. 27, 28; comp. Luke xi. 49, "The Wisdom of God" speaking in Scripture). **Is justified** (ἐδικαιώθη). The aorist is used either as expressing what is *wont* to happen (Madvig, § 111, Rem. *a*), or perhaps as expressing the completeness of the justification (cf. ἐβλήθη, John xv. 6). Nösgen, contrary to New Testament usage, understands ἐδικαιώθη as meaning "is *condemned* because of her works" ("So haben sie die Weisheit . . . um ihrer Werke willen verurtheilt"), but the ordinary interpretation holds good that she is acquitted of any error or wrong. **Of her children**; *works* (Revised Version); ἀπὸ τῶν ἔργων αὐτῆς, with the Sinaitic manuscript and the original hand of the Vatican, besides some of the versions. The common reading, τέκνων, has come from Luke. In these words lie the chief difficulty of this difficult sentence. *Of* (ἀπό) may be used of agents (comp. Jas. i. 13; v. 4; Luke vi. 18, almost as though it were ὑπό), but it is more natural to understand it here of the causes or reasons for the verdict. And ἀπό thus gives an excellent sense. Our Lord says that the Divine Wisdom is justified in the minds of men from the results she brings about. Of what is he thinking? Doubtless moral results, and probably those found in the change that might be seen in the publicans and sinners of which he has just been speaking. The Divine Wisdom, which appeared to the careless and unsympathetic so strange and changeable in her methods, is, notwithstanding, pronounced to be in the right, because of the results of her activity, the men and the women brought under her influence. These καιναὶ κτίσεις (2 Cor. v. 17; Gal. vi. 15) are always the best justification of misunderstood plans. While, however, this seems the best interpretation of the sentence as recorded in Matthew, it must be confessed that in Luke it appears more natural to understand "her children" as those who justify her; and further, this was probably St. Luke's own interpretation. For he seems to purposely give an explanation of the apothegm in the verses (Luke vii. 29, 30) by which he joins the equivalent of our vers. 16—19 to the equivalent of our ver. 11. He there tells us that all the people and the publicans "justified God," having been baptized with the baptism of John, but the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected God's plan towards them, not having been baptized by him. Wisdom's children justified her; others did not. Anyhow, ἔργων would appear to be the more original of the two terms, for with the explanation preferred above, τέκνων would be very easily derived from it. It may, indeed, be due to a more primitive confusion between עֲלִילָתָא ("her works," cf. Eccles. ix. 1) and עַבְדָתָא ("her servants," Hebrew עֶבֶד), this last word being commonly rendered δοῦλοι, and, perhaps through παῖδες, even υἱοί and τέκνα (cf. Resch, 'Agrapha,' p. 277), but even then it is unlikely that the former and harder reading should be only due to a mistake for the latter. That the harder and metaphorical should be changed into the easier and more literal, even as early as St. Luke's time, appears much more probable.

Vers. 20—24.—*Woe on those who reject him.* The parallel passage, Luke x. 12—15, comes almost at the close of the commission to the seventy. It is represented in the commission reported by St. Matthew by ch. x. 15 alone, which is almost verbally identical with ver. 24. It is possible that St. Matthew or the author of the source

used by him did not care to interrupt the subject of ch. x. by inserting more of these verses there, even though that place more nearly represented their original position. Observe that here they are connected with the rejection of John and of our Lord; in Luke, with the rejection of his disciples and of himself in them.

Ver. 20.—In Matthew only. It seems to be a kind of introduction, like ver. 7*a*, perhaps marking vers. 20—24 as a fresh section in the discourses. It serves more particularly as an explanation why our Lord especially mentioned these cities. **Then began he to upbraid** (ch. v. 11, note; comp. also Mark xvi. 14) **the cities wherein most of his mighty works** (ch. vii. 22, note) **were done, because they repented not.** "Quilibet auditor Nov. Test. est aut multo beatior (ver. 11) aut multo miserior antiquis" (Bengel).

Ver. 21.—**Woe unto thee, Chorazin.** The modern *Kerâzeh*, two miles from the north-west bank of the sea of Galilee. Among its ruins are the remains of a synagogue. The corn of both it and *Kephar Ahim* (probably Capernaum) was so excellent as to make R. Jose say that, had they been nearer Jerusalem, it would have been used for the temple offerings (Talm. Bab., 'Menachoth,' 85*a*; see Neubauer, 'Geogr.,' p. 220. There appears, however, to be a slight doubt about the reading of both names, see Rabbinovicz, 'Var. Lect.,' *in loc.*). **Woe unto thee, Bethsaida.** Schürer (I. ii. 14; compare, however, II. i. 136) thinks that this is probably not identical with the large town Bethsaida Julias on the east bank of the Jordan as it enters the sea of Galilee. It is, perhaps, *Khan Minyeh* (Nösgen), and if so was a little south-west of Capernaum. **For if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon.** The transposition of parts of these clauses in the Revised Version approaches more closely the order of the Greek, and better preserves the double emphasis there given. *Tyre and Sidon* (Ezek. xxviii.). **They would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes** (Jonah iii. 6; Dan. ix. 3; Esth. iv. 1; comp. also Job ii. 8; 2 Sam. iii. 31; and Ezekiel's description of the effect of Tyre's punishment upon her princes, xxvi. 16).

Ver. 22.—**But**; πλήν: *howbeit* (Revised Version). Setting this aside (comp. Bishop Lightfoot, on Phil. iii. 16); whatever might have been does not matter; this shall be. **I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment** (ch. x. 15, note) **than for you.** "Pessimis pejores erant et insanabiliores" (Wetstein).

Ver. 23.—**And thou, Capernaum** (ch. iv. 13, note), **which art exalted unto heaven;** *Shalt thou be exalted unto heaven?* (Revised Version); Μὴ ἕως οὐρανοῦ ὑψωθήσῃ; *i.e.* Shalt thou be raised high in public estimation, as thou thinkest, who art so proud of thy share in the busy and gay life on the lake-side? **Shalt be brought down to hell;** *thou shalt go down unto Hades* (Revised Version). The change of voice in the two clauses (ὑψωθήσῃ . . . καταβήσῃ) may imply that if thou art indeed raised, it will be by Another; but if thou fallest, it will be by thyself. Observe that our Lord's words are an adaptation of Isaiah's address to the King of Babylon (Isa. xiv. 13—15). **For if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom** (transposed in the Revised Version, as in ver. 21), **it would have remained until this day.** In this verse the stress lies on the effect of the moral attitude; in ver. 21, on the moral attitude itself.

Ver. 24 (see notes *supra*, vers. 20—24 and ch. x. 15).

Vers. 25—30.—In close connexion with the preceding.

Vers. 25, 26: Christ professes his full acceptance of his Father's plan, on both its sides.

Ver. 27: And says that all his work is due to and conditioned by the Father.

Vers. 28—30: Yet freely invites all to him.

Observe that, whether by "accident" or "design," vers. 25—30 are a statement of the good news contained in the expression, "Jesus the Son of God," while ch. xii. 1—8 leads us to regard him as the Son of man.

Vers. 25—27.—Parallel passage: Luke x. 21, 22, where the verses are recorded immediately after the return of the seventy. We know no other occasion which would be so likely to evoke this utterance. Although it is just possible that the seventy returned when our Lord was addressing the people in the manner related in the preceding verses of this chapter, it seems much more likely that a sense of a moral and not of a temporal connexion guided St. Matthew in his arrangement. What is true in a time of success (Luke x. 17, 18) is equally true in a time of failure (vers. 20—24). Observe the difference in the style of ver. 27 (Luke x. 22) from that of vers. 25, 26, suggesting the use of another, apparently Johannine, source. But this must have been added before either St. Matthew or St. Luke incorporated the passage. Observe that the comparatively

early date thus indicated for Johannine phraseology suggests that the language and form of the Fourth Gospel underwent a long process of development before St. John completed his work.

Ver. 25.—**At that time**; *season* (Revised Version); *ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ καιρῷ*. St. Luke's phrase ("in that very hour," *ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ*) is more precise, definitely connecting the utterance with the return of the seventy. St. Matthew's refers rather to that stage or period in his ministry (cf. ch. xii. 1; xiv. 1). **Jesus answered.** Only in Matthew. If we could suppose this to be the original context of the passage, the "answer" would probably refer to some expression of astonishment or complaint at his solemn statement in vers. 20—24. Professor Marshall's derivation of both "answered" and "rejoiced" (Luke) from a common Aramaic original (*Expositor*, April, 1891) appears very strained. **And said, I thank thee**; better, as the Revised Version margin, *praise* (*ἐξομολογοῦμαί σοι*). There is no thought of gratitude, but of publicity in assent (Luke xxii. 6), in confession (ch. iii. 6) and in acknowledgment (Rom. xiv. 11; Phil. ii. 11), and thus of praise (Josh. vii. 19; Ezra x. 11 (Lucian); 2 Chron. xxx. 22; Rom. xv. 9). It implies a profession of personal acceptance by Christ of God's methods. "I profess to thee my entire and joyful acquiescence in what thou doest." Hence St. Luke introduces the utterance by *ἠγαλλιάσατο*, adding *τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ*, thus giving us a glimpse of the unity of purpose and feeling inherent in the Trinity, even during the time that the Word "tabernacled among us." **O Father.** *Father* occurs in ch. vi. 9; xxvi. 39; Luke xxiii. 34, 46; John xi. 41; xii. 27; xvii. 1; in fact, in all the recorded prayers of our Lord except ch. xxvii. 46, which is a quotation, and where the phrase, "My God, my God," emphasizes his sense of desolation. The word expresses perfect relationship and intimate communion. It points to the trust, the love, and the obedience of Christ, and to the depth of natural affection and confidence (if we may say so) between him and the First Person of the Trinity. It suggests mercies in the past, care in the present, and provision for the future. **Lord of heaven and earth.** Acts xvii. 24, by St. Paul, who may have derived it from these words of our Lord (Resch, 'Agrapha,' p. 150), or perhaps from Ps. cxlvi. 6 or Isa. xlii. 5. As "Father" was the note of personal relationship, so is this of sovereign majesty. Christ unites the thought of God's love to himself with that of his ownership of all creation, thus paving the way for the main subject of the prayer—his Father's method of dealing with men of various kinds and tempers.

**Because**; *that* (Revised Version), perhaps as more idiomatic with "thank." But *ὅτι* here gives, not the contents of the "thanksgiving," but the reason for it. **Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.** The laws by which religious impressions are received, whether ultimately for good or for evil (2 Cor. ii. 15, 16; John ix. 39), are here attributed to God. Observe that the sentence is not a kind of hendiadys, but that Christ accepts his Father's action in both directions. The one is the subject of his entire acquiescence as much as the other. *Hast hid . . . hast revealed.* The aorists (cf. ver. 19, note) may be understood here as either (1) describing what took place in each case, or (2) regarding God's action as a whole from the standpoint of the hereafter (cf. Rom. viii. 29, 30). *These things.* The truths respecting Christ's teaching and work. In this context the reference would be to the general contents of vers. 2—24. *From the wise and prudent;* i.e. as such (there is no article). For mental excellence and intelligence (*vide infra*) in themselves cannot grasp spiritual truths, but are, on the contrary, often means by which the veil between man and God is made thicker. On the difference between "wise" (*σοφοί*) and "prudent" (*συνετοί, understanding*, Revised Version), see Bishop Lightfoot, on Col. i. 9. (For the general truth, cf. Job xxxvii. 24; 1 Cor. i. 19—27.) *And hast revealed them* (ch. xiii. 11, note); for even the most guileless heart has no power to see spiritual truths unless God draws back the veil. *Unto babes* (*νηπίοις*). The thought is of their helplessness and dependence. In comparison with the Pharisees and scribes, all our Lord's disciples were little more (cf. ch. xxi. 16).

Ver. 26.—**Even so**; *yea* (Revised Version); *ναί*. A renewed acceptance of the immediately preceding facts. **Father.** In ver. 25, *Πάτερ*: here, *ὁ Πατήρ*. There the term referred more directly to God as his own Father; here to him as Father of all, notwithstanding the methods he used. **For.** Giving the reason of Christ's acceptance. *That* (Revised Version margin) would make this clause closely dependent on the preceding. But this seems unnatural. **So**; *i.e.* in this double method. It seemed good (*it was well-pleasing*, Revised Version) **in thy sight** (*εὐδοκία ἐγένετο*); literally, *it was good pleasure before thee*—an Aramaism equivalent to "it was thy will" (compare the Targum of Judg. xiii. 23; 1 Sam. xii. 22 [רעוא קדם יי]; see also ch. xviii. 14). The phrase implies, not merely that it seemed good to God, but that, in a sense, it was his pleasure. For the workings out of the laws of truth must give pleasure to the

God of truth. (On the aorist ἐγένετο, see ver. 25, note.)

Ver. 27.—**All things.** Not in the widest sense, for this would forestall ch. xxviii. 18; but all things that are required for my work of manifesting the truth. The utterance is thus both closely parallel to John viii. 28, and also in most intimate connexion with the preceding verses. God's twofold action in hiding the truth from some and revealing it to others is, our Lord says, all of a piece with my whole work. This is all arranged by my Father, and the knowledge of God by any man is no chance matter. **Are delivered unto me**; *have been delivered* (Revised Version); rather, *were delivered* (παρεδόθη). Here also it is possible to interpret the aorist from the standpoint of the hereafter (ver. 25, note); but, as it is immediately followed by the present tense, it more probably refers to some time earlier than that at which our Lord was speaking. The time of his entrance on the world naturally suggests itself. Observe that here, when bringing out his dependence upon his Father, our Lord lays stress on the notion of transmission (παρεδόθη); but in ch. xxviii. 18, where he is bringing out his post-resurrection greatness (Phil. ii. 9), he merely mentions his authority as an absolute gift (ἐδόθη). Notice the contrast implied in παρεδόθη to the Jewish παράδοσις. The Pharisees boasted that their tradition came from God, though through many hands; Christ claimed to have received his from God himself. **Of** (ὑπό). For the transmission was immediate; there were no links between the Giver and the Receiver (cf. Bishop Lightfoot, on Gal. i. 12). **My Father**; *me . . . my.* Observe the double claim; his unique position as Teacher is due to his unique relation by nature. **And no man knoweth**; *i.e.* with a gradual, but at last complete, perception (ἐπιγινώσκει). In the Gospels this word is used of the knowledge of God and of Christ in this verse alone, though such a reference is especially suited to its meaning of perfection of knowledge (cf. Bishop Lightfoot, Col. i. 9). **The Son.** Not "me," because Christ wished to bring out more clearly his unique relation to God, and thus to emphasize the impossibility of any one, even an advanced disciple, fully knowing him. **But the Father.** Not "his Father." It may be that Christ wishes to include the suggestion that after all there is a sense in which his Father is the Father of all men, but more probably, by making ὁ πατήρ completely parallel to ὁ υἱός, he wishes to suggest that the full idea of Sonship and Fatherhood is nowhere else so fully satisfied. **Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.** The connexion is—You may think this (*i.e.* ver. 25) strange, but I alone have that knowledge of God which enables me to understand his ways; I alone, yet others also, if I reveal him to them. As St. Luke expressed it in his form of our ver. 19, "Wisdom is justified of her children" (comp. also John xiv. 9). *To whomsoever.* Though but a babe (ver. 25). *Will reveal; willeth to reveal* (Revised Version); βούληται . . . ἀποκαλύψαι. Not "is commanded," for Christ claims equality (see Chrysostom). Notice the idea of plan and deliberation, and not that of mere desire, unable, perhaps, to assign a reason for its existence (θέλω); cf. Philem. 13, 14.

Vers. 28—30.—In Matthew only. Ver. 28: An invitation to all who need him, and an unconditioned promise of welcome. Ver. 29: A summons to submit to his teaching, and a promise that those who do so shall find rest in it. Ver. 30: For his "service is perfect freedom."

Notice the sharp contrast between the width of this invitation and the apparent limitation of the preceding statement (ver. 27). The truths of prevenient grace and man's free-will may not be separated.

Ver. 28.—**Come** (δεῦτε); ch. iv. 19, note. There is less thought of the process of coming than in the very similar invitation in John vii. 37. **Unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden.** The toilers and burdened (οἱ κοπιῶντες καὶ πεφορτισμένοι). Our Lord purposely did not define in what the toil and burden consisted; for he would include all, from whatever quarter their toil and burden came. But since the spiritual is the central part of man (ch. v. 3, note), the more that the toil or burden is felt there so much the stronger would our Lord's reference to it be. He would therefore be inviting most especially those that toil in legal ways of righteousness (Rom. x. 2, 3), and are burdened under Pharisaic enactments (Luke xi. 46). **And I.** Emphatic (κἀγώ). However others may treat you. **Will give you rest** (ἀναπαύσω ὑμᾶς). Not to be identified with the phrase in ver. 29 (see there). As contrasted with παύω (see Bishop Lightfoot, on Philem. 7 and on Ignat., 'Eph.,' § 2), ἀναπαύω refers to temporary rather than permanent cessation from work, and it thus especially connotes refreshment of body and soul obtained through such rest. In conformity with this we find ἀνάπαυσις regularly used in the LXX. as a translation of *sabbathon* ("sabbath-keeping," *e.g.* Exod. xvi. 23, for which σαββατισμός comes in Heb. iv. 9 as an equivalent). The thought, therefore, here is not that those who come

to Christ will have no more work, but that Christ will give them at once such rest and refreshment of soul that they may be fit for work, should God have any in store for them.

Ver. 29.—Vers. 29, 30 have so much in common with both the language and the thought of Ecclus. li. 26, 27, that probably this passage was in our Lord's mind. It is noteworthy that most of the other signs of acquaintance with Ecclesiasticus are found in the Epistle of St. James (cf. Edersheim, in the 'Speaker's Commentary' on Ecclesiasticus, p. 22). **Take my yoke upon you.** For there is work to be done, therefore enter on it. The yoke is the service that Christ gives us to do, and therefore implies more than his teaching. This, however, is so important a part of his service, both in itself and as being the means of knowing what he wishes done, that Christ speaks of it as though almost identical with his yoke. (On the figure of the yoke, compare a note by Professor Ryle and Mr. James, in 'Psalms of Solomon,' vii. 8, suggesting that our Lord was contrasting his yoke with the yoke of minute legal observance laid upon the people by the scribes and Pharisees. For a detailed description of the yoke and plough used now in Palestine, see an article by Dr. Post in the Quarterly Statement of the Palestine Exploration for 1891, p. 112.) **And learn of me.** The figure of the oxen passes into that of the scholars. The "of" is slightly ambiguous, and may refer to Christ as the Example from which they may draw the lesson for themselves (ch. xxiv. 32), or as the Teacher who will himself instruct them (Col. i. 7). The second meaning is more suitable here. (For the thought, comp. John viii. 31.) **For.** The reason why they should learn from him and no other teacher. He alone was what he claimed to teach, therefore he alone could teach it properly, and therefore from him alone could they learn that type of character which they ought to develop. **I am.** Observe the claim. It is almost greater than that of ver. 27. **Meek.** Primarily, as regards God (ch. v. 5, note). Receiving in my degree whatever yoke my Father puts on me. **And lowly in heart.** As regards men. Observe that *meek* and *lowly* correspond, though the order is reversed, to "He humbled himself and became obedient" (Phil. ii. 8, where ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτόν does not refer to the Incarnation (ἐκένωσεν ἑαυτόν), but to his relation to others in this world). *In heart* (ch. v. 8, note). "Lowly in heart" very nearly corresponds to "he that is of a lowly spirit." Such a person as Christ's experience shows (Phil. ii. 9) "shall obtain honour" (Prov. xxix. 23). **And ye shall find rest unto your souls.** In this learning and service. The words are taken from Jer. vi. 16 (not the LXX.; cf. also Ecclus. vi. 28), where they form the promise given to those that ask for the old paths and walk in the good way of the Divine commandments. But these roads were now more clearly made known in Christ. Observe the full force of the two expressions, *I will give you rest* (ver. 28), and *Ye shall find rest*. The tired comers are at once refreshed by Christ; these accept his service and teaching, and in performing it find further rest. The first rest may be termed the peace of justification; the second, that of sanctification. Both are obtained through Christ alone, yet they are not to be confused, much less identified, with one another.

Ver. 30.—**For.** The fact of my giving work will not prevent this rest, but the contrary. **My yoke is easy** (χρηστός); *suave*, Latin; "softe" (Wickliffe); "sweete" (Rheims). And so are God's judgments (Ps. cxix. 39, 'Psalms of Solomon,' viii. 38). Contrast Ecclus. xxviii. 19, 20. **And my burden is light.** For "his commandments are not grievous" (1 John v. 3). "Omnia levia sunt caritati" (Augustine, in Meyer).

## HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—6.—*The message of John.* I. HIS QUESTION. 1. *Its cause.* He had heard the works of Christ. He was in prison, in the gloomy fortress of Machærus. He had been there six months at least, perhaps much longer. But he was not kept wholly without knowledge of the outer world; his disciples were allowed access to him; they related to him the mighty works of the great Prophet of Galilee. Nothing could interest John more deeply. The works were the works of the Christ, the Messiah; such as were attributed to him by the prophets. They would naturally fill the thoughts of the Baptist, and form the great subject of conversation between him and his disciples. 2. *Its meaning.* "Art thou he that should come, or are we to look for another?" What could the Baptist mean? He had witnessed the descent of the Holy Spirit upon our Lord; he had borne witness that he was the Son of God, the heavenly Bridegroom; he had pointed him out to his own disciples as the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world: how could he have any doubt about his

Messiahship? Probably he was not the man he had been. The long imprisonment had told upon him. It must have been especially irksome to one who had been so long accustomed to the free open life of the wilderness. Confinement, enforced inactivity, with no work, no employment for his ardent energies, tamed the spirit that had been so strong. Perhaps he sank at times into seasons of melancholy like Elijah his prototype. It may well have been so: he was a high saint of God, very bold and full of strength, but he was human; and human nature has, and must have, its inconsistencies and weaknesses. No man lives at all times up to his highest level; and it has been often noticed that God's saints fail sometimes in that very grace which is their most striking characteristic; Elijah, for instance, in courage, Moses in meekness, Peter in steadfastness. John had heard in the prison the works of Christ; but he had heard also from his disciples how he sat at meat with publicans and sinners; he had heard that his apostles had not adopted the ascetic life; he had heard that he had not publicly announced himself as the Messiah. It may be that he was somewhat disappointed. He longed for something decisive; he longed, perhaps, to see the wrath of God manifested against the profligacy of Herod, against the hollow hypocrisy of the Pharisees. He wished, perhaps, to urge Jesus to declare himself openly, to use his Divine power to put down sin and to introduce the reign of righteousness; he wished to accelerate the march of the Divine purpose. He had waited long; and now he had been a whole winter, perhaps more, cooped up in prison. It is no wonder if he became sometimes impatient; no wonder if the reports (somewhat coloured, it may be, by the prejudices of his disciples) which he heard of the teaching and actions of Jesus, so holy, and yet in some respects so unlike his own, disappointed and perplexed him. He would have been more than human if, under such circumstances, his faith had never failed him. Holy Scripture presents to us men as they really were. It does not draw ideal pictures; it exhibits the imperfections as well as the graces of holy men. We should be very thankful for this. It is one of the secondary evidences of the simple truthfulness of God's Word, and it offers to us a more interesting study, a more encouraging lesson. An ideal character has far less human interest than the actual portrait of a real man; and the thought that the saints of the Bible, who conquered in the fight and won the crown of life, were partakers of our sins and weaknesses is full of encouragement and help to us. Doubtless the result of the message tended to strengthen the faith of the messengers; but to suppose that this was the one object of the message seems to introduce an element of unreality into the Baptist's conduct. "Art thou he that should come?" There is a wavering sometimes, an agonizing doubt in the hearts of the best of God's servants. It comes from the temptations of the evil one; it arises sometimes, as perhaps in the case of the Baptist, partly from physical causes. The mortal body weigheth down the mind; it is to good men the most distressing of trials. The Baptist sent to the Lord in his difficulties; he put the question to him clearly and plainly. So we must come direct to Christ when we are troubled with the like perplexities. He will be gracious unto us, as he was to John, as he was to Thomas. He will give us peace in believing, helping us to persevere, like the Baptist, steadfast unto the end. "Are we to look for another?" No; there is none other Saviour, no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. We look only for him, for fuller manifestations of his grace; we look for his coming, when he shall make this body of our humiliation like unto the body of his glory.

*II.* THE LORD'S ANSWER. 1. *He directs the messengers to his works.* He does not affirm his Messiahship in words; he did so to the woman of Samaria; he did so to the man born blind; now he points to his works. The Lord adapts his teaching to the circumstances of each case, to the different characters, the varying spiritual needs of his disciples. Deeds are more convincing than words. If we would convince others of the deep reality of the experiences of personal religion, we must show its power in our lives. Words, glowing descriptions, will not convince; we must exhibit in the quiet, humble life of holiness the power of the Lord working in our hearts. The lives of God's saints are the best evidence to unbelievers of the strength of Christian motives, and of the reality of the promised help of the Holy Spirit; they are the facts which prove the presence and the energy of the great Cause. 2. *What those works were.* (1) They were the works of the Christ, his proper works, the works attributed to him by

the prophets. They proved that Jesus was the Christ; they were signs, evidences of his Divine origin, of his sacred office. John's disciples had now seen some of these great works with their own eyes; they were to report to their master the things which they had seen and heard. There is no evidence like that of an eye-witness. Such is the evidence of the apostles: "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you." It is the best evidence which we can give to others of the power of the Christ now: "We know it, we have felt it;" but only those whose lives are pure and holy can give that most convincing proof. (2) They were works of mercy; they were wonders, such as might be expected from the Son of God. The presence of God in the world could not be without some attestation; it must bring with it accompanying miracles. The Incarnation, the most mysterious of miracles, seems to necessitate a train of lesser miracles; it could not stand alone; an event of such overwhelming magnitude must imply momentous issues, and must be surrounded by stupendous circumstances. (3) But among these miracles of power there is one miracle of grace. "The poor have the gospel preached to them." It was a strange thing then—a thing unheard of. The Gentile teachers despised the poor and ignorant; so did the Jewish rabbis (John vii. 49). It was Christianity that first taught men to care for the poor, Christ who first set the holy example. It was a change, a miraculous change wrought among the nations by the power of Christ's religion. Isaiah had mentioned it as one of the works of the Christ (lxi. 1). And still to care really for the poor, to teach them, to preach Christ to them, is one of the marks of genuine piety and love of Christ. These were the appointed works of the Christ. They had been wrought by the Lord Jesus. He was the Christ; there was no room for doubt. 3. *The blessedness of simple faith.* Some were offended. They found stumbling-blocks in our Lord's humility, in the lowliness of his earthly surroundings, in his tenderness to outcasts and sinners, in his long-suffering patience, in his delay to execute judgment. Perhaps John the Baptist himself found for a time a stumbling-block in some of these things. Blessed is he who is not offended in Christ; who recognizes Christ's spiritual greatness, Christ's infinite goodness, Christ's deep and holy love. Blessed is he who sees nothing in Christ to repel, but everything to attract and to convince. He is blessed, for he will find in Christ all that he needs—peace, comfort, hope, rest for his soul. Such blessedness, we may be sure, the holy Baptist found, even if he wavered for a moment through that human frailty which belonged even to his exalted character.

LESSONS. 1. God's saints are not perfect; follow them, but as they followed Christ. 2. Trials of faith will come; be steadfast, looking unto Jesus. 3. Go straight to him in all your difficulties. 4. Meditate much on his holy life; it is one of the greatest helps to faith.

Vers. 7—19.—*The Lord's testimony to John the Baptist.* I. HIS CHARACTER. 1. *He was no reed shaken by the wind.* The multitudes who had now heard John's message and the Lord's answer had once gone into the wilderness to see the Baptist, drawn thither by the powerful attraction of his preaching and character. What had they found there? Were they disappointed? Was he unlike the report which they had heard of him? Was he weak, vacillating, wavering hither and thither like the reeds that grew on the banks of Jordan? No; he was one of the strongest of men. They must not misunderstand him; they must not judge him harshly. He had shown some disappointment, it may be, some impatience. The Christ, whom he had so gladly welcomed, had not in all respects fulfilled his expectations; some doubts had perplexed his soul. But who was there born of women who was always steadfast, absolutely independent of outward circumstances and mental depression? John was a great and holy man, an example of firm and constant courage. We must honour good men; we must not magnify the occasional weaknesses which must appear even in the noblest lives. Envious men exaggerate these little blemishes; the world loves to dwell upon the faults of God's people. Christ teaches us to admire the beauty of holiness, and not to talk about the imperfections which must be found even in real saints. 2. *He was no self-indulgent man.* He was not clothed in soft raiment, like those courtiers of Herod Antipas who were persecuting him. They lived in kings' houses; he chose the wilderness for his abode. He was wholly unworldly, a very hero of self-denial. 3. *He was a prophet.* He was commissioned by God, he spoke for God.

But he was more than a prophet, for he himself was the subject of prophecy, and he was (what no other prophet had been) the immediate forerunner of the Christ. He was the messenger of whom that prophet, whose name signifies "My messenger," had spoken. He was the messenger of God, and he prepared the way of God. It is worthy of notice that the words, "Thy way before *thee*," of the Gospel answer to the words, "The way before *me*," in the prophecy. In the unity of the Godhead there is a distinction of Personality. The Father sends the Son; the Lord of hosts comes himself; for "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Therefore John was more than a prophet, standing as he did in such very close relations with the Lord of whom the prophets spoke.

II. HIS GREATNESS. 1. *There had been no greater man than he.* From the beginning, through the long years of the world's history, no one had surpassed John in all that constitutes real greatness. In loftiness of soul, in singleness of purpose, in disinterestedness, in heroic self-denial, he stands almost alone, seldom equalled, never surpassed. Such was the judgment of the Lord Jesus Christ. It throws a light from heaven upon the confusion of the world, and shows where real greatness is to be found; not always in king's houses, not always among the rich, the high born, the luxurious. The greatest of men is he who is nearest to Christ, who humbles himself the most, who most denies himself, who is the most steadfast, the most decided in the cause of religion. True greatness is measured by self-denial, by humility, by devotion, by purity of heart and life. 2. *Yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater.* What encouragement there is in these words! There had been none greater than John; but the humblest Christian is in some sense greater yet—greater, that is, in privileges, in advantages, in gifts of grace. The kingdom of heaven is the Church of Christ, and all the members of that Church have very high and holy privileges—that fellowship which is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ, the gift of the Spirit, the Word of God, the holy sacraments, all the precious means of grace. "Many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them." John had not seen what the Lord's disciples saw, he had not heard what we have heard; he knew not the blessed story of the cross. He had not our privileges; he had not the helps which we have. He was not himself a member of the Church of Christ, the kingdom of heaven upon earth. He announced it. Those who are in that kingdom are higher in spiritual privileges than the herald of the kingdom. If they used those precious means of grace as they ought, they might be higher in sanctity even than the holy Baptist. Then to be a Christian, to have those sacred privileges, involves an awful responsibility—a very high and holy hope.

III. HIS MINISTRY HAD DONE ITS WORK. 1. *The kingdom of heaven was come.* John had announced its coming; it was at hand, he said. Now it was come; it was manifested in the world. The preaching and miracles of Christ had excited a wide and deep interest throughout Palestine. He was followed everywhere by eager multitudes. The enthusiasm for a time was boundless, the excitement intense. They sought to take him by force to make him a King. The kingdom of heaven was suffering violence. There may have been something of undisciplined zeal, of unchastened enthusiasm. It may be that many of these violent ones did not continue steadfast when the days of trial came. But now they crowded into the ranks of Christ's disciples; they offered to follow him whithersoever he went. There was a mighty movement. The kingdom of God was preached, and every man was pressing into it. There is a holy violence, a sacred zeal; but it must be zeal according to knowledge—the zeal of St. Paul or St. John, not a troubled wave of popular excitement. However, this enthusiasm, even if not lasting in all men, was better far than indifference; it showed a real interest in Divine things; it showed that the kingdom was come. 2. *Prophecy was being fulfilled.* The prophets had foretold the coming kingdom; the Law, too, had prophesied through its institutions, its ritual, its sacrifices. All was type and prophecy until John; John was the last of the Old Testament prophets. There was no need of types now that the antitype had appeared. Prophets were no longer raised up to predict the salvation of the Messiah; for he was in the world. 3. *It was fulfilled in John the Baptist.* John himself was the Elijah of whom the Prophet Malachi had spoken; he had gone before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah. He was not, indeed, the Elijah whom the

Jews expected, in their literal interpretation of the prophecy—the actual Elijah of the Old Testament, whom Elisha beheld as he went up by a whirlwind into heaven. But he was the Elijah of whom Malachi had spoken; Elijah's second self, his representative; a reproduction of his character, filled and animated with his spirit. 4. *The importance of this warning.* Not all would receive it. People expected a literal Elijah; they would not believe that John was the Elijah of prophecy. They expected a Messiah very different from Jesus, a kingdom very different from that kingdom which was not of this world. But let them listen who had ears to hear, whose spiritual senses were not blunted by the tradition and formalism of the Pharisees. The Lord called for fixed, earnest attention. It was a solemn truth which he proclaimed. The kingdom of heaven was in the world; it was come near to his hearers. It was a momentous announcement. To enter into that kingdom was a blessing unutterable; to reject it involved a tremendous condemnation. For that kingdom was from heaven, and its Head was the heavenly King himself. Listen, and come. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

IV. BUT THE JEWS WOULD NEITHER LISTEN TO THE FOREBUNNER NOR TO THE KING HIMSELF. 1. *Their opposition to the Baptist.* The Jews in our Lord's time were perverse; they were like wilful children who will not be amused. They reproached John with his asceticism; they said it was severe and unsocial. John (they said) separated himself from society; he would not share in its amusements; his austerity was unnatural, ungenial; he had no sympathy with human life. "We have piped unto you," they said, "and ye have not danced." They did not understand his lofty character. He was not of the world; he had higher aspirations, holier joys; he did not need the pleasures which so many seek; he had no taste for these things, for his whole heart was given to God and to the world to come. That sensuality which he condemned, those festivities which he shunned, brought him to the martyr's death. 2. *Their opposition to Christ.* He lived a social life among men, sharing in their innocent enjoyments. He would have us sanctify the whole life, its business and its recreations, as well as its times of prayer and devotion. Therefore he set us an example in all the relations of life. He worked as a carpenter at Nazareth; he mixed freely with men, accepting invitations from time to time, even when publicans and sinners were to sit at meat with him. His conduct was condemned as well as that of the Baptist. Men called him, in their wicked slander, a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber. It was a cruel falsehood; he was absolutely holy, in all things temperate and self-denying. But his exalted goodness excited their jealousy and malice. They hated it; they writhed under the consciousness of his greatness and their own littleness. And so they set themselves to invent malicious falsehoods. They contrasted his life with the asceticism of the Pharisees and the disciples of John. He and his disciples fasted not as they did. They had mourned unto him, and he had not lamented. The world hates holiness; it will attribute unworthy motives to the best of men; it will misrepresent their conduct and try to blacken their character. Whatever they do, whether they live in society or in retirement, they will not escape censorious criticism. Some will be called self-indulgent, others harsh and puritanical. They must not be distressed. They are not alone in this unkind treatment, these false constructions. They suffer no more than the Baptist, who in the Lord's judgment was inferior to no one that had been born of women; no more than the Lord Christ himself. The ambition of the Christian must be to please the Lord. The world's judgment is a very small matter; the judgment of God is of momentous importance. 3. *But there were a faithful few.* The wisdom of God was justified by the children of God, by those to whom the Lord had given power to become the sons of God. They received the Saviour; they recognized the wisdom of God in his teaching, in his most holy life. They saw that there was wisdom both in the life of the Baptist and in the life of Christ. The mission of the Baptist was not that of Christ. His conduct was suitable for the task assigned to him; so was the life of Christ for his most sacred work. The children of God honour holiness wherever they find it; they recognize true holiness in all its forms, under all its varying aspects. They show in their estimate of others the wisdom which is from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Such are children of wisdom, being children of God.

LESSONS. 1. Honour good men; dwell on their excellences, not on their defects.

2. Take the Lord's estimate of true greatness, not the world's. The world thought Tiberius great; the Lord, John the Baptist. 3. Try to live up to the responsibilities of the Christian life; it is a high dignity to be least in the kingdom of God. 4. Hate slanderous gossip; you may be speaking ill of one whom God will exalt.

Vers. 20—24.—*The Lord's denunciation of judgment.* I. ITS CAUSE. 1. *Knowledge.* The Lord's tone assumes a greater severity—a severity which perhaps favours the view that St. Luke gives (x. 13) the true chronological order. The people of Galilee had seen most of the mighty works of Christ. His life had been long before their eyes; they knew him well; they watched him as he walked in their streets, as he healed the sick, or cleansed the leper, or gave sight to the blind. They knew every feature of that holy face, every tone of that blessed voice. They had been astonished with a great astonishment. But now they were becoming so familiar with the Lord's power that his miracles, it may be, excited less wonder. Perhaps, like the Nazarenes (Luke iv. 23), they were beginning to regard his healing virtue almost as if it were at their disposal, almost as their right. They knew him, or seemed to know him, so well now, that the old excitement had passed away, the intense interest with which they used to regard him was becoming lukewarm. 2. *Obstinate indifference.* They repented not. They had heard his teaching, they had seen his works. There had been excitement, astonishment, enthusiasm; but even that was passing away, and, except in comparatively few, there had been no repentance. Repentance had been the first note of John the Baptist's preaching, the first note of our Lord's; but the message had been unheeded, the works by which the message had been attested had not produced real conviction. All had been done that could be done to bring them to repentance; but they would not come unto Christ that they might have life. And now the Lord upbraids them, not in wrath, but in sorrow; as afterwards he wept over the impenitent Jerusalem. Let us listen to those solemn words, and let us take to our hearts the great truth that repentance, a change of heart, is the essence of personal religion, and that all outward privileges, whatever they may be, are lost upon us if they do not, by the grace of God, produce that inward change.

II. ITS TERMS. 1. *The judgment of Chorazin and Bethsaida.* Bethsaida was the home of three of the apostles. Chorazin, too, it seems, had been often graced by the Lord's presence. They had had great opportunities, but they had failed to use them; and now the woe goes forth against them. "Woe unto thee!" It is a word of judgment, but it is also a word of sorrow (comp. Rev. xviii. 10, 16, 19). The Lord grieves while he pronounces sentence. "Peace be unto thee!" would come more sweetly from the lips of the Prince of Peace; but he could not say "Peace," where there was no peace. The Galilæans, it may be, had often condemned the idolatry and the licentiousness of the great cities which lay near their northern border. But, in truth, the guilt of Tyre and Sidon was not so great as that of Chorazin and Bethsaida. For guilt is measured, not absolutely, as it is seen in the guilty deed; but relatively, in its relations to opportunities, to privileges, to knowledge. The men of Tyre and Sidon had not seen the works of Christ; had they seen them, he himself says, they would have repented. Their knowledge was less; their guilt was less; their condemnation would be less. 2. *The judgment of Capernaum.* (1) It had become the Lord's own city. He had chosen to dwell there when he left the unbelieving Nazareth. The people of Capernaum had known him well and long; they had seen many of his miracles; they had followed him in crowds when he went to the house of Jairus; the maiden whom he had raised from the dead lived among them. The rulers of their synagogue, the centurion who had built it, could bear witness to the power and goodness of the Saviour. They all knew him; they had watched him day after day as he walked by the lake; they had listened, many of them, as he taught sitting in some fishing-boat by the shore. Several of his apostles, Matthew the publican, James and John, Peter and Andrew, were well known at Capernaum; people had talked to them constantly about their Master—his wonder-working power; his unique and unapproachable holiness; his tender, compassionate love; his calm, simple dignity. He had been long one of the principal subjects of talk, one of the great centres of interest, in that little town. All the details of his daily life had been scanned with eager curiosity, all his doings had been watched by observant eyes. But were the people of Capernaum much improved by the presence

of this great Example? Some were; but not the most of them—not the town as a whole. "Shalt thou be exalted unto heaven?" the Lord asks sorrowfully. "No," was the solemn answer; "thou shalt be cast down unto Hades." For the light of God's presence and love had shone in all its glory on Capernaum; and, in the midst of light, its people had turned their backs to the light, and had loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. (2) Capernaum worse than Sodom. The men of Sodom were wicked, and sinners against the Lord exceedingly. The Jews regarded the very name of Sodom with abhorrence and horror. But, in truth, they themselves had sinned more deeply yet; in the very presence of the Son of God they persisted in their sin and hardness. The Lord knew, in the far-reaching range of his Divine knowledge, that the men of Sodom would have repented if they had had the privileges granted to Capernaum. "Therefore," he said in Divine sorrow, "it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee." The words suggest many deep, mysterious, awful thoughts. The Lord does not satisfy our curiosity; he throws a veil over the secrets of the Divine judgment. It is enough for us to know that that judgment is both just and merciful. Account will be taken of circumstances, opportunities, privileges. The heathen will not be judged as the Christians, nor the ignorant as they that have knowledge. Is there hope for them who die unblest? We read this saying of our Lord's; we compare it with other Scriptures—for instance, with the latter part of the sixteenth chapter of Ezekiel; and we feel that "the secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may *do* all the words of this Law." "What is that to thee?" the Lord seems to say to us (as once he said to Peter) when our restless thoughts busy themselves about the dark problems of the mysterious future. "What is that to thee? follow thou me." We have greater privileges than the people of Capernaum. We have the Word of God, his sacraments, the promise of his Spirit. We have not known Christ after the flesh; but we may know him by a holier, a more precious knowledge—the knowledge by which the true sheep know the good Shepherd. Let us fear the condemnation of those who, living in the light, love darkness rather than light; let us use our privileges; let us strive always to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

LESSONS. 1. The heart must be changed; excitement, privileges, will not save us. 2. Pray for that great inner change of repentance; be satisfied with nothing less. 3. Use the means of grace; neglect involves an awful responsibility.

Vers. 25—30.—*The joy of Christ over the penitent.* I. THE THANKSGIVING. 1. *The Father's care for the lowly minded.* (1) The connection as given by St. Luke seems best to explain the Lord's thanksgiving. The seventy had just brought back tidings of their success; the Lord gives thanks for it. But if this discourse as recorded by St. Matthew is to be regarded as a continuous whole, we note here a transition in the Lord's thoughts from the hard-hearted and impenitent to the faithful few. He seems to answer his own thoughts. He had grieved over the impending condemnation of those who had rejected him. In holy communion with the Father he turns to Divine joy over those to whom he had given power to become the sons of God. Such transitions from sorrow to joy are common in the Christian life. (2) The Lord's joy. He rejoiced in spirit, St. Luke tells us. He was "a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." An apocryphal account of his life says that he was often seen to weep, never to smile. But here we read of his joy. It is very sweet and touching to think that amid the bitter sorrows of his self-sacrificing life the Lord Jesus had his hours of joy. It comforts us, as we strive in earnest meditation to sympathize with the suffering Lord, to remember that the long anguish which he endured for us was relieved by some gleams of holy gladness. It is enough for the disciple if he be as his Master. The most afflicted, the most sorrowful life will have its joys, if it is a Christian life; for the Christian who learns of Christ will learn to share his joy. The Lord rejoices, not in earthly comforts, earthly successes, but in the salvation of souls; he layeth the lost sheep on his shoulder, rejoicing; he saith unto his friends, "Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost." The true disciple rejoices in the Lord, in his presence, in communion with him, in his triumphs over evil. And the true disciple, loving the Lord above all things, strives to give him that joy in which he himself tells

us that he rejoices, by a deeper repentance, by an increasing hatred of sin, by a closer walk with Christ, by earnest efforts to draw the wanderers into the fold of the good Shepherd, to feed the sheep which the good Shepherd loved. (3) The cause of his joy. These things, the deep spiritual truths of his kingdom, his exceeding great love, his Divine wisdom, his message of atonement and reconciliation with God, had been hidden from the wise and prudent, from the Pharisees and rabbis of Capernaum; but they were revealed unto babes. Not that Christ rejoiced over the rejection of the wise and prudent. He wept over them. "Ye will not come to me," he said, "that ye might have life." The relation of the two clauses of the sentence is like that in Rom. vi. 17. The wise and prudent would not come to Christ; they would not see the things that belonged to their peace; now they were hidden from their eyes. The Lord rejoices because, although God the Father in his awful justice had now hidden these great truths from those who wilfully closed their eyes to them, he had revealed them unto babes. There were simple-hearted, humble men, even in Capernaum, who received the Saviour's message. To such God had revealed all the blessed truth. They saw it in its beauty and glory. It was to him that all praise was due. He is the Lord of heaven and earth, sovereign in his dealings with men. He doeth all things according to the counsels of his almighty will. But that will is not arbitrary; it is the will of an all-holy Being, who is infinitely just and infinitely merciful. We must believe, in simple trustfulness, in his love and mercy. Only let us come to him, as little children come to a wise and good father; then he will reveal to us all those most holy truths which can be realized in the heart only by a revelation from God. God shines into his people's hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. He reveals his Son in all his grace and love to those who seek him. He had revealed these things, these secrets of peace and holiness, to the lowly disciples of the Saviour; he doth reveal them still to all faithful and humble hearts. For this the Lord Jesus, the incarnate Son, praised the eternal Father. For this we praise him now. "Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight." His will is sovereign; it is holy, just, and good; his will is best. 2. *The Father's love for the Son.* The Lord Jesus seemed a man among men. He was rejected and despised. But, in truth, he was the almighty Son of God. All things had been given into his hand; all power was his. None knew him fully, in all the mystery and glory of his Divine personality, save only God the Father. Nor can any know the Father fully, save the Son. But the Lord adds at once the gracious words, "and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." "No man hath seen God at any time;" he is invisible, he dwelleth in the unapproachable light which no human eye can penetrate; but the only begotten Son hath declared him. He reveals to his chosen all that we need to know, all that man can know, of God and of his relations with mankind. Then the Lord Jesus Christ, who loved us and died for us, is one in the mystery of his being with the adorable Father. Here is our hope and joy. As Man, he is touched with the feeling of our infirmities; as God, he is able to save us to the uttermost.

II. THE GRACIOUS INVITATION. 1. *He invites all.* He had said that no man could know the Father unless the Son willeth to reveal him. But God willeth that all men should be saved. Christ Jesus gave himself a Ransom for all; now he invites all. He knew that not all would come; not all felt the need of a Saviour; therefore he addresses those that labour and are heavy laden. There is much toil in this life of ours—endless, unsatisfactory toil; the poor toil hard for their daily bread; the rich toil in the life of ambition or literature, or in the pursuit of pleasure. That toil will only end in weariness. "Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher; all is vanity." Many, too, are heavy laden, some with the cares of this life, some with pain and sickness, some with the consciousness of sin. All such the gracious Saviour calls. 2. *He bids them come to himself.* There is need of effort in the spiritual life. Men must not lie still, listless, lukewarm, indifferent. They must come. Coming implies spiritual effort; there must be thought, meditation, earnest prayer, a diligent use of all the appointed means of grace. We must rouse up our souls. The prodigal son would never have recovered his lost home if he had remained in the far country. He said, "I will arise, and go." And we must come to *Christ.* He himself is the Centre of his religion. It is not a philosophy, or a code of morals, or a theology, that is to save our souls; it is a Person—the Lord Jesus Christ himself. He can give rest to the weary; he can refresh the toiling, anxious soul; he

can give peace to the mind distracted by bewildering doubts. None could dare say this but only God. Put the words into the mouth of St. Paul or St. John, or any the very greatest of saints; for them to say such things would be arrogant, presumptuous in the extremest degree. But from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ those great words were only the simple truth, words of tenderness and lowliness. The very fact that he stood there in human form, that he uttered those words in human language, that he had submitted to contradiction and rejection, proved his lowliness, his condescension. It would be far otherwise were he not, what we know that he was, the Almighty God. 3. *His yoke and his burden.* But those who would come to him must take up his yoke and his burden. And his yoke is obedience, and his burden is the cross. The yoke seems irksome at first; but we must learn of him. He himself learned obedience by the things which he suffered. And he is meek and lowly in heart. He will teach by his example, by the voice of his Spirit speaking in the soul, all who come to him. He will teach them ever deeper lessons of the calm peace of submission of will, the sweetness of holy obedience. The cross seems at first a heavy burden, sharp and hard to bear. But the Lord Jesus, who himself bore the cross for us in his blessed love, helps his suffering people. He bears the cross for them; he lifts it on their shoulders; he supports it by his strength; and in time the heavy burden comes to be light, according to his gracious promise. He bids us take up our cross daily; only thus can we follow him. He goeth before his people, leading the way to the everlasting rest. Those who follow him shall find rest; rest even here—the restfulness of trusting faith; and at the last, rest in the Paradise of God, where the holy dead rest from their labours; where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

LESSONS. 1. The Lord rejoiced in the salvation of souls; so shall we, if we are truly his. 2. Let us come to Christ as little children; to such he revealeth the deep truths of religion. 3. He invites all to come to him. Let us come. None can give rest, but only he. 4. Let us take up the cross. We must, if we would follow him. Men would separate the cross from the crown; the thing is impossible. God hath joined them together; they cannot be put asunder.

## HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 3.—*A prophet's doubt.* What is most remarkable about this question is that it was put by John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ. Let us look at the doubt in relation to the prophet who felt it.

I. THE SUBJECT OF THE DOUBT. This was most fundamental. Was Jesus the Christ or not? No doubt can be more serious than this. There are many questions which cannot be answered, and people are not to be called sceptics because they do not see all truth. It is impossible to think on the great problems of existence without the most perplexing surmises, and yet while all these unsettled ideas may pass through the mind, it is still possible for faith to be fixed on a rock with a deep conviction of God, and a calm trust in Christ. But we must be clear and decided on these two points—not theoretically, but practically. We cannot understand the Trinity, and we may be quite unable to comprehend the Incarnation. Still, it is of vital importance to know whether indeed Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Saviour of the world, whether we can come to God through him and trust him as our eternal Redeemer.

II. THE RECEPTION OF THE DOUBT. A doubt as to the end of his work is in the mind of the Baptist. Had he made a mistake in pointing to Christ? Consider this man who entertains such a thought. 1. *A prophet.* Inspiration does not prevent personal weakness. Advanced knowledge will not secure us against the invasions of doubt. An apostle was a doubter (John XX. 25). 2. *A good man.* John the Baptist was no deceiver of the people. His heart was right with God. Yet he doubted. Doubt is not sinful in itself. 3. *A privileged man.* John had known Christ, had baptized him. Yet he doubted. It is not enough to know Christ after the flesh. 4. *A religious leader.* It is possible for a great religious teacher to be in error. Does the pope ever have a doubt? Certainly it is foolish for preachers to assume infallibility. Sympathy with doubters by confession of difficulties would be a tie of union between teacher and

learner. Yet the pulpit is not a place in which to air one's doubts. If the teacher is in serious uncertainty as to his message, is he not a blind leader of the blind?

III. THE CAUSES OF THE DOUBT. How dared the black thought venture to roost in the mind of the great prophet? 1. *In disappointment.* Jesus had not developed into the Messiah John had expected. The promising career of the Nazarene seemed to be passing into a simple ministry of preaching and healing. But John had a mistaken idea of the Messiahship. Sometimes doubts arise from the disappointment of erroneous religious notions. 2. *In adversity.* John lay in prison—he who all his life had lived in the wilderness! We need not be astonished that he was depressed. 3. *Without full grounds of assurance.* John never had been exactly a Christian. There is much doubt infecting the border-land of Christian faith.

IV. THE TREATMENT OF THE DOUBT. 1. *Confession.* John did not deny it; he did not hide it in shame; on the contrary, he clearly expressed it. We have half conquered our doubts when we have distinctly stated them. 2. *Inquiry.* John did not rest satisfied with doubt. He sought a solution of his difficulty. 3. *Resorting to Christ.* John sent to Christ. We can best learn about Christ by going straight to Christ. It is wise to bring our doubts to him. He meets doubt by showing his great works. To-day the answer to doubt is the work of Christ in the world.—W. F. A.

Ver. 11.—*The greatness of the least Christian.* These words of our Lord read like a paradox. They are after the manner of his strong startling sayings that arrest attention and dart surprising thoughts into our mind. Nevertheless, understood as he meant them to be, they contain no exaggeration.

I. THE GREATNESS OF JOHN THE BAPTIST. All parties of Jews had agreed in honouring the wonderful prophet of the wilderness. He had now passed from his popular work to the seclusion of a dungeon, and the frown of the government was upon him. In his lonely imprisonment he had been visited by distressing doubts, and Jesus had just heard of his difficulties. But all the more did our Lord delight to honour his forerunner, and now that John was seen at the greatest disadvantage, Jesus, magnanimously passing by the slight offered to himself, described him with language of the highest possible honour. 1. *John was great as a man.* His life was lofty, simple, unselfish, and devoted. (1) He showed fearless courage in standing before a king and denouncing royal wickedness. (2) He showed deep humility in giving place at the height of his popularity to an obscure New-Comer. 2. *John was great as a prophet.* His influence was felt throughout Palestine and even beyond its borders. Alone, but a voice crying in the wilderness, he thundered against the prevalent evils of all classes, and succeeded in spreading an earthquake-wave through society. 3. *John was great in preparing for Christ.* This was his peculiar function, and herein lay his unique supremacy. He was the last of the pre-Christian prophets, and he prepared the soil for the new seed of the Word of Christ.

II. THE OBVIOUS INFERIORITY OF THE LEAST CHRISTIAN. It would be a piece of inordinate vanity for a commonplace Christian to pretend that he was in himself superior to John the Baptist. There are very imperfect Christians who yet cannot be denied the name of followers of Christ. 1. *These people are inferior in character.* Compared with John the Baptist, they are cowardly, selfish, and worldly. 2. *These people are inferior in gifts.* They are not prophets. They see no new truth; they speak no Divine words; they do nothing remarkable, and very little that is at all helpful to their fellows.

III. THE SECRET OF THE CHRISTIAN GREATNESS. Obviously this does not consist in personal goodness or attainment. It is purely a result of new advantages. It is like the elevation of the dwarf on the giant's shoulders. The rider will reach the goal first if he is on a swift horse and is contending with a foot-runner, although he may not be so agile. Modern ammunition and military tactics give the soldiers of Europe and America an immense advantage over barbarous warriors, although the latter may in some cases equal them or even surpass them in strength and courage. The least Christian has certain advantages which were beyond the reach of the greatest prophet. 1. *The knowledge of Christ.* The context shows that John had not reached this knowledge. Yet it is the heritage of every Christian. 2. *The life from Christ.* The Christian is redeemed, and to him a new life is given. Christ is in him. 3. *The*

*baptism of the Holy Spirit.* The world waited for that in waiting for the advent of Christ. Christians live under the new dispensation of the Spirit. John belonged to the servitude of the Law; Christians enjoy the sonship of the gospel.—W. F. A.

Vers. 16—19.—*Children in the market-place.* Our Lord must have watched the children at play in the market-place, and have been grieved when a discontented spirit had been manifested by some of them. He had seen how no effort on the part of their companions could move these obstinate children from their sullen mood. And now he finds the behaviour of the children to be typical of that of their parents. Elder people may learn from children. The unconventional manners of children may reveal something of the character of the age, or something of human nature itself, that is too often hidden under the veneer of mere fashion.

I. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO SATISFY THE UNSYMPATHETIC. The disagreeable children can be enticed by no action of their companions. They will not dance to the gay music nor join in the mock mourning. A third method would be equally unsuccessful, because they are not to be pleased. They are sitting; there is always something wrong with children when they sit down for long; the life has gone out of them. Similarly there are people who are dissatisfied with all methods of religious work. Old staid methods are dull and gloomy to them; new and more lively methods are unseemly and irreverent. From the sobriety of the Quakers' meeting to the unrestrained fervour of a Salvation Army meeting they cannot discover any worship to suit them, and they find fault with all ways of conducting Church services. If some one could invent a new style of worshipping God this would be of no use for the discontented people. Their discontent lies deeper. The children had no mind to play; these people have no mind to pray. Therefore we shall not reach them by new methods. They are in a hopeless condition unless we can touch their hearts and lead them into a better state of mind. It is useless to pander to their prejudices. Perhaps at present all we can do is to pray for them.

II. UNSYMPATHETIC PEOPLE MISTAKE AUSTERITY FOR INSANITY. In our Lord's day these people could only explain John the Baptist by saying that he was possessed by the devil. There are men and women to whom the very idea of self-denial is absurd. They have always lived a self-indulgent life, and they cannot understand why anybody in his senses should do otherwise. Such people have not the least conception of the high claims of duty. Moreover, they do not understand the darker sides of life. To them Gethsemane is a perfect enigma.

III. UNSYMPATHETIC PEOPLE MISTAKE SOCIABILITY FOR SELF-INDULGENCE. The very people who say that the austere prophet is mad, when they see Christ, who is not austere, accuse him of laxity of conduct. This is enough to show that their opposition is insincere, or at least that it springs from their own state of mind, and not from any defect in those whom they presume to criticize. It is much to learn that the highest religion is not ascetic, and yet that it is not self-indulgent. The real reason why Jesus ate and drank with all sorts of people was not an indifference to moral distinctions, a hunger for popularity, or a love of ease—all vices utterly foreign to his character. It was just his brotherly love seeking to help and bless everybody. We cannot understand the story of Jesus till we catch his spirit. Then we see that the safest protection against the evil of the world is not ascetic isolation, but a self-forgetting life spent for the good of our fellow-men.—W. F. A.

Vers. 20—24.—*A lament over wasted privileges.* Jesus is already approaching the sadder stage of his brief ministry; already to the eye of sense it begins to look like a failure. To some it was a failure. The seed had fallen by the wayside, and the birds had carried it away. A similar lament to that of Christ might well be uttered over many regions of favoured Christendom.

I. THE GREATNESS OF THE PRIVILEGES. No places on earth had been more privileged than these Galilæan towns. Here Jesus had lived and worked; here his greatest miracles had been performed, and every miracle was an object-lesson setting forth before the eyes of men the blessings of the kingdom. 1. *Privileges of knowledge.* The inhabitants of these cities had heard the gospel from the very lips of the Saviour. They had seen the spirit of his life and the laws of the kingdom in everything he did.

They who dwell in Christian lands have privileges denied to the heathen. Still more have the children of a Christian home. If we have known Christ from our childhood, have been trained in Christian truth, have seen the work of Christ in the society in which we have lived, ours is the condition of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum.

II. THE NEGLECT OF THE PRIVILEGES. These cities had heard, but they had not heeded. They had seen, but they had not followed. The gospel had come to their doors, but the foolish people had not received it into their hearts. The explanation of this indifference is given in the earlier verses of the chapter. The negligent people were unsympathetic—they were like listless children sitting in the market-place. Their condition is representative of that of multitudes in our own day. The labours of the Church are expended on them in vain. They have had the truth of Christ's gospel preached in their ears time after time. Yet to them it is nothing. Their very familiarity with the words only seems to render them callous to the meaning. They could pass an examination in religious knowledge with credit; some of them have done so, and have won high places and carried off prizes. Yet they are utterly indifferent to Christ. Here is an appalling condition! It is due to the hardening effect of sin or to the deadening that comes with wilful worldliness. If men and women will absorb themselves in questions of money-making, amusement, and fashion, they cannot receive Christ or feel the blessedness of his gospel.

III. THE MELANCHOLY DOOM OF THOSE WHO WASTE GREAT PRIVILEGES. The cities are to be cast down. The prophecy of Christ has been literally fulfilled. All three cities have disappeared, and have left scarcely a ruin behind. Or at least there is a dispute as to what ruins may be identified with them, and Capernaum in particular has occasioned much trouble to the map-makers. The neglect of Christian privileges cannot continue for ever. He who has buried his talent will most assuredly be called to account for it. Then the doom will be proportionate to the privileges neglected. The vices of the three cities of Galilee may not have reached the hideous blackness of the wicked cities of the plain, nor the notorious corruption of Phœnicia. But the greater privileges will be thrown into the scale and will weigh it down. Decorous, respectable people who enjoy Christian privileges and neglect them will be more heavily condemned than the most degraded heathen.—W. F. A.

Ver. 25.—*The revelation to babes.* St. Luke associates these words with the return of the seventy from their triumphant mission (Luke x. 21). Therefore we see that our Lord is not thinking only or chiefly of children, but rather of the childlike. To these God has revealed great truths which he has not given to the worldly wise. So, following the context of St. Matthew, we are reminded that the citizens of Capernaum and other towns missed the truth which a handful of fishermen had laid hold of. At first the gospel began to spread among the lower classes of the Roman empire. The same is seen in India to-day.

I. WHY THE REVELATION IS HIDDEN FROM THE WISE. This cannot be owing to an arbitrary decision of God without need or reason. We must look for the explanation in the character and conduct of the wise. Now, it is not to be supposed that our Lord would depreciate intellect as such, because that would be to speak ill of one of the great works of God; moreover, he had a great intellect himself. Neither could he wish to discourage mental activity, to praise indolence and carelessness of thought. Where, then, do the disadvantages of the wise lie? 1. *The wise have no special privilege in regard to religious truth.* This does not reach us through intellectual efforts, nor does it rest on a foundation of scientific or literary acquirements. The child and the philosopher, the simple and the learned, must find God's greatest truth in the same way, and that a way as open to the babe in intellect as to the intellectual giant. 2. *The wise are tempted to look in the wrong direction for religious truth.* The man of science cannot easily escape from the thraldom of his scientific methods; the scholar is often so buried in his learning that he finds it hard to lift up his eyes from his books—and, alas! the truth he most needs is not in them; the thinker cannot escape from the notion that he by his thought must reach truth more readily than those who have not his trained faculties, and he tries to climb to religious truth on the aerial ladder of speculation. 3. *The wise are in danger of pride.* It is difficult for them to confess their ignorance and helplessness. The truly wise are perhaps most ready to do this; but

Christ rather referred to those who accounted themselves wise or who had a reputation for wisdom, such as the scribes.

II. HOW THE REVELATION IS REVEALED TO BABES. 1. *We must remember that it is a revelation.* The truth of Christ is not a product of human thinking, nor is it a discovery that men have to make for themselves. It could never be got by the pursuit of science or learning. It is a gift of God, and he can give it as readily to a babe as to a wise man. 2. *This revelation only comes to those who are receptive.* A feeling of wisdom is rather one of fulness and satisfaction. It is necessary, however, to feel empty and needing light and guidance. Now, the childlike soul is just in this condition. 3. *The knowledge of truth is conditioned by faith.* Some despise religious faith as lacking in foundation, and treat knowledge or even doubt as superior to it. But this is to misapprehend religious faith, which is not the acceptance of a creed, but trust in a Person. We want grounds for this confidence, but when we trust God we are prepared to receive his revelation, and the most childlike are the most ready to trust him.—W. F. A.

Vers. 28—30.—*The yoke of rest.* It is a common mistake to divide these verses and to quote the first of them—the invitation to the weary—without the others, which are really essential to the practical comprehension of Christ's method of giving rest; because it is in the conclusion of the whole passage that we discover how we may obtain rest from Christ. We must, therefore, look both at the blessing offered and at the means by which this blessing may be obtained.

I. THE BLESSING IS REST. 1. *In what it consists.* The soul of man in weariness and unrest craves for peace and repose. This is more than the outward calm of quiet circumstances. Many have that who are victims to a storm of unrest within—shipwrecked sailors tossing on the waves of their own passions. The true rest is not idleness. While the heart is at rest the hand may be at work. We can never work so well as with a restful mind. Neither is this rest a state of mental torpor. The mind may be wide awake, but calm and at peace—like the sea when its waves are still, and yet its deep waters teem with life, and great fleets sweep over its surface. 2. *For whom it is designed.* Those who labour and are heavy laden. Some people are naturally restful, constitutionally placid. But Christ desires to bring rest to troubled souls. He has sympathy for the toiling multitude; he brings peace to those whose lives are burdened. This may apply especially to those whose toil is inward—in the effort to overcome temptation, and who are heavily laden with the weight of sin.

II. THE BLESSING OF REST IS TO BE OBTAINED BY WEARING THE YOKE OF CHRIST. Let us see what this involves. 1. *A personal approach to Christ.* Jesus begins his words to the weary with the gracious invitation, "Come unto me." Let not any heart-broken, despondent person hold back in fear, for the invitation is just for him. "Arise; the Master calleth thee!" But he cannot receive the blessing until he goes to Christ. Rest begins in personal contact with Christ. 2. *Submitting to the rule of Christ.* Some have thought that by his reference to the yoke our Lord meant to indicate that the weary might yoke themselves to him, and that he and his tired disciple might walk under the same yoke—the greater part of the weight of which he would bear. Certainly there is some yoke to be borne by Christ's disciple. We do not escape from restlessness by plunging into lawlessness and self-will. On the contrary, our self-will is the source of our deepest unrest. When this is conquered we shall be at peace. Therefore the service of Christ, which involves the suppression of self, is the way of inward restfulness. To bear his yoke, nay, even to carry his cross, is to find rest. While we look for personal comfort and escape from duty, we are miserable and restless; when we cease to think of our own ease and give ourselves up to Christ's service, to bear his yoke, we find peace. 3. *Following in the way of Christ.* They who would have rest must learn of Christ. Then the rest does not come in a moment. It will be obtained just in the degree in which the great lesson is learnt. Further, this is a lesson in meekness and lowliness. Then rest will come in proportion as we become meek and lowly like Christ.—W. F. A.

Vers. 2—30 (see also Luke vii. 18—35).—*The forearming against a foreseen unbelief.* Note in introduction that St. Luke's placing of this narrative is the preferable one. It

was *during* the period of absence of the twelve, after they had been "commanded," that John was beheaded. The entire current of this chapter, that seems so exceptional in its character in some respects, is blown upon and troubled, as it were, by that presence, an ever-disturbing one, the phenomenal one, of unbelief. Notice—

I. A PROPHET'S FORESEEING OF THE WORKING OF UNBELIEF, POSSIBLY EVEN BEING TOUCHED WITH A FEELING OF IT HIMSELF; AND HIS PROVISION AGAINST IT, WHETHER FOR HIS PEOPLE ALONE OR FOR THE SAKE OF HIMSELF AND THEM. It is said by Jesus Christ here that a greater prophet had not arisen than John the Baptist. He had heralded Christ; he had baptized him; he had announced and pointed to him as "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world," and worthily had he already confessed him and the truth before the gainsaying and the ungodly. It is just conceivable that, in his prison and bonds, some untoward wave of doubt may have crossed his peaceful breast. But it is all the more *un*likely, whereas we read that it was when he heard through his disciples of the mighty works of Christ that he sent the question, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" Again, as his end drew near, it was certainly not merely plausibly, but justly and really likely, that his anxiety for the informed faith, and the strong, firm faith of his disciples, should be quickened. Had the evangelist made one comment of his own that the reason of John, when he sent his interrogation to his Lord and Master, was "to the end that" his own little flock, soon to be as sheep without their Shepherd, "might" the rather "believe," and might not fail to know the one, only good Shepherd, this old question would never once have been stirred. That neither of the evangelists *does* this need be no surprise at all to us, unless indeed it might be to a suggestion of *our* too easily awaking unbelief, oscillating as we so often are, between unbelief and *credulity*. And see, therefore, "the mighty works," say his disciples to John; and he to them again, "the mighty works;" and he sends two of them to Jesus, and *he* also, having done afresh all a glorious circle of mighty works, while *they* witnessed, *he*, of his own abounding sweet grace, grace to teach, and grace to help, and grace to guard the astray, and to confirm the weak, takes up the word, and re-echoes it home to the prison—"the mighty works!"—these "that I do bear witness of me." And, at all events, we are not told that the mission and the return message were *in vain*. If it were so, that John himself needs for the last earthly agony one more reviving word of the Holy One, he has it; and for *their* life his followers and disciples have it. Was it, indeed, a last word of recognition of his servant by the Lord and Master and Saviour of him, that there was added the benediction, "And blessed is *he* who shall not be offended in me"? John the Baptist was too near *the* blessing now to let it slip; too near to be permitted to let it slip, or to slip himself from the grasp, or be plucked from the hand of that Saviour. The works of Christ, the works of Christianity, the works of the Christian, and the works of the man who *says* he is such, but in works denies it, are, and shall be to the end, the test of each respectively.

II. THE UNEXPECTED OCCASION THAT CHRIST, EVER WATCHFUL, UTILIZES, IN ORDER TO DIRECT AND TO AID THE BELIEF OF "THE MULTITUDES." John the Baptist had roused a vast amount of attention in the nation. He had not failed in a jot of the accomplishment of the work he had been appointed to do, and had been announced centuries past, as appointed to do; nor had he failed in the realization of the character, and all that belonged to it, which was prophesied as the mark of him. It appears (ver. 7) that "multitudes" had been present while Jesus had given audience to the deputation from John the Baptist, and had given answer to them also. Christ had, of course, ever approved of the attention that the nation had given to the appearance and preaching of his forerunner. But of what use, and to what end was it, that they gave attention to that herald if they proceeded no further, if they did not "come to him"? The threefold question of Christ leads up now to this, and bears strictly upon the question of the people's belief. The question is, "What was it ye went out into the wilderness to see?" They went out in wondering, excited throngs. They heard a preacher of novel utterance; they saw a personage of unusual habit and diet; some believed and some believed not, but all had their thoughts, and all talked and argued. When confronted with the question, it was impossible to them to answer that they had gone out for nothing; impossible for them to admit that they had gone out to see a mere natural product, a mere native of the desert, stunted grass, or a trembling barren reed, the

*habitat* of which was the sandy or rocky wind-blown waste. It was equally impossible for them to plead that they had gone there to see the luxury, wealth, show of social life—the diametrical opposite of the desert; this every one knew was not *there*, and had not been there by any accident now. No, they could not deny that they had been out to see a prophet; and the further truth was, *the* prophet, allowed and incontestable—*for it was* "he of whom it was written," in their well-known and prized prophetic oracles, "Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, to prepare thy way before thee." They had flocked out to see John the Baptist, and "he it was who had testified of *him*." What an introduction for those multitudes to Christ! Why should they not now, "mighty works" and all else added, "believe on" and "follow" him? And Christ adds, the youngest true convert of the Church, the tyro in the school of the Church, the as yet unfledged apostle, is greater than he, more blessed, and with still nobler career before him. What a call of grace! What an inspiration to be offered to human ear! And how true, that in a *certain* sense the knell of prophecy had ceased, and yielded place to the ringing tidings of the Church of the kingdom! Its doors had been open but for a short time, but what press into it had there been, and how eagerly had the longing, craving, starving, and determined taken possession of its blessed shelter and hope!

III. THE METHOD WHICH CHRIST DID NOT HESITATE TO USE IN ORDER TO CHARACTERIZE GENERALLY THE CONDUCT OF THE UNBELIEVING OF THAT GENERATION. He used a similitude which, plainly as it must speak to any type of national mind, was probably additionally telling and significant to those for whom he then in the first instance spoke. A picture of the perversity of children suffices to portray this. The music of Christ is not listened to, nor the wail of warning of John; neither the stern rigour of this, nor the winning attractiveness of that! Such as these, who is to seek them, who to win, who to save? Dwell on the fact that Christ consents to condescend, by all and various method, to ply the stubborn, the rebellious, the hard-hearted, the "stiff-necked." *What* patience is this that instructs, but also argues and pleads, and by each avenue of approach to mind, to heart, to temper, to make his urgent and pitiful appeal! *At last*, where are the children of disobedience? But Wisdom's children justify their name and parentage.

IV. THE DISTINCT DENOUNCING OF JUDGMENT, WITH THE ANNOUNCING OF THE DAY OF JUDGMENT, FOR THOSE WHO RESISTED AND REFUSED THE TEACHING AND INTENT OF "THE MIGHTY WORKS" WROUGHT BY HIM. The lips that loved mercy, and belonged to a heart that supremely loved mercy, speak thus forth that very reason, *because* they love mercy, and the day of judgment was not *yet* come. The Lord "mourns for towns where the wonders of Divine power had been most manifestly set forth, which once had the mystery of God, and which might have brought forth the fruit of virtues." The Saviour's "Woe!" is denunciation indeed, but denunciation mingled with the most pathetic of grief. Tyre and Sidon had indeed trodden under foot the law of nature, and "without cause;" but *these* towns, after that they had transgressed the natural and the written Law, also make light of those "mighty wonders" which had been wrought among them.

V. THE CALM OUTFLOW OF THE SON'S PERFECT SYMPATHY OF PRAISE TOWARD THE FATHER. Dwell on: 1. *The title* by which the Father is addressed, as "Lord of heaven and earth"—once the Maker of both, ever the Ruler and Disposer of both, but withal to be adored as the *Uniter* of the one to the other. It is a reminiscence of the prayer Jesus taught: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." 2. *The perfect consent* and harmony that the known counsel and will of God the Father receives of the Son. 3. *The matter* which now serves to illustrate this, viz. the revealing to the childlike, the poor in spirit, the pure, the meek, of those things, deep as hell and high as heaven, which *their* souls were indeed able to receive, and which became "more abundant life" in them; and the withholding them from others, viz. those whose blindness, but self-sufficiency, could only misconceive, misrepresent, adulterate *them*, and increase their own condemnation. 4. *The fact* that Christ utters no *vindication*, but does speak perfect acquiescence in the sovereign sight and sovereign will. Dwell also generally on the symptoms suggested by this pause, this personal episode, so full of feeling, occurring in the midst of the current of all that was transpiring in the crooked and perverse generation. What did it mean? How

close it seemed to bring heaven down to earth, and what absolute and real intercommunion!

VI. THE ENDING OF ALL THE ARGUMENT AND EXPOSTULATION WITH UNBELIEF BY THAT UNSURPASSED INVITATION AND OFFER, OF SURPASSING GRACE, "COME UNTO ME, ALL THAT LABOUR," ETC. *First*, note the covering, forgiving love of this call. It is as though the memory of his own mission, and the supremest object and end of it, flashed again fresh upon the wonderful vision already of the Saviour, *partly* as he had threaded the way that day through the subterfuges of unbelief, and *partly* as just now for one moment of elysian communion he had addressed himself to the Father. *Second*, note the breadth and the length of that call—"Come to me, *all* that toil and are heavily burdened (do not translate "All *ye*"). Those that day, and in that place, who had tangled themselves in the meshes and the excuses of unbelief; those far and wide, as the good tidings should travel to *them*, of an all-sufficient help; those down through all the ages of time who had toiled, to take nothing, and had overburdened themselves, to break their own strength;—to *all* these the invitation of this surpassing grace is given. *Thirdly*, note the intrinsic, inherent, unconscious *right* and claim involved in the invitation on the part of him who gives it. There is no mistaking the word of it; it is "Come to *me*." *Fourthly*, note the engagement entered into. "I will give you rest"—rest from biting care; rest from bitter memory; rest from the chagrin of vain and wasted toil; rest from a reproaching conscience; rest from remorse. Who ever offered to enter into such an engagement except he who now did so? And he only can perform it. What tribute to *his* faithfulness to that offer, invitation, assurance, would millions, absolutely untold, render and present from that day to this! *Lastly*, note the more developed form of the simple call, "Come to me." It is this: "Take my yoke on you," and the burden I bear with it. The yoke is easy, the burden is light; for I am meek, and give my neck meekly to the yoke, and the burden follows, lightly weighing. *These* are of the highest things to be learned on earth of Jesus. Nor is there honour to compare with this—to wear the yoke that he wore, and wear it *like* him; to bear the burden he bore, and bear it *like* him. So *have* we learned of Jesus, and so shall learn, more and more.—B.

VERS. 1—11.—*John's inquiry.* I. THE MOTIVE OF THIS INQUIRY OF JOHN'S is not at once apparent. What was causing him perplexity, if not disappointment, about our Lord? He was disappointed because the works he heard of were not the *kind* of works he had himself expected the Messiah to perform. His own work had been to denounce prevailing iniquities, and to predict the advent of One who should cleanse with fire where he cleansed with water; who would come in the same spirit as himself, but with a mightier manifestation of it; One who would lay the axe to the root of the tree of evil, and quickly execute judgment in Israel. His whole soul went forth with expectation, and there was nothing to meet it. He had learned how short a time would be given to any one who was resolved to root out evil from the land. Why, then, this passive inactivity on the part of Jesus? Why was he content to go about in villages, helping beggars, speaking with uninfluential sinners, while the nation groaned under foreign tyranny and cried for its king? From this doubting inquiry of John's we may learn several things, as: 1. How entirely Jesus had to depend on himself. What must have been the clearness of aim and stability of purpose which could put aside not only the popular expectation, but the grave judgments and suggestions of men like John? 2. John's state of mind shows how apt people are to allow their own distresses to distort their views of Providence. When things go against us, and the despotic laws of the world move on and pay no respect to our prayers or our piety, we are apt to admit doubts where all was plain and sure to us. 3. When we ourselves are not used in God's work, we are tempted to think he is doing nothing. If a religious movement goes on without us, we think of it critically and with suspicion. 4. We see here how insignificant the effects of the gospel always seem. John saw only what he thought a good doctor could rival.

II. THE ANSWER SENT BY JESUS TO JOHN becomes at once intelligible so soon as the nature of the inquiry is understood. The important item in the report was the *preaching of the gospel to the poor.* It had always been recognized as characteristic of the Messiah that the poor were to be gladdened when he came. He would not over-

look those whom all other governors overlooked. This was equivalent to saying that no human necessities were beyond the relief he brought. He was to bring in a religion available for all men—for those who had nothing but humanity to recommend, aid, or support them. Until his kingdom was fully established this could only be a proclamation of good news, and so works of beneficence went hand in hand with the preaching, to show that the promise was not mere word. The miracles were thus actual proclamations. To the report of what they saw and heard the messengers were to add the words, "Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me." As if he would say, "I have chosen my methods of action. Blessed is he who understands the characteristic features of the kingdom and can rejoice in them. Blessed is he who does not take offence at the Saviour of the world because he comes with mercy and not with judgment. Blessed is he who understands that the most penetrating, lastingly efficacious powers in the world are forgiveness, tenderness, and pitiful ministering to the common wants." This word of warning applies to several kinds of misapprehension. 1. There are those to whom it seems unintelligible that Christ's work is so slow, that he is so tardy in making any marked impression on the world, that things should go on so much as if he had no power in heaven or on earth. In times of need they are tempted to ask, "Art thou he that should come?" But blessed are ye who, thus tempted, are able to accept Christ's way, not in sullen resignation, but believing that it is unintelligible to you only because his aim is higher than yours, his love greater, his wisdom more unclouded, his methods more radical. He will not always explain; he expects you will trust him warmly and lovingly, and so grow to understand his spirit; he will trust you for coming at last to see as he sees, and he leaves with you this loving word. 2. Christ here shows in what spirit he meets honest doubt about his Person and work. He knew that beneath that question of John's, which so shocked the bystanders, there was a heart more capable of loyalty to him than was to be found in any of those who gave their easy assent to claims they scarcely understood. That question of John's was of more value to him than the unreasoning hosannas of thoughtless followers; for through that question he saw a man in terrible earnest, to whom the answer was eternal life or eternal darkness. Nothing can be more contemptible than the doubts which are paraded, as if to doubt were an intellectual achievement, as if the man who lives in doubt were in a more advanced stage than he who has found the truth. Of such doubters, who question truth not that they may be answered, but for the sake of display, we have more than enough in these days. But there are also doubters, like the Baptist, whose doubt is wrung from an agonized heart, whose whole happiness is bound up in the question they put, and who, if Jesus be not the Christ, will sink in infinite despair. They try to fit in Christ's Word and salvation to what they actually find in their own life; they try to make Christ's rule as real as their own worldly business, and find themselves forced to wonder whether Christ is indeed meaning to rule on earth. Then Christ shows them that the power he desires on earth is just that power he is actually and all round putting forth, in bringing light to darkened souls, life to the dead. This is the real work he came to do, and *by doing which* he proves his claim. If anything were needed to prove the absence of resentment with which our Lord viewed John's question, it is his defence of John from the reflections of the people. He points out to them that he had never been a man with whom the idea of weakness could be associated—a reed shaken with the wind. He was the very last whose opinion would be moulded by his position. But it was of small moment what they thought of John as a man compared to their right understanding of the comparative value of the preaching of John and the preaching of the kingdom—of the difference between the reformation urged by John and the regeneration proclaimed by himself. In order sharply to mark this he says, "Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." He was a true prophet, yea, more than the greatest prophet had been, but all his zeal for righteousness, for the unflinching application of the Law, had, as it now appeared, unfitted him to appreciate the temper and spirit of the new era. Any one in the kingdom animated by the characteristic spirit of love is greater than he. It is not so much a comparison of any individual with John as of the new era with the outgoing era. It is rather the instrument than the man that is spoken of. John could point

out a thousand wrongs that needed to be redressed, a thousand sins that must be abandoned; but Jesus, without much denunciation of sin, gave men a love for himself that ejected the love of sin. John put the *righteousness* of God in the front of his teaching; Jesus put the *love* of God. And he who has the smallest tincture of the spirit of Jesus has more influence than one who has the inflexible righteousness of John.—D.

Vers. 7—19.—*John and Jesus: children in the market-place.* After dismissing the messengers of John, there appeared to our Lord urgent need of indicating with precision the merits and defects of the Baptist's work, so that the people might understand how it was the Baptist was disappointed in the Messiah he had so enthusiastically heralded, and what were the relations mutually held by the Baptist, the Messiah, and the people. In doing so our Lord touches on—

I. THE GREATNESS OF JOHN AND HIS WORK. He is unhesitating in the praise and admiration he bestows. Challenging comparison with any hero of old time, the conclusion still is, "There hath not risen a greater." And the distinctive greatness of his character was only in keeping with the unique importance of his work. This is indicated when he says of John that he was more than a prophet—a *messenger preparing the way*, an immediate forerunner. Up to John's time the prophets and the Law had *prophesied*; now the kingdom was not pointed at, but stormed and possessed. It is no longer a hope, it is a present reality; the kingdom is come. The land which had seemed very far off to the older prophets was there for whosoever had faith to win it. By the unusual expression he employs, our Lord apparently intends to emphasize the two ideas, (1) that only men of earnestness and vigour can win the kingdom, and (2) that in the entrance there is much disorder and tumult. 1. Of the first of these Bunyan is the best expositor, in his picture of the man who with his drawn sword made his way into the palace. Bunyan knew that it is only by the men that can stand blows and the sight of blood that the kingdom is won even now. Many, indeed, are they who still bar the entrance, and they fight with every variety of weapon. 2. In periods when appeal is made to the elementary forces of human nature, much that is indecorous, much that is illegal, is apt to be done. And when the religious life of a community is trying to shape for itself new forms, there always come to the front men of violence, men of the type of Luther, who disgust men of taste like Erasmus, but who are the fit instruments for taking by assault the new stronghold in which faith is to find refuge. The Pharisees were shocked to see the kind of people who crowded after Jesus, and the manner of their following. We are warned, therefore, to judge no movement by its superficial unseemliness and disorderly ways, but by the underlying principles which are really its moving power.

II. Diverse as were the types of character exhibited by John and Jesus, and by their message, both were unsatisfactory to the mass of the people. John demanded of them a righteousness which seemed impossible; and Jesus was still more unsuitable, even unintelligible—a mere good-natured time-server, indifferent to the sorrows of his people so long as he could be tolerably comfortable. John has nothing but stern denunciation—we have piped unto him, but not a step will he dance. Jesus goes to the other extreme; has no ear for any of our national sorrows, and seems quite able to be happy, though overtaxed and under foreign rule—we have mourned unto him, and he has not lamented. 1. There are people who live at feud with their generation because they cannot get their own whim petted, their own idea responded to. They cannot fall in with any of the religious movements of their time, and find in the market-place of life only food for their own disappointed vanity. The children of Wisdom, on the contrary, justify the wisdom which moves religious leaders to adopt differing methods. They see in John a congruity to his work. In one who was impartially to criticize all classes, and be an embodied conscience to the whole community, there was wisdom in showing, even in his outward aspect, that he was prepared to lead the way in stern repression of self-indulgence, and superiority to the influences of fashion and worldly expectation. It is quite true he is extreme, one-sided, a man of one idea, but much of the most important work in the world is effected by men of one idea, who are blind to all else but the one thing they have to do. Similarly, a free, cheerful intercourse with men became him whose work it was, not to reveal one aspect

of God, but his whole attitude towards men, and whose nature it was to be every man's Fellow, the Son of man. If Jesus is not only to convince of sin, but to save his people from their sins, how can he do so save by loving them and moving among them, and giving them his hand to help them? 2. Goodness may manifest itself in various forms of life, and we must judge men's manner and conduct by the work they have to do. Our heavenly Father is pleased with modes of life as diverse as the natures he has bestowed on us, and we need not condemn ourselves or others on the ground that our goodness does not express itself in a certain conventional form. 3. The man who makes his own tastes and expectations the measure of the religious movements of his time is apt to make mistakes fatal to his own religious growth. He will get no good from any of the movements that stir and advance other people, and he will get all the harm, the hardening of the heart, the self-righteous vanity, the hypocritical blindness to the truth, which must result from opposing the work of God in his own generation. Let us be sure we are giving our serious conviction and fullest energy to *some* form of life we are persuaded God approves, that we are not playing at religion like children in the market-place. Seek God in the way that commends itself to your conscience, but be sure it is him and not your own method you adore, and when you have found him try and see him in all and through all and over all.—D.

Vers. 20—30.—*Jesus rejected by the wise, but owned by babes and the Father.* Having illustrated by one or two sayings of our Lord what was his judgment of John and of those who heard John's teaching, Matthew sets alongside of these others regarding the towns which had enjoyed exceptional opportunities of forming an adequate idea of his Person and work. The complaint against these cities was that "they repented not." They were not sinners above other men, as Sodom and Gomorrah had been. But when Jesus came exhibiting the kingdom of heaven, and inviting men to enter it, they were expected to repent of having chosen any other object as their chief good, and to welcome the kingdom as the Father's best gift. They were summoned at once to repentance and faith. In our Lord's judgment, then, that is the most damning condition of human life, in which a man has seen the kingdom of God but not felt drawn to it above all else. In the case of Capernaum there is an additional element of woe. For some months Jesus had made it the centre of his operations. And it may not unnaturally have occurred to the inhabitants that, as Jerusalem had rejected the Messiah, this town might be exalted to the high position of metropolis of the kingdom. But when he definitely enounced the pure spirituality of his mission, intense repugnance and resentment at once took the place of admiration, and from a heaven of Messianic expectation they fell to a hell of disappointment, bitterness, and godless despair. Such transitions are of not infrequent occurrence. Religious enthusiasm has been kindled under false impressions of what our Lord offers, and when it becomes apparent that he does not bestow an easy conquest over sin, but only grace which enables a man through painful self-denial to win self-mastery, bitter murmuring takes the place of hope, and he turns in fierce resentment against our Lord, as if he were accountable for the misconceptions of his kingdom which a worldly, weak, and self-seeking nature cannot but make. In what spirit and temper did our Lord accept this sad result of his teaching? Admitting frankly and without any sneer that the wise and prudent had discountenanced him, he finds his solace in the fact that the babes had received him, and that, if earthly authorities disowned his claim, his Father knew him. The wise and prudent in his day were the trained teachers, the leaders in religion, the men who had been at much pains to ascertain the meaning of Scripture, and to maintain the kind of character which they considered acceptable to God. They had their minds made up already about all things human and Divine, and to minds thus filled with preconceived ideas Jesus seemed either unintelligible or blasphemous. Sadly, therefore, he turns to those who were unsophisticated by centuries of systematic teaching, but could by their native instincts discern between good and evil. The law illustrated by our Lord's experience is again and again referred to in Scripture, as if all religious teachers had been brought into practical contact with it. Paul *e.g.* says, "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called;" and this not as if God were jealous of the wise, or had some special dislike to men of education, but because the mind of the educated man has difficulties in the way of his acceptance of the gospel from which

the uneducated is happily exempt. When we are introduced to truths which the intellect is too small to comprehend, we are tempted to reject them because the ordinary methods of inquiry fail us. Few men of intellect escape the mental perplexity and suffering which this entails. There are truths which we must accept in faith, on the word of him who is better informed than we, and whom we know to be true. Intellect has its place and its function in connection with Christian truth; but in point of fact and as matter of history intellect has not discovered God. Christ has done so, and that man makes best growth in Christ's school who has humility enough to accept his teaching. But while our Lord was thus on all hands met by repulse and unbelief, he had one unfailing source of comfort. The Father knew who he was—that he was no misled enthusiast, no pretentious blasphemer, but God's own Son. Again, men might despise his unconventional teaching, mistaking genuine simplicity for ignorance of high matters, they might upbraid him with contradicting the received teaching about God, but he could say truthfully, "No man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." By this consciousness did he stimulate himself again to return, and once more to seek to convince men of the Father's love. And there was a third element in this sustaining consciousness. Judged by his present success, he seemed feeble and of small influence, yet he reminded himself that "all things were delivered unto him of his Father." He was to be God so far as men and this world were concerned. Men might ignore him and deny his teaching, but they could not prevent him from raising the dead, from rebuking the winds and waves, from returning their contempt with compassion, their hatred with love, from living righteously and lovingly so as to be a light to all generations. They could not prevent him from accepting God's Spirit and living in his humanity as the perfect image of the Father, and thus exercising an influence on human affairs that deepens as the world grows. But the practical outcome of our Lord's experience of the hostility, suspicion, and contempt of men was not merely to confirm his own consciousness of his fellowship with the Father, but also to lead him confidently to invite to himself all who found life laborious and burdensome. And that he does this at the very moment when we should have naturally expected to find him most hopeless, is not without significance. He has been compelled by the cold reception given him to revise his claims, to cross-examine his own consciousness of a Divine commission, and the result of this is the tenderest and most assured invitation to weak and weary men that ever fell from his lips. It is not the cheerful and over-confident utterance of a happy moment; it is the sober, weighty, reasoned deliverance of one who has pondered the matter all round, and who promises only what he knows he can stand to and make good. He bids you consider that you may have rest. However defeated and soiled with the dust of conflict, however paralyzed and dismayed your heart, however weary of the little that comes of all your striving, to you he offers partnership with himself. He will make all things a school, in which you will be encouraged by his presence, and from which you shall pass into that full maturity and fitness for all the future which begin in meekness and lowly carrying of his yoke.—D.

Vers. 1—6.—*The credentials of Messiah.* The precepts of the charge which Jesus had given to his disciples are here called his commands. Christ's commissions are commands (cf. Ps. cv. 8; 1 Cor. ix. 16). He "made an end of commanding." The instructions of Christ are complete. Then "he departed to teach," more privately, "and preach," publicly, "in their cities." His ministry leaves men without excuse. "Now when John had heard in prison," etc. We have here—

I. THE INQUIRY OF JOHN. 1. *As to its occasion.* (1) Jesus wrought the works of the Christ. Miracles were expected of Messiah (see John vii. 31). (2) He wrought them in the cities of Galilee. The cities of Galilee were the cities of the disciples (cf. ver. 20, etc.; Acts ii. 7). Jesus took care of their cities while they visited others—perhaps the cities of Judæa. He does not allow the interests of those who do his work to suffer. The remotest connection with Christ is attended with blessing. Even the ungodly enjoy civilizing influences where the religion of Jesus is in the air. (3) The fame of the Messianic works reached John in his prison. It was carried to him there by his own disciples (see Luke vii. 18). So John saw with gladness the fulfilment of his own words, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John iii. 30). He was truly

"the friend of the Bridegroom." 2. *As to the matter.* (1) It had respect to the Coming One. This was one of the titles of Messiah (see Ps. cxviii. 26; ch. xxi. 9; xxiii. 39). (2) It concerned his identity. Jesus met the general expectation as to his *lineage.* He was "of the house and lineage of David" (cf. Ps. cxxxii. 11; Jer. xxiii. 5; Luke ii. 4; John vii. 42). As to the *place* of his manifestation. His birth was at *Bethlehem* (see Micah v. 2). His ministry chiefly in *Galilee* (see Isa. ix. 1, 2). As to the *time.* It was approaching the completion of Daniel's seventy weeks, viz. of years (Dan. ix. 24, etc.). Moreover, Jesus did the works of the Christ, as we have seen. (3) Yet the inquiry is raised, "Do we look for another?" Many prophecies describe the coming of Messiah in glory; but Jesus came in humiliation. For this reason, overlooking the fact that many likewise describe his coming in humiliation, Jesus was rejected by the Jews, and they still indeed "look for another." (4) The imprisoned John, who was yet to be beheaded, was the fitting forerunner of the Christ in his advent in suffering and death (see ch. xvii. 12). Elijah, in full form, who cannot be imprisoned, will herald the second advent of Jesus in power. 3. *As to the reason.* (1) Was it that John doubted? His prophetic impulses, taken together with his repeated testimonies, forbid this supposition (cf. John i. 6—8, 33—36; iii. 26; v. 32, 33). The confidence of John was not shaken by his sufferings. He was not "a reed shaken by the wind" (ver. 7). John knew that the works, of which he had heard in the prison, were "the works of *the Christ.*" (2) It was rather that the disciples of John questioned. Like the majority of their countrymen, they might have stumbled at the meanness of the birth of Jesus and the humility of his station (see ver. 6). They might also have questioned as to why, if Jesus were the Christ, he did not deliver their master from prison. Doubters may ever find occasions. (3) But why did John send his doubting disciples to Jesus? He judged that to be the true way to fix their wavering minds. All doubters should take the hint. Instead of conversing with Voltaire, let them converse with Jesus. Let them honestly study his Word. By earnest prayer let them seek the light of his Spirit upon it.

II. THE ANSWER OF JESUS. 1. *It was indirect, yet decisive.* (1) It differed in form from his express answers upon other occasions. To the woman of Samaria he said, "I that speak unto thee am he." To the man who had been born blind he said, "Thou hast both seen him, and he it is that speaketh with thee." To the high priest, when adjured, he said, "I am [the Christ, the Son of the Blessed]: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming with the clouds of heaven" (ch. xxvi. 63, 64; Mark xiv. 61, 62; John iv. 26; ix. 37). (2) The form of the answer on the present occasion was suited to the temper of the questioners. It was an appeal to evidence. Jesus encourages the use of reason in religion. He recognizes the province of private judgment. 2. *It was an appeal to testimony.* (1) "Go and tell John the things which ye do hear." They were now in the region in which "most of his mighty works were done" (ver. 20). They had the best opportunity for examining witnesses. (2) They could take evidence respecting the raising of the daughter of Jairus; and they had the report of the raising of the son of the widow of Nain (see ch. ix. 25, 26; Luke vii. 17, 18, etc.). The rabbins held that "in the land where the dead should arise, the kingdom of the Messiah should commence." 3. *It was also an appeal to sense.* (1) "Go and tell John the things which ye do *see*" (cf. Isa. xxxv. 5, 6; xlii. 7). For Jesus doubtless wrought miracles before them. (2) Certainly they heard the gospel preached to the poor. This was a new thing. The scribes, like the heathen philosophers, courted the rich, and treated the poor and ignorant with contempt (John vii. 49). To preach the gospel to the lowly was a Messianic mark (cf. Isa. lxi. 1 with Luke iv. 18; also Zeph. iii. 12; Zech. xi. 11). The Son of David was to be the poor man's King (see Ps. lxxii. 2, 4, 12, 13). 4. *The Messianic miracles were parabolic works.* (1) The blind receiving sight was not only a proof that Jesus was the Christ, but also a specimen of the power which Messiah claimed to enlighten the prejudiced and error-blinded mind. In both senses, the opening of the eyes of the blind is God's prerogative (see Ps. clxii. 8). (2) He that made the lame to walk can give steadiness and consistency to the limping and irregular life. (3) The cleansing of the leper set forth the power of Christ to purify the soul from the corruption of sin. (4) Making the deaf to hear, he evinced his power to reduce to obedience the most obstinate. (5) In raising the dead, he proved himself the source of spiritual life also to the "dead in

trespasses and sins." 5. *It was an appeal to experience.* (1) To be offended in Christ, after appealing to us with such convincing evidence, would be a great unhappiness. How melancholy has been the history of the unbelieving Jew! That many should be offended is an actual mark of Messiah (see Isa. lii. 14). (2) Happy is he who is not offended with the lowliness of Jesus. Whether in his Person or in his disciples. To rise above such offences is to many a difficult lesson. (3) Those who drink into the spirit of the humiliation and sufferings of Jesus will also share in his future glory.—J. A. M.

Vers. 7—15.—*The greatest of the prophets.* Two of John's disciples came to Jesus with the inquiry, "Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?" Having replied to this inquiry and sent the men away, Jesus seized the opportunity to discourse to the multitude concerning John. Note: Jesus improved every opportunity. In this, as in everything, we should endeavour to follow him. In the description of John we see—

I. THE FEATURES OF A GREAT CHARACTER. 1. *Deep and earnest conviction.* (1) John was no "reed shaken with the wind." The reed, hollow and pliant, was a fit symbol of levity and inconsistency (see Isa. xxxvi. 6). (2) In the marshes of the wilderness were many reeds; and John was among them, but not of them. Had he been a fickle character, he would not have had his immense following. For, however reedlike the multitude may be, they are led, for good or ill, by the stronger will. Many went out "for to see"—led by curiosity. So still are there many who attend the ministry of the gospel "for to see" and to be seen. (3) John was not the creature of circumstances. He made circumstances bend to righteousness. He would not dishonour his conscience to purchase liberty or life; he carried his integrity to the prison and to the block. (4) His testimony concerning Christ was like himself, decisive and unwavering. "He confessed, and denied not; and he confessed," and still he stuck to it (cf. John i. 20; iii. 28). Nor does he now, in prison, waver; for his object in sending his disciples to Jesus was not to settle any doubt in his mind, but to fix their faith. 2. *Superiority to vulgar ambition.* (1) Some derive their greatness from their clothes. They affect "soft clothing." They are dependent for their distinction upon the skill of their tailor or dressmaker. Such weakness was not in John, whose raiment was rough and strong—camel's hair and leather. A man's character may be seen in his dress. The man in the rough clothes may be "great in the sight of the Lord" (Luke i. 15). (2) Some derive their greatness from their surroundings. "They that wear soft raiment are in kings' houses." The address of the courtier, like his dress, is flattering. John, the son of a chief priest, might have been a courtier had he chosen; but his sphere was in the wilderness. 3. *Integrity.* (1) As Elijah behaved before Ahab and Jezebel, so did John, who came in the spirit and power of Elijah, behave before Herod and Herodias. He would not wink at the sin of Herod because he occupied a throne; nor would he conciliate the favour of Herodias by silence when she should be reproved. (2) Integrity was more to him than meat and drink. "John came neither eating nor drinking" (cf. ver. 18; Luke i. 15). He was a self-denying man. Those who live a life of mortification are the less likely to be lured away from the integrity of religion. 4. *The favour of God.* (1) This is the surest mark of greatness, for God cannot flatter. Jesus waited until John's disciples had retired before he pronounced his eulogy upon John. (2) John when in prosperity bore testimony to Jesus. Jesus now, John being in adversity, bears testimony to John. The judgment of God is not influenced by the judgments of men. (3) The testimony of Jesus to John came when John had finished his testimony. Judgment comes when our work is done (John xii. 26). However consistency may suffer in the running, it will win at the goal.

II. THE TOKENS OF A GREAT PROPHET. 1. *He was a prophet whose coming was predicted.* (1) He was predicted by Isaiah and Malachi (see Isa. xl. 3; Mal. iii. 1; iv. 5). He was also predicted in the same quality by his father Zecharias, who was instructed by Gabriel (see Luke i. 17, 76—78). As a prophet predicted John stands alone. (2) John "came in the spirit and power of Elijah," not in his person. The latter he disclaimed. The absence of the article in connection with the name of Elijah (ver. 14) shows this to be an autonomasia, or that he is the *typical*, not the *actual*, Elijah. (3) He fulfilled the character of Elijah as described in prophecy. (*a*) As

forerunner to Messiah; (*b*) appearing before the destruction of the *second* temple, to which Messiah was to come; (*c*) as preaching repentance to turn the hearts of the wayward children to the faith of the fathers; (*d*) all this before the coming of the day of judgment upon the nation. (4) Elijah in person, however, will yet come to restore all things. Had the Jews received John as the forerunner of Jesus, had they repented to receive the gospel, then John would have been Elijah to them. Gospel truths must be received. Elijah in spirit introduced Jesus in humiliation at his first coming; Elijah in person, as the Jews still expect him, may introduce Jesus when he comes again, or herald his advent in glory. 2. *John was the last and greatest of the prophets.* (1) "All the prophets and the Law prophesied." The Law prophesied of the gospel in its types. Christ began from Moses to interpret the Scriptures concerning himself (Luke xxiv. 27). (2) "Prophesied until John." John's testimony was the complement and completion of all the rest. Thence, being turned into history, prophecy ceased to be prophecy. (3) The Old Testament in Malachi ends with Elijah; the New, in Mark, begins with Elijah again. The fulfilment of prophecy begins with John, who began to unfold the sublimer system of the gospel (see Luke xvi. 16). (4) John was more than a prophet. He was God's messenger. He was to go before the face of Immanuel. Our honour lies in our nearness to Christ. John testified to the Person of Christ.

III. THE LIMITS OF HUMAN GREATNESS. 1. *John was the greatest of all that had arisen.* (1) "Among them that are born of women." A personage was introduced to the first Napoleon as the son of an eminent man. "Nay," said the sagacious emperor, "do not tell me who was his father, but who was his *mother*." (2) The expression, "born of women," or naturally born, may be in contrast to the Son of God. Of the kingdom of heaven Jesus is the King. (3) The superiority of John to his predecessors may be limited to his official distinction as the harbinger of Christ. 2. *Yet is he surpassed by the least in the kingdom.* (1) The least in the kingdom of glory surpasses the greatest upon earth. There are degrees of greatness there. Here we are "lower than the angels;" there, "equal unto the angels" (see Ps. viii. 5; Luke xx. 36). (2) The least of the prophets of the gospel is greater than John. The first preachers of the gospel worked miracles; but "John did no sign" (John x. 41). Every gospel minister declares the blessings already come of which John preached only the near approach (cf. ch. xiii. 7; Luke vii. 28). (3) The least saint under the gospel, in possessing the higher gifts of the Spirit, has a richer experience than John enjoyed (cf. Zech. xii. 8; John iii. 31—34). The saint is not only "born of a woman," but also "born of God" (John i. 13). John did not know all those matters which a catechumen learns now from the Apostles' Creed. (4) There is a progress in which human greatness evermore surpasses itself. 3. *Since John men rush into the kingdom.* (1) Conspicuous in the rush are the poor, the publicans and the sinners—those who, according to the scribes, would have little right. "It is no breach of good manners to go into heaven before our betters" (Henry). (2) He that will enter into the joys of salvation must be in earnest. He has to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil. Earnestness in such a battle must be violent. (3) "Since John." His ministry, which lasted about two years, was very successful. The thousands who embraced the gospel were probably roused by the ministry of John.—J. A. M.

Vers. 16—24.—*The Judgment of God.* The "generation" here rebuked is the race or succession of obstinately impenitent Jews headed and represented by the scribes and Pharisees. We are reminded—

I. THAT THE JUDGMENT OF GOD COMMENCES IN THIS WORLD. 1. *The wicked are here convicted by the truth.* (1) The conceited scribe, who affected the wisdom of the sage, and the proud Pharisee, who affected the purity of the saint, are together humbled to the dust by being likened to querulous and pettish children, so utterly unreasonable and foolish that they can be pleased no way. Upon the principle, "The greater the truth the greater the libel," the justness of the rebuke is its sting. (2) They waywardly rejected the testimony of John, who came in the habit of austerity (see Luke i. 15), preaching the self-denial of repentance and reformation. Note: The habit of a minister should agree with the matter of his ministry. To justify themselves, the Pharisees said of John, "He hath a devil." Note: The best actions of the good may

become the worst of their accusations with the wicked (see Ps. lxix. 10). But truth searches the conscience. (3) They rejected likewise the ministry of Jesus, whose habit was social, affable, and familiar, in keeping with that grace which distinguished his gospel from the message of John. Note: The true minister will, upon occasion, pipe as at a funeral or pipe as at a wedding (cf. 1 Cor. ix. 22; xii. 6, 11). To justify themselves, the Pharisees said of Jesus that he was "a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners." Note: Unparalleled excellency is not proof against the reproach of tongues. Envy and malice may give an odious colouring to the noblest conduct. (4) The simile of the children in the market-place accuses the impenitent Jews with treating the solemn messages of John and of Jesus as unrealities. For the piping of the children was but dramatic as they played at funerals and weddings. The sinner persuades himself that what he is unwilling to imitate does not come from God. So he distorts facts, carps at virtue as "extreme," and turns virtues into vices. But all this aggravates his accusation. 2. *The condemnation of the wicked is the commendation of the good.* (1) "Wisdom is justified of her children." Christ is "Wisdom" itself. The disciples of Jesus are the "children" of wisdom (see Heb. ii. 13). Such were the "publicans and sinners" who received the messages which the Pharisees refused. (2) The children of Wisdom justify the ways of Wisdom. They see the austere ways of John to be in good keeping with his mission; and what the Pharisees attribute to the devil they discern to be of God. So likewise the friendly, social ways of Jesus. To the upright in mind everything is good, as everything is evil to the vicious in heart. (3) Those only truly justify Christ, "the Wisdom of God," who receive wisdom from him and exercise it in union with him. There must be an internal witness before there can be an internal belief. External evidence cannot carry internal conviction. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." (4) Wisdom is justified of her children when the fruits of wisdom bear testimony before men to the excellence of the principles that give them birth. The children of Wisdom are charged with the very character and credit of Christianity. It depends upon them to extend or diminish its influence in the world. (5) Wisdom justifies her children. 3. *The providence of God has its rewards.* (1) Tyre and Sidon, heathen cities of Phœnicia, were notable for their pride, luxury, idolatry, and their cruel and selfish exultation against Israel in the day of his reverses (see Ezek. xviii. 2—6, 15, 16; xxvi. 2; xxvii. 3). They were warned by the Hebrew prophets, but repented not. The Babylonian invasion brought down their pride. (2) Sodom, for her licentiousness, was destroyed by a tempest of fire from heaven. (3) The cities of Galilee, specially favoured with the presence, teaching, and miracles of Jesus, were, for their impudence, doomed; and so complete has been their destruction, that their position is now uncertain.

II. THAT THE JUDGMENT OF GOD WILL BE COMPLETED IN THE WORLD TO COME. 1. *Justice is not fully vindicated in this world.* (1) In many cases the righteous suffer from the hand of the wicked more than the wicked suffer from the hand of God in providence. There is a balance of equity to be adjusted between the righteous and the wicked. (2) So is there a balance of equity to be adjusted between the wicked and the wicked. Desperately wicked persons escape punishment, or suffer it slightly, while others far less culpable suffer it in severity. Tyre and Sidon have yet to settle accounts with Chorazin and Bethsaida. So has Sodom with Capernaum. (3) Only at the last day, when all the lights of all the ages come together, will it be possible to settle all the cross-accounts of humanity. 2. *Tendencies of character will be considered in the judgment to come.* (1) In the scrutiny of motives it will be seen who was more or less impenitent; who would or would not, with increased light, have repented and reformed. It will be inquired not only how bad men are, but how much worse they would be with increased facilities for sinning, and how much better they might have been but for their own fault. (2) Then it will be pleaded against the impenitence of Chorazin and Bethsaida that had Ezekiel, when denouncing the sin of Tyre, confirmed his prophecy by such miracles as Jesus wrought, there would have been repentance. It might have been a repentance like that of Nineveh, induced by fear; yet even that would be such a recognition of God as was wanting in the cities of Galilee. It will likewise be pleaded against the impenitence of Capernaum that had Lot wrought miracles he would not have seemed to the men of Sodom as one that mocked. Deter-

mined infidelity, the result of perverse false reasoning and self-righteous pride, was not the sin of the heathen cities. 3. *There will be a righteous apportionment of punishment to the degree of guilt.* (1) Those who, like Capernaum, are exalted to heaven in opportunity, and still cleave to the earth, then they shall sink into hell. Capernaum was even more highly blessed with opportunity than Chorazin and Bethsaida, and its sin and misery are proportionately greater. (2) The enlargement of the faculties through the preaching of the gospel will be an increased capacity for reward or punishment. What a terrible punishment will be the reproach in hell of having missed the opportunity of getting to heaven! (3) But who can estimate the turpitude of that impenitence which is the very sinfulness of sin? No temporal punishment is sufficient to mark its heinousness. Hence even Sodom, which was destroyed by fire from heaven, will have to come up again for punishment. Though the men of Sodom will have been damned more than four thousand years, yet are they still to come up for a final doom. (4) Will there not be a classification of characters at the judgment? How else will corporations such as Sodom and Tyre and Capernaum appear? May not the licentious be grouped under the heading of Sodom; the proud under the designation of Tyre; and the obstinately wicked under the style of the cities of Galilee? In what sense was Moses gathered to his people in contradistinction to his brother Aaron, who was gathered to *his* people (cf. Deut. xxxii. 50)?—J. A. M.

Vers. 25—30.—*The knowledge of the Holy.* The "things" to which our Lord here refers may be better gathered from what follows than from what goes before. They are evidently spiritual things (Luke xix. 42); things pertaining to—

I. THE HIGHEST KNOWLEDGE. 1. *The knowledge of the Father.* (1) As the "Lord of heaven and earth." Thus known, he is recognized as the Source of all created things. Moreover, he is so constantly recognized as never to be merged or lost in second causes. He is the Ruler as well as the Creator of all. (2) As the "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. i. 3). This knowledge recognizes the relationship of the Father to the Son in the mystery of the Incarnation. It moreover recognizes the covenant relationship in which the Father stands to the Son. (3) As "our Father," viz. in respect to our creation in his image and his care over us in nature (Gen. i. 26; ch. v. 45). In respect to our redemption through the Son of his love, by which we receive adoption into his family and renewal in his likeness. 2. *The knowledge of the Son.* (1) This knowledge recognizes the reality of his manhood. It was no phantom. He was "bone of our bone." (2) It recognizes also the reality of his Godhead. Those who only saw the manhood of Jesus never saw the Son of God. The discernment of the Father dwelling in him is essential to our seeing him as the Son (see John xiv. 8—11). (3) The knowledge of the Son of God recognizes the beatification of the manhood in the Godhead. Christ as God is one with the Father; as Mediator he receives his power and glory from the Father (cf. ver. 27; ch. xxviii. 18; John v. 22, 27). We are encouraged to deliver our souls for their salvation into the hands into which the Father hath delivered "all authority and power" (see Zech. vi. 13).

II. THE METHOD OF ITS COMMUNICATION. 1. *It is not attained by natural reason.* (1) Deists boast of the powers of reason, and plead for natural theology. They would substitute this for the theology of the Bible. (2) But where would our natural theologians be but for the Bible? There are no natural theologians where the Bible has not been before them. Clearly, therefore, they credit their reason with the hints which they got from the Bible, whether they acknowledge it or not. (3) But, after all, how far has their natural theology carried them? In its chapters they discourse of the Creator. But what about the Fatherhood of God? What about the Son of God and the Saviour of the world? These are matters about which sinners need to be certainly informed. 2. *It is attained by Divine revelation.* (1) To this source we are indebted for the Bible. The evidence upon this subject is ample. The fact that there are no natural theologians without the Bible shows that human reason is not its source. (2) "No one knoweth the Son, save the Father." The mystery of the Incarnation is only perfectly known to God. "Neither doth any know the Father, save the Son." The being and attributes of God are only perfectly known to Christ. (3) These great subjects are only known to us just so far as they are revealed. We are drawn to the

Son by the Father (John vi. 44). The Son reveals himself by personal manifestation to the believer. This is a higher evidence than that of the miraculous works of the Father (see John xiv. 11). (4) The happiness of man lies in his knowledge of God. It is "life eternal" (see John xvii. 1—3). There is no comfortable intercourse between a sinful man and a holy God but through the one competent Mediator (see John xiv. 6).

III. THE PERSONS WHO ARE HONOURED WITH IT. 1. *Not the "wise and understanding."* (1) This phrase is used in irony. The reference is to the scribes and Pharisees, who were "wise and understanding," viz. in their own conceits. They looked down upon the common "people who knew not the Law" as "accursed;" while they themselves, confounding the traditions of the elders with the Law, made the latter void. And so wise and understanding were they in their care not to be deceived by appearances, that they failed to discern the Messiah whom they sought. (2) There are many who in our day expose themselves to the same irony. Some of the darkest upon spiritual questions are amongst the great scholars in human literature and science (see 1 Cor. i. 21). And some have taken a leading part in opposition to the transcendent truth (see 1 Tim. vi. 20). (3) Such persons become subjects of judicial blindness. "*Thou hast hid* these things from the wise and understanding." Spiritual ignorance comes as a punishment upon obstinate unbelievers (cf. John xii. 39, 40; Acts xxviii. 26, 27; Rom. xi. 7, 8). (4) Moreover, Christ thanks the Father for this judicial dealing. Note: We must not let false compassion displace in us a proper jealousy for the justice and honour of God. Thanksgiving is the proper "answer" to dark and disquieting thoughts. And mercy may be thankful for a judgment that is mingled with mercy in hiding from the obstinate a knowledge which would aggravate their doom. 2. *The revelation is to babes.* (1) This is a Jewish term for unlearned persons (see Rom. ii. 20). It is, therefore, applied to the disciples of Jesus, who were simple men (cf. Ps. viii. 2; ch. xxi. 15, 16; Acts iv. 13; 1 Cor. ii. 6—10). In this sense "to our children" belong "things that are revealed" (Deut. xxix. 29). (2) To the simple people Jesus gives his invitation, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The poor people are first called who groan under the burdens heavy and grievous to be borne, of laws and traditions laid on their shoulders by the scribes and Pharisees (see ch. xxiii. 4; Acts xv. 10). If the Pharisee would himself come to Jesus, he must first become a babe (see ch. xviii. 3). (3) These only will implicitly submit to the guidance of Jesus who labour for the "rest" of his love. Others will seek rest in titles, riches, pleasures, extremes of ambition and avarice. They do but increase their unrest. True rest is in the "meek and lowly" heart—the heart that is in sympathy with the blessed heart of Jesus. (4) Those only will take the yoke of Christ upon them who feel the burden of sin. The distressing sense of guilt and depravity. Taking upon us the yoke of Christ is submitting to him as our Ruler (cf. 1 Kings xii. 10; 1 Tim. vi. 1). If he releases us from the drudgery of sin, it is that we may serve him in the bonds of truth and love. One yoke gives place to another; we cannot be "as gods"—independent. 3. *The revelation is heavenly.* (1) Its rest is glorious. Rest from the weary ways of sin. For the wicked there is no rest. The peace that passeth understanding. The anticipation of heaven. (2) Its yoke is easy. It is the sweet yoke of love. "It is a yoke that is lined with love" (Henry). The commandments of love are not grievous. The gospel law is the liberty of the purest love. It is a wonderful contrast to the bondage of sin (see Deut. xxviii. 47, 48; Isa. x. 27; Dan. ix. 24). (3) Its burden is light. It is sweet to the loyal servant to know that the cross he bears is Christ's. The love of Christ lightens the burden, and so he sustains it himself. "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he will sustain *thee*" (Ps. lv. 22). He will carry thyself and thy load. Thou art thyself thy load (cf. Isa. xliii. 2; lxiii. 9; Dan. iii. 25; 2 Cor. i. 5; iv. 17).—J. A. M.

Ver. 28.—*Rest for the weary.* We have here—

I. A BURDEN. 1. *Some are laden with sin.* (1) Guilt. Their bad life is set in array against them. The Spirit of God comes to them in the Law, in the Gospel, by the ministry, over an open grave. (2) Depravity. Vestiges of vanity, of pride, self-will, selfishness. 2. *Others groan under the distresses of life.* (1) Poverty. (2) Sickness. (3) Temptation. Satan takes advantage of our depression. (4) Persecution. Permitted to wean us from the world. To prepare us for a better.

II. A RELIEF. 1. *Christ offers pardon to the guilty.* (1) He gives rest to the conscience; removes the sense of guilt. (2) He gives peace to the heart. 2. *Christ offers purity to the unholy.* (1) This his merits have purchased. (2) His Spirit is efficient. (3) His promises are assuring (see Ezek. xxxvi. 25—27; 1 Thess. v. 23). 3. *Christ offers grace for the needy.* (1) He will remove the thorn in the flesh, (2) or he will enable us to rise above the affliction.

III. THE MEANS. 1. *We must go to Christ.* (1) We may go to church without going to Christ. (2) We may go to the Lord's table without going to Christ. (3) We must have a *personal* interview and acquaintance with him. To this end we must *seek him.* In his house; at his table; at the footstool of his throne. 2. *We must approach him humbly.* (1) In the contrast of his glorious purity we sink abashed.

"I loathe myself when God I see,
And into nothing fall."

(2) We should pray for the grace of his Spirit. 3. *We must approach him obediently.* (1) By ceasing to do evil. Every idol must be thrown down. (2) By learning to do well. Acts of justice. Acts of mercy. Habits of truth and goodness. 4. *We must approach him believingly.* (1) Realize Christ here—now. (2) Realize that he is here, and now ready to remove your burden. (3) You will soon realize that his service is rest—present, everlasting.

How lamentable that all do not come to Jesus! Angels lament this. Good men lament it. There is no excuse for those who will not seek such a blessed Saviour.—J. A. M.

Ver. 2.—*The mission of miracles.* "When John had heard in the prison *the works* of Christ." Archbishop Thomson says, "Many Fathers are pleased to say that John had no doubts himself; that his faith was too strong for that, and that he only sent the two disciples to Jesus that they might have their faith refreshed by a stronger draught than their own master could administer. I cannot and do not believe it. There can hardly be a doubt that in thus sending his disciples to inquire of Jesus he wished to satisfy a doubt and a misgiving that had sprung up in his mind. 'Why this tarrying? Why this great delay? Why not proclaim the truth upon the mountain-tops and in the city that Jesus the Christ, the Messiah, is come, that the people might bow down to him, and then rise as one man to shake off the Roman yoke?' It was his own misgiving. The faith is still there, but clouded over for the moment by a certain doubt, 'Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?'" Archbishop Trench explains the force of the term "works" as applied to our Lord's miracles. "A further term by which St. John very frequently names the miracles is eminently significant. They are very often with him simply 'works.' The wonderful is for St. John only the natural form of working for him who is dwelt in by all the fulness of God. He must, out of the necessity of his higher being, bring forth these works greater than man's." "These miracles are the fruit after its kind which the Divine tree brings forth; and may, with a deep truth, be styled the 'works' of Christ, with no further addition or explanation."

I. THE PECULIARITIES OF THE CHRISTIAN MIRACLES. It is well to remember that the Christian is not the only set of miracles; their characteristic features can best be seen on comparing them with others, especially those recorded, with more or less authority, in ecclesiastical history. Note these peculiarities: 1. The miracles of Christ were kept within remarkable limitations. The fewness, not the abundance, surprises us. Christ's restraint of miracle is far more surprising than his working miracles at all. 2. The miracles of Christ were purely philanthropic in their character. The apparent exceptions are proofs of the truth, for they were philanthropic *to the disciples*, parts of their spiritual training. 3. The miracles of Christ were in full harmony with the character and words of their author. 4. Less is made of the miracles of Christ as credentials than we should have expected.

II. THE PURPOSE OF THE CHRISTIAN MIRACLES. The true way to the vindication of the miracles is to show that the *reason* of a thing affords the best proof of its existence. Some of the heavenly bodies have been discovered, not by sight with the help of the telescope, but by the reason for their existence, which was found in the

force of their gravitation, and the aberration of certain neighbouring bodies. It was first shown that they must be there, and then it was found that they were there. 1. The miracles were a necessary part of Christ's *mission*. He was both Redeemer from sin and Giver of life. His was really a spiritual work; not, therefore, immediately apparent to human vision. He must, in some outward palpable form, illustrate his higher work. He did the outward work of healing bodily disease and driving out evil spirits that he might lead men to look to him for *spiritual* healings and redeemings. 2. The miracles were also a necessary part of Christ's *revelation*. He *had* a mission, and *was* a revelation. The Father-God was set before men in Jesus Christ. He was "God manifest in the flesh." Christ's character must show men what the Father *is*; and Christ's works—his miracles—must show men what the Father *does*.—R. T.

Ver. 3.—*The way to deal with our doubts.* Whether the doubts were John's own, or such as he knew disturbed the minds of his disciples, he certainly took the wisest and most hopeful way in which to secure their removal. If a man is an intelligent man he is sure to have doubts; doubts come in the process of thinking; but everything depends on the way in which a man deals with his doubts. He may foster them; he may indulge them; or he may make earnest effort to secure their removal. He may keep them to himself, and grow proud of them; or he may take them to Jesus, and get them solved and dissipated.

I. JOHN DEALING WITH HIS OWN DOUBTS. 1. Thinking them over in his own heart. It is certain that John had occasional glimpses, at least, of the higher and more spiritual aspects of Messiah's mission; but it is equally certain that he never shook himself quite free from those temporal notions of Messiah which were the characteristic of his age. The teaching and healing, and the very gentle ways, of Jesus, did not at all match the idea of Messiah which he had formed. The Jewish nation was not likely to be delivered from Roman bondage by such a man. Perhaps, after all, the work of Jesus was only *preparing* work, like his own had been. 2. Talking them over with his disciples. They might well be more puzzled than he, for they had none of those prophetical visions which had been vouchsafed to him. Evidently the talk did not mend matters. It even seemed to increase the uncertainty, and it made John feel that something must at once be done. Neither thinking doubts over, nor talking doubts over, ever helps us very much. Too often they grow big by brooding; and so much depends on the friends whom we choose for the talk.

II. JOHN TAKING HIS DOUBTS TO THE LORD JESUS. He would have actually gone himself, but he could not. So he sent two disciples, that he might see through their eyes and hear through their ears. Our Lord solved the doubts by, in effect, saying, "You find a difficulty in recognizing me because you are hindered by wrong ideas concerning the *character* of Messiah's mission." A Messiah who *heals, delivers*, and *saves*, exactly fits a forerunner who called to *repentance*. John's doubts fled when he learned to say, "He is the Messiah, he must be the Messiah, for I see that his moral and spiritual work is precisely the carrying on, the completion, of that moral work of mine."—R. T.

Ver. 5.—*The classes Christ helped.* The point of the answer sent by our Lord to John is usually thought to be the proof he was giving of his Divine *power;* he was opening the eyes of the blind; he was making the lame walk; he was cleansing the lepers; he was unstopping the ears of the deaf; he was raising the dead. Must he not, then, be the Messiah? Nicodemus properly argued, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a Teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." And yet it may be that this was not our Lord's precise point. Indeed, John knew all about these miracles, and it was because he could not make up his mind about them that he sent the inquiry. It may be that our Lord fixed the attention of the messengers on the *kinds of persons* for whom he was working, and the *character* of the work he was doing for them. And we can see that just *this* would be the most suggestive and helpful answer for John. It would show him that Jesus was Messiah in a *spiritual* sense. "It might seem, at first sight, as if the thing that would make fitting impression on John was the display of Divine *power* in these miracles of healing and restoration. It would seem as if

John would be bound to argue that he must be Divine who could do such mighty works. But that is only the surface-teaching of the miracles. The prominent thing in our Lord's response is his pointing out *who* it is gets the benefit of his work; it is as if he had said, "See all you can, but be sure to notice and to tell John this—it is the *blind* who are being blessed; it is the *lame*, it is the *lepers*, it is the *deaf*, who are being blessed; it is the *poor* who are being savingly blessed." It is as if the Lord had said, "Be sure and point out to John the *character* of my work; that will be an all-sufficient answer to his question." Jesus worked for those who were *sufferers* because of *sin*. He came to be "God saving men from their sins." Jesus did not touch national disabilities, social struggles, class weaknesses, or political contentions; these things formed no sphere for him. Where sin had been, there he went. Where sin was, there he came. What sin had done, that he strove to remedy. So the suffering made for him a sphere. The ignorant, the poor, the perishing, were ready for his gospel.—R. T.

Ver. 11.—*A critical estimate of John.* One does not readily associate the idea of criticism, and especially criticism of persons, with our Divine Lord. We forget that there are both good and bad criticisms, and that estimates of character which bring out the *good* are just as truly criticisms as those which bring out the *bad*. Here we have one of the few estimates formed by our Lord which have been preserved in the Gospels. Everybody had talked about John. Everybody had formed some opinion concerning him. It was generally recognized that he was a Jehovah-prophet. What our Lord's disciples thought of him we can only surmise. The impressions they were likely to take, from his sending this message of inquiry, our Lord sought at once to correct.

I. WAS JOHN VACILLATING? This would be the first impression of the disciples. John had most plainly testified to Jesus as Messiah. On the ground of his testimony, some of them had joined Jesus; and now he seemed to be doubting his own work, and making them doubt. The man was "a reed, shaken by the wind." The reed is a familiar type of uncertainty and instability. A broken reed is one of the most helpless things. Jesus rejects such an explanation. There was no real vacillation indicated by John's inquiry; only such passing doubt as depression brings.

II. WAS JOHN BECOMING SELF-INDULGENT? This was rather a malicious suggestion, but the great Heart-reader knew that some one was fashioning it in his heart. "John has had so much to do with courts, he is evidently getting spoiled, and losing his spiritual sensitiveness in self-indulgence." Jesus rejects that explanation as altogether unreasonable. True, John is in a palace; but he is in its prison, not in its banqueting-hall. There in the prison his clothing is as rough as it was in the desert.

III. WAS JOHN ONLY A PROPHET? This was a supercilious suggestion. "Don't make too much of John. He was sent to preach and baptize; that was his prophetic work, and when *it* was done *he* was done." The idea was that his opinion about Messiah really did not matter. Jesus scorns this view; declares John to have been "more than a prophet," and proceeds to give his own positive criticism. John was at once *great* and *little*. Great because he was announcer of Messiah. Little because he never stepped over the borders of Judaism to become a member of Messiah's kingdom. John's weakness and uncertainty resulted from this—he looked on Christ from *outside* his kingdom; a man must come *inside* if he would appraise it truly.—R. T.

Ver. 12.—*Violent entrance into the kingdom.* "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." It is difficult to accept restfully any of the explanations offered of this very bold figure. We cannot think who had been showing such "violence" in pushing into Christ's new kingdom. Evidently our Lord is dealing with John's mistake. He was filled with doubts because Christ's ways were so *gentle*. If Jesus meant to establish the Messianic kingdom, John felt that he would have to put *more force* into it. So Jesus, thinking of this idea of John's, says, "It is the common mistake men have made ever since that vigorous ministry of John's. Everybody seems to think the Messianic kingdom is to be established by violence. They are all tempting me to use force." Men were disposed violently to hurry the kingdom into premature existence. They *will* have it *now*. They will *take it by storm*.

I. MEN'S WAY OF GETTING THE KINGDOM. Because the only kingdom they could realize was an *outward* one, some good they could possess, some liberty, some position, some rights and privileges, some wealth which they could gain and hold, therefore they thought they must grasp, and push, and strive, and fight. These are men's ways of getting all kinds of outside good. Illustrate by the crowding and pushing to get the benefits of our Lord's healings. To get something men can be violent; each striving to be first, and the "violent taking by force."

II. CHRIST'S WAY OF GETTING MEN INTO THE KINGDOM. He evidently trusted to first getting the kingdom *into them*; for to him the kingdom was inward, a state of mind and heart, a gracious relation with God, character moulded to the Divine image, and then conduct ruled by the Divine will. From our Lord's point of view there was no room for physical force, though plenty of room for moral energy. Violence was altogether unsuitable; indeed, as he taught in the sermon on the mount, the gentle and submissive elements of character, rather than the strong and forceful, made ways into his kingdom. The best comment on our Lord's words here—a comment which brings out clearly enough that he is *rebuking* the violence of those who use force, and in no way praising it—is found in the familiar but most gentle and gracious words of vers. 28—30.—R. T.

Ver. 16.—*An unfavourable estimate of a generation.* Generations have their marked characteristics. Generations of humanity; generations of races; generations of nations; if we would be subtile we might even say, generations of classes. Thus we speak of ages of faith, sceptical ages, scientific ages, dark ages, ages of conflict, æsthetic ages, and so on. But it is necessary to distinguish between the abstract philosophical estimate of an age made by the historians, and the rough-and-ready estimate of a particular period, or a particular people, made by the prophet or the preacher, who brings a testing message. Our Lord was not attempting what we should mean by a critical examination of the characteristics of the people of Palestine in the first century. He is rather, in the fashion of the quickly observant preacher, noticing what conditions of society make his work difficult. Neither the austere John nor the friendly Jesus pleased the fickle multitude.

I. A GENERATION THAT WOULD NOT BE DRIVEN TO GOODNESS. The element of fear was prominent in John Baptist's work. He demanded, he threatened, he prophesied of judgment to come. But that fickle generation responded in moments of excitement, and then tired, and fell back on their old self-indulgences. They were like children, who were induced to play at funerals, but soon tired of the mock solemnity, and wanted a change. And the generation did but illustrate an abiding characteristic of humanity. Force soon wearies men; fear soon becomes familiar; threats cease to alarm; the terror of the gospel may open hearts; but if something does not follow the terror that can satisfy hearts, they will soon shut again, and closer than ever.

II. A GENERATION THAT WOULD NOT BE DRAWN TO GOODNESS. John drove; Jesus drew. Jesus entered into all the common spheres of men, bringing cheer of sympathy and help. He was everywhere a Joy-bringer. And yet the generation soon tired of him; even as children tire of playing at weddings. They tire because they cannot have altogether their own way. That was the secret of the fickleness of the generation. They wanted John to be what they wished. They wanted Jesus to be and do and say just what they wished; and they were like sulky children who could not get their own way. John and Jesus both had to be what God would have them be.—R. T.

Ver. 19.—*The justification of wisdom.* John's peculiarity was no oddity; it was the power arranged for him in the Divine wisdom. The peculiarity of Jesus was no eccentricity; it was the expression of that Divine Spirit of wisdom which dwelt in him. Men may criticize the methods of John and Jesus; the story of the ages fully justifies the wisdom of those methods.

I. WISDOM USES VARIOUS AGENCIES. "The spiritual unfoldings of wisdom in the religious world are manifold." John moves you by his fear and terror; Jesus moves you by his quiet goodness. John's wisdom thunders; the wisdom of Jesus flows out in mild words. Men "wonder at the gracious words which proceed from his mouth."

Through the intellect God appeals to you in one way; and through sympathy in quite another way. How sweetly gentle is electricity in the growth of lilies, and in the generation of birds, bees, butterflies! But in certain conditions it gathers itself up, and flashes in lightning, accompanied with terrible artillery. "Wisdom in John Baptist was ascetic and sincere; in Jesus it was freer, gentler, and sweetly social" (Pulsford). We can never fairly judge an agency until we see how it stands in its relation—what it does, what it is calculated to do. Then what seems insignificant and even unsuitable is plainly seen to be an inspiration of wisdom.

II. WISDOM IS JUSTIFIED IN THE ADAPTATION OF ITS AGENCIES. Estimate fairly what John had to do, and his austerity and severity are fully justified. Estimate fairly what Jesus has to do, and his friendliness and readiness to enter into the common spheres of life are fully justified. Wisdom is justified in all her methods and changes.

III. WISDOM ONLY FAILS TO JUSTIFY ITSELF TO A RIVAL WISDOM. "The children of pride and self-will justify Wisdom in no form. They puff up their own conceit by complaining of every mode in which she presents herself. John comes to them grave enough, earnest as life and death, smiting at the roots of their hereditary nature; but they say, 'What a gloomy fellow!' Jesus comes, bland and winning, ready to sit at table with every class of men; but they say, 'He is fond of a good dinner and his wine.' So that neither can John break them from their old habits, nor Jesus attract them to the Divine-human life."—R. T.

Ver. 25.—*The Divine reserve.* From some the higher truth is hidden; to some the higher truth is revealed. This cannot be explained by what is called the "sovereignty" of God; because we must think of God as acting on good judgment, though the materials of his judgment may be more than we can comprehend, or beyond our power to appreciate aright. Here the difficulty of the Divine reserve is not great. We can easily recognize the wisdom of leaving those who think themselves wise to their fancied wisdom; and bestowing gifts on those who are conscious of their ignorance and want to be taught.

I. GOD REVEALS TRUTH FREELY, BUT WITH DISCRIMINATION. Jesus spoke quite freely; anywhere, everywhere, on all occasions, he dropped the seeds of Divine truth; and yet he observed that only some of the seeds went into the soul, germinated, and brought forth fruit. This found expression in his parables. This was sometimes a distress to him. Freely he had preached in Galilee, but the fickle people heard him for a while, and then turned against him. Capernaum saw his mighty works, but evil influences closed the avenues of faith, and the well-to-do, and the Pharisee proud of his religion, and the scribe proud of his learning, united to leave him alone to be the Friend of the poor, who "know not the Law." In the manner characteristic of the pious Jew, and eminently characteristic of himself, Jesus saw the workings of Divine wisdom in this. His revelation of God was proving a touchstone; God was making the truth *tell* on some, and fail in making its way to others. And apostles saw the gospel to be "a savour of life unto life, and of death unto death." Preached to *all*, the gospel is reserved from *some*.

II. THE DISCRIMINATION CONCERNS THE CHARACTER OF THE PROPOSED RECIPIENTS. Not their circumstances. Truth is not reserved for the poor only. The contrast presented by our Lord is between guileful, self-satisfied *man* and simple, receptive *child*. He does but give expression to a recognized universal law of teaching. The man who thinks he knows will not learn. The man who feels that he does not know is glad to learn. But our Lord searchingly suggests, what we well know to be the case, that these two men represent types of character. It is not that the one knows and the other does not know; it is that the one is guileful and conceited, and *feels* as if he knew; while the other is humble and diffident, and *feels* as if he did not know. Christ's revelation of the Father, and the redemption, never can be interesting to any but simple, childlike souls.—R. T.

Ver. 27.—*The Son and the Father.* It is remarkable that Jesus almost always used the term "Father" when he spoke of God. And he used the term so constantly that it may even be treated as the key-note of the revelation which he brought. He came to earth in order to bring to men "good news of God;" and the good news may be

gathered up into a sentence, "He is your Father. You ought to be anxious about standing in right relations with your Father." It is easy to show how that will open out into an answer to the questions, "How can we get back into right relations? And how can we keep in right relations?" Jesus says, "I am the Truth about the Father; I am the Way back to the Father; I am the Model Life of the Son with the Father." "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." Then we see the meaning and point of the closing verses of the chapter. Jesus really says, "Come unto me, and I will teach you how to be a son with his Father; and you will find *that* is rest to your souls."

I. THE RELATIONS OF THE SON AND THE FATHER. It would be to miss the point altogether to bring in ideas concerning what is called the "eternal Sonship." Our Lord is not thinking of his abstract and absolute Divine relationships. He was a Man; as a Man he was a Son; he was a model Son, a firstborn Son. His Sonship was a headship, a leadership; after him come a multitude of sons who, with him, call God their Father. In the expressions our Lord uses we can find two things characteristic of the relations between *the* Son and the Father; and representative of the proper relations between *every* son and the Father. 1. *Intimacy.* "Truly our fellowship is with the Father." Observe, however, that our Lord speaks of it as a present intimacy, fullest confidence, mutual confidence, between the Father and the Son, though the Son was a Man in earthly spheres. 2. *Trust.* The Father fully gave all the earth-concerns, the redemptive earth-concerns, into the hands of his Son. In this, too, representing the trust he still puts in all who are sons in his Son.

II. THE COMPETENCY OF THE SON TO REVEAL THE FATHER. "The Son will reveal him." This will open out simply by showing how Jesus reveals (1) the Divine holiness; (2) the Divine pitifulness; (3) the Divine power; (4) the Divine love. But it needs to be seen that Christ reveals the Father by what he *was*, even more than by what he *said* or *did*.—R. T.

Ver. 29.—*A yoke for two.* "Take my yoke upon you." Christ's yoke, of which he speaks here, is the yoke of Sonship, his relation to God, and the responsibilities, duties, and burdens which it involved. And his point is that he did not want to bear that yoke *alone*. It was a yoke meant for *two*. It could only be borne aright when disciples and he bore the yoke together. Illustration may be taken from the yoke fitted to the shoulders of the two oxen that drew the Eastern plough. That yoke was only easy for each ox as they both cheerfully bore it together. So with the yoke of *Sonship*. It did not lie easy on Christ's shoulder unless his disciples bore it with him. It never could lie easy on their shoulder unless he bore it with them. It is true that rest comes for man in the spirit of sonship; but it is also true that it does not come to man in a *lonely* sonship—only in a sonship fully shared with Christ.

I. A YOKE FOR ONE. "Take *my* yoke." There must be a sense in which our Lord's yoke was his own, and could be shared by nobody. And there is a sense in which each individual man must "bear his own burden." But Christ and we have more that is common to humanity, than that is unique to ourselves. We can and do "bear one another's burdens." There is a tendency to exaggerate the uniqueness of our Lord's experience. It is healthier and wiser to dwell fully on the commonness of his experience and ours. The piece of the yoke on Christ was exactly *his piece*, and had its peculiar pressure; but it was only part of a yoke, which really lay on two shoulders.

II. A YOKE FOR TWO. "Take my yoke upon you," and let us share it together; then it will grow light and easy for us both. Can we bear Christ's yoke with him? Yes, if we understand aright what that yoke was. 1. It was honouring God in a gracious human life. We can share in that. 2. It was revealing God as the loving Father, in a beautiful human Sonship. We can share in that. 3. It was doing the Father's work, and seeking and saving the wandering and lost sons and daughters. We can share in that. And the strange thing is that lifting up and sharing Christ's yoke is the way to *rest*, the only way. Rest for any man can only come out of finding the Father in heaven. No one can find the Father until he gets the Spirit of the Son into his heart. Jesus seems to say, "My rest is in being a Son; my yoke is the yoke of Sonship. Bear my yoke, and you too shall find rest unto your souls."—R. T.

Ver. 30.—*The exchange of yokes.* It is remarkable that so much attention should be given to the first clause of this very familiar and beautiful passage, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden," and so little attention should be given to the later clause, "Take my yoke upon you." These later clauses present the very suggestive thought, that our spiritual dealing with Christ is an exchange of yokes. The "yoke" gives us the idea of a burden which calls for effort, and even strain, to bear it, and keep on bearing it. There is an exchange in all yoke-bearings of *love.* We and those whom we love bear yokes together. My friend bears mine, and I bear his.

I. OUR YOKE, AND THE WAY IN WHICH CHRIST TAKES IT. Our sins, our cares, our sorrows. Estimate what these are to Christ by what they are to us. Never think they become lighter because our Lord takes them on himself. But what a relief to us that shifting of our yoke is! Christ takes it: 1. Wholly. We need keep none for lonely bearing. 2. Cheerfully. Making us feel as if it were he that was benefited by the taking. 3. Lovingly. As if he would melt and win us by the taking.

"'Tis enough that he should care;
Why should I the burden bear?"

II. CHRIST'S YOKE, AND THE WAY IN WHICH WE TAKE IT. 1. Yoke of Christian profession. 2. Yoke of Christian living. 3. Yoke of Christian duty. 4. Yoke of Christian affliction. These go to make up Christ's yoke, as it can become our yoke. We too often bear it half-heartedly, as a sort of must. Persons will sometimes say, "Oh yes, I submit, for there is nothing else I can do." But a true submission is willing submission, whether anything else can be done or not. Or we bear Christ's yoke carelessly, as though nothing were involved in the bearing, not even the supreme honour of our Divine Lord.

How different Christ's yoke for us *appears* and *is!* We never really find out what it is while we only look at it. We know it when we lift it up on our shoulder; then we find that the "yoke is easy, and the burden light."—R. T.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER XII.

Vers. 1—50.—The opposition that our Lord met with (1) from his enemies (vers. 1—45); (2) from his relations (vers. 46—50); and the manner in which he dealt with it.

Vers. 1—45.—(1) *Opposition from his enemies.* (*a*) Conscious and wilful opposition (vers. 1—37). (*α*) As regards the sabbath (vers. 1—14). (*β*) An interlude. The evangelist sees in our Lord's behaviour the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy (vers. 15—21). (*γ*) The opposition carried to the extreme of accusing him of alliance with Beelzebub. Christ shows the monstrous character of such an accusation, and the absence which it discloses of all spirituality of mind (vers. 22—37). (*b*) Opposition due to lack of energy in spiritual things. Christ contrasts the behaviour of heathen mentioned in the Old Testament, and warns the Jews of the result of their present apathy (vers. 38—45).

Vers. 1—8.—*The sabbath in relation to the preparation of food.* Parallel passages: Mark ii. 23—28; Luke vi. 1—5. St. Matthew here returns to the Framework, which he left at ch. ix. 26 or 34.

Ver. 1.—**At that time** (ch. xi. 25, note) **Jesus went** (ἐπορεύθη). It has been suggested that he was now on his way to the synagogue spoken of in ver. 9 (but see note there). Wherever he was going, it must have been within about three quarters of a mile distance (two thousand cubits; see Dr. Lumby, on Acts i. 12, "a sabbath day's journey;" and Schürer, II. ii. 102). **On the sabbath day.** Defined in the Received Text of Luke by the anomalous term "second-first," for the genesis of which see especially Westcott and Hort, 'App.' **Through the corn;** *the corn-fields* (Revised Version, as also Authorized Version in the parallel passages). If it was barley harvest, the time would be probably the beginning of May; if wheat harvest, as seems more likely, about the beginning of June. **And his disciples were a hungred.** So that it was not for his own sake that our Lord acted as he did. **And began.** They could therefore hardly have eaten much when the complaint was made. **To pluck the ears of**

corn, and to eat. It was legal to pluck corn from a field through which one passed (Deut. xxiii. 25), and it is said to be allowed still; but as it was held by the scribes to be a form of reaping, and perhaps of threshing also, it was considered illegal on the sabbath (cf. Edersheim, 'Life,' ii. 56).

Ver. 2.—**But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him.** The Revised Version (*but the Pharisees, when they saw it, said unto him*) retains the simple order of the Greek, which more vividly represents the Pharisees as a party opposed to him. **Behold.** They suggest that he had not noticed it. Were the disciples behind him (cf. ch. viii. 23)? **Thy disciples.** Notice that all the accusations brought against the disciples in this Gospel concern food: ch. ix. 14, as regards abstaining from it upon fixed days; ch. xv. 2, as regards eating it without taking extreme precautions against ceremonial pollution; in the present passage, as regards avoiding any profanation of the sabbath for its sake. **Do.** At this moment. **That which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day** (ver. 1, note).

Ver. 3.—**But he said unto them, Have ye not read.** Our Lord answers them by showing that the principle of the action of his disciples was sanctioned in the Scriptures to which they implicitly appealed. He calls their attention first (*more Rabbinico;* cf. on ver. 5) to the Prophets (*i.e.* the former prophets, according to the Hebrew division), as teaching by example that holy things are of secondary importance compared with the benefit of God's people; and afterwards to the Law, which implies that the sabbath itself is of secondary importance compared with work necessary for the sanctuary. He then affirms that in the present case there is One present who is even greater than the sanctuary. He goes on to say that their complaint, however, was really due to the lack, not so much of intellectual as of spiritual knowledge; they had no *rapprochement* with the God of love, or they would not have condemned those who, both because they were men and because they were disciples of the Son of man, stood above the sabbath. **What David did, when he was a hungred, and they that were with him** (1 Sam. xxi. 1—7).

Ver. 4.—**How he entered into the house of God, and did eat;** rather, *and they did eat,* with Revised Version margin (ἔφαγον), the simple plural verb laying the action less at David's door than does the phrase in the parallel passages—"and he gave" them to eat. Observe that the mention of ordinary people, like David's attendants, adds to the force of our Lord's illustration. **The shewbread** (Exod. xxv. 30; Lev. xxiv. 5—7). **Which.** Which kind of food (ὅ). **Was not lawful** (οὐκ ἔξον ἦν). Reminding the Pharisees of their own words in ver. 2. **For him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests?** (Lev. xxiv. 9).

Ver. 5.—Matthew only. **Or.** A second example, if the first does not convince you. **Have ye not read in the Law.** Beyond which there is no appeal. Jewish authors often appeal to Scripture in the order of Hagiographa, Prophets, and, last of all, Law. He here refers to Lev. xxiv. 8 (cf. also 1 Chron. ix. 32), but Bengel's suggestive remark that Leviticus was read in the services at that very time of year is vitiated by the double uncertainty, first, what time of year it really was; and secondly, what is the antiquity of the present custom of reading the whole Law every year (cf. Dr. Lumby on Acts xiii., 'Add. Note'). According to the express orders of the Law, the priests put in fresh shewbread on the sabbath day. **How that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple.** The word of wider import is used (ἱερόν, not σκηνή), because the Law still holds good. **Profane the sabbath.** If their work is regarded in itself, as the action of my disciples is now regarded. **And are blameless?** (*guiltless,* Revised Version, as also the Authorized Version in ver. 7); *i.e.* in the eyes of the Law. This you will all grant (cf. Schürer, II. ii. 103). Lightfoot's ('Hor. Hebr.') attractive quotation from Maimonides in 'Pesachim,' i. (*i.e.* 'Hilkoth Korban Pesach,' § i.), "There is no sabbatism at all in the temple," appears to rest on a misunderstanding.

Ver. 6.—Matthew only. **But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple** (τοῦ ἱεροῦ μείζόν ἐστιν ὧδε); "Gr. *a greater thing*" (Revised Version margin). A similarly difficult neuter is found in vers. 41, 42. If the neuter be insisted upon, we must understand Christ to refer to his cause, the work in which the disciples were engaged. This was greater than the temple; much more, therefore, was it greater than the sabbath. Probably, however, our Lord is referring to himself, to his own Person and character, but uses the neuter, either as forming a more decided contrast to ἱερόν, or as being more weighty than the masculine (cf. ch. xi. 9, note). Also it was less defined and more mysterious. He could not reveal to them the secret of his presence. Observe the use, even at this stage in his ministry, of words implying the decadence of the temple service (cf. John iv. 21; Acts vi. 14). *In this place; here* (Revised Version), as in vers. 41, 42.

Ver. 7.—Matthew only. **But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless** (on the quotation,

see ch. ix. 13, note). Had you learned the simple Bible truth that God places the exercise of your moral faculties, particularly those of kindness, above merely external observances, you would not have committed this sin of taking up the position of wrong judges. He traces their error up to its true source, ignorance of the first principles of religion, ignorance of what God really desires. *Condemned.* Formally and officially (*καταδικάζω*). *The guiltless.* As were the very priests (ver. 5).

Ver. 8.—Parallel passages: Mark ii. 28; Luke vi. 5. **For.** With immediate reference to *guiltless.* **The Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day**; *is Lord of the sabbath* (Revised Version); *even* being added in the Received Text from Mark and Luke. Christ clinches the argument, and at the same time explains his phrase in ver. 6. The temple is greater than the sabbath; I am greater than the temple; these my disciples are therefore guiltless; for, to put it briefly, I, whom they are following, am greater than the sabbath and rule over it. Observe, however, that Christ does not directly say "I," but *the Son of man.* The reason is seen in Mark, where a connecting link is given: "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: so that the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath." Christ there implies that the sabbath is inferior to man, not only because it exists for his sake (cf. 1 Cor. xi. 9), but also because it falls under the lordship referred to in Gen. i. 28; and therefore that he himself is really superior to it as man, and much more as the ideal Man (ch. viii. 20, note). Our saying is very condensed, but includes the same thought, omitting *even* as unnecessary, after having definitely pronounced the innocence of his disciples. (For the thought of the saying, cf. 2 Macc. v. 19, "God did not choose the people for the place's sake, but the place for the people's sake," and the Midrash 'Mechilta,' on Exod. xxxi. 13, especially the words, "The sabbath is given to you, not you to the sabbath." So also Talm. Bab., 'Yoma,' 85 *b*.)

Vers. 9—14.—*The healing of the man with the withered hand.* Parallel passages: Mark iii. 1—6; Luke vi. 6—11. In vers. 10, 11 there are reminiscences of a narrative, presumably belonging to the Framework, which is essentially preserved in Luke xiv. 2—5 (cf. Weiss).

In this section the opposition of the Pharisees is turned directly against our Lord himself for breaking the sabbath. Observe, however, that he did not do this for his own benefit. It was his kindness to another that brought about the determination to kill him.

Ver. 9.—**And when he was departed thence** (*καὶ μεταβὰς ἐκεῖθεν*). The phrase implies more than removal from that place in the corn-fields where he had been accused by the Pharisees, and is to be understood of removal from one town to another, the words that originally preceded this narrative not being recorded (cf. *infra*, and ch. xi. 1, note). When, therefore, it took place we have absolutely no means of knowing, save that it was not on the same day as the event recorded in vers. 1—8 (cf. Luke, "on another sabbath"), and that it was later on in his ministry. **He went into their synagogue.** Whose? Hardly the Pharisees mentioned in ver. 2, as this was a different occasion. Possibly the Galilæans, among whom he then was (cf. ch. iv. 23; ix. 35), or probably the Jews generally (cf. ch. xi. 1, note). In the two last cases the subject of "they asked," in ver. 10, would be the same as that of "they watched," in Mark (iii. 2), namely, the frequenters of the synagogue, among whom the Pharisees naturally took a prominent place. But it is quite possible that we have here a trace of the use of a fresh source, the *αὐτῶν* being quite intelligible in its original context.

Ver. 10.—**And, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered**; *and behold a man having a withered hand* (Revised Version, with Westcott and Hort). For the quotation by Jerome from "the Gospel which the Nazarenes and Ebionites use" (comp. also Introduction, p. xvi.), in which this man tells our Lord, "Cæmentarius (a mason) eram, manibus victum quæritans," see especially Resch, 'Agrapha,' p. 379. **And they asked him, saying.** In the narrative of healing the man with the dropsy, found in Luke xiv. 1—6 (*vide supra*), a similar question is asked by our Lord. **Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days?** The Talmudic answer is that it is unlawful except in cases of actual danger to life (cf. Schürer, II. ii. 104), but whether this distinction was really drawn as early as the time of our Lord is not known in the present backward state of all critical investigations of Jewish literature. **That they might accuse him**; *i.e.* before the local court, ch. v. 21 (Meyer). Observe that, recognizing his readiness to help others, they desire (according to Matthew) to get a clear statement from him whether he would follow the traditional law (as we may assume it was) or not, intending to base their accusation on his reply. Verbally, however, Christ avoids the dilemma, as in the more famous case of the tribute to Cæsar (ch. xxii. 21).

Ver. 11.—Matthew alone on this occasion,

but comp. Luke xiv. 5. **And he said unto them.** Christ's answer appeals from intellectual and theoretical difficulties to the practical common sense of ordinary morality (cf. Rom. iii. 5—7). Their own feelings would guide them to help a brute, much more a man. According to the parallel passages, our Lord first set the man in the midst of them, wishing, perhaps, to draw out their sympathy, and only afterwards spoke this verse of censure (see Chrysostom). **What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep.** One only, and therefore so much the dearer (Meyer). He would feel an interest in it as an animal that he had learned to love; and he would care for it as his property. In Christ's case also there was the love of man as man, and of man as belonging to him (John x. 14; i. 11). In Luke xiv. 5 ("a son or an ox") the double thought is distributed over two objects; the man would love his son, and care for his property in the ox. **And if it (*this*, Revised Version) fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out?** Lightfoot ('Hor. Hebr.') confirms this from the Jerusalem Talmud and Maimonides.

Ver. 12.—**How much then is a man better than a sheep?** (ch. vi. 26; x. 31). **Wherefore it is lawful to do well (*to do good*, Revised Version) on the sabbath days.** He answers their question about healing (ver. 10) by enunciating a general principle which would cover more. "Doing good" (perhaps merely "well-doing," Acts x. 33; 1 Cor. vii. 37; but probably "doing good to" another, cf. Luke vi. 26, 27; and the parallel passages here, ἀγαθοποιῆσαι ἢ κακοποιῆσαι) is to be one test by which the duty of resting or of working on the sabbath is to be determined.

Ver. 13.—**Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand.** He is bid use his strength before he is told that it is given. The intellectual difficulties that might have occurred to him lose themselves in the action. In the somewhat similar case in ch. ix. 5, 6 there had been the preparation of forgiveness of sins. **And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other.** Power is linked to obedience. *Whole;* i.e. sound, in complete health and vigour. The word comes more often in the account of the man healed at the pool of Bethesda than in all the rest of the New Testament.

Ver. 14.—**Then the Pharisees went out** (ἐξελθόντες δὲ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι). Probably at once, before the service was over. Note the emphatic position of ἐξελθόντες. They will no longer stay in the same building with one who does such a thing. **And held a council; *and took counsel*** (Revised Version, with Authorized Version margin); cf. ch. xxii. 15; xxvii. 1, 7; xxviii. 12. **Against him, how they might destroy him.** We learn from Mark that the Herodians also took part in the deliberation. Professor Marshall (*Expositor*, June, 1891, pp. 465, 466) suggests a too ingenious reconciliation of this verse and its parallels, in three details, by suggesting an Aramaic original which would explain the divergences.

Vers. 15 — 21. — Jesus withdraws, and although many follow him and are healed by him, he charges them not to make him known, thus fulfilling the prophecy of the Ideal Israelite, who is the object of God's love and delight, and will receive his Spirit and declare the revelation of him to the Gentiles; he will not strive or exalt himself, or use harshness towards the weak; and his meekness shall last until he has succeeded in his purpose of revealing God to men; for he shall succeed, and he shall be the object of the Gentiles' hope.

Ver. 15.—Vers. 15, 16 are found essentially in Mark iii. 7, 12; the remainder of this section, the application of prophecy, here only. **But when Jesus knew it; *and Jesus perceiving it*** (Revised Version). Whether by his own unaided powers, or by intelligence brought him, is not stated. **He withdrew himself** (cf. ch. iv. 12, *he departed*, note) **from thence.** We see from the next clause that this withdrawal was not into any very retired spot, but rather away from the town in which he had been. His motives may have been partly to carry on his work more quietly elsewhere (fulfilling his own injunction, ch. x. 23), and partly to avoid stirring up the excitement of partisans like those who a little later wished to seize him by force and make him king (John vi. 15, where observe "withdrew"). **And great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all.** Almost verbally in ch. xix. 2.

Ver. 16.—**And charged them that they should not make him known.** Publicity as such was rather hindering to his work than otherwise. Only those who had no spiritual affinity with him (John vii. 3—5), or at most but little (ch. ix. 31), desired him to have it.

Ver. 17.—**That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying** (Isa. xlii. 1—4). The following quotation is not taken from the LXX., but from the Hebrew, and this it largely paraphrases.

Ver. 18.—**Behold my servant.** Primarily, as would appear, Israel in its ideal, up to which true Israelites came in measure, but only One came fully. **Whom I have chosen**

(ὃν ᾑρέτισα). The Hebrew denotes "lay hold of" (אחמך), *i.e.* for myself. Bengel has a beautiful note on the εἰς ὅν of the Received Text, "Εἰς, *in*, denotat perpetuam mentis paternæ tendentiam erga dilectum, 2 Petr. i. 17." According to the LXX. of 1 Chron. xxix. 1, David's expression about Solomon affords a curious parallel, Ὁ υἱός μου, εἰς ὃν ᾑρέτικεν ἐν αὐτῷ Κύριος (edit. Dr. Swete). But Lagarde's edition of the Lucianic text punctuates and accents differently, Ὁ υἱός μου εἷς, ὃν ᾑρέτικεν ἐν αὐτῷ κύριος, and this is much nearer to the Hebrew. **My beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased** (ch. iii. 17, note); **I will put my Spirit upon him, and he shall show** (*declare*, Revised Version) **judgment to the Gentiles** (καὶ κρίσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἀπαγγελεῖ). Although κρίσις usually represents in the New Testament God's decision as to the character and life of men, it here must be understood, like *mishpaṭ* in the original, of the Divine right as made known to them for their acceptance and imitation. It is "the true religion viewed on its practical side as a norm and standard for life in all its relations" (Delitzsch). The thought here, therefore, is not of Christ's power to punish and avenge (though he refused to use it as yet), but of his bringing a revelation which should eventually spread, not only to the Jews who now rejected him, but to the Gentiles whom they despised.

Ver. 19.—**He shall not strive, nor cry.** In Isaiah the clause is, "He shall not cry aloud nor lift up *his voice* (לא יצעק ולא ישא);" and so the LXX. But "strive" would represent one very frequent connotation of "cry aloud" and its synonyms, for in Eastern lands disputants use their voice much more loudly than we do. This close connexion between the two ideas is seen also in the Syriac Version of Isaiah, where "lift up *his voice*" is translated *narib*, a word meaning primarily "he shall strive," and only secondarily "he shall lift up his voice." It is possible, but not probable, that Matthew's "strive" is taken directly from *narib*, adopting its primary and commoner meaning, and transposed. **Neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.** A slight paraphrase of the original, "nor cause his voice to be heard in the street," perhaps due to different vocalization of the Hebrew.

Ver. 20.—**A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench.** Though what more feeble than a cracked reed or a wick just flickering? Yet he reckons neither as useless; he allows for possibilities of improvement. His treatment of the believer who is weakest, and, so to speak, least alive, is marked by long-suffering and gentleness. Observe that (1) Matthew omits the words, "He shall not burn dimly nor be discouraged," because he is not concerned with anything else than Christ's relation to others; (2) he combines into one the two clauses of Isaiah, "He shall bring forth judgment in truth" and "Till he have set judgment in the earth." **Till he send forth** (ἕως ἂν ἐκβάλῃ). This being the supreme object of Messiah's life and energy —bringing out, as from his own plans and resources, judgment unto victory; *i.e.* the revelation of the Divine Law (ver. 18, note) to a successful issue in human hearts. *Unto victory.* Apparently only a paraphrase of the thought in Isaiah.

Ver. 21.—**And in his Name shall the Gentiles trust**; *hope* (Revised Version). The evangelist thus completes the parallelism with the end of the first stanza (ver. 18). However Jews treat Messiah, Gentiles shall place their hope in his Name, which, in fact, sums up for man all that can be known of God (ch. vi. 9, note). *In his Name.* So even the LXX. But the Hebrew, "in his Law." Ὀνόματι is possibly due to a confusion with νόμῳ, but is more probably merely a paraphrase bringing out more clearly the fact that the Christian religion is emphatically trust in a Person. *The Gentiles*; rather, *Gentiles*, as such. This paraphrase for "isles" in the original is also found in the LXX. (For the whole verse, cf. ch. xxviii. 19, an utterance never lost sight of by the evangelist.)

Vers. 22—32.—The healing of a man blind and dumb, and the consequent blasphemy of the Pharisees. The miracle leads them to the extreme of spiritual opposition. (On the assimilation to our vers. 22—24, found in ch. ix. 32—34, see notes there.) The parallel passages are Luke xi. 14—23 and, for the blasphemy and our Lord's consequent defence only, Mark iii. 22—30.

Ver. 22.—**Then was brought.** So Westcott and Hort margin, but text, "then they brought," as in ch. ix. 32. **Unto him one possessed with a devil, blind** (this fact is not mentioned by Luke), **and dumb.** "The devil had shut up each entrance by which he might come to faith, his sight and his hearing, yet Christ opened each" (Chrysostom). **And he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw.** The case was worse than even that of ch. ix. 32, where the man was not blind.

Ver. 23.—**And all the people**; *the multitudes* (Revised Version); *i.e.* the various concourses of people that formed themselves at different times of the day and in different parts of the town (cf. ch. viii. 1; xiv. 15,

notes). **Were amazed** (ἐξίσταντο); here only in Matthew, but cf. Mark ii. 12. **And said, Is this** (μήτι οὗτός ἐστιν). The form of the question suggests that it seemed altogether too wonderful to allow of an affirmative answer being returned. The American Committee of Revision wished to translate, "Can this be," etc.? **The Son of David?** (ch. ix. 27, note).

Ver. 24.—(On the relation of this verse to ch. ix. 34, see notes there.) **But when the Pharisees.** Not further defined here, but in Mark iii. 22 spoken of as "the scribes that had come down from Jerusalem." **Heard it, they said, This fellow**; *man* (Revised Version); οὗτος (cf. ch. ix. 3, note). Observe that οὗτος (in Matthew only) here answers to the οὗτος of ver. 23. "This man" is at once the object of hope in the minds of the multitudes, and of the deepest opposition on the part of the Pharisees. **Doth not cast out devils, but.** In the parallel passages there is merely a direct assertion that he does it by Beelzebub; here there is a denial of his power to do it by any other agency. Does Matthew's version express rather the process of their deliberation, and that of Mark and Luke the final result? (On the Jewish tradition that our Lord performed miracles by magic, see ch. ii. 14, note, and Lightfoot, 'Hor. Hebr.,' here.) **By**; *in*, Revised Version, margin (ch. ix. 34, note). **Beelzebub** (ch. x. 25, note). **The prince.** Better omit the article, ἄρχοντι giving, so to speak, his official title. **Of the devils.**

Vers. 25—37.—Our Lord shows the monstrous character of their accusation, and urges the need of a complete change at heart.

(1) An *a priori* argument that such an action on Satan's part, as they suppose, would be self-destructive (vers. 25, 26).

(2) An *argumentum ad hominem*. The Pharisees cannot logically and morally acknowledge that their disciples' miracles are performed by Divine help without acknowledging that Jesus' miracles are also. But then they ought to recognize what this implies—that the kingdom of God has come (vers. 27, 28).

(3) This last alternative is true; for how otherwise can they explain the fact of Satan's captives being released (ver. 29)?

(4) An appeal to them and to the bystanders to be decided (ver. 30).

(5) Therefore he warns them solemnly against committing the sin for which there is no forgiveness (vers. 31, 32).

(6) Why be surprised at this language? Their words show that they need a complete change at heart (vers. 33—35).

(7) Is this to make too much of words? It is by words that men will be judged (vers. 36, 37).

Ver. 25.—Vers 25, 26, parallel passages: Mark iii. 24, 25; Luke xi. 17, 18. **And Jesus knew their thoughts** (ch. ix. 4, note), **and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation.** According to Mark iii. 23, our Lord begins with the direct retort, "How can Satan cast out Satan?" But while that gives, of course, our Lord's thought, it is very unlike his method, which is to begin his reply with a parabolic saying. **And every city.** Matthew only. **Or house divided against itself.** It is worth noticing that, apart from all metaphor, the peasants' houses in some districts of Palestine are built of such poor material as to easily give way and burst in half (cf. Thomson, 'Land and the Book,' p. 390, edit. 1887). **Shall not stand.** Neither kingdom, town, nor family can endure such self-destruction; no, nor an individual. There is, too, the further thought that Satan is more than a mere individual; that he is bound up with his kingdom, and his kingdom with him.

Ver. 26.—**And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then.** The transposition in the Revised Version to *how then shall* brings out more distinctly the fact that *then* is not temporal, but argumentative (οὖν). **His kingdom stand?** To De Wette's objection that Satan might perhaps do such a thing once so as to gain in other ways, Meyer answers that our Lord is referring to the *practice* of casting out devils, which, as such, is certainly directed against Satan.

Vers. 27, 28.—Parallel passage: Luke xi. 19, 20, almost verbally identical.

Ver. 27.—**And** (καί). Another stage in his argument. There is a further reason why they should hesitate before making such an accusation; their own disciples claimed to be able to cast out devils. **If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children**; *sons* (Revised Version); *i.e.* your pupils, who will carry on your work (cf. "sons of the prophets"). **Cast them out?** (cf. ch. iv. 24, note). For examples of such cases by others than professed followers of Christ, see Luke ix. 49; Acts xix. 13. Josephus also mentions some, but they are mere impostures; he says ('Ant.,' viii. 2. 5), "Solomon left behind him the manner of using exorcisms, by which they drive away demons, so that they never return, and this method of cure is of great force

unto this day; for I have seen a certain man of my own country, whose name was Eleazar, releasing people that were demoniacal in the presence of Vespasian, and his sons, and his captains, and the whole multitude of his soldiers. The manner of the cure was this: he put a ring that had a root of one of those sorts mentioned by Solomon to the nostrils of the demoniac, after which he drew out the demon through his nostrils; and when the man fell down immediately, he abjured him to return into him no more, making still mention of Solomon, and reciting the incantations which he composed" (cf. also Dr. Cheetham's article on "Exorcism," in 'Dict. of Christian Antiq.'). **Therefore they.** Emphatic (*αὐτοί*), and hence, presumably, the transposition in the Revised Version, *shall they*. **Shall be your judges.** Our Lord asks the preceding question, neither denying nor affirming for himself the fact that their disciples cast out devils, but only by way of argument. He implies, "You will answer that they do so by God's help. If so, then your sons shall be your judges, convicting you of insincerity. You acknowledge that they work miracles by God's help, and you do not acknowledge that I do. But you cannot stop short there. You must acknowledge that I also cast out devils by God's help."

Ver. 28.—The argument continues: "But if this be so (I say nothing about your disciples, but speak only of my own works) —if I really cast out devils by God's help, this shows such a strange putting forth of God's strength that it can mean nothing else but the coming of the Messianic kingdom." Observe that this could not be affirmed from the success of the Pharisees' disciples, for with them expulsion of devils, even if it were real, was, as it were, accidental, standing in no close connexion with their work (cf. ch. vii. 22, note). Besides, they did not, as our Lord did, claim to be the Messiah, and to inaugurate the kingdom. **But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God**; *but if I by the Spirit of God*, etc. (Revised Version). The chief emphasis lies on *by the Spirit of God*, and there is a secondary emphasis on *I*, as compared with "your sons." Observe the absence of the article in *ἐν πνεύματι Θεοῦ*; contrast vers. 31, 32, and comp. ch. i. 18, note. Luke has, "by the finger of God," a term used to designate God's power as put forth upon nature (Exod. viii. 19; xxxi. 18; cf. Ps. viii. 3). **Then.** Little as you think it (*ἄρα*); cf. Luke xi. 48. **The kingdom of God.** In contrast to Satan's kingdom (ver. 26). **Is come** (*ἔφθασεν*: *prævenit*, Codex Brixianus; cf. Wordsworth and White's Vulgate). This may mean (1) it has come sooner than you expected, it has got the start of you (cf. 1 Thess. iv. 15); or (2) it has actually come as far as you, it has arrived. This latter sense seems to be more in accordance with Hellenistic usage (cf. Phil. iii. 16; 1 Thess. ii. 16). **Unto you**; *upon you* (Revised Version), *ἐφ' ὑμᾶς*.

Ver. 29.—Parallel passages: Mark iii. 27; Luke xi. 21, 22. Mark is practically identical with Matthew. Luke ("the strong man armed," etc.) is more detailed and vivid, and is perhaps the original form of the saying. **Or else**; *or* (Revised Version); *i.e.* if this be not the case, that the kingdom of God is come upon you, how else do you explain what has happened, the fact of Satan's instruments being taken from him? **How can one enter into a strong man's house**; *the house of the strong man* (Revised Version). (For the article, cf. ch. i. 23, note.) **And spoil** (*ἁρπάσαι*) **his goods.** Carry off his household tools and utensils (*τὰ σκεύη αὐτοῦ*). **Except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.** This is more than merely the conclusion. It is an emphatic statement that he will do this, yes, utterly plunder (*διαρπάσει*) the whole house. The interpretation of the parable is self-evident: the strong man is Satan; his vessels are those afflicted by him; the one who binds, etc., is Christ. For Christ's appearance and work, even before the Crucifixion and Resurrection, bound Satan in this respect. Observe that there is probably a tacit reference to Isa. xlix. 25, which at any rate now received a fulfilment.

Ver. 30.—Parallel passage: Luke xi. 23, omitted in Mark. The aim of this verse is doubtful. (1) It may be addressed to the Pharisees, with the object of showing them what their words really implied. They were not due, as some might think, to mere indifferentism or to a judicial neutrality; such a relation to him was impossible. They were due to opposition of inner life and of outward energy. Thus their words denoted complete separation from him. This he brings out more clearly in the two following verses. (2) This interpretation, however, would attribute to the Pharisees too great an ignorance of their own feelings of opposition to Christ, and it is therefore best to understand the verse as addressed to the many bystanders. Christ has defended himself from the accusation brought against him, and now urges these waverers not to be content with only not opposing him, but to take sides—for, in fact, they cannot help doing so. Indifference in this case is only another name for opposition; not actively to help is really to hinder. Thus understood, the lesson of this verse finds its parallel in vers. 43—45, by which

indeed, it is immediately followed in Luke. **He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.** The first clause speaks of the inner disposition, that which forms the real being of the man; the second, of his energy. Observe that the figure of the second clause appears to be connected with that of ver. 29. If Christ's property is not collected, it is driven further from him. Christ and Christians must gather (John xi. 52; cf. Bengel). For *gathereth* (*συνάγων*), cf. also ch. iii. 12; xiii. 30. In *scattereth abroad* (*σκορπίζει*) the thought almost leaves the simile of the *σκεύη*, and regards the persons signified. Notice that in John xi. 52, referred to above, the two verbs *συνάγειν* and (*διὰ*)*σκορπίζειν* also occur; the figure there, however, appears to be taken from sheep (cf. John x. 12). Further, Mark ix. 40 and Luke ix. 50 record the saying, "He that is not against us is for us," which was addressed to our Lord's disciples. Both sayings are necessary; earnest Christians need to remember that when outsiders do anything in Christ's name, it must, on the whole, forward his cause (Phil. i. 18); the undecided must face the fact that neutrality is impossible.

Vers. 31, 32.—Parallel passages: Mark iii. 28—30 (where the verses immediately follow our ver. 29) and Luke xii. 10 (where the context is not the same, he having passed straight from our ver. 30 to our ver. 43, *vide infra*). It is to be observed that all three accounts differ a good deal in form, though but slightly in substance.

The Apostolical Constitutions contain what is probably a mixture of these verses with 2 Pet. ii. 1 and other passages of the New Testament. Resch ('Agrapha,' pp. 130, 249, etc.), in accordance with his theory, thinks that the Constitutions have preserved a genuine utterance of the Lord, of which only different fragments are presented in various parts of the New Testament.

A few words of introduction to these difficult verses. It has been strangely forgotten, in their interpretation, that our Lord spoke in language that he intended his hearers to understand, and that probably not a single one of those who stood by would understand by the expressions, "the Spirit" (ver. 31), "the Holy Spirit" (ver. 32), a Person in the Godhead distinct from the First Person or the Second (cf. ch. i. 18, note). At most they would understand them to refer to an influence by God upon men (Ps. li. 11; cf. Luke xi. 13), such as Christ had claimed to possess in a special degree (Luke iv. 18). In inquiring, therefore, for an explanation of our Lord's sayings, we must not begin at the Trinitarian standpoint, and see in the words a contrast between "blasphemy" against one Person of the Trinity, and "blasphemy" against another. The contrast is between "blasphemy" against Christ as Son of man, Christ in his earthly work and under earthly conditions, the Christ whom they saw and whom they did not understand, and "blasphemy" against God as such working upon earth. "Blasphemy" against the former might be due to ignorance and prejudice, but "blasphemy" against the latter was to speak against God's work recognized as such, against God manifesting himself to their consciences (cf. vers. 27, 28); it was to reject the counsel of God towards them, to set themselves up in opposition to God, and thus to exclude from themselves forgiveness. Just as under the Law there were sacrifices for sins of ignorance and minor offences, but none for wilful disregard of and opposition to God, so must it be at all times even under the gospel itself.

Observe that the "blasphemy" is understood by our Lord as showing the state of the heart (cf. Acts vii. 51). What the effect of a change of heart, *i.e.* of repentance, would be does not enter into our Lord's utterance. All other sin is venial, but for heart-opposition there is no forgiveness. As Tyndale says ('Expositions,' p. 232, Parker Society), "Sin against the Holy Ghost is despising of the gospel and his working. Where that bideth is no remedy of sin: for it fighteth against faith, which is the forgiveness of sin. If that be put away, faith may enter in, and all sins depart." (Cf. also Dorner, 'System,' iii. 73; iv. 94.)

Ver. 31.—**Wherefore** (*διὰ τοῦτο*). Referring primarily to ver. 30, and to be joined closely to "I say unto you." Because such is the terrible effect of what you think mere indifferentism, I say this solemnly, Beware of committing the great sin. Luke's connexion of our ver. 43 with ver. 30 gives a good but a weaker sense—Become fully decided, lest the devil return to you stronger than ever. Matthew's connexion is—Become fully decided, for the legitimate outcome of want of decision is the sin that will not be forgiven. **I say unto you** (ch. vi. 25,

note), **All manner of**; *every* (Revised Version); *πᾶσα*. **Sin and blasphemy.** Genus and species (Meyer). *Blasphemy* passes in this verse from its wider meaning of open slander and detraction in the first clause to its now commoner but restricted meaning of speech against God in the second clause. **Shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost**; *the Spirit* (Revised Version), thus making it more possible for the English reader to see the connexion of thought with the phrase in ver. 28. **Shall not be forgiven unto men.** The words, *unto men*, must be omitted, with the Revised Version. They weaken a statement which in itself may apply to other beings than those that are on earth.

Ver. 32.—Our Lord applies the general principle of ver. 31 to "blasphemy" against himself. This might be, comparatively speaking, innocuous if it was merely defamation or detraction of him as man; but if, on the other hand, it referred to his work in such a way as to mean a real detraction of God's actions considered as Divine, it indicated a state of feeling which did not admit of forgiveness (*vide supra*). If it be asked whether the individual Pharisees referred to in vers. 24—28 had committed this sin, the answer depends upon whether they had recognized the hand of God as such, and had, notwithstanding, wilfully rejected it. If they had—as our Lord's tone seems to imply—then they had in fact committed it. Yet they may afterwards have repented, and so have come under a different category. **And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man** (ch. viii. 20, note); *e.g.* his birth, the circumstances of his life on earth, or his decisions respecting the sabbath or meats, or his disregard of the conventionalities of his time in his treatment of "sinners" and publicans. All such things must have been included in those which St. Paul once blasphemed (1 Tim. i. 13). **It shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh** (such a word) **against the Holy Ghost** (*the Holy Spirit*, Revised Version), **it shall not be forgiven him** (*οὐκ ἀφεθήσεται*). The margin of Westcott and Hort, with the Vatican manuscript, represents it still more strongly (*οὐ μὴ ἀφεθῇ*). **Neither in this world** (*age*, Revised Version margin), **neither in the world to come.** "The age to come" (עולם הבא) included all that followed the coming of Messiah. Sometimes it was restricted to, or practically identified with, the reign of Messiah upon earth, but usually it included much more—eternity as well as time (see especially Weber, 'System,' pp. 354, 355; and cf. Schürer, II. ii. 177). It is in its widest sense that our Lord here uses it—contrasting the present order of things with that which will be the final result of his coming, his thoughts travelling far beyond the present course of this world to that which is to be hereafter.

Vers. 33—37.—You wonder that I make so much of words; words are not trivialities, but are really the legitimate and normal fruit of the heart, and therefore by them each man will be judged.

(1) Take your choice; half-heartedness is not enough (cf. ver. 30); the fruit tells the nature of the tree (ver. 33).

(2) Our Lord addresses the Pharisees directly, showing them their true character. They only speak according to their spiritual condition (ver. 34).

(3) Man can only bring out what is already in his heart (ver. 35).

(4) A solemn close, in which he applies the principle generally; for every idle word an account shall be given, since words are always the source of the verdict upon each man's case (vers. 36, 37).

Vers. 33—35.—Parallel passage: Luke vi. 43—45 (cf. ch. vii. 16—18, notes).

Ver. 33.—**Either make** (*ἢ ποιήσατε*). Not "suppose" (*fac, pone*), still less "declare," but "make." The Lord is speaking in a parable. You would not, surely, make a tree in any other way; it would be against nature; how then imagine it can be so in your own persons? Ch. vii. 18 and Luke vi. 43 state as a fact that the reverse case does not take place in nature. **The tree good, and his fruit good** (*i.e.* one if the other); or **else make the tree corrupt** (ch. vii. 17, note), **and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit.** "By his own fruit" (Luke).

Ver. 34.—The first clause is in Matthew only. **O generation** (*ye offspring*, Revised Version) **of vipers** (ch. iii. 7, note). Observe that the figure of the tree had also been used by the Baptist (ch. iii. 10). **How can ye.** It is against nature. **Being evil**; *i.e.* inherently worthless (ch. vi. 13, note); cf. *πονηροὶ ὄντες*, ch. vii. 11. **Speak good things? For out of the abundance**; *i.e.* even to overflowing (*περίσσευμα*: cf. Mark viii. 8, of what remained after all were filled). **Of the heart the mouth speaketh.** In Eph. iv. 29 there is apparently a reminiscence of this saying in connexion with our ver. 33 (cf. also Jas. iii. 10—12).

Ver. 35.—**A good man out of the good treasure of the heart**; *out of his good treasure* (Revised Version), *of the heart* being added in the Received Text from Luke vi. 45. *Treasure* (ch. ii. 11, note). "Vere thesaurus est in quovis homine, et copia latens" (Bengel); cf. also ch. xiii. 52. **Bringeth**

forth good things: and an (*the*, Revised Version) evil man out of the (*his*, Revised Version) evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. *Bringeth forth* (ἐκβάλλει, but Luke προφέρει). Matthew regards the receptacle from which, Luke the outer world into which, the things are brought.

Vers. 36, 37.—Matthew only.

Ver. 36.—**But** (δέ); *and* (Revised Version). The adversative particle hints at the contrast of ver. 35 to their ordinary ideas about the importance of words. **I say unto you, That every idle** (ἀργόν); *i.e.* effecting nothing, morally useless; 2 Pet. i. 8 (cf. καταργεῖ, Luke xiii. 7). **Word** (ῥῆμα); see ver. 37, note. **That men shall speak, they shall give account thereof** (ἀποδώσουσι λόγον: cf. 1 Pet. iv. 5) **in the day of judgment** (ch. x. 15, note).

Ver. 37.—**For by** (ἐκ)—referring to, as it were, the source of the verdict—**thy words** (τῶν λόγοι σου); *thy*, individualizing. Observe the change from ῥῆμα (ver. 36), which might in itself refer to the utterance of a madman, or to a parrot-like quotation. But by here using λόγοι our Lord shows that he is thinking of utterances of the reason, sentences spoken with a knowledge of their meaning, and forming parts of what are virtually, though not literally, discourses. A ῥῆμα may be the merely mechanical utterance of the lips, λόγοι imply consciousness. The presence of λόγον in the preceding clause is probably entirely accidental. **Thou shalt be justified** (ch. xi. 19, note)—"Quid enim aliud sermones sancti quam fides sonans" (Calovius, in Meyer)—**and by thy words thou shalt be condemned** (ver. 7, note).

Vers. 38—42.—Before entering on this difficult passage, it seems necessary to make some preliminary observations.

(1) Luke xi. 29—32 is the recognized parallel.

(2) According to Luke xi. 16, our Lord had been already asked for a sign, in what would be the middle of our preceding discussion, *i.e.* between the accusation by the Pharisees (our ver. 24) and the Lord's answer to it (our ver. 25, *sqq.*). This shows that *either* the demand was in fact made at some time during this discussion, *or* at least that it was such a demand as our Lord's opponents were likely to make when they were hard pressed, and such as they did in fact make on a somewhat similar occasion. Notice that in Luke xi. 16 it is expressly attributed to others than those who had brought the accusation.

(3) Very similar verses are found in ch. xvi. 1—4 (parallel passage: Mark viii. 11—13); Luke xi. 16 agrees more verbally with the demand as described there than with our ver. 38.

(4) Thus Mark and Luke relate such an incident once, but Matthew twice.

(5) The four passages (ch. xii. 38—42; Luke xi. 16, 29—32; ch. xvi. 1—4; Mark viii. 11—13) contain so much similarity of language that we cannot suppose them to be absolutely independent of each other.

(6) Hence two hypotheses present themselves: (*a*) The demand was made twice (in itself exceedingly probable), and our Lord's answers were to a great extent identical in substance (in itself not very probable), and when identical in substance were closely identical in language (distinctly less probable). Or perhaps we might suppose that this identity of language was rather due to the narrator than to our Lord himself; familiarity with one answer may in the early Church have moulded the record of the other. (*b*) The demand and the answer, as recorded, refer to one and the same occasion. But the account existed in more than one of the sources used by St. Matthew, and as each form of it had its own peculiarities (especially our ver. 24 and ch. xvi. 2, 3), he retained them both. Anyhow, ch. xvi. 1—4 seems to have belonged to the Framework, and our passage to the Discourses.

(7) It will be noticed that all the passages except Mark viii. 11—13 speak of "the sign of Jonah." How was Jonah a sign? Our ver. 40 seems to answer the question, and to say that it was by being in the whale's belly three days and three nights. But there are serious difficulties in accepting this view as finally and alone right. For in ch. xvi. 4 no explanation at all is recorded (though, indeed, it might be urged that the evangelist might fairly expect his readers to remember our ver. 40), and in Luke xi. 30 apparently a different explanation is found, "for even as Jonah became a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation"—words which, taken alone, would seem to refer to Jonah being a sign by the mere fact of his preaching. Thus our Lord would mean—As Jonah preached, so I preach. The future is used in Luke xi. 30 (ἔσται), as bringing out

more clearly than the present would have done the final relation in which Christ should stand to his contemporaries. Godet, indeed, urges that the future excludes any present reference to Christ's work as preaching, and that the demand for a sign *from heaven* (Luke xi. 16) can only be fully satisfied by Christ's resurrection, "in which no human agency intervenes, and in which Divine power appears alone." He, therefore, makes Luke's meaning identical with that of our ver. 40, and paraphrases thus: "It was as one who had miraculously escaped from death that Jonas presented himself before the Ninevites, summoning them to anticipate the danger which threatened them; it is as the Risen One that I (by my messengers) shall proclaim salvation to the men of this generation." But this would almost assume that Jonah told the Ninevites of his miraculous escape, though there is not a hint of his having done so. On the contrary, Jonah iii. 4, *sqq.*, implies that the call to repentance on the basis of punishment threatened was the sole and only means employed by the prophet to accomplish his mission. Jonah the preacher became, by virtue of his preaching, a sign to the Ninevites (for, quite apart from his miraculous preservation, his appearance in Nineveh and his preaching there were no small portent and sign of Divine interest in the Ninevites' affairs), and they accepted him. Matthew's addition, "the prophet," emphasizes this thought, even though he passes on to give what appears to have been the Lord's secondary interpretation of *the sign of Jonah*.

Christ's primary object, then, in his reply was to show to his opponents that heathen Ninevites and a heathen queen accepted the truth without any such sign as that which they were now demanding, and, if possible, to shame them into doing so. Thus ver. 40 is to be considered as parenthetical rather than as the main subject.

It has, indeed, been suggested that ver. 40 was in fact not spoken at all by the Lord himself, but is only the result of a very early interpretation by the Hebrew Christians of our Lord's phrase, added before the formation of our Gospel. The explanation is tempting, but, in the entire absence of corroboration, cannot be accepted (cf. note there). So far as our present evidence goes, we must attribute ver. 40 to Christ, and consider that as he was mentioning the reception of Jonah by the Ninevites, the thought occurred to him that in Jonah's history lay as it were a prefigurement of what he himself would be. Just as on another occasion he illustrated his death and resurrection by the figure of destroying and building the temple (John ii. 18, 19), so now he uses the figure of Jonah in the whale's belly.

(8) This is not the place to enter upon a discussion of the question whether the event here referred to literally happened or not, much less to examine the deep and mysterious subject of the Lord's kenosis (Phil. ii. 7). But it should be observed that some at least of those critics who do not believe that the narrative of Jonah being in the whale's belly is to be understood literally, consider that his preaching to the Ninevites at all is equally metaphorical (cf. C. H. H. Wright, 'Introduction to Old Testament,' p. 207, *sqq.*), so that not only ver. 40 but ver. 41 and Luke xi. 32 are affected, and that indeed more seriously, since the Lord says that the Ninevites will stand up as witnesses. The reasons for taking the narrative as only metaphorical are far from convincing, yet even if they were overwhelming, the illustration in ver. 40 (though not ver. 41) would still remain valid, just as (with all reverence be it spoken) any one to-day might illustrate his action from that of one of Shakespeare's characters whose historical existence is more than doubtful. While, however, the frequency of the allegorical and pictorial in Hebrew poetry and prophecy must be fully allowed for, there seems to be no strong reason (apart from the miracle) to doubt the historical character of the narrative. Further, as to the miracle, Jonah i. 17; ii. 10 are so closely connected with Jonah i., iii., and iv., that it is best to understand the writer as intending to represent it (marvellous though it is) as literal history.

Vers. 38—45.—Some of our Lord's opponents try to defend themselves by asking for a sign of his authority to claim so much; *e.g.* ver. 30 (ver. 38). In his reply he refers them to their own histories for proof that such a demand is inexcusable. The Ninevites did not require one when Jonah became a sign to them—and in mentioning

Jonah he refers to his being in the whale's belly three days and three nights as a symbol of what should happen to himself—and "the queen of the south" took immense trouble to satisfy her craving after wisdom (vers. 39—42). Therefore let them beware; their present state was one of extreme danger; the improvement that they showed was only negative, and if they did not take care worse would happen to them in the future than in the past (vers. 43—45).

Ver. 38.—**Then certain.** The demand is only made by a portion of those present, who, according to Luke xi. 16, were not the same as those who spoke our ver. 24. **Of the scribes and of the** (Revised Version omits *the*) **Pharisees.** They are represented as forming but one party (ch. v. 20, note). **Answered** (*him*, Revised Version, with the manuscripts). It is worth noticing that the insertion of the pronoun makes the passage more like ch. xvi. 1 and parallels. **Saying, Master** (διδάσκαλε); ch. viii. 19, note. Only in this place is their request given verbally. **We would see** (θέλομεν . . . ἰδεῖν). Observe that their language is rather brusque; they express their own wish regardless of him. But they may have intended it only as a plain statement of the difficulty they felt in believing him. They wished to see a sign first. **A sign.** More than a miracle of healing, however wonderful; they desired, as expressly said in ch. xvi. 1; Mark viii. 11; Luke xi. 16, a sign from heaven, presumably some portent in the sky, which should be a sign of his mission (cf. 1 Cor. i. 22; John iv. 48). **From thee;** *i.e.* happening, not accidentally, but at thy command.

Ver. 39.—Of the passages mentioned in the introductory note on vers. 38—42, ch. xvi. 4 is verbally identical with the answer of our present verse, except the omission of the words, "the prophet," which occur nowhere else but in this passage. **But he answered and said to them, An evil** (πονηρά, ch. vi. 13, note) **and adulterous generation.** However frequent the sin of adultery may then have been, the common metaphorical sense of spiritual unfaithfulness to God and the practical worship of some other than Jehovah seems the more probable here (cf. Jas. iv. 4; Rev. ii. 20—23). **Seeketh after** (ἐπιζητεῖ); ch. vi. 32. **A sign; but there shall no sign be given to it.** In Mark viii. 12 our Lord's reply ends here. **But the sign of the Prophet Jonas;** *Jonah the prophet* (Revised Version). In ch. xvi. 4 and Luke xi. 29 "the prophet" has been added in the Received Text.

Ver. 40.—Matthew only. **For as Jonas** (*Jonah*, Revised Version) **was three days and three nights in the whale's belly.** Verbally from the LXX. of Jonah i. 17 (ii. 1). **So shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.** Since, so far as the balance of evidence goes (cf., however, Bishop Westcott, 'Introduction,' p. 344, edit. 1872), the Crucifixion was on Friday and the Resurrection on Sunday, the actual time between them was only one clear day and two parts of days (which might fairly be called three days) and two whole nights. The reckoning, therefore, here is, strictly speaking, inaccurate. The words are perhaps a mere adaptation of the phrase in Jonah, and are here used only to roughly mark the time of our Lord's stay in the grave. Observe, however, that the addition of "nights" tends to emphasize the reality of our Lord's stay there. It was a matter of days and nights; he spent both kinds of earthly time "in the heart of the earth" (cf. ch. iv. 2, note). It will be noticed that the inaccuracy of the wording would, if modern Western habits were alone to be considered, make it most unlikely that the phrase is a later addition; but in view of the early Christian and Jewish method of illustrating events by passages of Scripture which do not apply in all respects, the improbability is not so great as would at first sight appear. However, upon our present information, we must say that the phrase was spoken by our Lord himself, and that although the exact time of his stay in the grave was well known to the early believers, they continued to repeat the saying in the form in which the Lord left it. ***In the heart of the earth.*** The form of the expression is derived from Jonah ii. 3 (4), "in the heart of the seas" (cf. Exod. xv. 8), and would therefore appear to mean some deeper place than the rock-hewn sepulchre. Hence many commentators, beginning with Irenæus ('Adv. Hær.,' V. xxxi.) and Tertullian ('De Anima,' lv.), understand it as directly denoting the place of departed spirits. Eph. iv. 9 ("the lower parts of the earth"), on the contrary, probably refers to the earth as such in contrast to heaven.

Ver. 41.—Verbally identical with Luke xi. 32. **The men of Nineveh** (ἄνδρες Νινευῖται). No article, because the evangelist desired to call attention to the character of the Ninevites. The men of Nineveh, heathen though they were, shall do this. Ἄνδρες (not ἄνθρωποι); hardly because of the approaching mention of a woman (cf. Luke xi. 31), but because the men in the city would naturally take the lead, and not the women. So also in the LXX. of Jonah iii. 5 (contrast ver. 7, of the population generally). **Shall rise in judgment;** ***shall stand up in the judgment*** (Revised Version); *i.e.* shall stand up as witnesses (Job xvi. 8; Mark xiv. 57) in the final judgment (Luke x. 14). **With this generation;** *i.e.* present before the

judgment-seat with them, for what purpose is shown by the following words (cf. Winer, § xlvii. *h*). **And shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas** (Jonah iii. 5, *sqq.*). Observe that this was without miracles or signs being wrought. *At* (*εἰς*). Marking the direction of their faith (Rom. iv. 20). **And, behold, a greater than** — "Gr. *more than*" (Revised Version margin)—**Jonas is here** (ver 6, note).

Ver. 42.—Almost verbally identical with Luke xi. 31. **The queen of the south** (*βασίλισσα νότου*, anarthrous; ver. 41, note). *The south* here doubtless represents part of Arabia Felix (see Dr. Lumby, on 1 Kings x. 1). **Shall rise up.** Does *ἐγερθήσεται* here imply more effort than *ἀναστήσονται* (ver. 41)? This would at least be consistent with the energy which the mention of the Queen of Sheba always suggests. **In the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts** (*the ends*, Revised Version) **of the earth.** Observe the contrast; the message was brought to the Ninevites in their own homes. She marks a higher stage of inquiry and faith. **To hear the wisdom of Solomon**; *i.e.* not out of mere curiosity to see him. **And, behold, a greater than Solomon is here** (ver. 41, note). Observe that Christ claims for himself superiority to the one prophet that was listened to by a Gentile nation, and to the one king whose wisdom drew an inquirer from "the ends of the earth." Rightly; for the claim is confirmed by history; the Gospels have had greater influence than all the Prophets, both "former" and "later," and than all the Ḥokmah literature. Jesus of Nazareth has drawn all men unto him (John xii. 32; cf. 19).

Vers. 43—45.—Parallel passage: Luke xi. 24—26, almost verbally, but omitting the application at the end of our ver. 45. A solemn warning against a merely negative improvement. External preparation, mechanical religion, is insufficient; a definite acceptance of my teaching is required. Our Lord's primary thought would appear to be the relation in which those to whom he was speaking stood to himself. But he frames his words so as to include the whole of that generation of Jews (vers. 39, 45) For his present hearers truly represented their contemporaries.

Observe (1) the close of this discourse resembles that of the sermon on the mount; (2) the connexion of *thought* is the same in Luke, though there the passage comes immediately after our ver. 30; *i.e.* if you are not with me you are really against me; you are only swept and garnished, and the evil spirit returns.

Ver. 43.—**When**; *but . . . when* (Revised Version); *ὅταν δέ*. St. Matthew does not bring this forward as a separate utterance; he wishes the connexion between it and the preceding to be seen. There is a contrast between the behaviour of the Ninevites and the Queen of Sheba, and that of the Jews. **The unclean spirit** (ch. x. 1, note) **is gone out of a** (*the*, Revised Version) **man** (*τὸ πνεῦμα . . . τοῦ ἀνθρώπου*). The first article is inserted for the sake of vividness; the second points back to the spirit; he leaves the man in whom he had dwelt. The two together make the saying parabolic instead of abstract. **He walketh**; *passeth* (Revised Version); *διέρχεται*. Perhaps merely "goes through," with the connotation of distance traversed (John iv. 15; Acts ix. 38), but probably "goes about," *i.e.* to different spots (cf. Luke ix. 6; Acts viii. 4, 40; xx. 25, and so of a rumour being spread abroad, Luke v. 15), in restless wandering. **Through dry** (*waterless*, Revised Version; *δι' ἀνύδρων*) **places.** Which supplied nothing wherewith he might refresh himself (Ps. lxiii. 1), and which would, of course, have no houses (Ps. cvii. 4—7, 33—36). **Seeking rest** (ch. xi. 28, 29, notes), **and findeth none**; *and findeth it not* (Revised Version).

Ver. 44.—**Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out.** In the true text the emphasis lies on the words, "into my house;" *i.e.* the place that I have found so comfortable before, where I was so thoroughly at home; which, in fact, is still mine. Observe the curious parallel to ch. x. 25. The Jews had called Christ Beelzebub absolutely without reason, but in their own case it was only too possible that they had an unclean spirit as "master of the house." **And when he is come, he findeth it empty,** unoccupied (*σχολάζοντα*). **Swept**; "cleansed with besoms" (Wickliffe); *σεσαρωμένον*. **And garnished**; "made fair" (Wickliffe); *καὶ κεκοσμημένον*. It had no tenant, but it was fully prepared for one; all the rubbish had been removed, and suitable preparations been made.

Ver. 45.—**Then.** On seeing that this is the case (cf. ch. iii. 5, note). **Goeth he** (*πορεύεται*). Part of the figure; the others would not be far off. **And taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked** (*evil*, *πονηρότερα*) **than himself.** Christ emphasizes the force and the malignity of a spiritual relapse. **And they enter in.** Into the heart, and thence into the whole body and soul. **And dwell there.** Permanently. **And the last state of that man is worse than the first.** Our Lord's words are apparently quoted in 2 Pet. ii. 20. Observe that the idea of pollution is found

there as well as here. (For the form of the expression, comp. also ch. xxvii. 64.) *Is; becometh* (Revised Version), as the result. **Even so shall it be.** This is more than a warning; it is a verdict. **Also unto this wicked generation.** Observe Christ's solemn addition of "wicked" (*evil*, Revised Version; cf. ver. 34); τῇ γενεᾷ ταύτῃ τῇ πονηρᾷ. The twofold use of "evil" in this verse is not accidental; this evil generation is already fit for the coming of the evil spirits.

Vers. 46—50—(2) *The opposition that our Lord met with from his relations.* He shows that not natural but spiritual relationship is all-important. Parallel passages: Mark iii. 31—35; Luke viii. 19—21. The section belonged originally to the Framework.

Ver. 46.—**While he yet talked**; *while he was yet speaking* (Revised Version); *i.e.* on the occasion which formed the basis of the preceding discourse (vers. 22—45). **To the people**; *to the multitudes* (Revised Version). **Behold, his mother and his brethren** (ch. xiii. 55) **stood without** (so that he was in a house), **desiring** (*seeking*, Revised Version, ζητοῦντες, they evidently made attempts) **to speak with him.**

Ver. 47.—**Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.** The verse is omitted by the Sinaitic manuscript (original hand), the Vatican, and a few others; also by the Old Syriac and some manuscripts of the Old Latin Version. It is clearly an insertion to bridge over the "seeking" of ver. 46 and "him that told him" of ver. 48.

Ver. 48.—**But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?** Who are they who are such in the truest sense?—they for whom I must therefore primarily care?

Ver. 49.—**And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples.** One of the very few signs of an eye-witness in sentences peculiar to the First Gospel (see Introduction, p. xi.). **And said, Behold my mother and my brethren!**

Ver. 50.—**For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same** (*he*, Revised Version; *αὐτός*: ch. i. 21, note) **is my brother, and sister, and mother.** He is all; he sums up in himself all such relations. Observe that our Lord does not raise the question whether or not his mother and brethren now believed on him. He is only speaking of the claims of relationship as such. From Mark iii. 21, however (which seems to refer to the same occasion), we may conclude that the motive for this endeavour to interrupt him lay in unbelief. If so, Mary was either unaware of this or had herself been overpersuaded into momentary impatience (John ii. 3) and distrust. If the latter alternative be adopted, she forms a parallel to the Baptist (ch. xi. 3, note).

## HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—14.—*Christ the Lord of the sabbath.* I. NECESSARY WORK MAY BE DONE ON THE SABBATH. 1. *The accusation of the Pharisees.* The Lord's disciples were hungry; they gathered the ears of corn. This was allowed by the Law (Deut. xxiii. 25). But it was the sabbath day, and there were Pharisees in attendance, some of them rulers of the neighbouring synagogue, some perhaps spies, sent from Jerusalem to watch our Lord. After the healing of the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda, the leading Pharisees at Jerusalem had resolved to take an opportunity of compassing the death of Jesus; and from that time their emissaries appear to have dogged his steps wherever he went. They watched him everywhere—in the corn-fields and in the synagogues; in Galilee and in Peræa. And now they accused the disciples. It was a profanation of the sabbath, they said; to gather the ears and rub them in the hands was equivalent to reaping and threshing; and that was forbidden on pain of death. 2. *The Lord's answer.* They insisted on their traditions; he referred them to the Scriptures. (1) They condemned the disciples; but David, their great saint and hero, had eaten the shewbread when he and his men were hungry. The disciples had transgressed the Law only by implication; David had done so directly. The sufficient excuse in both cases was the same—hunger. The Law of God is merciful; it does not forbid works of necessity on the sabbath day. (2) Again, every sabbath day the priests changed the shewbread, and offered double sacrifices; yet they were blameless. The strict rules of sabbath observance were set aside for the sake of the temple service. But there was One greater than the temple, One who was himself, in the highest sense of the word, the true Temple of God, for "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." His disciples, hungry while in attendance on their

Lord, were as guiltless as the priests engaged in their temple duties. 3. *The error of the Pharisees.* It was the common error of formalists and hypocrites. They cared more for the letter of the Law than for the spirit, more for the outward ordinance than for the spiritual principle which is embodied in the ordinance. The Lord refers them again to that deep saying of the Prophet Hosea, which he had already quoted (ch. ix. 13), when they blamed him for eating with publicans and sinners. Then he bade them go and learn its spiritual meaning. They had not done so; they were as ignorant as ever; well read in the letter of the Scriptures, but utterly ignorant of those great and holy truths which are often hidden from the wise and prudent, but by the grace of God revealed unto babes. They transposed the Divine order of things; they put the letter above the spirit, outward forms above the inner worship of the heart, sacrifice above mercy. They came to Christ, but it was to vex and persecute him, to misinterpret his words, to find opportunity to kill him; not to learn those holy lessons which he teaches to his true disciples. Guilty themselves, they condemned the guiltless. Mercy is better than sacrifice. Sacrifice is good, but mercy is better. It is good to observe all the outward ordinances of religion; they are precious helps, ordained of God. But they cease to be good if we forget that they are only helps; if we trust in them while we break the higher law of charity. To condemn the guiltless is a grievous sin; to speak evil of our neighbours, especially of those who are following Christ in sincerity, though they may perhaps differ from us in many things, is a crime in the sight of God. To come to God's house with uncharitable intentions, to spy, to find fault, to misrepresent, is the sin of the Pharisees, for which the Lord rebuked them. 4. *The Lord's authority.* The Son of man, he said, is Lord even of the sabbath day. The Pharisees exalted the sabbath in a way which destroyed its real meaning. The sabbath was made for man; for his spiritual necessities; for rest from worldly labour, that he might give himself to worship and to the care of his soul. The salvation of man was of infinitely greater importance than the outward observance of the sabbath. That was the great end; the sabbath was one of the appointed means; it was made for man, not man for the sabbath. The Son of man, the Representative of humanity, the Son of God, who had become the Son of man for man's peace and salvation, was Lord of the sabbath. He might put aside the traditions of the Pharisees, their rigorous formalisms, for the sake of suffering humanity. He is Lord over the ordinances of the sabbath day. Those ordinances belonged to the ceremonial law; they were a shadow of things to come (Col. ii. 16, 17), a preparatory discipline. "In this," says Stier, "Christ has shown himself to be Lord of the sabbath for his Church, for the new humanity in him; that he has changed the day from the end of the old-world week, which passed away for ever with the still sabbath of his grave, to the beginning, with which an entirely new state of things commenced; and thus has made the day peculiarly his own, the Lord's day, and has united to the remembrance of the first creation, whose sabbath was broken and rendered servile by sin, the praise of the new creation, effected by him who became a Son of man for man's sake."

II. WORKS OF MERCY. 1. *The question of the Pharisees.* Another sabbath had come (Luke vi. 6), and the Lord, as he was wont, attended the synagogue-worship. It was *their* synagogue; those very men who had been dogging his steps, who had so lately accused his disciples, were its rulers and elders. The Lord was not like some men nowadays, who absent themselves from church because they have, or fancy they have, some quarrel with the minister. The church is the house of God; we go there to worship God. No earthly motives should be allowed to keep us from it, or to influence our thoughts when we are there. In the congregation on that day was a man with a withered hand; it hung useless by his side. The Pharisees pointed him out to Christ, not in sympathy for the poor man, but in hatred of the Lord. Their hearts were full of malice. In the very house of God, on the sabbath which they affected to vindicate, they sought to ensnare to his destruction One who had done nought but good. "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days?" they asked him, seeking not instruction, but an opportunity of accusing the holy Saviour. Blinded as they were by their malice, they did not understand that no profanation of the sabbath is worse in the sight of God than evil thoughts, malicious designs; no crime could be darker than to try to compass the death of One most holy, most merciful, and that among sacred associations, on the day which God had hallowed. 2. *The answer.* The

Lord answers, as he did so often, one question by another. Would they not save a sheep from danger on the sabbath day? and if a sheep, how much more a man? He lifts the question at once into a higher sphere. He will not argue it on the basis of mere formalism; he will not dispute, as it seems the Jews did afterwards, whether the sheep might be lifted from the pit, or only helped to get out by means of planks. He goes at once to the principle, "It is lawful to do well on the sabbath days." Not to do good when it lies in our power is to do evil (Mark iii. 4), therefore it is not only lawful, but sometimes it is our bounden duty to do works of mercy on the sabbath day. 3. *The miracle.* The Lord was grieved, St. Mark tells us, with the hardness of their hearts. He looked round about on them with anger. It was anger against the sin, grief for the sinners. He would have saved those scribes and Pharisees; he would have won their hearts. But they were stiffened into hardness by their miserable formalism; they would not come to him that they might have life. He was grieved. He is grieved when we sin—grieved for us, for our folly, for our danger. He looked round about on them with anger. He does so now when men cherish evil thoughts in the house of God. He is present; he reads the secrets of the hearts. Oh, what a scene would there be if the hearts of a congregation were open to the eyes of men, as they are open to the searching eye of Christ! But there was a work of mercy to be done. "He saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth." He believed the word of the Lord; he willed to stretch forth the withered hand. The muscles, helpless before, obeyed the mandate of the will; his hand was restored whole, like as the other. So if we, in trustful faith, will to come after Christ, he will give us strength to stretch forth the hand, to take up the daily cross of self denial, and to follow him. The strength is his, he giveth it; he asks us only for faith. "Only believe," he saith; "all things are possible to him that believeth." 4. *Its effect upon the Pharisees.* "They were filled with madness," St. Luke says (vi. 11); the Greek word means rather "wicked folly" (see Bishop Ellicott, on 2 Tim. iii. 9); and they took counsel against him, how they might destroy him. He had shamed them, he had put them to silence; and yet he had done nothing which could be made a ground of accusation against him. There is no wrath fiercer than that of baffled malice. The Lord's anger was righteous, mingled with grief. Theirs was impious, Satanic; for the hatred of goodness is the very character of the evil one. They were blinded by this angry and wicked stupidity to such a degree that they joined with the Herodians, the party to which they were diametrically opposed, to compass the death of Christ. Worldly and wicked men hate goodness; it is a reproach to them. The contrast makes their character appear all the darker; they will combine against it, and lay aside for a time their jealousies and enmities to effect its downfall. But the Lord reigneth.

LESSONS. 1. Remember that the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life; do not exalt the letter above the spirit. 2. Fear to profane God's holy day by unholy thoughts and words; he seeth the heart. 3. Believe in his Word; stretch forth the hand of faith; he giveth strength.

Vers. 15—21.—*The patience of Christ.* I. HIS RETIREMENT. 1. *Its reason.* It was not fear; his hour was not yet come. He fled, it has been said, not only from his enemies, but for them. He would not bring upon them the guilt of his death; he would give them time, "yet another year;" he would try what could be done by patience and gentleness and self-denying love. He would not stimulate their malice by remaining in their neighbourhood. When men are heated in disputes and controversies, it is best sometimes to retire. Persistence may stir up wrath all the more, and perhaps increase the sin of those who are arguing on the wrong side, influenced by party spirit, or, it may be, by evil motives. 2. *Its occupation.* The Lord could not be alone. The Pharisees hated him; but great multitudes followed him still. Some sought his teaching; some sought his mercy. He listened, as he ever did, to the cry of pain and sorrow; he healed all that had need of healing. The opposition of his enemies did not dishearten him; it did not turn him aside from his works of love. Good men are sometimes very much cast down by opposition. They lose heart; they sink into melancholy, as Elijah did; they think that their life has been wasted; they can work no longer. It was not so with the Lord Christ. He retired, but it was to another field of labour. His servants must never give way to despondency; it implies

distrustfulness, doubt of their Lord. 3. *Its privacy.* He charged the multitude that they should not make him known. He was content that his holy deeds of Divine love should remain unknown; he was willing to work on in obscurity. He did not seek the praise of men; he sought only to save souls. So his servants should be willing to work either in private or in public, either in remote corners or before the eyes of men, wherever it may please God to set them. But everywhere alike, in the little village or in the great city, they must seek only his glory; not human praise, earthly reputation.

II. THE FULFILMENT OF PROPHECY. 1. *The servant of Jehovah.* Isaiah had prophesied of the Messiah, and now the same God who had inspired the prophet was bringing to pass the prophecy. The Lord Christ came to fulfil the Law and the prophets; the details of his blessed life were so ordered as to bring about that great end, to fulfil all that had been written of him. The prophecy came from God; the fulfilment also was regulated by his overruling providence. Isaiah, the evangelical prophet, had faithfully portrayed the character of the Christ. He was to be the Servant of Jehovah. "I came," he said, "not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me;" "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." He was the Servant of whom Isaiah prophesied; he was the Beloved, the Elect of God, for it pleased the Father by him to reconcile all things unto himself. At his baptism the voice from heaven proclaimed that in him the Father was well pleased; then he was anointed with the Holy Spirit, and consecrated for his Divine mission. He would proclaim judgment to the Gentiles, when he would send his apostles into all the world to preach the gospel to every creature. Such was the prophet's description of the Servant of Jehovah, and such was Jesus the Christ. 2. *His quietness.* "He shall not strive." It was even now fulfilled; he had withdrawn from strife. He loved not strife. His disciples must learn of him; they must avoid, as far as lieth in them, angry disputes and the heated atmosphere of controversy. "He shall not cry." His preaching was not noisy or violent; it was calm, quiet, dignified. He delighted not in uproar and excitement, but in quiet communion with God. His disciples differ from one another; they present different aspects of the Christian character; "the Holy Spirit divideth to every man severally as he will;" but we may say that a holy calmness is generally one of the characteristic marks of the most advanced followers of Christ. 3. *His gentleness.* (1) "A bruised reed shall he not break." There were many bruised reeds then among those who sought his help; there are many such among his disciples now—weak, trembling Christians with little strength, bowed down with sorrow, bruised by many a trial, by many temptations, and, it may be, by many weak concessions to the tempter. He will not break them; they are fearful, trembling, full of anxious doubts. He is gentle exceedingly; such should his servants be. (2) "Smoking flax shall he not quench." He will not despise the least spark of spiritual life. The flax may burn dimly, very dimly; but if it burn at all, there is hope. If there is any tenderness of conscience, any sense of sin, any yearning after God, however feeble and intermittent, there is the possibility of conversion, of sanctification, even of saintliness. He will not quench the smoking flax; nay, he will fan it into a bright, clear flame. He will not by harshness or sternness check the faintest aspirations after holiness; he will deepen, strengthen, guide them by the influence of his Holy Spirit. For it was to save our souls that he came down from heaven and gave himself to die; therefore every human soul is precious exceedingly in the sight of the Lord. He will not lightly lose that which he prized so highly; he will cherish the slightest flickering of the flame of life in the weak, dying soul. Then quench not the Spirit; quench it not in thyself by sin or by despondency; quench it not in others by harshness or contempt. Listen to the softest whisper of the blessed Spirit of God. Listen like Samuel; it will fill thy whole being with its pervading influence. But if, like Saul, thou persist in disobedience, the end at last must be like the end of Saul—"the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him." 4. *His success at last.* This quiet gentleness will result in victory. He will persevere, winning souls, one by one, by the soft holy influence of his constraining love. "He shall not fail, nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth" (Isa. xlii. 4); "He shall bring forth judgment unto truth;" he shall at length be recognized as King and Judge. His judicial decision between right and wrong, his rule of holiness, shall at last prevail. It will be the

victory of truth and righteousness; and that not only in the Holy Land, among the chosen people. "In his Name shall the Gentiles hope." "The isles shall wait for his law." They shall wait, and not wait in vain; for he is the Saviour of all men—a Light to lighten the Gentiles." He will send forth his holy Law, the Divine Law of love, to draw all men to himself by the attractive power of his cross. Such is the picture which the prophet draws of the Christ—a picture in which we see the strength of gentleness, the majesty of love. These are the weapons by which the Saviour overcometh the world. His disciples must learn of him. "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." Gentleness and Christian love win more hearts than sternness and severity.

LESSONS. 1. Study the prophecies of the Old Testament, they give us precious views of the Messiah's character and teaching. 2. He was the Servant of Jehovah; we are his servants; we should strive to do his will, as he ever did the will of the Father. 3. Imitate his quietness; shun violence and party spirit; cherish a holy quiet in the soul. 4. Be gentle like the Lord, kind to the weak and fearful; great is the strength of gentleness.

Vers. 22—37.—*The blasphemy of the Pharisees.* I. ITS CAUSE. 1. *The demoniac.* The poor man was blind and dumb, and that not from natural causes, but by the cruel agency of an evil spirit. Like the dumb man (ch. ix. 32), he was brought to Christ. He was helpless; he could not see his way; he could not express his wants. The Lord healed him at once; he both spake and saw. We must do our part to bring the helpless to the Lord. There are many, alas! whose eyes the God of this world has blinded, who know not how to pray. It is a good and holy deed to show the way to Christ, to help the helpless, to guide them to the Lord. He can open the lips of the dumb; he can give sight to the blind; he can drive away the evil spirit that keeps the sinner from his Saviour. His arm is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear. 2. *The wonder of the people.* They were astonished at the Lord's power; they said, "Is this the Son of David?" They felt in their hearts that these mighty works were the signs of the Messiah, the proper works of the Christ. They were ready to believe.

II. THE ACCUSATION. 1. *The envy of the Pharisees.* The people were on the point of recognizing Jesus as the Messiah; the Pharisees interfered. The miracle filled the crowd with admiration; it filled the Pharisees with anger and malignity. God's grace hardens those whom it does not save. The very cross is a savour of death unto death to the impenitent. Good men love goodness; evil men hate it. 2. *The charge of complicity with Satan.* They could not deny the fact of the miracle; in their wicked jealousy they attributed it to the help of Satan. Once before they had said the same thing privately amongst themselves (ch. ix. 34); now they said it openly to prevent the people from owning the Messiahship of Jesus. "Yes," they said, "he casts out devils; but it is through the power of the devil, in union with him." Oh, what an evil thing is jealousy, it vents its spite upon the best and holiest! How lovely is that charity which thinketh no evil, which rejoiceth in the truth!

III. THE LORD'S REPLY. 1. *His knowledge.* He knew their thoughts. Indeed, they had not only conceived the wicked thought; they had uttered it. But it seems they had not spoken in the Lord's hearing; they had disseminated their falsehoods among the crowd. But he read their thoughts. He reads the envious, unloving thoughts which, alas! dwell sometimes in our hearts. We are ashamed of them, we would not utter them to our nearest friends; but they are known to the Lord. Reverence his presence; strive to entertain no thought displeasing to him. 2. *His wisdom.* He refers his adversaries to principles which they could not deny. A kingdom divided against itself cannot stand. The existence of political parties, as we see them now, is not an unmixed evil; they balance one another; they check one another's excesses. But when they stand opposed in the fierceness of civil war, then the kingdom cannot stand. So there may be anarchy in the kingdom of Satan; it is the kingdom of burning hatred, of envy, of malice; but, like the Pharisees and the Herodians, like Pilate and Herod, it is united against the kingdom of God. The dreaded presence of the Holy One of God gave unity to the hosts of Satan. They were banded together in one in their intense opposition to the Saviour. Satan would not cast out Satan when Christ was at hand: "The serpent was more subtile than any beast of the field." Satan had too much

wisdom in his wickedness to weaken himself when his power was beginning to wane before the majesty of the Son of God. Union is strength, division is weakness. Oh that the children of light could learn a lesson from the enemy, and be reunited in one faith and love in the face of the impending struggle with scepticism and unbelief! 3. *His argumentum ad hominem.* The disciples of the Pharisees practised certain forms of exorcism; they professed to cast out evil spirits (comp. Mark ix. 38 and Acts xix. 14). Did *they* do it by the aid of Beelzebub? They were not punished; on the contrary, they were held in esteem. Why should Christ's miracles be attributed to the agency of Satan, when others, not holy as he was, professed to have the power of casting out devils, and yet were not supposed to be in confederation with the prince of darkness? To say the least, it would be only fair that the actions of Jesus should be judged by the same rule as those of these Jewish exorcists. How unfair people are! How constantly they judge themselves and their friends by one rule, those from whom they differ by another! The Christian must aim at absolute honesty and impartiality. 4. *The true explanation of his power.* He used none of the strange forms practised by the exorcists, none of the appliances and manipulations which were employed either to impress the patient or to collect the energy of the operator. He simply spoke the word of power. He cast out devils by an energy contrary, antagonistic to theirs—the energy of the Holy Spirit of God which abode upon him. He was full of the Holy Ghost (Luke iv. 1) when he met Satan face to face in the wilderness of the temptation. He cast out devils with the finger of God (Luke xi. 20). The three blessed Persons are One God; the work of Christ was the work of the Three in One. And if so, the kingdom of God was come. It had come unawares, not with observation; but it was already in the world, active and energetic in the immediate neighbourhood of these unbelieving Pharisees. How else could the kingdom of Satan be invaded? Satan was strong; he had seized upon many of the creatures of God, and made them the vessels of his accursed wickedness. The Lord was despoiling him; he was driving him from the unhappy men over whom he had tyrannized. Then the Lord Jesus was stronger than Satan. He had bound the strong man. By the mystery of his incarnation, by his own victory over the tempter, he had overcome the wicked one. The power of Satan is not now what once it was. The Lord triumphed over him on the cross; by his atoning sacrifice of himself he broke the devil's power over man. He will spoil his house. The Lord has not yet gathered in all the fruits of his victory; he will go on, conquering and to conquer, till all things are put under his feet. 5. *The warning.* (1) The kingdom of God was come. The two kingdoms, the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness, are in intense, energetic antagonism to one another. There is no middle point, no possible neutrality: "He that is not with me is against me." For Christ the Lord was perfect in holiness, hating evil with a Divine hatred. He came down from heaven to fight against it; he gave himself to die in the awful conflict, and by his death he triumphed. His disciples must imitate the Lord; indifference cannot coexist with the service of him who was so earnest, so full of holy energy. There must be no indecision, no halting between two opinions. The true disciple must give his heart to Christ; he must range himself with Christ under the banner of the cross; he must fight the good fight of faith, and quit himself like a man, steadfast unto death. For the struggle is real; its issues are momentous. Christ calls the soldiers of the cross; each has his place in the ranks of the great army; every one, however weak, must do his part and take his share in the lifelong battle. "He that is not with me is against me." In that sharp opposition indifference puts a man on the side of Satan against the Lord, against him who loved us and died to save us, against him who will one day judge us. It is an awful word, but it is the word of Christ, and he is the Truth. (2) The Lord died "that he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." And he saith, "He that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." He who is with Christ, distinctly, actively on his side, gathereth souls. Christ is with him, and he with Christ; and Christ's power working in him draws souls out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. Every true Christian life is a powerful instrument for spreading the knowledge of Christ. But he who is not with Christ doth not only not gather; he scattereth. Indifferent, lukewarm Christians not only do no good, they do real harm to souls; their example, especially if they are persons of influence and of respectable life, leads others to acquiesce in the same spiritual indolence. Thus

they are against Christ; they scatter the souls which he would gather into his little flock. Their opposition is not active; they do not suppose themselves to be enemies of Christ, they do not think of the mischief which they are doing; but in reality their conduct tends to scatter the sheep quite as certainly as that of the open opponents of religion. (3) The life is wasted that is not given to Christ. He that gathereth not with Christ may gather many things—riches, honours, earthly comforts—but he cannot gather the true riches; they are offered him, but he scatters them abroad. He despises them in the time of health and strength; in sickness and in death he will be poor, desolate, hopeless.

IV. THE SIN AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST. 1. *What is it?* The Pharisees needed the warning; they had come perilously near to the unpardonable sin; they had attributed miracles which were wrought by the Spirit of God to the agency of Satan. But it was Christ against whom they had spoken directly, not the Holy Ghost. Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is the sin of those who "were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost," but yet have fallen away, and "done despite to the Spirit of grace." Such blasphemy is the expression of that "eternal sin" of which our Lord speaks in Mark iii. 29—eternal, unchangeable hostility against God, the strife of the flesh against the Spirit (Gal. v. 17) matured into complete antagonism. The blasphemy which cannot be forgiven seems to be the expression of this awful state in wicked words: that defiance of God, that contemptuous rejection of his revelation which is the ultimate outcome of the wilful quenching of the Spirit in the individual heart. 2. *It cannot be forgiven.* St. Paul had spoken against Christ, he had been a blasphemer (1 Tim. i. 13); but he did it ignorantly; it was not a sin against light, not the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. That blasphemy hath never forgiveness; for he who thus blasphemes sets himself in direct hostility to that Holy Spirit who is the only Source of spiritual life. He could not so blaspheme unless he had first quenched the Spirit; such blasphemy is a proof that the blasphemer would not retain God in his knowledge, and that God hath given him over to a reprobate mind. Many deep, perplexing thoughts gather round these most awful words. Are there sins which, unforgiven here, may obtain forgiveness in the world to come, in the future age? We cannot help asking the question; the answer we must leave to God. It is one of the secret things which he has not revealed, of which we must be content to be ignorant. Only let us remember the awful holiness of the good Spirit of God, let us listen to his faintest whispers; to grieve the Holy Spirit is full of danger, to quench the Spirit is deadly sin.

V. PARABLE OF THE TREE AND THE FRUIT. 1. *If the fruit is good, the tree is good.* If the works of Christ are good, they must proceed from a good source. The Pharisees could not deny the goodness of the works; it was wicked folly to attribute deeds so holy to the evil one. It is a grievous sin to misrepresent the conduct of good men, to suggest unworthy motives for their good deeds. 2. "*Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.*" The Pharisees could not be expected to speak good things, for they were corrupt at the heart. They had said wicked things of Christ; the Lord knew the wickedness of their hearts. Merciful and gentle as he was, he repeated the strong words of condemnation which John the Baptist had used already, "O generation of vipers!" (ch. iii. 7). Their heart had its hidden store of unholy thoughts, sinful imaginations, wicked motives; out of that evil treasure came their evil words. They could not speak good things, for good things issue out of the heart's precious treasure of holy love, heavenly thoughts, blessed hopes; and that they had not. A wicked man may, indeed, speak good things at times, when he is playing the hypocrite. But hypocrisy has always something forced and unnatural about it; it betrays itself sooner or later. In sudden emergencies, in seasons of excitement, when the man is off his guard—then, "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." 3. *The judgment of wicked words.* We must give account of our words in the awful day. The idle, vain, unprofitable word is sin; it shows the state of the heart. Words, thoughts, deeds, all will be brought into judgment; each department of human life must form a part of the great account. He whose words were good will so far be acquitted; he whose words were evil will so far be condemned. Then words, fleeting as they may seem, forgotten sometimes almost as soon as spoken, assume an awful character. Let every man beware.

LESSONS. 1. Bring the helpless to Christ; he can heal the sick soul. 2. Flee from envy; hate it; crush it out; it is sin; it is the parent of deadly evil. 3. Remember always, God reads the thoughts. 4. Be decided in your religion; range yourself on the side of Christ. 5. Grieve not the Spirit; keep a strict watch over thoughts and words, as well as deeds.

Vers. 38—45.—*Further manifestation of unbelief.* I. THE SIGN FROM HEAVEN. 1. *The demand of the scribes and Pharisees.* They had just witnessed a wonderful sign, a striking evidence of the Divine authority of Christ. Some of them wickedly accused the Lord of dealings with Satan; others, less brutal, but equally obstinate in their unbelief, demanded further proof. It must be some visible appearance in the sky, they said (Luke xi. 16); nothing else would satisfy them. 2. *The Lord's reply.* He knew their hearts; it was an evil and corrupt generation; corrupt at heart and false to the living God who had betrothed the ancient Church to himself. He knew that they were only tempting him. They had had proof enough of his mission, his most holy life, his Divine teaching, his wonderful works. But they were obstinate; they hardened their hearts in unbelief, and now they prescribed the kind of evidence which they required. The Lord knew that it would not convince them; he would not work a miracle to satisfy unbelieving curiosity. He would work miracles in abundance to relieve the sick and helpless, but not one to amuse the curious and to display his power. Yet there should be a sign, and a mighty one. The Lord himself, his own incarnation, life, death, resurrection, ascension, was the stupendous Sign from heaven, sufficient, and more than sufficient, to convince the honest seeker after truth. As the Prophet Jonah lay hidden in the fish's belly, so would he lie buried in the grave; and as Jonah was restored to the upper air by the power of God, so would he rise again in the majesty of his triumphant resurrection.

II. CONTRAST OF THEIR UNBELIEF WITH THE BELIEF OF THE HEATHEN. 1. *The men of Nineveh.* Jonah preached to them; they repented. What was the preaching of Jonah compared with the Lord's deep and holy teaching? The Ninevites had not the privileges of these scribes and Pharisees; their example condemned them; it was a presage of the coming judgment. 2. *The queen of the south.* She came a long toilsome journey to hear the wisdom of Solomon; her example condemned the Jews. Christ was with them, preaching in their synagogues; they would not come to him that they might have life. And he was greater than Solomon—greater in wisdom, greater in royal majesty. Could he say this of himself without arrogance unless he were (what we know he is) the Word of God, who in the beginning was with God, and himself was God? We read the histories of holy men and women; they are full of interest; they are also full of solemn warning. What others have done by the grace of God, that we too can do. We have, perhaps, the same privileges, perhaps greater. Certainly we have the same grace to help us. Let us be in earnest; let us truly repent like the Ninevites; let us listen to the heavenly wisdom of Christ, as the Queen of Sheba listened to the wisdom of Solomon.

III. WARNING OF INCREASING DANGER. 1. *The miracle just wrought.* Christ had cast out the evil spirit: would the man who had thus been saved from the presence of Satan give his heart to the merciful Saviour? If he would not receive the Holy Spirit into the heart that now was empty, the evil one might return; he was ever restless, seeking whom he might devour, burning always with unsatisfied malice; if he returned, the last state of that man would be worse than the first. Mercies despised expose men to sorer assaults of temptation. 2. *Application to that wicked generation.* God had been long-suffering with his chosen people; by his chastisements, by the teaching of his prophets, the old demon of idolatry had been cast out. The house was swept and garnished; it had outward adornments enough in the rites and ceremonies of the temple-worship, and the strict rules and formalisms of the scribes and Pharisees. But, alas! it was empty. There was One who claimed that house as his own, the true Lord of the dwelling, but him they would not receive. The evil spirit would return, and seven others with them—the demons of hypocrisy and hardness of heart, and bitterness, and party spirit, and hatred of spiritual religion, and such-like. And the last state would be worse than the first; it would be more evil, it would end in more awful condemnation. Christ is knocking at the door of our hearts; if we receive him not, the

evil spirit will surely enter in. The heart empty of God is ready for the presence of Satan; he will return in greater force than ever. The house may be swept and garnished by education and refinement; but the devil can be kept out only by the presence of him who is stronger than the strong man armed. Let us, then, receive Christ into our souls. The peace of God keepeth, as with a garrison, the heart and thoughts of those in whom the Holy Spirit dwelleth; the evil one cannot enter.

LESSONS. 1. There is evidence in abundance of the truth of Christianity; only receive it with an honest heart. 2. The histories of past conversions furnish a convincing proof of the power of God's grace; read them, and try to profit by them. 3. Open the heart to Christ; seek his presence there above all things; trust nothing less.

VERS. 46—50.—*The Lord's mother and brethren.* I. THEIR INTERVENTION. 1. *The reason of their coming.* We know that even later in our Lord's ministry his brethren did not believe in him (John vii. 5). They seem to have been Hebrews of the Hebrews, exceedingly zealous of the Law. They had heard, it seems, of the rupture between Christ and the Pharisees. They knew that the Jews at Jerusalem had sought to kill our Lord because of the cure of the impotent man at the Pool of Bethesda on the sabbath day, and now these Pharisees from Jerusalem (Mark iii. 22) had accused him of being in league with Satan. They had been accustomed to regard these rabbis of the holy city with the utmost reverence. Doubtless they felt a deep affection for the Lord, though they could not realize his Divine authority. They were in a great strait, full of perplexity and anxiety. They seem to have thought that the Lord's intense earnestness and excessive labours had affected his mind (Mark iii. 21); and they came in mistaken tenderness, but yet out of real love, to check him, to save him from the consequences of his rupture with the Jerusalem authorities, and perhaps to bring him back to the quiet of Nazareth for the much-needed rest. His blessed mother came with them; she knew, as no one else could know, the mystery of his incarnation; she had kept and pondered in her heart the many wondrous circumstances which attended the birth of the holy Child. We cannot tell what her feelings were; doubtless she feared for his life; perhaps, too, there was something of disappointment mingling with her deep love. This humble laborious life, spent in doing good among the poor and afflicted, was not what she had expected in him to whom the throne of his father David had been promised by the messenger of God. Perhaps, as at the marriage feast at Cana, she thought of advising him how to act, in all love and tenderness, but yet not fully conscious of his Divine majesty, not wholly realizing the relations in which he now stood to her. It must have been very hard for a mother who had nursed him as an infant, and cared for him in his youth, to understand always how high he stood above her in the awful dignity of the Godhead. It was not for her to control him; it was not for one compassed with infirmity, holy though she was according to the measure of human goodness, to guide and counsel the Holy One of God. 2. *The message.* "Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee." Their intentions were good in the main. They loved the Lord Jesus, but they feared and probably reverenced the scribes and Pharisees; they wished to prevent our Lord from breaking with them. Worldly policy can never really advance the cause of true religion. Sometimes those who love us the best tempt us the most; in mistaken affection they urge us not to deny ourselves, not to take up our cross, not to do this or that work for Christ.

II. THE LORD'S REPLY. 1. *He does not admit their authority.* He was subject to his mother once, but from the time of his solemn consecration for his Divine mission earthly relationships must give way to the work of his sacred office. He loved his mother tenderly; he thought of her in his death-agony. But he was come to do the Father's will, he was about his Father's business; she must not interfere. "What have I to do with thee?" he had said to her once before, when she attempted to direct him; for she was human, he was Divine. 2. *Spiritual relations with Christ closer than earthly ties.* He has taken upon him our humanity; we are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones. True Christians who abide in the Lord are nearer to him than they were who knew him after the flesh till they learned to know him so no more, and believed in him as the Divine Redeemer. "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother;" near to

him as his brethren were, near to him as his holy virgin-mother. Blessed words! He welcomes our love; he makes us his own, very close and very dear to him; dear to Christ the Lord as brother, sister, mother, if only we do the heavenly Father's will. It is the blessing of the true disciple. May it be ours!

LESSONS. 1. We must not presume to question the wisdom of God's dealings with men. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" 2. No motives of worldly policy should be allowed to interfere with work for Christ. 3. Try earnestly to do the will of God; it makes us brethren of the Son of God.

## HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 8.—*The Lord of the sabbath.* Sabbath observance had been exalted into the chief position in the Jewish religion, so that to "sabbatize" was a proverbial expression, used to describe the following of Judaism, even among Latin writers. It was not the Law, it was the trivial and yet burdensome additions to the Law, that marked the later Jewish keeping of the sabbath. Many of these observances were as lax in spirit as they were strict in regard to the letter, and thus it was that the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees was nowhere more pronounced than in their treatment of the sabbath.

I. CHRIST IS SUPREME OVER ALL ORDINANCES. 1. *By reason of his Divinity.* Here he speaks out of the calm consciousness of his Divine authority. 2. *Through his human brotherhood.* Christ speaks as the Son of man. He teaches us that the sabbath was made for man (Mark ii. 27). His rule is wise and beneficent because of his large human knowledge and sympathy. Our business is not to follow narrow laws like the Galatian Judaizers, but to follow our Lord and Master.

II. OUR LORD GREATLY SHOCKED THE RELIGIOUS CLASSES BY HIS DARING INNOVATIONS. He did not take pleasure in paining any one, nor did he wish to offend religious prejudices merely for the sake of producing a sensation, merely to astonish people with novel practices. He was far too kind and earnest for any such conduct. But he said and did what he felt to be right quite regardless of the fact that it would stir up a hornet's nest of prejudices. It must be painful to a sensitive, devout mind to be accused of irreligion. Yet our Lord knowingly provoked this accusation. Truth is higher than any respected religious observance. It is more important to please God than to please the most worthy religious people. It may be a duty to offend good people in upsetting injurious customs. Men are not always the worse for having their cherished notions rudely shaken.

III. GOD EXPECTS US TO BE HUMAN IN OUR RELIGION. St. James has shown us that the highest religious ritual consists in deeds of charity (Jas. i. 27). We can best serve God by doing kind deeds to our brother-men. St. John reminds us that if we do not love our brother whom we have seen, we cannot love God whom we have not seen (1 John iv. 20). From these principles it follows, *à fortiori*, that any religious observances that involve unkindness to other people must be very displeasing to God. We only mock him when we offer him the formal rites he cares nothing about, and for the very sake of doing so restrain the charity that he really loves, or even perform directly unkind actions.

IV. WE CAN ONLY KEEP THE SABBATH ARIGHT WHEN WE DO SO IN THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST. 1. *Negatively.* It is not to be kept for its own sake, as an ordinance valuable in itself; it is not to be kept in the letter to the neglect of its spirit; it is not to be so kept that it interferes with higher duties. 2. *Positively.* It is to be kept as Christ kept it. It is not left to our caprice to decide how we shall use the privilege of the sabbath day's rest. Although we are not under the letter of the Jewish Law, the eternal principles of it are binding on us. Leisure from toil and an opportunity to "lift up our eyes" we all need. Only they who follow Christ can use the sabbath in the best way. We best keep it when we help our brother-men on that day.—W. F. A.

Ver. 20.—*The bruised reed.* According to his custom, St. Matthew here applies an ancient prophecy to Jesus Christ. The ideal that was never realized before now finds its fulfilment. It is one peculiarly appropriate to the character of Christ and to his saving mission.

I. CHRIST BRINGS GOOD TIDINGS TO THE FEEBLE AND FAILING. He comes as the Physician for the sick. He is the good Shepherd who leaves the safe flock of ninety and nine to seek the one lost sheep. He has little for the righteous, but much for the sinful. He was not the Friend of Pharisees, but the Friend of publicans and sinners. 1. *This is contrary to the common customs of men.* With us too often religion is for the religious. The good have more goodness offered to them, but the bad are left in their badness. This was the case with the old-world religions, which fed the devotion of the devout, but neglected the ruin of the impious. Christ and all who follow Christ bring the gospel to the lost. 2. *This counteracts the stern processes of nature.* In nature we witness the survival of the fittest. There the strong succeed and the weak fail, and the race is to the swift and the battle to the strong. Christ brings a more merciful principle to work upon men. The bruised and crushed and hopeless are the especial objects of his care.

II. THE SOURCE OF CHRIST'S ACTION IS PURE COMPASSION. There is no obligation to deal out mercy to the worthless. They who fail do not deserve to be helped merely on account of their failure. The bruised reed cannot entertain us with sweet music; if it can emit any sounds at all, these must be of a rather painful character. The smoking wick has ceased to illumine the room; it is now an offensive object. Would it not be better to throw both of them away? No reason could be given for tenderness to those who have ceased to be of any use to the community excepting pure compassion. But this was the very motive of our Lord's most frequent miracles. Again and again we read that "he was moved with compassion." The same wonderful love and sympathy prompted his whole life-work. It is now the great motive of the gospel. Therefore the work of Christ is characterized by tenderness. He does not drive; he leads. He does not merely command; he helps, uplifting, strengthening.

III. THE COMPASSIONATE MINISTRY OF CHRIST IS JUSTIFIED BY ITS RESULTS. A hard man of the world may be inclined to criticize our Lord's method as uneconomical. He may say that the same amount of energy spent on the young, the strong, the hopeful, would produce larger results. In reply it may be urged that Compassion does not weigh and measure and calculate, or she would cease to be Compassion; she gives freely, asking for no return. Nevertheless, there is a return. Christ's compassion is powerful. He mends the bruised reed and rekindles the smoking flax. Then the first result is the salvation of the helpless. But the process does not stay here. They who are thus redeemed are bound to their Saviour by the closest ties of gratitude. There is no love so tender and devoted as that of the Magdalene. The redeemed are living witnesses to the grace of Christ, and they are the most zealous in proclaiming it to others.—W. F. A.

Ver. 29.—*Robbing the strong man's house.* The circumstances under which it was spoken explain this parable. Our Lord had just cast out a demon from a poor creature who was both blind and dumb. A more pitiable object than such a demoniac can hardly be conceived. And yet in this extreme instance of the tenderness of Jesus to the bruised reed his enemies only see sinister motives and suspect malign influences, they charge the great Deliverer with being in league with Satan. The parable is our Lord's reply to this monstrous allegation.

I. SATAN IS LIKE A STRONG MAN. Some men speak lightly of temptation, and boast of their strength to resist it. These may be its earliest victims. Christ knew the powers of evil, and he did not despise their magnitude. He had met the tempter in the wilderness, and though he had come off completely victorious, he had seen the awful might of the great enemy of souls. Satan is so strong that no human being can master him alone. Only a stronger can bind him.

II. THE SIN-POSSESSED WORLD IS A HOUSE OF SATAN. The miserable demoniac was like a house of Satan, in the power of the prince of evil. But the whole world is described as under the spirit of evil. He is the prince of this world.

III. EVIL INFLUENCES ARE THE WEAPONS AND TOOLS OF SATAN. We might render the word "goods" as "instruments." The demon in the poor possessed man was one of Satan's instruments. In a secondary sense we may now say that evil passions and corrupt habits are Satan's weapons, because it is through them that the power of evil works in the world and inflicts his cruel tortures on his victims.

IV. IT IS THE PURPOSE OF CHRIST TO DELIVER THE WORLD FROM EVIL INFLUENCES.

His principal miracle-working is described as the casting out of demons. Doubtless this was intended to be suggestive of his great spiritual work in liberating souls from the bad influences, the sinful habits and passions with which they are possessed. Thus he is a robber, breaking into the house of Satan to take away his detestable instruments. When he has done this the house itself will no longer be in the power of the evil one.

V. THE HOUSE OF SATAN CANNOT BE ROBBED TILL ITS MASTER IS OVERMASTERED. The strong man will keep his house and will permit no weak intruder to rob it. 1. The first work in the salvation of the world must be the binding of Satan. Something more must be done than to bring gracious influences to bear on individual men. An awful conflict must go on till the power of evil itself is restrained. 2. It is impossible to raise the fallen till the sin that has ruined them is conquered. The problem of rescuing the degraded inhabitants of great cities must be faced on its moral side. Drunkenness, gambling, and profligacy must be fought and conquered before the wretched condition of these people can be effectually overcome. 3. Evil must be cast out by conquering temptation. The tempter must be bound. It is a Christian work to restrain or remove the influences that tempt to vice.

VI. CHRIST REDEEMS THE WORLD BY MASTERING THE POWER OF EVIL. 1. He worsted Satan in his temptation. 2. He effectually vanquished the spirit of evil in his work, and beheld him fall like lightning from heaven. 3. He completely mastered the evil one at Calvary and in the resurrection. 4. He now binds Satan in individual hearts, conquering the ruling powers of evil within.—W. F. A.

Ver. 33.—*The tree and its fruit.* This illustration is applied by our Lord to the use of the tongue. Words are the fruits of the heart that prompts them. But they are the simplest and least considered forms of action, and they stand for the extreme representatives of a process that applies to all conduct. Let us consider the laws of life thus set forth in their widest range.

I. CONDUCT IS THE FRUIT OF LIFE. 1. *It is not possible without life.* Growth in the tree is only produced when the sap is flowing and the cells are active. Animal activity depends on vitality; the dead animal is stiff and stark; lowered vitality results in torpor. Mental work springs from a living mind. Spiritual movements are only possible when there is spiritual life. 2. *It is determined by the character of the life.* No manœuvres can make a fig tree bring forth anything but figs. If the fruit is poor we cannot improve it by doctoring it. Here is a law of necessity. We are constantly finding in practice that our wills and energies and capacities are limited by our nature. Free-will is not enjoyed without many checks. Not only do our natures determine what we can accomplish; our habits very largely decide it.

II. LIFE MAY BE ESTIMATED BY CONDUCT. We judge of the tree by the fruit it bears, and we judge of the man by the conduct he displays. 1. *Other estimates are delusive.* (1) Profession. This may be hypocritically false; or, if not so bad, it may still be enormously enlarged by self-flattery. (2) Promises. These may be well meant; yet there may not be energy to keep them, or they may be forgotten or neglected when they are due. The leaves may be green and yet the fruit may be bitter. 2. *Conduct is a sure test.* This is real. It requires energy, employs faculty, and produces a tangible result. Still, it needs to be fairly judged. (1) At the right time. The tree is not barren just because it is bare in winter. We must wait for a harvest. (2) By the true standard. The most beautiful fruit is not always the sweetest. There is a flashy conduct which arrests the attention and claims the admiration of all beholders, and yet which is hollow and useless. 3. *Slight actions are tests of serious conditions of character.* We shall be judged by our words. Even thoughtless, light words will be taken account of, because they too spring from the tone and temper of the mind. They are the straws that show which way the stream is flowing. Sometimes they are better tests than more important actions, because they are unpremeditated, and therefore true to our characters. We reveal ourselves when we are off our guard.

III. THE REFORMATION OF CONDUCT DEPENDS ON THE REGENERATION OF LIFE. This practical conclusion necessarily follows on the principles which determine the growth of conduct. Manners may be improved by a superficial polish. But the really moral character of our actions cannot be transformed by any external process. Do what we

will, the fruit must come according to the nature and character of the stock on which it grows. Therefore Christian work must be directed to the deep inner needs of the soul. This is not unpractical, as some assert. Lectures on ethics are not the best means of improving the morals of a people. Evangelical teaching is the source of moral improvement. We cannot imitate Christ until we have the life of Christ in our hearts.—W. F. A.

Vers. 43—45.—*The empty house.* The heart of man is a house in which dwell good or evil. When evil has taken up its abode there, the moralist will endeavour to drive it out. But if he is not able to substitute a positive good, his work will issue in worse than a failure; the evil will come back with increased power and resume possession of its old haunts. Let us endeavour to see the reason of this, and then how the mischief can be prevented.

I. THE EVICTION. The house was inhabited by a most undesirable tenant, who kept it in an ill condition, neglected, and filthy. So the landlord turned him out, and had the house cleaned down and garnished ready for a better occupier. This is analogous to a partial reformation—one that is only negative. We may compare it with the work of John the Baptist when that is not followed up by the gospel of Christ. The old state of sin has become unendurable; a desperate effort has been made to break off the bad habits. The drunkard has given up his drink; the profligate has left his vice; the worldly person has turned aside from his old follies. The evil spirit has been expelled. More has been done. Not only has there been an expulsion; there has been a cleansing, there has been a re-decoration. The empty house is swept and garnished. An improvement of manners has taken place. Some attempt has been made to add grace and beauty to the once wrecked and degraded soul.

II. THE EMPTINESS. An empty house is a dreary sight. Gaunt and silent in a street full of life, it seems to be the abode of ghostly shadows that flit to and fro and peep out of the windows at twilight. If we enter it, it strikes us with a dismal sense of desertion. Its walls echo to every footfall; the stairs creak painfully under our tread; a gust of wind sighs through the vacant passages; suddenly we are startled by the slamming of a door somewhere up in the garret. It is an eerie place. An empty mind is equally desolate; and a heart from which the old affections have been torn is a dreary vacancy. Such things cannot be endured, and they do not last.

III. THE RETURN. The empty house invites stray guests. It cannot remain perfectly deserted, if it has nothing better than rats and mice to scamper over the ceilings and chase one another behind the wainscoting. The poor empty soul will soon be infested with a brood of "tenants-at-will." If there is nothing to keep them out, the old habits will return and reassert themselves. The disappointment of the hope of reformation is likely to give rise to an utter abandonment of despair. When the reformed drunkard breaks out with his old vice again he plunges deeper than ever in the mire.

IV. THE REMEDY. How can this terrible end be prevented? The evil arises from the emptiness of the heart. This vacuum must be filled. If the old evil is not to return, a new good must take its place. The only way to keep the old tenant out is to put a new tenant in possession. Negative morality is of little value. "Thou shalt not" is a poor substitute for a gospel of redemption. The heart needs to be filled with a new passion in order that it may leave no room for the old passions to return. Now, this remedy is found in Christ. The love of sin is only perfectly banished when the love of Christ has filled the heart. But when Christ is in possession sin cannot reassert its insolent claims.—W. F. A.

Vers. 46—50.—*Brotherhood with Christ.* It must have been one of the most painful trials in the life of our Lord that none of his relatives except his mother believed in him, and that even she misunderstood him. Instead of supporting his arduous toils, they all did what they could to hinder him. No doubt their motives were kind; they thought he was wearing himself out with too much work; they saw his danger with the authorities, and wished to shield him; they seem to have thought he was beside himself with fanaticism, and needing kindly oversight and restraint. To us this looks almost impossible. But they who are nearest to inspiration are often the most per-

plexed by it. In 'Adam Bede' Mrs. Poyser can only account for Dinah Morris's preaching enthusiasm by supposing that her niece has "a maggot" in her brain. To Jesus the misapprehension of his family must have been most acutely painful because he loved sympathy. In his distress, however, he was not embittered; but his large heart turned to a greater kinship.

I. THE CONDITIONS OF BROTHERHOOD WITH CHRIST. 1. *It is not merely natural, but spiritual.* Jesus did not deny the claims of nature. In the agony of death he thought of his mother, and committed her to the charge of the beloved disciple. But it was the pain of his life that the happy family union which is the source of earth's deepest joy was broken by the unique destiny he was following. Christ has kinship with men in their higher natures. 2. *It is determined, not by opinions, but by conduct.* They are not Christ's brethren who understand most; but the deeds of life determine relationship with Christ. It is possible to be very orthodox and yet not be owned by Christ; the poor heretic, hounded to death by pious persecutors, may be owned as our Lord's brother—not because he is a heretic, as some people seem to think, but because in spite of his heresy his conduct pleases Christ. 3. *It is not conditioned by religious observances, but by the doing of God's will.* The condition is wide, and it may embrace many sects and creeds. Yet in another sense it is narrow. While Christ is good to all, he only owns brotherhood with those who are obedient to God. Obedience is the tie of kinship. It marks men as of the family of God, of which Jesus is the elder Brother, the type of obedience, and its inspiring influence.

II. THE PRIVILEGES OF BROTHERHOOD WITH CHRIST. 1. *It is a joy to Christ.* The sympathy he could not find among his own kindred he met in the larger family of God's obedient sons and daughters. Thus it is possible to contribute to the joy of Christ. This cannot but be a privilege to those who are his true brethren. 2. *It secures his full sympathy.* He is not like those selfish sufferers who demand unlimited sympathy with their own woes, but offer no sympathy with others in return. His life is utterly unselfish, a perpetual expenditure of himself for his brethren. 3. *It brings the confidence of family union.* One of the happiest features of home-life is the complete mutual confidence of the members of the family. This Christ permits between himself and his people. He does not stand off from them in kingly isolation. "He is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Heb. ii. 11). 4. *It secures a lasting heritage.* Christ's brethren are his fellow-heirs. Kings' families may come to sad endings. It is better to be a Christian than a Stuart or a Bourbon.—W. F. A.

Vers. 1—8 (see also Mark ii. 23—28; Luke vi. 1—5).—*The sabbath made for man.* Note in introduction that the chiefest interest of this passage centres in the last verses of it, and in their combined moral aspects. The occasion of these must be esteemed, with certain other passages of the Gospel, as one of no lesser import, recorded as it is by all of the three evangelists. That occasion arose not out of the direct course and tenor of the conduct of Christ, but out of that of his disciples. Nevertheless, *his* own use of the sabbath day for works of mercy originates more than once the similar sharp criticism of his shallow enemies. The conduct in question of the disciples, natural enough on the very face of it, might have been more easily open to exception if the sabbath day had been habitually found to confer some exemption from the experience of hunger. By the very dictate of *nature* we should be content to justify it, which proclaims *everywhere* so much universal love, free hospitality. But beside this, the permission was specially accorded to the Jew (Deut. xxiii. 25), and something more also, viz. the free appropriation for the occasion of the clusters of grapes. The objection of the captious critics now, however, concerned the point that the disciples took of these ears of corn on the *sabbath*, which still removes their inconsistency only one step further. For was there any qualifying addendum to the permissions quoted above, such *e.g.* that men should not walk through the fields at all on the sabbath, or if they did that they must beware of the corn-field and vineyard, and though they hungered, must on *that* day bear their hunger? No, but "this and many other like things they had put in their traditions." It was equally a sign of their presumption and of the alienation of their heart from the true Word of God. Christ, therefore, not arguing in any detail, but instancing two well-known precedents (1 Sam. xxi. 1—7; xxii. 22), concludes the matter by the clearest statement of the true principle on which

the observance of the sabbath was ever to proceed—it "is made for man, and not man for" it. Any man and every man is to *use* that sabbath that certainly was "made for him," and he is to use it intelligently and to the best of his light, and he is so far in one sense only appointed to be lord over it, while none the less he stands or falls to *his* Lord on the question *how* he uses it. Much more, therefore, must "*the Son of man* be Lord *also* of the sabbath day." Notice—

I. A GREAT HISTORIC CHANGE. Few enough men now come near the edge of the snare of supposing that *they* "were made for the sabbath." They triumph too loudly and too self-confidently in the help they themselves, perhaps, have given to the explosion of *that* heresy. May we not easily and truthfully imagine that if the moral majesty of Christ's presence were again amongst us, his gaze and his emphatic accents would all go to say, "*The sabbath was made for man;* have you forgotten that? Divinely suggested *for man*, divinely exampled *for man;* have you forgotten this? Man is *not* its lord and sovereign disposer in the sense *you* are practically interpreting it"? How does the world in its sad history pitch from one extreme of error to the opposite!

II. THE PRIOR GREAT HISTORIC FACT. That the "sabbath was made for man" is not, indeed, a revelation of things to come, but it *is* the pronounced and authoritative revelation of a great reality in this world's creation and design. Consider it by the aid of the light of a few contrasts and comparisons. What things are made for man! How divinely made! What wealth of possession, of beauty, of thought! What powers of body, the mere shadows and servants of richer and more wonderful faculties of mind! What lamps are hung up in the heavens; what seasons are made for man, and months, and days, and nights! Amidst them all, Christ says *another* thing, less evident, very likely, to sense, but *not* less real, "was made for man"—the sabbath! Strange, indeed, would it be that Christ should use so emphatic a sentence, without one hint of any waning importance of the day, if he and the force of his truth were about to assign it a lower standard, or to put altogether an end to it! The very first mention of it, as the day on which God ended his creative work—how striking it is! "On the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which he had created and made." That majestic history is unaccompanied by any precept or command that it should be observed by men. Nor is it wonderful, when it is remembered that it is descriptive of a time when there was but one man in the world. But from that time forward, for many a century, there is not to be found one distinct and explicit reference to the "sabbath day" till the reference to it as placed in the ten commandments. Thence its checkered history for ages varied much with that of the one nation to whom it was expressly appointed, and it may safely be said about it that it was not *most* faithfully kept, or most profitably and in the spirit, when it was most scrupulously talked about. Once, then, "God hallowed and sanctified it," surely not for himself; then when it appears again on the surface of the sacred page it is emphatically introduced as a day to be "*remembered*," and *not* as though it were now new and unknown hitherto; and now in the bold and most authoritative language of the text, so universal in its scope and idea, it is said, "The sabbath was made for man." In another brief but solemn spell of time the day became the first day of the week instead of the seventh, when Christ's resurrection gave the signal. And in due time the first converted Roman emperor, Constantine, made it the legalized day for his wide dominions; and all the world has followed suit—an amazing, overwhelming indication that it was *not* he alone who did it! The day is one of those gifts specially entitled to the language of St. Paul, "a gift of God *without repentance.*" It came with the sacred voice of God; it was revived to the favoured people to whom belonged the oracles; it rose from a long oppressed and discredited state with the appearance of the most intense new motives of religious feeling and principle and devotion; it still holds its own in the very whirlpool of worldliness, and amid the most constant and subtle undermining of the unbelieving; and it vindicates in deed what Jesus here says of it by word, "*it was made for man.*"

III. THE GRAND HISTORIC SWEEP SO CONFESSED TO OF ITS PRICELESS USEFULNESS. With such an Author, and with such nativity, it was well to be supposed that the use

of the sabbath would be very comprehensive, and that it would win its way with the low on lower grounds even, with the high on the highest. 1. Of the millions careless to use it to highest gain, can there be found one willing or anxious to spare it for *himself* and for his own particular private purpose? *All* want what *they* think the gain of it! Who can count the advantage to man of even the inferior ends of the sabbath? For one day's rest out of seven the tool does *not* rust, nor does its edge grow blunt; *but* he who uses it *does* renew his strength, *does* repair his lost energies, *does* refresh his spirit. Macaulay wrote of it, "That day is not lost while industry is suspended, while the plough lies in the furrow, while the Exchange is silent, while no smoke ascends from the factory. A process is going on quite as important to the wealth of the nation as any process that is performing on more busy days. Man, the machine of machines, the machine compared with which the contrivances of the Wattses and the Arkwrights and the Bessemers are worthless, is repairing and winding up so that he returns to his labour on Monday with clearer intellect, with livelier spirit, and with renewed bodily vigour." It is not to be believed that the sabbath is a day *out* of which a growing world will grow, but one into which it will grow *more and more*, in this one direction to begin with only. 2. Its wide sweep of nobler use for the highest glory of man—in the exercise of his faculty of worship; in meditation, faith in the Unseen, prayer, praise, and in the natural conditions of the growth of Christian love and brotherhood on earth. Few things can strike the devout as more really beautiful, impressive, or cheering than the vision of the faithful in church, as they present a sight so grandly distinct from any other. Every day of the week finds every one of us in different place, in different thought, in different work, in different attitude, different aspiration, and with all the varieties of character, age, position, and necessity—pressing heavily on us, and sundering us even, however unwillingly; but *this* day the opposite! One place holds all, irrespective of every one of these differences. One God attracts us all. One Saviour's love meets us all. One Holy Spirit's energy draws, enlightens, cheers us all. We all have one thought, one hope, seek one heaven, sing one song, bow down together before the Unseen with one penitent confession. And however slowly, and therefore betimes discouragingly, the Church of Christ *is* restoring even now, and immensely by aid of the sabbath day, the unity of God's great family of man so long, so sadly astray! 3. The sabbath day is mighty, indeed, in its very highest sweep of influence, when it is intelligently and devoutly used as the solemn and most grateful memorial of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, with all else that flows therefrom in strict relation to it—the sacrament of his body and blood, and the holy communion which comes of it. The *coronal fact* of Christianity is the *resurrection fact*. It shows no longer man's hope sowed in the ground like a "corn of wheat," but appeared above ground, grown up some way, radiant with light and colour, full of promise, and the undoubted earnest of joy beyond all thought. For all such as are thus minded the day is stamped with highest and most reviving joy. It is "Morn of morns and day of days." It says, "Christ the Light of lights hath risen." The Church sings with one heart and tone, "Welcome, sweet day of rest!" And it deliberately says, while it muses with burning heart—

"Blest day of God, most calm, most bright,
The first and best of days;
The labourer's rest, the saint's delight,
The day of joyful praise!

"My Saviour's face did make thee shine,
His rising thee did raise;
This made thee heavenly and Divine,
Above the common days."

B.

Vers. 9—14 (see also Mark iii. 1—6; Luke vi. 6—12).—*The efficacy of righteous wrath.* This occasion, apparently belonging to the *same* sabbath as the incident preceding in our Gospel, of the blame laid ostensibly on the disciples of Christ, really on himself, on account of their plucking the ears of corn on the sabbath day, did really belong, as we learn from the account of St. Luke, to the following sabbath. The present passage, it

may also be observed, is one of those which most fully illustrate the advantage of comparing with one another the accounts of the three synoptic evangelists. There is double or tenfold advantage in doing this when the first comparison seems simply to show *variations*, but the task does not come to its end before those very variations are shown to corroborate and to complete the account. Thus, *e.g.*, the narratives of St. Mark and St. Luke would at the beginning of them actually seem to proceed on the very showing for part of their efficacy that the enemies of Christ had *not* asked Christ in the first instance the question of shallow cleverness only, "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day?" But the words at the close of St. Luke's account, that Jesus said, "*I* will ask *you* one thing," make all plain and certain. Again, the mention on the part of St. Mark of the righteous "*anger*" of Christ adds an important touch to the scene, and fills the gap in St. Luke following the words, "And looking round about upon them all;" and find their place in St. Matthew after the word "then" in ver. 13. Notice—

I. THE BARE SHIFTS TO WHICH THE DISPOSITION AND THE WICKED WISH "TO ACCUSE" TEMPT MEN TO RESORT.

II. HOW THE SIMPLEST SUBSTITUTION OF A PLAIN WORD FOR AN AMBIGUOUS WILL BE SUFFICIENT TO CONFOUND ALIKE THE CASE AND THE FACE OF MEN WITH THIS SORT OF EVIL IN THEIR HEART. FOR THE WORD "TO HEAL," JESUS OFFERS THE ALTERNATIVES "TO DO GOOD" AND "TO SAVE LIFE," AND THEY HAVE TO BE ACCEPTED. FOR THE SUPPRESSED "NOT TO HEAL" JESUS OFFERS THE ALTERNATIVES "TO DO EVIL" AND "TO KILL." AND THE TRIUMPHANT VICTORY IS HIS, WITHOUT ANOTHER SENTENCE.

III. HOW ALL ENMITY, ALL MALIGNITY, ALL SMALLEST PASSIONS RAGING ROUND ABOUT, AND DEEP JUST ANGER KINDLED IN THE HEART AND LOOK AND WORD OF JESUS, NONE THE LESS LEAVE UNHURT, UNPOISONED, UNTOUCHED, EVEN UNDELAYED, THE FLOWING FORTH OF HIS PITY, MERCY, POWER, AS SAVIOUR,—FOR THE SUFFERER HIMSELF.—B.

Ver. 20 (see also vers. 15—21; and Mark iii. 7—12).—*The rarest of gentleness.* The verse is a quotation from Isa. xlii. 1—3. It was not among the least wonders of Christ's earthly life that while his untiring step paced the flinty path of duty often so anguished, and always so hard with reality, that step made the plants of a date earlier by far reappear and blossom, and yield their sweet fragrance at his feet. The Old Testament may be said to be continually flowering and fruiting in the New. St. Matthew here tells us where Christ now was, and how it came to pass that he was where he was—what he was doing, and why he did it. He had turned aside from the place where he had been because they conspired for his life. Two sabbath days in succession they were offended in him, who never had gone one single step to offend them. They courted each day the decisive defeat which they sustained. However angry they were with him, it was the worse because they were angry with themselves. And because Jesus knew that his hour was "not yet come," he would not meet their enraged human nature. He rather turned aside and avoided those whom then to have encountered would indeed have been in no wise to bring fear of destruction to himself, but certain destruction to them. In avoiding them, his enemies, until his appointed time should be come, we must ever view Christ, not as betraying fear or wish to get out of harm's way, but as illustrating the grand truth that he came not to destroy life, but to save it. Out of the synagogue, then, and out of Capernaum did Jesus come this sabbath day. His followers, whether of the closer or the larger circle, he kept, in the full career of all his mighty works, unwontedly quiet. At one and the same time he hushed their pains and their praises, their loud complaints or louder thanks. All are bade to observe awhile what seems even an unnatural silence. It is not yet quite the hour that the Shepherd should lay down his life and give it a ransom for the flock. And now, says the divinely inspired St. Matthew, this healing, salvation, and silence, hard to maintain, are the flowering of old prophecy, "Behold my Servant, whom I have chosen; my Beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased. . . . He shall not strive, nor cry, neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench." This incident was recorded in the life of our Saviour to bring very forcibly before us some phases of his character and work. It

shows manifestly very differently from the character of men, and from the general intense craving of human nature for praise and for early manifestation, specially where the law that obtains is to prefer the praise of men to that of God. It rebukes passion as distinguished from patience; boastingness as compared with humility; and ostentation as compared with retiringness. But it does something much more. It presents Christ as the Embodiment of a series of very remarkable contrasts, or of what would generally be *held* to be such. God's chosen Servant, his ineffable delight, the residence of the fulness of the Spirit, is nevertheless meekness, silence, and tenderness itself. The crowd of sufferers gather round one Deliverer; the crowd of sinners round one Saviour; the crowd of grateful worshippers round the one Object of their worship, "God manifest in the flesh." But this one Deliverer, this only Saviour, this loving and true God incarnate, appears not here dressed in authority. His look, his garb, his commands, are unlike those of one who would clothe himself with authority, other than that which his actual deeds and sleeping strength might shadow forth. The text fixes one of those characteristics, *gentleness.* He is so gentle that he will not break a bruised reed, nor quench smoking flax. What others would tread upon or cast into the fire, he will stoop and pick up and save; what others would crush, and quench its dying smoke, as the remnant of a taper, he will *not* quench; but while there is life will give light, while there is light will sustain it. The bruised stem for the by-passer he will stay to bind up, reed only though it be; and will rekindle, not quench, life's spent taper. Uncommonly and sublimely simple, even for Scripture, as is the double figure of Isaiah, here quoted by St. Matthew, and in so unexpected a connection, it is intended to speak (1) an unknown tenderness of heart; (2) an unknown gentleness of touch; and (3) an unknown patience of forbearance—all unknown at least till he of whom they are now spoken *made* them known. This verse, then, one of the golden links of connection between the Old and the New Testament, what the prophet of old foretold of him, what the evangelist echoes and re-echoes, speaks of Christ and claims for him—

I. AN UNKNOWN TENDERNESS OF HEART. Even the perfect simplicity and the fresh charming naturalness of a child's affection would scarcely dictate the carefulness not to break a bruised reed, or the regretful watching of the last curling rings of some taper's departing life. Yet the figure here used is no exaggeration, for it tells and helps us to get some approach to a correcter notion of Christ's tender love to the bruised reed, called one's self; and to the smoking flax, which is another name for the inner life and inner light which God put within, but which we have gone so near to put out. While the Divine One was here there was not a bruised limb nor a damaged sense which he did not repair and renew; not an inner spring, or power, or flickering flame of life to which he did not give its own vigour and native energy in place of its own degenerate smouldering and smoke. Reason's flickering rushlight and the soul's just dying lamp of life did he rekindle, and fed them both from the sources of the eternal light. "Infinite pity touched the heart of God's almighty Son." It considered not difficulty nor expenditure, nor the shame and anguish of the cross; but one thing only—that object on which it had set itself. *This* is the tenderness of the immortal love of the strong Son of God—man's matchless Friend and man's enemy's overmastering Foe; and thus is it written of him, "He will not break a bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax." Infinite power achieves the immortal victory over Satan, and the conquest of sin and death; *but* infinite tenderness achieves the counterpart victory, to take for ever captive our loving soul.

II. AN UNKNOWN GENTLENESS OF TOUCH. Given the former, it may seem that *all* is given, and that all the rest must follow as matter of course. But it is not exactly so; it is not necessarily so. Often, indeed, the will surpasses the deed, and often indeed, with confessed kindness and tenderness of heart, there may fail to be found a happy or a tender way of expressing it. Innumerable, in fact, are the instances of those who would be very surprised and hurt if they were plainly told that there was no one yet suspected them of having the one very thing they never suspected themselves of not having—a truly kind heart; but whose deeds, or want of deeds, or way of showing forth their deeds, have long, loudly, irresistibly, told it to all others, though not to themselves. If a bruised reed is to be handled at all, it must be handled very carefully; and if the flickering, flaxen taper is not to be utterly extinguished, it must, whether lifted or only approached, be very cautiously approached, and be lifted very

gently. A breath may put it out. But oh! how undeniably gentle has the touch of Jesus been! and how soft have his breathings been! Breathings of hope, breathings of forgiveness, breathings of peace, breathings of holiness, breathings of heaven itself—till what was going out revives, what was waning waxes, what was *so* fitful burns steady and serener far than vestal fire, and the earthly light has brightened into the heavenly!

III. AN UNKNOWN FORBEARANCE OF PATIENCE. For the unknown tenderness of heart and the unknown gentleness of touch which belong to Christ to gain their object and win their souls, what forbearance in the forbearingness of his patience has been needed, and times innumerable has been shown by him! Among men *this* is one of the very rarest of virtues and graces. What is owed to Christ, that he has shown it, and ever is showing it to such perfection. And how we all need to remember that, if tried too long, it brings us to the verge of that "judgment," of which our following verse speaks, "Until he shall bring forth judgment in his victory." Judgment begun must be the offer of mercy foreclosed for those who still so long refused it. And for these the far different words of Isaiah's prophecy also must become true, "Then shall the strong man be as tow, and his work as a spark; and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench *them*."—B.

Vers. 22—37 (see also Mark iii. 22—30; Luke xi. 14—23).—*The bathos of detracting blasphemy.* In introduction, note the unity of this passage of sixteen verses. While the linking of one portion of the accounts contained in the Gospels to another is very often exceedingly evident, and that, link by link, a oneness of a different and complete kind marks this marvellous episode. Observe also upon the fact that the criticism of all the ages from the earliest Christian writings of the centuries has fastened upon these verses with no mistaken instinct. And grant that the crucial question, which they undoubtedly own to, considering the words and the tone of the Lord Jesus, may be approached, ought to be approached, investigated, and pondered with prayer, but will not allow itself to be dogmatized upon. The certain meaning eludes *this* treatment at any rate; and demands most reverential handling quite as really as it commands the awed meditating of the true student of the words of Christ. Treating the passage in the simplest manner, the likelier to lead to a better appreciation of the central difficulty, notice—

I. THE SIGNIFICANT RISE OF THE OCCASION, WHICH TOOK SO WIDE A RANGE AFTERWARDS. 1. The prompt, manifest, and undisputed healing of a man who suffered from the deprivation (presumably) of three out of the five senses which belonged to his nature. 2. The *modus* of this healing, to wit, the relieving the man of the tyrannous incubus of an evil spirit. *This* dispossessed, the man's dispossession vanished; the devil's possession challenged, disturbed, dislodged, and evicted, the man's rightful possession and possessions came to him, like some dawn of day. 3. Inspiration's presentation of this event and transaction to the uncounted millions of its readers. That is, not in its *personal* aspects, without one word of rehearsal of the circumstances of the faith and inner desire and subsequent conduct of the man healed. *He* is here; he is healed—possibly he joins the amazed multitude, possibly he goes his way, and *gratefully* so; *but* the mighty work of Christ is left, and *this* becomes the sole absorbing subject. 4. The world of observers wended different ways—the way of the "people," and the way of the "Pharisees."

II. THE DARING IMPUTATION, SUICIDAL SLANDER, AND PRONOUNCED BLASPHEMY THEREUPON, OF THE PHARISEES. A type to infernal perfection of that vice that has discredited so often in less degree fallen human nature, the detracting from the goodness of the good and their good deeds, and from the greatness of the great and their great deeds, is before us here. What are the *facts*? They are: 1. A great work done, a good work done, an absolutely merciful work done, the same being done *not* "on the sabbath day," and the same, all in one, done manifestly and to absolute undenied certainty; *done*, not merely alleged, not even offered the charge of simulation. 2. An evil work *un*done, a devil's work *un*done, with the devil who had done that work turned out; and an exceeding bitter calamity and deprivation to an integral, individual part of God's creation graciously *un*done. 3. The Doer of the work answering to the above description—he is present, and his prerequisites for such work are, and (by the confession and in the words of one of that very body from whom the blasphemy proceeds) *are known* to be, "that he be come from God," and that "God be

with him" (John iii. 2). It must be added that the credentials of this accused but wonderful Personage are already multiplied, and of the most pronounced character, alike in deed and in word. *The blasphemy is* that his detractors say that his work is *not* of that God whose working he does, but of the devil whose working he *un*does!

III. THE EXPOSURE AND REBUKE OF THIS BLASPHEMY. The Pharisees spoke their blasphemy as an aside; or perhaps from a little distance off, whence they come, and now draw near enough to Christ for him to address them and "their thoughts" personally, though "their thoughts" had not been openly and with any "courage of conviction" addressed in language to him. 1. Universal reason expressed in universal proverb exposes and rebukes the blasphemy. Satan won't divide against himself, says Christ; and they all know it. 2. A practical alternative question storms the position and abashes the blasphemy. "If," says Christ, "I by Beelzebub cast out devils," dare to put it in words, "by whom your children cast them out?" "but if I by the finger of God," which is "the Spirit of God, cast them out, then that kingdom of God" which you are refusing to enter, and which you are striving to prevent, is veritably "come to you." What about your neglect of it, and your malignant opposition to him who brings it? Strong and armed as confessedly Satan is, and his "palace" long time "kept," now it is before your eyes, though you may not, will not, confess it with the tongue, that a Stronger has "come upon him," has "overcome him," has "bound him," has "taken from him all his armour, wherein he trusted, and has divided his spoils." It is upon the ruins of that house, that palace, that kingdom which your blasphemy says is already divided against itself, that "the kingdom of God is come unto you." And now henceforth, he that does not know me, know to be "with me," and to gather with and for me, "is against me," and dooms himself to "scatter," and be scattered.

IV. THE TERRIBLE WARNING IN THE MATTER OF BLASPHEMY, VIZ. THAT "AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST," NOW PRONOUNCED BY CHRIST. The language of Christ on this subject offers itself for the simplest acceptance, and humble and awed faith of all. Notwithstanding its brevity, its exceedingly simple diction, and the apparently designed wording of it, so that it shall *not* fail to reach its aim, it remains, after all the centuries, a passage that finds no absolutely satisfactory exposition, and that can command not one really just parallel by aid of which to determine and define it. To generalize upon it is easy, and to say continuous resistance of the Holy Spirit is likely, only too likely, to lead to final resistance of him, and *that* to the fatal doom here pronounced, is safe enough, and at the same time safely far enough from the exactness of the language and the point of its warning, here found. The apostle warns not to "quench" the Holy Spirit of God, after warning not to "grieve" him. But at what point long and repeated grieving may avail to quench we cannot fix, nor, if we could, would this enable us any more certainly to decipher what is here written, not of some prolonged rebellion against the Holy Spirit, but apparently of some such state of heart as may in a moment precipitate the unforgivable sin. We believe that it must be a "merciful and wise obscurity" that lies upon this passage; none the less solemn, but perhaps more so; none the less useful, but perhaps more so. The comment of St. Mark (iii. 30), "Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit," seems to bring us nearest of all to the exact description of the sin, already adjudicated on by Christ, both for the time before the full gospel day, and thence to the end. And we believe that the dread testimony and warning goes to this—that there is a blasphemy of the tongue against the Holy Ghost, which speaks a blasphemy of the heart against him, such and of such sort, that though not to be pronounced upon (while wheat and tares grow together), the all-seeing One knows, and declares of it, that it cannot know the grace of repentance, and cannot have the infinite boon of forgiveness extended to it.

V. CHRIST'S EMPHATIC DENIAL OF ANY FORM OF CONVENTIONAL AND ARTIFICIAL DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE HEART AND INNER QUALITY AND INGRAVEN CHARACTER OF MEN, AND THEIR WORDS AND ACTIONS. It is as true of the highest as of the lowest; and it is also as true of them both, and of all others whomsoever, as of the tree and its fruit. So literally and precisely true is this, that though it were possible that a "word," for instance, were so "idle," so light, so useless, so inactive, devoid of energy, inoperative, that it inferred *no* danger to any one in all the world outside, it should not the less be true that it inferred danger to the *speaker* of it. What witness must it *needs* bear about *him*, and against him! These concluding verses are, without mistake,

a summing up of most practical and forcible application to the "generation of vipers" in the first instance, and also a reminder of widespread and deeply significant importance to all of us.—B.

Vers. 38—45, specially ver. 42 (see also Luke xi. 16—18, 24—26).—*One inevitable law of judgment.* In introduction, notice the displeasure expressed by Christ in respect of the scribes and Pharisees asking a sign. This may have been for an accumulation of reasons. *First*, because (see Luke xi. 16) perhaps they asked a "sign from heaven," marking in their wish a craving of curiosity for the novel and the more striking, regardless of the *quantum* of instruction that the sign might be charged with, at any rate, for others. *Secondly*, whether it were a sign from heaven or not, in asking they asked without the *higher* wish, without *any* wish, probably, for the higher object of a sign, when it is granted. *Thirdly*, without asking, they had already had many a sign of the most effective and incontestable kind, and they were signs "nigh at hand, and not afar off;" and yet these signs had not been used, not improved—had been seen, but resisted; and these men are the worst of all, who had "seen and yet believed *not*." And once more, *fourthly*, because if this passage finds its *correct* place immediately on the narrative that here precedes, as seems certainly to be the case, they had *just* seen a sign, and had listened to what followed from the lips of Christ, and had been in the position to survey the entire scene, and to take awful warning from it. Note, further, that, true though it was that these doubters and unbelievers and disbelievers *had* had, and were still sure to have, numerous signs of the kind just given, yet Christ takes *their* meaning when he adds, "No sign shall be given but the sign of the Prophet Jonas;" and, alluding to this, he contrasts the practical conduct, the faith and repentance of Nineveh, on the preaching of Jonas, and the faith and zeal of the Queen of Sheba, when she heard the wisdom of Solomon, with the wilful unrepentingness of *his* hearers, and the cold deadness of their mind and heart. Note once more, from the closing portion of these verses, the link which holds them to the beginning of the passage. Their text is the "evil and adulterous generation;" and these last sentences forecast the "worse" state, to which they ever sink who, with all added light, gift, opportunity, shut, not eye and ear so much as mind and heart to them, while these are flung wide open for the evil spirits, who most ruthlessly victimize them. In the whole passage, select for special development the instance of the judgment and condemnation which the Queen of Sheba shall contribute, by the contrast of her example with that of the men to whom Jesus Christ was preaching, and manifesting forth his glory, his wisdom, and his mighty works. And learn that this example—

I. REMINDS OF THE CREDIT THAT IT IS TO HUMAN NATURE TO SEEK. It is one of the certain signs that its life and reality are not yet dried up and exhausted. We honour and admire the individual who seeks. Our admiration and honour grow when we see the seeking converted into thorough, earnest, persevering search. This, the onward, upward determination of our nature, constitutes one of the moral evidences of its immortality. Yet at the same time we cannot leave out of the question *what* it is which is the object of its search. Endeavour, labour, decision, and enthusiasm directed to a really worthy object—when any one labours for the thing he knows to his best light to be the highest—raise the whole scale of our admiration. Still, the man who exhibits these qualities may be wrong in not knowing a higher. It may be his *fault*, it may be even his sin, that he does *not* know a higher. Of how much of both our darkness and ignorance are we ourselves not unfrequently the guilty causes! Not, then, does any arrive at the best till he has made sure that what he and his heart and soul go in quest of is the truly highest that human mind may reach after, and human heart love. Though the visitor of Solomon was a queen, she journeyed far; and not for money nor for presents, though with both did she journey, but in quest of wisdom; *this* fired her soul's desire, on *this* her imagination went to work, *this* her ears tingled to hear, *this* determined her journey. In her deed she was blessed—blessed for her time of day. She acted up to an elevated and generous impulse, and she was *not* disappointed. And it is she, says Christ himself, who will rise up in judgment with those who, so far from being athirst for wisdom, and for the highest type attainable, refuse that infinitely greater wisdom, so near, so graciously pressed on them, of *him* who is greater beyond all count than Solomon. Search long, toilsome, and honourable for inferior

blessings *often* reproves our wasteful heedlessness of that which is the greater; but never a millionth time so much as when it is "all the world" on the one hand, but Christ and his wisdom on the other hand, which are offered so freely, which plead for our regard so graciously, and which nevertheless are sought so feebly.

II. REMINDS OF THE SUPREME OBJECT WHICH IS INCONTESTABLY THE ONE WORTHY TO BE SOUGHT. It is, indeed, in itself a most interesting thing, as the barest fact of history, the history of the time of the Queen of Sheba, that she longed to hear the wisdom of Solomon. To be anxious to see all his wealth and magnificence and state would have been a usual enough anxiety. Nor can there be any doubt, from what we afterwards read, that she did think of these, and was satisfied and rejoiced with the satisfaction and rejoicing that *these* could give. None the less is it to be noticed that the record is that she craved to hear his *wisdom*. Now, this wisdom *was* great in certain relations and comparisons, and it was very unusual; but what at the furthest was its compass and its range? Great memory, great knowledge, great gift of observation, great force of discernment—all such Solomon confessedly had. How many proverbs did he write, and then repeat from memory! how much poetry did he compose and sing! what a natural historian he was, though science "in those days was very precious," and microscope there was none! "He spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five. He spake of trees also, from the cedar that is in Lebanon even to the hyssop that springeth out of the wall of Jerusalem. He spake of beasts also, and of fowls, of creeping things, and of fishes." But all this—was it not knowledge of a very *restrained* sort? It was curious and entertaining and instructive, and capable certainly of leading from nature to nature's God; but what was it in comparison of the antitype! Now for the reverse of the grand medal. 1. The "Greater than Solomon" *brings* his wisdom, and brings it from heaven's highest heights. Thence brought, it descends to *all* of our various, deepest need. Thence brought, it spreads over all the wide compass of the various want of our life. Christ knows all that *is*. 2. The wisdom of Christ *ante*dates all the present. All the past he knows, who "was in the beginning with God, and was God." So his wisdom was "from everlasting." 3. He knows all the future. Where our vision cannot reach, and where (*could* we glance) we should tremble to glance, which way *soever* our glance turned, there does *his* reaching, searching, steady gaze anticipate the direction, and swift as a morning ray travel to the end. How should men cleave for his wisdom's sake to him who sees, who only sees, *all that awaits* them!

"No eye but his might ever bear
To look all down that vast abyss,
Because none ever saw so clear
The shore *beyond* of endless bliss.
The giddy waves so restless hurled,
The vexed pulse of the feverish world,
He views and counts with steadfast sight,
Used to behold the Infinite."

Oh, with what strange, awful wisdom does all *this* invest Christ! 4. The wisdom of Christ is so *kind*. It is not confessedly grand and awful things which can be depended upon to draw human hearts the most. But Christ's wisdom *is* what we of all created things should most rejoice to call wisdom. It is so kind, so deep, so gentle, so quiet, that condescends to search all our needs, to stoop to view all our trials and sorrows, to come in contact with all that is most infinitely repulsive to him, *our sin*, and then to find the one perfect remedy for it. What justice even to our apprehension in that sentence of St. Paul, "Christ the *Wisdom* of God"! To "hear" the wisdom of Solomon did the Queen of Sheba travel from the uttermost parts of the earth, though there might not be one single word in it all for her *self*, for her life, heart, soul. But all the wisdom of Christ, so far as it is as yet revealed to us, gazes full on us; it has us for the objects of its expenditure. He *has* come to us. From the uttermost heavens has he descended to us.

"How swift and joyful was his flight,
On wings of everlasting love!"

He has worn our nature, borne our sins, carried our sorrows; has made himself known

in our world, the very Pattern and Type of the seeking, watchful, compassionate Shepherd. And in the unfathomed marvels and mystery of the cross he has comprehended all the length and breadth, the height and depth, of wisdom. Against those who neglect this, it must indeed be that the Queen of Sheba shall rise in the judgment.—B.

Vers. 46—50 (see also Mark iii. 31—35; Luke viii. 19—21).—*The necessary condition of right personal love.* In comparing the accounts as quoted above, one thing first arrests our attention, that while no one of them speaks of more than "mother and brethren" seeking for Jesus, every one of them finds a place in the tenderness of Christ's reply for the introduction of the word "sister." St. Luke's, the shortest account, nevertheless explains precisely how "the press" of people was what prevented the "mother and brethren" of Jesus reaching him; while the "certain" of the people of St. Luke, and the "one" of St. Matthew, who informed Jesus of the fact, are so very naturally replaced by the "multitude" in St. Mark. How these took up the message, and tried to pass it on, pictures itself readily to our familiar knowledge of the ready tongue of a "multitude." No one of the evangelists' accounts tell us, however, of what might have been the object of the desire on the part of the mother and brethren of Jesus to "see" or to "speak with" him. It may have been to bring him refreshment for the body; it may have been to warn him of apprehended danger; it may have been to share with nearer position the manifested power and glory and manifestation of the Mighty One whom they had known, as they thought, so well. The significance of the silence on the point may lead us, not uncharitably, to the theory that it was for some reason personal rather to *them* than to him. The incident described in the passage before us, and which so naturally has arrested our attention and our deep sympathetic feelings so often—

I. SUGGESTS THE DIFFERENCE WHICH CHRIST HIMSELF MARKED BETWEEN PERSONAL LOVE TO HIM AND A MERE LOVE TO HIS PERSON. It is not by this to be understood for a moment that his mother's love to him was a mere love to his Person. But broad and deep is the line which Jesus does himself draw, as though for the help of all whomsoever who should be, between these two things. There is a vast gulf of separation between our natural and our saintly desires. How hard it might seem sometimes to allow for this separating gulf, however! When our agonized meditative thought has led us betimes to say to our inmost self what we would give for a moment's vision of that Holy One in the garb of his human flesh alone; to see that form, to hear that voice, to know what his eye literally looked, to watch the expression of his countenance, to ask him one question personally, to walk across the field by his adorable side, to plant one's step literally in the footprint of his own; and when one has been impelled to think how many millions for that one aged Simeon would now be ready, for such a boon granted, to say, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace," and welcomely to close the eyes on earth, and all it ever could have else to show, the words of Jesus here (1) warn us against a snare, manifest though it may be held to be; and (2) point us the better, the more excellent way, to learn "to hear and to do the will of God"—of "my Father which is in heaven." Such desires on our part may even take rank among unearthly desires, among saintly desires even; *but* they are *not* the saintly desire for a moment to stand in comparison of what Christ here places before us. Though we be not competent to say certainly now that it was any such mere superficial motive on the part of mother and brethren to see Jesus, and to share some reflected glory from his Person, it *is* competent to us to say that Christ seized the opportunity, at whatever other risk, to say that all *personal* relationship dwindles in the presence of that living, intrinsic, eternally abiding relationship that constitutes one the mother, another the sister, and millions the brethren of the now invisible One, the Lord Jesus Christ.

II. SUGGESTS THE POSSIBILITY OF REALIZING A CERTAIN FULNESS AND A CERTAIN TENDERNESS IN SUCH RELATIONSHIPS AS CHRIST IS WILLING TO SUSTAIN TOWARD US, AND STATES FORCIBLY THE CONDITIONS NECESSARY THERETO. What is most sacred, what is most tender, what is absolutely most real of earthly and human relationship, is employed to set forth the fulness, the tenderness, the absolute sympathy, that bear witness of not a mere acquaintance with Christ, but of such an acquaintance as is all-pervading, knows no discord, is inspired by no jarring want of harmony, and already

bears the stamp of eternity on it, almost fit already to merge into spiritual shape. What reproach the thought gives to all half-heartedness, to all mere interested profession of Christian faith and hope and love! How it repudiates the thought of a mere question of gain to be gotten from Christ, and tramples with just scorn and indignation upon the blasphemy in practice of patronizing Christ! Jesus would have us understand and believe how much it draws his heart towards any one who begins to "hear," as he never heard before, "the Word of God, and to do his Father's will." For want of this the family was once broken up, and only by the restoring of this can its unity be regained. Now, the love which Christ has toward us as sinners, whom he came to seek and to save, when he looked down on us *as* sinners, and far from "God's Word," is *one* love. It is the love of commiseration, of God-like compassion, of heavenly mercy. But the love which he condescends to liken to that of mother, sister, brother, and to that to be shown *to* these, is something else. It is the oneness, the heartfelt sympathy, the fellowship and communion of delight, which they know, yet can never describe, who, happy themselves, know the bliss of resting in the unruffled security and harmony of the family in which they were born, which surrounded them with their first consciousness of life, and in which they have as yet ever lived without a fear, without a want. Jesus Christ wished loudly to declare it in the press, the motley group, the harassed multitude that were around him, that *this* rule, "to hear the Word of God and do it," was not only the rectifying of everything that could be wrong in the family of man, but also the perfecting of joy in every one who should observe to do it. A crown will make a king or queen; ancestry and accident will make princes and princesses; wealth will make position, however ticklish and uncertain; knowledge and learning will make that wisdom and power which are at any rate somewhat less uncertain; but *hearing the Word of God and doing it* will make what is immeasurably superior to all these. It will fill up the family of God on earth, will deepen and diffuse pure joy here, and will help fill all heaven above with joy and praise.—B.

Vers. 1—13.—*The sabbath.* Six times was our Lord, either directly or through his disciples, charged with sabbath-breaking. In considering the manner in which he met the accusation, we must bear in mind that he was in a different relation to the Jewish sabbath from that which we hold to it. Indeed, we could not, from his observance of the day, argue that a day was to be similarly observed in the Christian Church, because many important observances ceased at his death, and remain to us only in their spiritual substance. But the principles he lays down in defending his conduct carry with them important conclusions regarding the day. 1. The first of these principles underlies all rational religion. It was not a new idea. Our Lord finds adequate expression of it in the Old Testament words, "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." In other words, God is not pleased by our payment of dues to him, but by our growing in likeness to him and learning to love our brother. The worship that does not feed character is nought. 2. But the second principle has a special reference to the sabbath. It is little more than an inference from the first. "The Son of man," he says, "is Lord even of the sabbath;" or, as he more plainly puts it in another Gospel, "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath." It is a day given to us by God, who has so arranged things that the world's work can be done completely by giving six-sevenths of our time to it. The tendency of much of our civilization is to make men think that work or business is the whole of life. Such a tendency is checked and rebuked by this day. Every seventh day says to us, "You are not merely a merchant; you are a man. You are not in this world to manufacture material articles and accumulate money; you are here to cultivate friendships, to educate yourself in all that is good, to know God, and become meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." All this was explicitly taught when the sabbath was first promulgated to Israel. The remarkable words were uttered to them, "For that the Lord hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days." This weekly rest was a new sensation to the over-driven slaves; it was a new idea to them to have one day all their own—a day in which they were loosed from all the cares of earth, and taught to know themselves God's children. This fourth commandment, which both our Lord and the Pharisees accepted, was interpreted by them

to quite opposite meanings. The Pharisees took the letter of the law, regardless of its spirit and intention. The letter ran, "Thou shalt do no work;" and with the most perfect verbal logic the Pharisee maintained that he kept the law best who did least work. Our Lord, on the other hand, sought to find and satisfy the *spirit* of the law; and he said, "The day was made to promote men's good; to be a pleasure and a boon, not a vexation and a burden." Whatever best promotes man's good best satisfies the sabbath law. Whatever most effectually sets him free from the grinding toil and feverish cares of this life best satisfies the law. Starting, then, with this idea, that the day is meant to promote the good of man, we see why the one point insisted on in the commandment is that men should cease from their ordinary works. There is not a word about worship, no hint regarding the observance of the day further than this, that it is to be an exceptional day, a day of rest. But, the rest being provided by *God*, it follows that we must be in cordial and frank fellowship with him in availing ourselves of it. When a father brings his boy home for a holiday, he feels grieved and disappointed if the boy obviously prefers the company of low and coarse lads to the company he finds in his father's house. And how can a man be directed to the right observance of the seventh day who is at discord with his heavenly Father on the fundamental point of what constitutes true happiness and well-being? Two instances are cited by our Lord to illustrate his meaning.

I. David did not scruple, in an extraordinary emergency, to fall back on the great principle that he himself, God's living servant, was more precious than an ordinance made for his good. From this we derive two hints: 1. We see that the sabbath is not an idol to which man's life or health is to be sacrificed. In all large cities there are thousands who from Monday morning till Saturday night breathe nothing but the most polluted atmosphere, and for such persons to confine themselves to their little room through the whole Sunday as well, seems to lean rather to the Pharisaic observance of the day. 2. But this instance carries with it no sanction of the conduct of any who use it habitually for their mere bodily comfort and worldly gain. David ate the shewbread under pressure. He did it once in his lifetime. And so our Lord admits that resting was the ordinary, normal way to observe the day, and that whosoever dispenses with that must be able to show good cause.

II. The second illustration is equally instructive. The ordinary work of the priests prevents them from keeping the command in the letter. They must care for the public worship. There are circumstances in which you may fairly be expected to give up your day of rest out of deference to the necessities of society, of your employers, or of one another. Your business is to see that these necessities are real, and not fanciful.

But we are no longer under the Jewish Law; do any of the ideas expressed in it directly concern us? No doubt Paul sometimes speaks as if we were done with all distinctions of days, and had no need any longer of the Law, but could live entirely by the direction and impulse of the Spirit. But he sets before us the ideal of the Christian and Christianity; practically the attempt to live without the aids of sabbath observance commonly ends not in elevating all our days to the level of a well-spent sabbath, but in bringing down to a merely worldly level both our sabbaths and our week-days. If, then, we assert for ourselves our Lord's liberty regarding this day, let us be sure we do so from his point of view. Let us not hesitate to prefer the real welfare of men to the claims of the sabbath. But let us be quite sure that we are at one with God in our judgment of what does constitute the welfare of ourselves and others. Seven weeks of leisure out of every year should surely leave behind some very visible traces of our willingness to be helpful in this world, where there is such room for wise and honest helpfulness. To spend such a day in formal attendance at church, in yawning idleness, in gossiping levity, is a scandal to our common humanity; and to spend it even in the pursuit of science, or in reading good secular literature, is to prove we do not yet know what are the capacities and contents of our nature. Make a duty of seriously considering your ways, your habits, your disposition; let your mind rest on the great gospel facts, seek your Lord's presence and address him with the words your thoughts of him suggest, and you will learn how reasonable and fruitful an appointment it is that from all your ordinary works you should rest every seventh day.—D.

Vers. 22—37.—*Casting out devils, and blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.* The

opposition of the Pharisees on this occasion much less excusable than when charging the Lord with sabbath-breaking. Contrasts with honest amazement of the people, exclaiming, "Is not this," etc.? Pharisees felt evidence of miracle as much as common people, but refused to follow their own convictions. Make what they know to be a flimsy and insufficient explanation. Our Lord makes a threefold reply. 1. It is absurd to suppose that any prince would counterwork his own agents. Argument addressed to common sense. 2. Introduces more serious difficulties. "If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children," etc.? Exorcism not uncommon in our Lord's day. Necessary to notice unusually formidable assault made on gospel narrative. It has been urged that the age and nation were extremely credulous, that accurate observation and exact reporting are very rare, tendency to misstate and exaggerate much increased by religious excitement. Jews believed in power of many subordinate spirits in causing maladies and misfortunes. Therefore little credit due to their reports. Reply, in first place, modern critics also guilty of exaggeration in collecting all evidences of this taste for marvels to the exclusion of all other features of the age, as if no countervailing sense or knowledge of men. But granting all the credulity and superstition, the fact cuts both ways. If marvels were so common, what gave *our Lord's* miracles so decisive an influence on the world's history? Why did this imagination of the Christians alone prove so solid a basis for life? But the whole force of our Lord's reference to exorcism by the Jews is not exhausted by saying it was a form of quackery, sometimes benefiting feeble, nervous patients, but otherwise an imagination. One cannot but be struck by the contrast between the Jews' method—charlatanry too silly to be quoted—and our Lord's sober, simple word of command. How is it that he stands absolutely clear of all professional methods? It is true he believes in a demoniacal possession of which modern science takes no account—now called epilepsy, lunacy, etc. Argument that our Lord might be ignorant of the nature of the diseases he cured. Not necessary to suppose that he knew and anticipated all discoveries of modern science. This were to deny to him a true and proper humanity, and so fall into one of the most dangerous of heresies. His miracles displayed his power and his love, not his medical skill. But our knowledge on these very points still too limited to admit of pronouncing positively. And to reason thus does not remove the difficulty, for the Lord's idea of actual devils is verified in the recorded facts—they not only obeyed him, but on one occasion passed into the swine, indicating separate personalities. Alternative between veracity of Gospels and existence of devils. 3. Third reply most significant for us. Blasphemy against the Spirit, a sin of quite unique enormity. Pharisees had often judged and found fault with his conduct as *man*; but these were works admittedly Divine, yet they ascribed them to Satanic agency. The distinction broad and important. In the one case it might be a mistake, though a blamable one; in the other, an evasion of evidence and resistance to light which must result in utter darkness. Jesus ever seeks to be judged by his works. If the fruit is good, must not the tree be good? If he gives us what is best, shall we not own him, and give him our best? From attitude of Pharisees two important warnings: (1) "He that is not with me," etc. After abundant evidence neutrality impossible. Difficulty of being entirely honest in inquiry; danger of state in which not reason, but pride, indifference, reluctance, find difficulties. Make sure that you are allowing due weight to all that God says to your conscience. (2) "Every idle word," etc. Judged by words, because "out of abundance of heart," etc. Every such word an index of heart. Evading conviction or decision by foolish or ill-natured words. Whenever good is done, heartily welcome it. Meanest of all occupations to stand idle and criticize.—D.

Vers. 38—45.—*Last state worse than first.* All that was implied in our Lord's mode of working is here explicitly enounced. The miracles were only subordinately evidences of his Divine commission; primarily they were deeds of mercy. But to heal every one would have been to violate the constitution of man's nature, and upset the equilibrium required for the harmonious co-operation of God and man. Those only who had faith were healed, and this secured that their character was purified and aided, not debauched. The Pharisees had the shallowest idea of miracles. They would have approved the devil's suggestion that the convincing proof of Messiahship

was to cast himself unhurt from a pinnacle of the temple, though why the possession of a mountain-sheep's capacity for jumping should prove any one the greatest spiritual blessing to mankind they probably did not inquire. They had lost the capacity of knowing excellence—could only measure him by their silly external tests, and scorned him for the very things that proved his greatness. A miracle wrought merely for the sake of convincing men, could not convince them, could only prove the possession of a certain unexplained power. But miracles wrought out of compassion for the wretched justly convinced men that God was nigh. We join the ranks of the Pharisees when we refuse to acknowledge Christ until he presents some more striking evidence. To us, as to them, it must be said—Ye can discern the face of the sky, but ye cannot read the signs of the times. You know the sequences of nature, but you have no eye for spiritual sequences; you do not see that a clever feat which makes men stare has no natural connection with salvation from sin, but that the entrance into the world of such love and holiness, and the identification of their possessor with all human interests, portends more good to humanity than any physical marvel could portend. Could you rightly read the signs of the times, you would understand that a Greater than Jonas, a Greater than all men, *the* Greatest and Holiest and most Sacrificing, could not be in the world without changing its course for ever. And each of us may read our own individual future as here directed by our Lord, for it is impossible he should join himself to any one of us individually without bringing into our life an otherwise unattainable hope. Certain natural signs never deceive, because there is a rigid natural connection between the cause and the consequence. As rigid is the connection in the moral world; you cannot belong to Christ without receiving the utmost of human blessing. It means untold good to you; it is the spring of your life that promises endless harvest. All that is unworthy, weak, and wicked will be displaced, and you will be changed into his likeness. It is as certain as the shower that you see coming down the wind to the spot you stand on. But while our Lord refused any sign as a mere wonder proving his power, he assured them a sign should be given of the most astonishing kind. As if he said, "I will do no miracle of the kind you require; it would not convince you; you are not seeking conviction, but a plausible pretext against me. You think I am endangering the ship, and you will treat me as Jonah was treated; but as Jonah's mission was expedited by what seemed to terminate it, so shall my mission, by your final action against me, receive its most convincing authentication." This sign of the resurrection of Christ is that which seals the truth of all he asserted regarding himself, but especially does it give us assurance that our Lord is now alive. Only when we believe in this do we attain to faith in our own immortality. In the little parable with which this passage closes, our Lord points out that, though they had cast out the devil of idolatry, the heart not being filled with love of God and holiness, the empty apartment of their soul was straightway filled with self-conceit, contempt for gross sinners, hatred of any light that made them suspicious of their state. Probably he pointed specially to the deterioration of "this generation." There had been a revival of religion under John, but John himself warned them that he could not baptize with the Holy Spirit. He saw that merely to cast out one or two devils of misconduct, and to leave the heart empty, was to place men in a perilous position. To the individual this little parable is full of significance. There are diseases in which there are periods of relief from pain, followed by severe relapse. So in the case here spoken of, the downward career is not steadily progressive, but is checked for a while, only to be resumed with sevenfold violence. The principle pointed at is that wherever an evil thing is not expelled by the invasion of good that enters and dispossesses it, the expulsion is ineffectual. Nature dictates and observes this law. If you wish to clear a room of bad air, you do not get an air-pump and exhaust it, but by opening the window you let the rush of pure air drive out the impure; were you to exhaust the air, you might produce a suction which would burst your gas-pipes and draw up foul air from your sewers. So in the moral world evil is to be ejected by soul-possessing love of good. Christ is set before us that we may learn to love him, and so have no room for any unworthy affection. To use religion only as a repressive and expulsive influence is fatal. There are persons whose hearts are emptied rather than filled by religion. There is a death of their old bad life, but there is no strong impelling power, no new and abundant *life*. Is there anything in you that would make it a pleasure to you to take your place by

the side of Christ in his humble ministering to the poor and wretched? How can you relish the prospect of eternal life, if you have in you no hearty love for the style of life that will then prevail? The result of using religion merely as an instrument for repression is that the soul becomes possessed of greater iniquities than ever. The new sins may be sins, as our Lord expresses it, that find their suitable dwelling in a house that is swept and garnished, yet they are worse than the original iniquity. These sins are vanity; contempt of men; hatred of persons differing from them in doctrine and outward forms of religion, though having more love to Christ than they; hypocrisy and coldness of feeling. These new tenants are prim, decorous, church-going devils, that adapt themselves to the ways of respectable society. But none the less will they one day overwhelm the house in disaster. The history of the man whose religious experience is here given is this—he has rid himself of some form of iniquity out of regard for self rather than for Christ; he plumes himself on the improvement instead of humbly thanking Christ, cultivates self rather than fellowship with Christ. Is your heart so filled and satisfied with the love of Christ that all that offends him is banished from it?—D.

Ver. 50.—*Christ's spiritual family.* "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." There is nothing new or peculiarly Christian in the idea that there is a bond stronger than that of blood. It is too obvious to escape notice. Nor does the assertion cast any disparagement on the institution of the family; less is not made of blood, but more of spiritual affinity. That our Lord did not make less of family ties is shown by his care for his mother; that he made much of spiritual ties also is shown by his commending her to the care of his most sympathetic friend. The family bulks less in his life because the community, the world, bulks larger. The proportion of thought he gave to the family was smaller, the actual amount greater, than that given by most men. That which is peculiar in these words is—The distinct assertion of what constitutes the bond of this more enduring, truer relationship. It is the recognition and acceptance of God's will. This is the true basis of eternal society, the one bond we can trust to, to keep us ever united. The doing of God's will implies an inward, deep-seated acknowledgment that his will is holy, just, and good, and that God is the Ruler of our life; it implies that devout love for God from which flows light and regeneration to every part of a man's life and nature. Other associations dissolve, pass away, become obsolete, but all that comes of accepting God's will from a genuine love of him abides. 2. But Christ here indirectly presents himself as the Centre of this new spiritual family. This is so (1) because he is the actual, visible embodiment of God's will, in whom men can best see what that will is. And (2) because it is through him they become able to do God's will. Only by becoming brethren of Christ can we become children of God. From this truth flow several inferences.

I. IT IS NOT YOUR BIRTH, BUT YOUR CHOICE, WHICH DETERMINES YOUR ETERNAL RELATIONSHIPS AND SURROUNDINGS. Every man passes judgment on himself by his affinities. You cannot judge a man by his family, his origin; but you can judge him, or he can judge himself, by the profession he chooses, the friendships he forms, the course of life he freely adopts. But the great test of men is Christ. He is set for the fall and rising of many, and by him are the thoughts of many hearts revealed. By the treatment men give him they reveal what is in them, and whether their talk about virtue is merely talk, or if they have hearty love for it when presented in actual life.

II. THE FAMILY IS NOT AN ETERNAL INSTITUTION. Those affections which are developed in the family must be fed from a more enduring root if they are to abide. They are like the bindings which join the graft to the tree; they keep us together until the vital sap knits us into one. There is no guarantee for the endurance of love but that it goes down to and roots itself in the deepest springs of our life. In family life the pain of want of sympathy is only the keener for the superficial affection. It is thus that Christ brings sometimes, not peace, but division. It is the magnet passing through the heap of dust and iron filings; the superior attraction at once produces separation. It is not that we must buy his favour by perfect submission, or propitiate his jealousy by disliking others, but that he is worthy of and can command a deeper, holier, more devoted love than any other; and the further we ourselves advance in all

that is good, the more we see the necessary truth of his saying, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me." Let parents try to win their children to that permanent and eternal family in which the relationship lies not in the flesh, but in the deepest recesses of the spirit, and from which there are no banishments, no deaths, no separations. Death then loses the greater part of its terrors—is, indeed, recognized as the apparently necessary means of purifying and deepening our natural affections.

III. FROM THIS STATEMENT WE UNDERSTAND BETTER OUR OWN POSITION, IF WE BE DOING THE WILL OF GOD. 1. We have claims on Christ superior to those which can be asserted even by his relatives. He wants to be trusted, confided in, counted on. If you would have counted it happy to be born in the same family, and would have expected from him, your own Brother, all the help he could give, you may still count on that help and with greater assurance. 2. Christ takes pleasure in us, if we are doing God's will, such as he finds in nothing else. We cannot understand his longing for human love and acceptance, but we know that even as God he loved human fellowship, and when he became man we find him the same. To be closer to Christ than to father or mother, to be more truly at one with him than with any one besides, this *is* salvation. In his own day he could point to some and say, "Behold my mother and my brethren!" Surely there are among ourselves those who long above all things to be truly the brethren of the Lord Jesus Christ.—D.

Vers. 1—8.—*Ritual and morals.* The Pharisaic Jews are, in the previous chapter, upbraided for their obstinate impenitence. We find the same people here condemning the disciples of Christ as sabbath-breakers because they plucked ears of corn to satisfy their hunger. The manner in which Jesus defends his disciples shows—

I. THAT RITUAL IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR MORALS. 1. *The Pharisees were stringent ritualists.* (1) Their formality was seen in their dress. In their observance of ceremonies. In their scrupulous tithing of mint and anise and cummin. (2) The ritual of sabbath observance in like manner they zealously respected. So far did they carry this, that they refused to defend themselves in the wars with Antiochus Epiphanes and the Romans on the sabbath. It was through this superstition that Pompey was enabled to take Jerusalem. (3) The ritual of sabbath observance with them was intensified by the interpretations of the elders. Thus reaping was admitted to be a servile work; and so was threshing. But according to the rabbins plucking ears of corn was "a kind of reaping," and rubbing them in their hands was "a kind of threshing." 2. *But they were lax in morals.* (1) It is common for men of corrupt minds to attempt to atone for the looseness of their morals by zeal for the outward services of religion. So the Pharisees "made void the commandment of God through their traditions." While they scrupulously paid tithe upon trifles, they "neglected the weightier matters of the Law—judgment, mercy, and truth." (2) So in their zeal for the externals of sabbath observance they missed its spirit of worship. They failed to see that the sabbath is truly observed in its spirit, which is the spirit of heaven, mercy and love, justice and truth. (3) This spirit they violated in the harshness of their judgment. In condemning the action of the hungry disciples they would sacrifice mercy to ceremony. 3. *They inverted the order of God.* (1) The end of the Law is love. (2) Ritual is instituted as a means to that end. (3) When ritual interferes with love it must give place. Hence when the law of commandments contained in ordinances ceased to point men to Christ the Saviour of sinners, it was abrogated as a useless burden.

II. THAT RITUAL MAY GIVE WAY TO NECESSITY. 2. *This principle was sanctioned by David.* (1) Necessity was with him a sufficient reason for setting aside the letter of the law relating to the shewbread (cf. Lev. x. 10; xxiv. 5—9; 1 Sam. xxi. 1—6). (2) Note: This action of David was parabolic. The shewbread is admitted to have been a type of Christ, who appears in the presence of God for the nourishment and life of the spiritual priesthood. Since part of the frankincense put in the bread was burnt on the altar for a memorial, the merit of the sacrifice of Christ is represented. The hunger of David and his men constituted their particular claim to set forth the verity that those who hunger after righteousness are the persons to be satisfied with the goodness of God's house (cf. 1 Pet. ii. 5; Rev. i. 6; v. 10; xx. 6). 2. *This principle was sanc-*

*tioned by Moses.* (1) For his Law requires the profaning of the sabbath by the priests in the temple. They were required to prepare the sacrifices, offer them, and attend to the other *services* of the temple on the sabbath as on common days (see Exod. xxix. 38; Numb. xxviii. 9). (2) This legislation interprets the words, "Thou shalt not do any work," in the fourth commandment, to mean *secular* work, or work for personal pleasure or temporal advantage. The works done about the holy things in the temple were scarcely "service;" for they were done unto the Lord. (3) The argument from the temple was conclusive against the Pharisees, whose traditions invested the sabbath law with excessive stringency. 3. *This principle was sanctioned by the prophets.* (1) In their *practice.* For they set aside the Levitical rule that all sacrifices should be offered at the door of the tabernacle or temple, as when Elijah offered his sacrifice upon Carmel. In this he had the high sanction of Heaven. (2) In their *precept.* An example is here cited from Hosea, who declares that God prefers mercy to sacrifice (cf. Hos. vi. 6; Micah vi. 6—8). (3) The Lord prefers mercy through the sacrifice of Christ to the sacrifice of the sinner in the coming day of vengeance (see Zeph. i. 7, 8; Ezek. xxxix. 17, 18; Rev. xix. 17). 4. *This principle is sanctioned by Christ.* (1) The hungry disciples had the sanction of Christ for plucking the corn and rubbing it in their hands upon the sabbath day. He did not reprove them. On the contrary, he defended them. (2) He defended them not only upon the authority of David, of Moses, and the prophets; but upon his own authority, which he asserted to be Divine. This was the meaning of his declaration, "I say unto you, That in this place is One greater than the temple." For the rabbins acknowledged none but God to be greater than the temple (cf. Mal. iii. 1; Mark xiv. 58—64; Heb. iii. 3). He asserted his Divinity in claiming to be the Lord of the sabbath (see Gen. ii. 3). As the sabbath yielded to the temple, and the temple to Christ, so must the sabbath also yield to Christ (see John vii. 21—23). (3) Jesus, who claims to be "Lord of the sabbath day," appears to have exercised his prerogative in changing it from the seventh to the first day, and hence the first day is now distinguished as "the Lord's day" (see Rev. i. 10). (4) The Lordship of the Son of man is the Lordship of mercy. Those who are engaged in the service of Jesus Christ enjoy greater liberty than those who were engaged in the service of the temple. The gospel is in all things superior to the Law.

III. THAT NECESSITY CANNOT BE PLEADED AGAINST MORALS. 1. *There is no good precedent to sanction it.* (1) When our Lord sanctioned the plucking of the ears of corn in the field, he did not sanction theft under the plea of necessity. The Law sanctioned this liberty (see Deut. xxiii. 24, 25). The permission was intended to teach humanity and kindness. (2) Our Lord's defence of his disciples in relation to the question of the sabbath did not touch the moral obligation of the institution, which is the devotion of our time to the worship and service of God. The spirit of the sabbath should be in the week. (3) The change of the day brings into it the motives of the resurrection and the ascension of the Lord, and the gift of the Holy Spirit, by which we are in spirit brought nearer to the rest of heaven. 2. *Morals are themselves the highest necessity.* (1) They are a *spiritual* necessity. As the spirit is superior to the body, so is a spiritual necessity more important than a bodily necessity. (2) They are a *universal* necessity. The needs of an individual must give way to those of a community. The interests of all the worlds cannot be sacrificed or compromised to suit individual urgency. (3) They are an *eternal* necessity. They are founded in the nature of the everlasting God. They belong to the immortal soul. The law of the ages cannot be set aside to meet the necessity of a moment. (4) A man is not forsaken of God because he is in want. The disciples may suffer hunger in the very presence of Jesus. It is more honourable to want in fellowship with Christ than to abound in fellowship with the world. Jesus knows how to lead his hungry disciples through the corn-fields.—J. A. M.

Vers. 9—21.—*The mission of Christ.* In the last paragraph we learn how Jesus showed that works of *necessity* are lawful on the sabbath day. In the paragraph before us we see that works of *mercy* also are lawful. If under the Law the spirit of the sabbath was binding rather than the letter, how much more so under the gospel! The subject teaches us that Christ came amongst men—

I. TO VANQUISH MALIGNITY. 1. *Malignity was embodied in the Pharisees.* (1)

They sought to accuse the Son of God of profanity. This was to convert the highest virtue into the deepest vice, and to confound all moral order. Note: Matthew says, "And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day? that they might accuse him." According to Luke (vi. 8), Jesus read the question in their thoughts. Learn that in the Lord's sight speech and thought are one. (2) They sought to murder the Saviour of the world. This was, as far as in them lay, to destroy God and man at a stroke. This was the expression of their vexation, because the doctrine of Christ mortified their pride, exposed their hypocrisy, and crossed their worldly interests, and their honour was eclipsed by his life and miracles. (3) Their malignity was deliberate. It was not the sudden ebullition of unthinking passion. They evidently agreed, in the first instance, to tempt him. Then, certainly, they "took counsel against him, how they might destroy him." (4) This was all done under the mask of religion. The pretext was zeal for the sanctity of the *sabbath*. The wicked have no objection to the holiness of *things*; it is the holiness of *persons* that offends them. If they could convict Jesus of blasphemy in his saying that he was greater than the temple, or of profanity in breaking the sabbath, *death* would be the penalty (see Exod. XXXV. 2). Note: There is a religion of Satan as well as a religion of God. The religion of Satan is a parody upon the religion of God. As love is the essence of the religion of God, malignity is the spirit of the religion of Satan. 2. *Malignity is vanquished by exposure.* (1) The case of the sheep was a home-thrust. The ritualists allowed the exception, not out of mercy to the animal, but from selfishness. "Take tender care of the goods of an Israelite" was with the Jews a cherished canon. Self-interest is a casuist first consulted, decisive in the removal of scruples, and readily obeyed. (2) Ritualism had no mercy for the withered hand in which the Pharisee had no property. Our Lord invaded a heartless superstition when he established the principle that it is lawful to do good on the sabbath day. (3) But the question returns, "How much is a man of more value than a sheep?" Yet are there many called Christians who do more for the beast of burden or pleasure than they will for a man. They spend that upon hunters, coursers, spaniels, and hounds of which many followers of Christ are destitute. (4) The spiritual nature of man—his faculties for knowing, loving, and serving God—invest him with his vast superiority. How much better, then, is the philanthropy which blesses the soul even than that which terminates in the body! 3. *Malignity is left to its own punishment.* (1) "The Pharisees went out," viz. from the presence of Christ. Evil shuns the goodness that rebukes it. Falsehood shuns the truth that exposes it. (2) They went out, not like Peter to weep bitter tears of repentance, but to take evil counsel. (3) Jesus "withdrew" when they "went out." He "perceived" their purpose by his Divine faculty of reading hearts. He left them in the desperation of their obstinacy. They were abandoned to themselves—murderers to murderers, human and infernal. (4) The withdrawal of Jesus is the presage of vengeance. So it was when he left the temple and the city of Jerusalem. At his second coming he will send forth judgment unto victory.

II. To MAGNIFY MERCY. 1. *He vindicates the spirit of the Law.* (1) The spirit of the Law is love. The Law was given in love to man. Its end is to foster in him grateful and obedient love to God. The spirit of the Law is another name for the gospel. (2) Through excessive zeal for the letter, the Jewish ritualists lost sight of this. The Law was in consequence converted into an intolerable burden. (3) Jesus came not to destroy but to fulfil the Law, which he did by bringing out its spirit. In order to this he assailed the traditions which the ritualists had confounded with the Law. 2. *He sets a high value upon man.* (1) "How much is a man better than a sheep?" Under the Law sheep were offered in sacrifice for the sin of man; but they could not take it away. Hence they appeared again and again upon the altar. The utmost they could do was to call sin to remembrance, and point to a more worthy sacrifice. (2) Jesus himself became that more worthy Sacrifice. "He hath put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." So completely did he effect this "once for all," that there is now "no more remembrance of sin." The price he paid was the precious blood of the Son of God. (3) He freely dispenses healing power. He "restored whole as the other" the withered hand with a word. He did not even give the pretext of the *touch* to those who would accuse him of breaking the sabbath law. So did he heal "all" that followed him when he withdrew from the Pharisees. (4) But he required the faith of

the suppliant. "Stretch forth thine hand." The poor man had often tried to do this in his own strength, and failed. The *effort* to believe is often that *faith* by which the soul is *healed*. 3. *He shows compassion to the Gentiles.* (1) His question is not, "How much is the Jew better than a sheep?" He took hold of the "seed of Abraham," but in doing so he was "made in the likeness of *men*," without limitation. (2) His action in withdrawing from the unbelieving Pharisees was parabolic as well as prudential; for it is noteworthy that in his following now we find many of the Gentiles (see Mark iii. 6—8). The portent was that when the nation of the Jews should reject the gospel, then the gospel would leave them and offer its blessings to the Gentiles (cf. Acts xiii. 46; xviii. 6; xxviii. 28). (3) The justness of this remark appears in the citation from Isaiah in which Messiah is predicted as coming to declare judgment to the Gentiles, and to give them "hope" in his Name (vers. 18, 22). For this prediction is here mentioned as now fulfilled. "He charged" those he healed "that they should not make him known," viz. as their Healer, to the unbelievers, "*that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah.*" (4) Considering the Gentiles is in other prophecies likewise made a mark of Messiah (see Gen. xlix. 10; Ps. ii. 8; Zech. ix. 10; Isa. ii. 3). 4. *He is gentle with the frail.* (1) Gentleness is natural to him. His voice is not heard in clamour. The Jews looked for a Messiah wielding the sword. Matthew shows how Jesus fulfils the prophecies in his non-resistance to evil and injury. (2) The timid may hope in his mercy. "A bruised reed" is a remarkable emblem of extreme frailty and weakness (see Ezek. xxix. 6, 7). One bruised by the weight of sin "he will not break." He will not terrify the penitent by a frown. "A smoking flax shall he not quench." Rather will he cherish the feeblest fire of holy desire. (3) "Till he send forth judgment unto victory." For "mercy rejoices upon judgment." —J. A. M.

Vers. 22—32.—*The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.* Many persons have been tempted to believe that they had committed this dreadful sin, and thereby put themselves beyond the reach of mercy. Correct judgment upon this very important subject may best be attained by considering the more fearfully emphatic words of our Lord in their connection.

I. THE NATURE OF THE BLASPHEMY MAY BE GATHERED FROM THE STORY. 1. *Our Lord had wrought a notable miracle.* (1) The subject was both blind and dumb. The case of Laura Bridgman, and another, seem to be the only examples of this double affliction which have occurred in modern times. But this wretched man was, moreover, a demoniac. (2) What a type of the sinner is here! Blind to spiritual truth. Having no voice for God's praise. "Carried captive by the devil at his will." (3) But Jesus "healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw." The devil also owned the presence of a Superior. So can Jesus open the blind eye of the soul. He also can put a new song into the praiseless mouth. And he can deliver our hearts from infernal domination. 2. *The people were convinced of his Messiahship.* (1) They cried out, "Is not this the Son of David?" The prophecies authorized the expectation of Messiah in the lineage of David. That Jesus was in that lineage could not be denied. (2) "Is not this" Miracle-worker the Messiah? The prophecies authorized the expectation of Messiah as a Worker of miracles (see Isa. xxxv. 5). (3) Is not this Vanquisher of demons the illustrious Personage destined to appear as the Seed of the woman and crush the serpent's head (Gen. iii. 15)? (4) Who can now dispute that with Jesus is the Spirit of God, that he is the Anointed One, the Messiah, the Christ of God? 3. *But the Pharisees blasphemed.* (1) Against the clearest evidence, through pride, envy, and malignity, they refused to recognize the Messiah. None are so blind as those who will not see (cf. John ix. 39—41). (2) To defend their unbelief and to retain their credit with the people they invented the libel that Jesus had cast out devils through the prince of the devils. Thus the work of the Spirit of God was blasphemously attributed to diabolical agency. Thus the blessed Spirit of God was blasphemously confounded with the very devil. (3) This horrible libel was whispered. They did not speak it openly in the hearing of Jesus. They feared to encounter his convincing words. But Jesus "knew their thoughts." There is no evading the scrutiny of that eye. (4) "*This* [fellow]," viz. a sabbath-breaker and blasphemer! What venom can be condensed into a single word! 4. *The Heart-searcher exposed*

*their malignity.* (1) He confounded their logic, reasoning first from the general to the particular. Factions will ruin any kingdom. Are devils so foolish as by promoting factions to ruin their kingdom? Note: If devils are more wicked than men they are not so foolish. (2) He proceeds to use the *argumentum ad hominem*, retorting, "If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges." They will at least convict you of partial and unjust judgment. (*a*) Some of the disciples of the Pharisees pretended to exorcise devils. Whether they did so in reality is open to question. Josephus (see 'Ant.,' vii. 6. 3; viii. 2. 5), Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Origen, Tertullian, and other early Fathers are quoted to show that such exorcisms were successfully practised. The sons of Sceva attempted it to their cost (see Acts xix. 16). If they only pretended to do it, then our Lord's words here are *ironical*, but the argument is equally good. (*b*) The disciples of the Pharisees professed not to cast out devils by the aid of devils. They did it, or attempted to do it, by the invocation of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. (3) He applies the reasoning to the confusion of the unbeliever. "If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you." It were blasphemy to charge the Spirit of God with working to confirm a falsehood. The disciples of the Pharisees did not claim to be the Messiah. (4) He emphasizes the proof of his Messiahship in that superiority to devils which he had evinced in the miracle. The strong man's house can only be entered by the stronger than he; and who but Messiah is stronger than Satan? (5) In this war between Christ and Belial there is no neuter. We obstruct if we do not promote the kingdom of God (see Luke ix. 49, 50). "He that gathereth not with me scattereth." The sense is, says Stier, "He that gathereth, but not with me, his gathering is itself a scattering." (6) Then he marks the dreadful character of their blasphemy, "Wherefore I say unto you," etc.

II. THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE SUBJECT MAY NOW BE CONSIDERED. 1. *Is not the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost the final rejection of Jesus as the Christ?* (1) "Not a particular *act* of sin, but a *state* of wilful, determined opposition to the Holy Spirit, is meant (1 John v. 16; 2 Tim. iii. 8; Jude 4, 12, 13; Heb. x. 26—31; vi. 4—8)" (Alford). (2) That there is no forgiveness for such a state, viz. while the sinner remains in it, is obvious. The one sin to which damnation is appended is persevering unbelief. (3) To speak against the Son of man is to resist the testimony of Christ coming without the demonstration of miracles. To speak against the Holy Ghost is to resist that testimony when confirmed by miracles (cf. Exod. viii. 19; Luke xi. 20; John x. 47, 48). (4) "The sin denounced is, probably, the rejection of the last and greatest evidence of the Messiahship of Christ—the dispensation of the Spirit" (Harris). In this view, with respect to the Pharisees, our Lord's words are admonitory, "If you persist in this temper you will place yourselves beyond the reach of mercy." The nation of Israel was not destroyed until after the evidence of the Spirit proved unavailing. (5) There is absolutely no sin that may not be repented and forgiven through the mercy of the gospel. Impenitence—wilful unbelief—is the one unpardonable crime. 2. *Yet are there degrees of difficulty in respect to repentance.* (1) Sins of ignorance could be readily expiated by sacrifice under the Law (see Numb. xv. 28). And so still are they more easily forgiven under the gospel (see 1 Tim. i. 13). (2) For presumptuous or high-handed sins there were under the Law no sacrifices (see Lev. xx. 10; Numb. xv. 30, 31; xxxv. 31; 1 Sam. ii. 25). (3) Yet for presumptuous sins there was forgiveness from the Lord upon repentance in anticipation of the mercy of the gospel. The pardon of high-handed sins belongs properly to the age of Messiah (cf. Ps. li.; Acts ii. 36, 38; iii. 17; v. 31). The converting grace of Christ masters the strong man in the heart. Once the devil could make the sinner swear, get drunk, neglect his soul; but now things are changed, and he has no such power. (4) When sin becomes desperately malignant, as in the case of these Pharisees, repentance becomes extremely difficult. The spirit of the words of Christ is that all manner of sin and blasphemy is *more easily* forgiven than the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. Thus when our Lord says, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Mark xiii. 31), the meaning is that heaven and earth will more easily pass away than that his words should fail of accomplishment. For so it is expressed in Luke (xvi. 17). 3. *Is there here any countenance to the doctrine of purgatory?* (1) The words "world to come" (עולם הבא) "age to come," are commonly used in Jewish writers

to express the age of Messiah. The age to come, then, is the gospel age, which did not set in fully until the great Sacrifice was offered upon Calvary and the Spirit poured out on the Day of Pentecost, and which was contrasted with the Levitical age then current. (2) The Jews expected a freer forgiveness of sins in the age of Messiah than they enjoyed under the Levitical dispensation. (3) The import of our Lord's words, then, simply is that the difficulty is extreme in bringing to repentance a malignant and unreasonable blasphemer. (4) And if he pass the age of Messiah unforgiven, then he will have to encounter the horrors of "eternal damnation" (Mark iii. 29), or, as the New Version puts it, "is guilty of an eternal sin."—J. A. M.

Vers. 33—37.—*The heart in the tongue.* The subject of the Pharisees' blasphemy is continued in these verses. From them we learn—

I. THAT THE LICENCE OF THE TONGUE IS A PREGNANT EVIL. 1. *It is fruitful in robbery.* (1) Slander filches the reputation of the innocent. A man's character is his reputation with his Maker, whatever may be his reputation with his fellows. Reputation is a man's character as estimated by his fellows. Next to the favour of God men esteem that of their fellows. It is a moral power the loss of which is serious injury. (2) Slander robs a man of his friends. We are constituted for society. Solitary confinement is intolerable. No man can afford to be deserted of his friends. But who would be the friend of a blasted reputation? (3) Slander deprives a man of property. The robber may not be enriched, but the robbery is real. A man without a character is shut out of the markets. 2. *It is prolific in murder.* (1) Murder is held among men of all crimes the most heinous, and is therefore visited by the extreme penalty of law. But hatred is incipient murder (cf. ch. v. 21, 22; 1 John iii. 15). Slander is the hatred of the cowardly knave. The Pharisees who first maligned Christ then took counsel to destroy him (see ver. 14). (2) If slander does not aim at the life of the body, it stabs the life of character. Character is moral life. It is a more sacred thing than the life of the animal. A virtuous man would part with the life of the flesh rather than sacrifice his character. (3) The poison of the nettle or of the sting of an insect is not the less real because it may elude the tests of chemistry. The murder is not the less real because it is not overtaken by the civil law. 3. *It is emphatically diabolical.* (1) Calumny is the favourite weapon of the "father of lies." This is expressed in his very name. "Devil" means *traducer.* Satan slandered God to Eve (see Gen. iii. 1, 4, 5). Satan slandered Job to God (Job i. 11; ii. 4). (2) Therefore the blasphemy of the Pharisees is here fittingly compared to the venom of the serpent. "Ye offspring of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things?" (see also ch. iii. 7). (3) The malignity of the slanderer is devilish. Its wickedness is as gratuitous as it is cruel. A burglar may benefit by his plunder; but this species of robbery benefits nobody. A man whose reputation is preserved may replace his property; but filched of his "good name" he is "poor indeed."

II. THAT THE CONQUEST OF THE TONGUE IS A WORTHY AMBITION. 1. *Words are the vehicles of thought.* (1) They are the *instruments* of thought. We think in words. We cannot think without them. Try. Clear ideas are shaped in appropriate language. The vocabulary of the savage is too rude for him to be capable of profound or philosophic thought. (2) They are the *conveyancers* of thought. Perceptive ideas may be conveyed by other signs, as gesture, or facial expression; but profound thoughts and delicate distinctions require the more perfect instrument of speech. 2. *By words thought stirs worlds.* (1) The world of *commerce.* Educated hands and inventive minds are linked by words. Words guide the transport of the products from the factory to the market. In the market they preside in all exchanges. (2) The world of *politics.* The speech of an orator may shape the destinies of an empire. By a word the peace of a continent may be settled or disturbed. Words have created revolutions. (3) The world of *morals.* Witness the connection between the preaching of Peter the Hermit and the Crusades; the relation of the preaching of Luther to the Protestant Reformation. 3. *What an engine for good or evil is here!* (1) Skilfully used, steam will set a factory in motion. Mismanaged, it will wreck it. So words. (2) Eternal happiness or misery turns upon the quality of a word. A good word may awaken memories and start trains of thought to issue in a regenerated life. A malignant word, at a moment of indecision, may so determine the will as to damn an immortal destiny.

(3) The value of words will be seen in the day of judgment. For by their words will they be judged (vers. 36, 37). (*a*) Wicked words will pass in review. The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. The word against the Son of man. (*b*) Idle words—words wanting in seriousness and caution; discourse that does not tend to the glory of God; the desecration of the solemn language of Scripture in garnishing idle talk (cf. Prov. x. 9; Eph. iv. 29; v. 4; 1 Tim. v. 13). (*c*) Of these we shall have to give an account. Picture the Pharisee explaining his blasphemy in the very presence of the Blessed One whom he had attempted to identify with the devil!

III. THAT THE TONGUE IS CONQUERED IN THE HEART. 1. *Speech is the natural vent of the heart.* (1) The heart will have expression or it will break. The growing tree will displace rocks. The overflowing fountain will carry away obstructions. Pent-up feeling is like steam in a close vessel. (2) The heart will have adequate expression. This it can only find in speech. It is ready. "Nearest the heart, nearest the mouth." The idea most forcibly impressed on the mind will naturally claim first utterance. The tongue also is flexible and mobile, and words are versatile and apt. 2. *Language is the sure index to character.* (1) This follows, for the heart is the character. Jesus is the good tree whose fruit is good. The Pharisee is the evil tree whose fruit is evil. (2) As the tree is known by its fruit, so is the heart by the conversation. "The kind of speech in a man betokens the kind of action you will get from him" (Carlyle). (3) The tree after its kind is folded up in the seed, and can be evolved from it again; so from our words the Judge of all will evolve again our character in the great day of doom. (4) Every word has its moral history. (5) Though Jacob may simulate the raiment of Esau, he cannot simulate his voice. 3. *Therefore the tongue must be cured in the heart.* (1) They begin at the wrong end who would reform the heart by reforming the tongue. "A man may beat down the bitter fruit from an evil tree until he is weary; but whilst the root abides in strength and vigour, the beating down of the present fruit will not hinder it from bringing forth more" (Dr. Owen). (2) Resolution can only transiently cure, viz. while the matter is present to the mind. But thought cannot evermore remain upon any single subject. The most vigilant sentinel must sometimes sleep, and the truant heart will out. (3) But let the heart be full of love to God and man, and its malice may be trusted anywhere. (4) Nothing but the salt of grace will heal the bitter spring of the bad heart. Nothing but a good graft can convert an evil tree (see 1 Sam. xxiv. 13; Isa. xxxii. 6). (5) It should be more our care to be good than to seem good (cf. Prov. xxv. 26; Jer. vi. 7).—J. A. M.

Vers. 38—45.—*The sign-seekers.* After Jesus had denounced the blasphemy of the scribes and Pharisees, and threatened them with the severity of the judgment, certain of their number demanded of him a sign to sustain his asserted authority. In his reply we notice—

I. THAT THE SINNERS ARE REBUKED IN MERCY. 1. *They sought a sign, viz., from heaven.* (1) The sign of the Prophet Daniel was evidently that for which they looked (cf. Dan. vii. 13; ch. xvi. 1; Luke xi. 16; 1 Cor. i. 22). They were eager for the visible kingdom. (2) In this clamour former miracles are ignored. He who is unconvinced by proofs so stupendous as those on which Christianity rests is an unbeliever, not from want of evidence, but from an evil bias upon his judgment and will which no additional demonstration can remedy. 2. *But this sign was not for that generation.* (1) They were "evil." The Pharisees and scribes were eminently so. Speaking against the Son of man. Blaspheming against the Holy Ghost. A "generation of vipers." (2) They were adulterous. *Literally* so. They were guilty of polygamy, frequent divorces, and other sensualities, which they covered by hypocrisy or defended by immoral casuistry. About this time the Rabbi Joachim ben Zacchai abrogated the trial by the bitter waters of jealousy, because so many were found to be thus criminated. (3) *Figuratively.* The Hebrews were by the Sinai covenant married to their Maker, as Christians become the spouse of Christ by the covenant from Zion. Idolatry and worldliness, which is a form of idolatry, are spiritual adultery (see Jas. iv. 4). (4) The clamourers did not consider that the sign from heaven is the signal for judgment. Had they faithfully read the Prophet Daniel they would have seen that the judgment precedes the visible kingdom. It is in his mercy that God does not answer the prayers of wicked men. 3. *He gave them the sign from the earth.* (1) Jonah was a type of

Christ in his burial. Jonah spoke of his position in the belly of the fish as that of one buried in the grave. He calls it "the belly of hell," Sheol, or the grave; and "the pit" (see Jonah ii. 2, 6, margin). The type was all the more remarkable in the miraculous preservation of his life. For the Holy One must not see corruption. He cannot be holden of death. (2) Jonah was a type of Christ in his resurrection. (*a*) As to the *fact*. (*b*) As to the *time* (*vide* Exposition; see also Hos. vi. 2). (3) Jonah preached to the Ninevites after his return from his burial in the sea-monster. The true preaching of the gospel followed upon the resurrection of Jesus. (4) The miracle in the case of Jonah was a sign that he was a divinely commissioned prophet; and it authenticated his words to the Ninevites. So is the resurrection of Jesus the authentication of *his* mission and words (see Luke xi. 30). Those who will not accept this sign are in no condition to accept any sign, though it should be even "from heaven." (5) In God's order the sign of the Prophet Jonah must anticipate the sign of the Prophet Daniel. Messiah must first come in humiliation, in suffering and death and burial, before he can come in power and great glory.

II. THAT THE SINNERS ARE ADMONISHED OF JUDGMENT. 1. *The men of Nineveh will confront them there.* (1) The Ninevites repented at the preaching of Jonah. They credited the sign. Their faith saved them from vengeance. Note: God's threatenings, as well as his promises, are conditional. No one goes to perdition by arbitrary predestination. (2) How will the scribes and Pharisees appear in the judgment when confronted with the men of Nineveh? They repented not at the preaching of Jesus, who came to them authenticated by miracles and prophecies innumerable. (3) Jesus is a "greater than Jonah." The Ninevites repented at the preaching of the lesser prophet. The scribes and Pharisees resisted the preaching of the greater. Note: Responsibilities are heavier as privileges and opportunities are greater. 2. *The queen of the south will confront them there.* (1) She came to hear the wisdom of Solomon. Solomon was but a type of Jesus. He is Wisdom itself—the Eternal Word of God. The Wisdom of God himself "came to his own" privileged people, "but they received him not." (2) She came "from the uttermost parts of the earth." She came up out of a dark heathen land, far away from the light of the oracles of God. How strongly did her case contrast with that of the very doctors of the Law, who, in the "Valley of Vision," were visited by the God of glory! (3) Gentile believers in general will come into judgment with the Jewish rejecters of the gospel. So will those who amongst the Gentiles improved inferior light rise up to confound those who have neglected or abused the superior. The *rising up* alludes to the custom of witnesses rising from their seats and standing in court to give their testimony. (4) Opportunity and privilege will have their value in the judgment in determining the measure of the rewards and punishments.

III. THAT THE SINNERS ARE WARNED OF DOOM. 1. *The sentence is the sequel of the trial.* (1) The certainty of the trial cannot be disputed. It is certified in the sign of the resurrection of Christ. This is the very gist of the reference to the sign of the Prophet Jonah. In this sense also Paul cites the sign: "He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom he hath ordained; *whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead* (Acts xvii. 31). (2) Not only is the resurrection of Christ given for a sign of the judgment; it is, moreover, given to evince the certainty of the particular doctrine, viz. that men shall be then judged by their words, and by them justified or condemned. Let this great truth influence all our conversation. (3) As certainly as there will be a judgment, so certainly will the destiny of the judged be determined. The judgment will be no mere parade. The doom of the wicked is portrayed in the parable of the unclean spirit. 2. *Communities are punished in this world.* (1) This is obvious from the nature of the case. They belong exclusively to it, and exist in it. So the parable sets forth the doom of the "generation" or race of unbelieving Jews. (2) Their "first" state was melancholy, viz. when they were visited by the gospel. It is described under the similitude of a demoniac. The prevalence of demoniacal possession at that time was a consequence, and therefore fittingly a figure, of the wickedness of the nation. (3) They had a season of merciful visitation in the preaching of John and of Jesus. There was a partial reformation through the preaching of John. Jesus, in consequence, appeared, and expelled devils

to evince his power to drive them away from the hearts of the people. (4) The reformation, however, was but partial. The people relapsed; and now their condition had become worse than ever. Instead of being the victim of one, they now became the victim of seven devils, and these more wicked than the former. Note: There are degrees of wickedness in devils. Hence the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. Hence also their filling up the measure of their iniquity in crucifying the Just One; and hence the consequent "days of vengeance" in the destruction of Jerusalem. 3. *Individuals also are punished for sin.* (1) Sinners, as individuals, do not wholly go unpunished in this world. The wrath upon communities is felt by individuals. The condition of the backslider is itself a punishment. (2) Satan finds his soul inviting. For out of humanity he is restless. He is uneasy when he can do no mischief. Hell is the devil's heaven. There is nothing to keep him out. (*a*) He finds it "empty" of God, of Christ, of his Holy Spirit. (*b*) It is "swept" from love, lowliness, meekness, and all the fruits of the Spirit. (*c*) It is "garnished" with levity and security. The lodgings are furnished. "Servants make the house trim and handsome against their master comes home, especially when he brings guests with him, as here the devil brings 'seven more'" (Gurnall). (3) The last state of the backslider is worse than the first. (*a*) His powers were expanded under the heavenly influences of the gospel, and he is the more capable now of refinement in iniquity. He can now entertain "seven" devils, whereas formerly he had accommodation for one only. (*b*) Evil habits are formed and strengthened by relapses. The condition induced by multiplied relapses is therefore the more incurable. (4) The final doom of the sinner is at the judgment of the last day. Then balances are struck and arrears paid up. Then the severity of the tyranny of the "seven devils" is felt.—J. A. M.

Vers. 46—50.—*Christ's relationships.* These, so far as they are set forth in the text, are three, viz. he has a relationship to the world, to the family, and to the Church. Consider, then—

I. HIS RELATIONSHIP TO THE WORLD. 1. *He is its Redeemer.* (1) To accomplish our redemption he assumed our nature. In our nature he assumed our sin. Not, however, by his incarnation, but by imputation. He redeemed us from suffering by suffering in our stead. (2) He is the Redeemer of all men. To all men, therefore, the conditions of salvation are to be proclaimed. Those who accept the conditions experience the benefit. (3) The redemption saves us from sin to righteousness. It saves us from death—spiritual—everlasting. 2. *He is its Teacher.* (1) He came to release the Jew from the traditions of the elders. To bring out the spirit of the Law, which has the essence of the gospel in it (see 2 Cor. iii. 12—18). To illustrate life and immortality. (2) He came to release the Gentile from ignorance, superstition, and vice. To reconcile him to God. To reconcile him to the Jew. For the children of the promise, whether Jew or Gentile, are the children of Abraham's faith (Gal. iii. 29). (3) Here we find him "speaking to the multitudes." His discourse was not to the Pharisees, but to the crowd. From the "wise and understanding" he turns away, that he may reveal the mysteries of wisdom "unto babes." Those multitudes were representative. To the vaster multitudes in all climes, in a million echoes, he still speaks loving words.

II. HIS RELATIONSHIP TO HIS FAMILY. 1. *The family claim was asserted.* (1) "His mother and his brethren." There is difference of opinion as to the identity of these "brethren." Some think they were his cousins—children of Mary, his mother's sister, and of Cleophas, or Alphæus. Some believe them to have been children of Joseph and Mary. There is no sufficient reason to doubt this; for the perpetual virginity of Mary is a figment. (2) They "stood without, seeking to speak with him." Note: Mary made no effort to "command her Son," as the Mariolatrists speak. Yet there was an assertion of family claim in the desire for a private audience with Jesus. (3) Had the family claim been properly asserted, it would doubtless receive a recognition. From his cross Jesus was solicitous for the temporal maintenance and protection of his mother (see John xix. 25—27). 2. *It was offensively asserted.* (1) "His mother and his brethren *stood without*," when they should have stood within, listening to the discourse. Those who are nearest the means of grace are often the most negligent of them. So the proverb, "The nearer the church the further from God." (2) Yet they had the pre-

sumption to desire that Jesus should come out to them. This was, moreover, an unseemly interruption of a heavenly discourse. It was also an unwarrantable distraction to the hearers. Family influence is misplaced in interrupting the blessed work of God (see Luke xi. 27, 28). (3) Their purpose was to stop his preaching; for his brethren were unbelieving, and thought him beside himself (cf. Mark iii. 21, 31; John vii. 5). His mother was with them. Perhaps her motive may have been to caution him against offending the Pharisees. 3. *The intrusion was reproved.* (1) "He answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?" And what follows suggests that upon this occasion, at least, they were not doing the will of his Father which is in heaven. (2) He proceeded with his discourse. His earthly mother's claims must not compete with the will and work of his heavenly Father. The opposition we may meet with even from our relatives must not drive us from the work of God. (3) The fault of Mary, together with its reproof, seriously discourage Mariolatry (cf. Luke ii. 49; xi. 28; John ii. 4).

III. HIS RELATIONSHIP TO THE CHURCH. 1. *Christ's nearest relations are his true disciples.* (1) They are defined to be those who do the will of his Father which is in heaven (see John vii. 17). Jesus himself came, not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him (John vi. 38). (2) His true disciples are preferred before his natural relatives. There is no saving relationship to Jesus according to the flesh. Spiritual relationship to him is saving. (3) Those who do the will of the Father are nearest of kin to the Son. He is his Father's Heir. Those who are the children of his Father are his co-heirs (cf. Rom. viii. 17; Gal. iv. 7). 2. *Endearments of natural relationship are heightened in them.* (1) "He is my brother." Jesus is more than a Friend to his true disciple. He will cleave to him when he is forsaken of all others. He is that Friend that sticketh closer than a brother. (2) "And sister." He extends to his disciple that loving protection which a true brother extends to his sister. He delights in the happiness of the disciple as the brother delights in the happiness of his sister. (3) "And mother." As a good son gives the support of a strong arm to his mother in her failing strength, so does Jesus strengthen his disciples in the seasons of their weakness. (4) As the disciples who are worthy of Christ forsake for him all natural relationships, so does he forsake all natural relationships for them (cf. ch. iv. 22; x. 37; Luke xiv. 26). Thus do they receive in him both the hundredfold and the eternal life (see ch. xix. 29). 3. *Spiritual relationships are enduring.* (1) Not so the natural. These are invaded by death. Saints in the resurrection are like the angels of God. (2) The family named after Christ is at once in heaven and earth. We are already come to the general assembly and Church of the Firstborn enrolled in heaven. (3) Christ will not be ashamed of his poor relations. He will confess them before assembled worlds.—J. A. M.

Ver. 2.—*Rigidity in sabbath rules.* That which the disciples did was not regarded as a wrong thing in their day. Thomson tells us that, when travelling in harvest-time, his muleteers plucked off the ears of corn, rubbed them in their hands, and ate the grains, just as the apostles did. And this was quite allowable; it was never thought of as stealing. The Pharisees did not object to the thing that was done, but to the infringement of their stiff rule, that this particular act should not be done on the sabbath, because it amounted to *doing work* on the sabbath day. Divine laws can gain adjustments and adaptations to fit to various conditions and circumstances; there is elasticity in their applications. Man-made laws are stiff and rigid; they scarcely permit exceptions; and require that men shall always adjust to them, and never expect law to adjust to meet their need. The Divine sabbath law is large, comprehensive, spiritual, and therefore searching. But it is elastic, and adjusts to man's varying conditions; it does not expect men to force themselves to fit to it. Human sabbath rules were, in our Lord's time, and are still, most vexatious things—yokes that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear. They required a woman to have no bow on her dress, unless it was sewn on, and so a part of the dress; for otherwise she would be *carrying a bow.* And these strange rules to-day permit a woman to use a pin on the Sunday, but refuse to allow her to use a needle. Sabbath never can be really kept on man-made rules. "In their bigoted reverence for the sabbath some of the Jews asserted that the day was first of all kept in heaven, and that the Jewish nation had

been chosen for no other end than to preserve it holy upon earth." The extent to which they carried their scruples excites one's ridicule and contempt.

I. THE SABBATH AS A PRINCIPLE. It is well, in dealing with the sabbath, always to show first that it is a Divine arrangement for humanity, as such, and is not, in the first place, distinctively *religious*. For healthy *life* God provided the rest of night; for healthy *work* God provided the rest of the sabbath. But there is this important difference between them. The rest of night is compulsory; the seventh-day rest is voluntary. This at once brings in the element of principle and of religion. If a man is in the fear and love of God, as he should be, he will readily and cheerfully do what God *suggests* as well as what God *commands*.

II. THE SABBATH AS A RULE. Voluntary things may not be done; then if God will not make certain things compulsory, men think they can do God service by fixing *rules* for their fellows, and so *make* them keep sabbath. And even good men cannot see that thus they take all the glory of the sabbath away.—R. T.

Ver. 8.—*The sabbath an agency within Christ's control.* "For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day." It would open up a most interesting subject if we were to inquire whether our Lord spoke these words in his personal or in his representative capacity—whether he meant, "I, as an individual, am Lord of the sabbath," or whether he meant, "Every man, if he is a true man, with right motives and purposes, is lord of his sabbath, and has both the power and the liberty to arrange it as he thinks may be for the best."

I. CHRIST WAS LORD OF HIS SABBATHS. It is familiar thought that he was Lord because he was Divine—he was the Son of God; "all power was given unto him in heaven and in earth." But that is not his own ground of claim here. He was "Lord of the sabbath" because he was "the Son of man;" first of men—model Man. His manhood gave him his rights. Had he been a man of wavering disposition, uncertain in his ideas of the right, ruled by self-pleasing, or with a poor sense of loyalty to God, he could not have managed his sabbaths. But, being the perfectly controlled, pious, cultured Man he was, we all feel at once that we could have no hesitation whatever in fully committing to him the management of his sabbaths, for himself, for his household, for his disciples. The perfect Divine Man can be "Lord of the sabbath;" he will do no wrong himself; he will let no wrong be done by those about him. If he permits his disciples to satisfy their hunger by plucking the ears of corn on the sabbath, those disciples do no wrong. Character, sanctified character, is the lord of the sabbath; and this is perfectly shown in the claims of Jesus, the ideal Man.

II. CHRISTIANS ARE LORDS OF THEIR SABBATHS. Just in the degree in which they are Christians indeed, swayed by Christian principles, toned by the Christian spirit, moulded to the Christian model. We observe that we do, without thinking about it, fully permit established Christians to arrange their sabbaths how they please—we easily let *them* be lords of the sabbath. Our anxiety concerns the ways in which the inexperienced Christians, the mere professors, and the worldly, keep the sabbath. It is only for their sakes that we ever think of making sabbath rules. If all men were such men as the Lord Jesus, we could banish every sabbath rule, and let them be "lords of their sabbaths;" and so it comes to view that what the world wants is the Divine life in souls, the Divine culture in life, the perfecting of manhood so that every man may become lord of his sabbath.—R. T.

Ver. 13.—*Power allied to obedience.* "Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other." The man did as he was bidden, and found himself able to do what he was bidden to do. And this illustrates a great, comprehensive, ever-working law. Every man *can* do what he *ought* to do. He who *tries* to obey will surely find himself *able* to obey. This man was bidden to do precisely what, to all appearance, he could not do. He did it, in obedience to a Divine command, and, to his own surprise, and every one else's surprise, he found he could do it. In a similar way our Lord said to the paralytic, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." How a paralyzed man was to do this did not appear. But the man tried to obey, and found that power came with the obedience. Had he waited for consciousness of strength he might have waited, helpless, for ever.

Prompt obedience proved the possession of faith; that is the arranged channel of Divine blessing. "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it," and you will find that you can do it.

I. MAN'S OBEDIENCE IS THE SIGN OF HIS FAITH. Therein lies the virtue of it. The act reveals the spirit of the man. He who believes in Christ will, without question or hesitancy, do whatever Christ tells him to do. Illustrate from such cases as that of Abraham offering up his son. We can see the obedience, but behind the obedience, and inspiring the obedience, we may see the faith. And this the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews brings out: "By faith Abraham offered up Isaac . . . accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure." Mere obedience has no special virtue in it. It is no more than our duty. But when obedience becomes the expression of *faith*, then it becomes supremely interesting, it is a high moral and spiritual power. St. James points out that "faith without works [obediences] is dead;" but it is equally true that "works [obediences] without faith are dead." This man stretched out his hand because he believed in Christ's power to heal.

II. GOD'S POWER IN RESPONSE TO A MAN'S FAITH. It should be clearly seen that Christ rewarded the *faith*. It is that honours God. We may even illustrate from the relations of our home-life. We love to be obeyed, and we do much for the children who are good. But we, in a far higher sense, love to be trusted, and we do our best, unfold our richest, for those who lean on us with loving confidence. It is the sweet mystery of the Fatherhood of God that he loves to be trusted, and gives his best to those who trust. "Only believe; all things are possible to him that believeth."—R. T.

Ver. 14.—*The perils of faithfulness.* That he might be "in all points tempted like as we are," our Lord had the experience of rousing enmity even in doing faithfully the duty of the hour. It was his life-work to heal and save. He was not going to allow himself to be hindered, in doing his great life-work, by the claims of merely rabbinical rules. But the penalty came, which comes to all men who are persistently faithful to their sense of right: "The Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him." It is important to note that the Pharisaic opposition to Christ was raised on the distinct ground that he would be true to himself—he would say just what was given him to say; he would do just what was given him to do; he would not trim his words or his ways to please any parties. And this in no spirit of stubbornness; only in supreme loyalty to the supreme Authority which he acknowledged, and those Pharisees professed to acknowledge. If any man means to be faithful to the best he knows, he had better take due account of the fact that he will be misunderstood, misrepresented, and socially persecuted. The man who means to get through life easily has no very positive opinions, and is quite ready to shift and change his views if they do not quite please. But such men never yet led, ennobled, inspired, or reproved any generation. Men of positive convictions alone can lead to noble things; and they may be well content to bear the perils of faithfulness.

I. THE FOES OF FAITHFUL JESUS. "These Pharisees passed for the best persons in the country, the conservators of respectability and orthodoxy. They cannot be accused of having neglected Jesus. They turned their attention to him from the first. They followed him step by step. They discussed his doctrines and his claims, and made up their minds. Their decision was adverse, and they followed it up with acts, never becoming remiss in their activity for an hour. This is, perhaps, the most solemn and appalling circumstance in the whole tragedy of the life of Christ, that the men who rejected, hunted down, and murdered him, were those reputed best in the nation, its teachers and examples, the zealous conservators of the Bible, and the traditions of the past." But this is always the supreme bitterness of the lot of faithful men; their worst foes are the *good* people whom they would die to serve, if they could, with supreme loyalty to God.

II. THE SCHEMES OF THE FOES OF FAITHFUL JESUS. They began with trying arguments; but as they did not succeed at that, they attempted to silence Jesus; and even were led on to scheme his death. They represent the gradual embittering and blinding which always follow on cherished religious prejudice.—R. T.

Ver. 19.—*The power that may be in silent forces.* This passage from Isaiah is given

to show that one most characteristic feature of our Lord's ministry was anticipated in prophecy. He avoided publicity; he shrank from contentions; he would not thrust himself into danger; he was absolutely content to do a quiet work, by personal influence, daily teachings, and kindly deeds of helpfulness, and of "heavenly, Divine charity." Silent forces are the mightiest. Silent light does more than bursting lightning; silent gravitation does more than rumbling earthquake. A thought, a truth, may work in men's minds as the frost works in the cliffs that guard "the inviolate sea;" and presently the results are found, as the cliffs fall on to the shores. But faith in the power of silent forces is not usual with men, more especially in the spheres of religion. We are always wanting something that can be reported in the newspapers, and bring round upon us the praise of men for our energy and activity. The quiet-souled, who are content to do good work, and to keep on doing it, leaving it with God to appraise work, and reckon results, and reward workers, can always make their appeal to Christ, who got away from crowds whenever he could, who shrank from public excitement, and laid on the altar of the Father's service simply good, patient, quiet work. This subject may be effectively illustrated in relation to the following things: 1. The silent force of sanctified personal character. 2. The silent force of unconscious influence. 3. The silent force of ever-ready and ever-cheerful helpfulness. 4. The silent force of cultured self-denial. 5. The silent force of full convictions of truth. The man of strong faith never needs to use strong assertion. Quietness is his strength. There is need for the noisy forces; and God is properly called by the poet "Lord of the strong things and the gentle." But our faith in the manifestly strong things needs no buttressing. Our faith in the seemingly weak things needs much buttressing. Jesus neither "strives nor cries," but he puts forces into the world which will work, as the leaven works, until they have secured the world's redemption.—R. T.

Ver. 24.—*A malicious explanation.* "This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils." The Pharisees must have been very hard driven indeed in order to invent such an explanation. Perhaps what was in their minds was this: "He orders the evil spirits about as if he were a master, or prince, of them. He must be himself possessed with a devil, and it evidently is Beelzebub the prince of the devils." Our Lord had no difficulty in showing up the folly and malice of such suggestions. 1. Masters do not spoil the characteristic work of their servants; a prince of devils was not likely to prevent devils doing devils' work. 2. Jewish exorcists claimed power to cast out devils; these Pharisees claimed such power; then their argument was readily turned round on themselves—they too must be possessed by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. "According to the Book of Henoch, the demons are the souls of the giants who corrupted themselves with the daughters of men; but Josephus regarded them as the spirits of dead men. They were so numerous that every man has ten thousand on his right hand, and one thousand on his left. The chief of the diabolical empire was Beelzebub." "The rabbis, scribes, and doctors of the Law undertook the casting out demons, and some of them were considered very skilful in the art. The healing art was simply exorcism." Dean Plumptre ventures to remind us that "we need not assume that such power was always a pretence, or rested only on spells and incantations. Earnestness, prayer, fasting, faith,—these are always mighty in intensifying the power of will, before which the frenzied soul bows in submission or yields in confidence; and these may well have been found among the better and truer Pharisees."

I. AN EXPLANATION MAY BE GOOD IF IT IS OFFERED IN A MALICIOUS SPIRIT. Its value, as an explanation, should be fairly weighed, without prejudice. We may often learn most valuable things from the bitter words of our enemies. They reveal to us what otherwise we might never have discovered.

II. AN EXPLANATION IS LIKELY TO BE BAD WHEN IT IS OFFERED IN A MALICIOUS SPIRIT. It is better to suspect it; better not to make too much of it. Malice spoils eyesight, and certainly spoils judgment. These Pharisees fashioned a bad argument just because they felt angry with Jesus.—R. T.

Ver. 28.—*An argument with a warning.* "But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you." The sin against the Holy Ghost,

which cannot be forgiven, has been so much misunderstood, because its immediate relations have not been sufficiently noticed. It has been treated as a general form of sin, of which any one may be guilty, rather than as a specific sin, of which a particular class of persons in a particular age were guilty. Our Lord was replying to certain Pharisaic objectors. He claimed to work miracles in the power of the *Spirit of God*. They declared that he worked the miracles in the power of the chief of the evil spirits. To say that was to offer open insult to the Holy Spirit in Jesus. And that is a hopeless kind of sin, because only in the power of the Spirit can men be saved. He who calls the Spirit Beelzebub will never seek his saving help, and so he never will be forgiven or regenerated. Forgiveness only comes to the penitent and humble. It is quite clear that they are neither penitent nor humble who think the Holy Spirit in Jesus is Beelzebub.

I. TWO POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS OF OUR LORD'S CASTING OUT DEVILS. 1. He may do it with the help of the prince of the devils. Is that a reasonable explanation? If it were merely directing the movements of devils from one sphere of work to another, it might be reasonable; but the case before us is distinctly one of *stopping the devils' work*. Jesus "cast out" the devils. It is not reasonable to think of princes of devils stopping their subordinates' work. Then see that these Pharisees were shut up to, and obliged to accept, the other possible explanation. Jesus cast out devils by the *Spirit of God*; that is every way reasonable, according to their own showing, for the *good* God must be opposed to the work of *evil* spirits.

II. THE CONSEQUENCES OF ADMITTING THE ONLY REASONABLE EXPLANATION. These Pharisees came under the gravest responsibility. If Jesus wrought in the power of the Spirit, they were bound to believe him, and come into discipleship with him. This they *would* not do. Then Christ presses home the consequences of their wilfulness. They sinned against light; they resisted inward convictions; they grieved the Spirit; they blasphemed the Spirit; they put themselves into such moral attitudes that they could not be forgiven; forgiveness is of no value to those who are not humble.—R. T.

Ver. 34.—*The law of good speech.* "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." It is in our Lord's mind here to account for the *bad* speech of the Pharisees. It was the natural expression of bad minds, minds full of prejudice and malice. How could they, "*being evil*, speak good things"? But a great principle is involved in our Lord's appeal.

I. WORDS MAY BE MERE WORDS. Our Lord calls them "idle words." Much that we say we have not really thought. We often speak first and think last. And such idle words, though they do not express our real selves, often make sad mischief. Words glibly pass our tongues, and we forget them the moment after they are uttered, but they are as scorpion-stings to those who hear; they light up fires like the fires of hell. Therefore Christ warns so severely against words that have no thought and no heart behind them, and yet do their fatal work, saying, "For every idle word that man shall speak, he shall give account in the day of judgment." The first law of good speech is—*think before you speak.*

II. WORDS MAY UTTER A BAD HEART. The skill of life is keeping bad thoughts from gaining utterance. At the most, they only injure one person if they are kept from utterance. There is no knowing how many they may injure if they get expressed. These Pharisees had bad enough thoughts concerning Christ. If they had kept them to themselves, they would only have ruined themselves. Speaking their thought out, they started evil in other minds; words were agencies for communicating thought to thought; so the mischief ran, other souls were blocked against Christ, and his redeeming work was hindered in men.

III. WORDS MAY UTTER A GOOD HEART. Think pure things, and you need not restrain utterance; you will find pure words. Think kind things, trustful things, God-honouring things, and then, out of the abundance of the heart, the lips may freely speak. What you say will not be "idle things" with nothing behind them; nor will they be evil things with malice behind them. Let God make the soul-fountains of thought and heart fresh and sweet by his Holy Spirit's regenerating and sanctifying, and there need be no fear—our speech will be good speech, "seasoned with salt."—R. T.

Ver. 38.—*Sinful sign-seekers.* Sign-seeking may be either right or wrong. Gideon sought a sign from God for the confirmation of his faith; and to him the sign was given. These Pharisees asked for a sign which they could turn into a confirmation of their unbelief, and to them no sign was given; they must be content with a sort of enigma, or riddle, which they might puzzle over if they pleased. The state of mind of these sign-seekers is of great importance. It explains to us at once that it would have been worse than waste for our Lord to have yielded to their wish.

I. THE SIGN THEY SOUGHT. Some miracle, wrought under conditions which they would appoint, and submitted to tests which they would provide. Illustrate by the recent demand of the scientific man to have the question of "answer to prayer" submitted to what he called "adequate scientific tests." For them to seek a sign at all was to show that the miracles Christ had wrought had not produced their proper moral effect upon them. And anything like a *demand* for a sign showed that they did not realize their proper relations to a Jehovah-prophet, and to this Jehovah-prophet, who was the Messiah.

II. THE SIGN THEY OBTAINED. Not at all the kind of thing they asked for. Something stated in such a paradoxical way as compelled them to think. The reference to Jonah's being in the sea-monster's belly is not the thing our Lord is using as a sign; that only introduces the sign of Jonah's preaching repentance to the men of Nineveh. That was a sign, or illustration, of our Lord's preaching to the Pharisees; and the sign became a solemn warning; for, while the Ninevites obeyed Jonah, *they* were resolutely setting themselves against all obedience to Christ; and as Christ was greater than Jonah, so their judgment for rejecting him would be proportionately severe. It is as if our Lord had said, "I will not give you a sign, but I will give you an illustration; and I will take it from the Old Testament history, which you pride yourselves on knowing so well; and from the conduct of a heathen people, whom you sublimely despise. 'They repented at the preaching of Jonah;' 'A Greater than Jonah is here.' How are you treating him and his message? Verily the men of Nineveh will rise and condemn you, you men of the superior privilege, in the day of judgment." They wanted a sign that they might use to condemn Christ; he gave them a sign which condemned them.—R. T.

Ver. 43.—*Clean, but empty.* A notion prevailed in Chaldea which presents a striking similarity to that appealed to by our Lord in this parable of the evil spirit returning to possess the empty house. It was thought that when once the possessing demons were expelled from the body the only guarantee was to obtain, by the power of incantations, an opposite possession by a favourable demon. A good spirit must take the place of the evil one in the body of the man. This is part of one of their incantations—

> "May the bad demons depart! May they seize upon one another!
> The propitious demon,
> The propitious giant,—
> May they penetrate into his body!"

We must try to see the connection in which this parable stands.

I. IT PICTURES THE HISTORICAL FACT CONCERNING ISRAEL. The nation had, once for all and resolutely, turned out the demon of idolatry when they returned from Babylon to repossess their land. For a long time the land was clean from that sin, empty of that bad spirit; but as Jesus read the bad hearts of those Pharisees, and the mischievous influence of their teachings, it seemed clear to him that the old demon of idolatry had come back in disguise, and brought with him seven other spirits, worse than himself. That generation was more utterly corrupt than even the old ages of violent idolatry. Hypocrisy, self-will, hard-heartedness, pride, malice, were devils morally worse than idolatry.

II. IT REVEALS AN EVER-RECURRING FACT CONCERNING ALL MEN. They are easily satisfied with reforms that merely mean putting aside some evil indulgence. They give up certain habits, and so are clean; but they only turn out the evil and leave his place empty. A soul must be occupied, and if its interest in *evil* is removed, it must be interested in good. Religion should fill up all empty places, and leave no room for returning evil. The man who relapses into sin after being delivered from its power,

almost always goes greater lengths in sin than he went in the early stages. Every relapse is more dangerous than the disease. "It is quite possible that a man who has conquered some old vice or besetting sin may, as a reformed man, pass under the dominion of spirits who are far more plausible and no less evil than the one he has subdued. Instead of one coarse spirit, think of eight subtle intellects crowding into a man's soul."—R. T.

Vers. 49, 50.—*Spiritual relationships.* There is difficulty in ascertaining the precise relationship to Christ borne by the persons called "his brethren." They were what we should call "blood-relations," but they may not have been either children of Joseph before his marriage to Mary, or children of Mary born after the birth of Jesus. The term is known to have often included cousins, and cousins of different degrees. The point we want is that they came, claiming Christ's special attention, because they were *blood-relations.*

I. FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS LIE ON A LOW PLANE. Only low comparatively. Until compared with spiritual relationships, it seems to be a very high plane. We regard as morally most valuable the influence and mutual service of family relationships. It is not possible to think of Christ as failing to recognize family ties. They altogether fail in imagination, insight, and spiritual sensitiveness who think our Lord's answer was rude, harsh, and unfeeling. Pulsford says, very suggestively, "A man's relations are as distinct as are his own flesh and spirit. His blood-relatives are often not his spirit-relatives. Blood-relations are of time and for time; kindred spirits are of eternity and for eternity. Natural life has its own associations, and Divine life its own. When the Divine life is quickened in a man he enters into a new world of relationships. And in proportion to the reality and fervour of his new life will be his attachment to his new kindred, and his power of attaching them to him."

II. SPIRITUAL RELATIONSHIPS LIE IN THE HIGHER PLANE, BUT ARE WELL REPRESENTED BY THOSE IN THE LOWER PLANE. "It was as if he had said, 'Truly she is my mother, and they are my brethren; but in the higher life, not alone the one who reared me, but every one who is like her is mine. Not alone the gentler companions of my childhood are brothers and sisters, but all who have pure and large hearts. For all true relationship springs from moral states, and not from the mechanical arrangements of society. God is the one Father, and all men become intimately related to each other in proportion as they are intimately related to God'" (Beecher). It is a happy thing indeed when one's near relatives in the flesh are also real relatives, kindred souls, one with us in the love and service of the risen and living Lord.—R. T.

# HOMILETICAL INDEX

TO

# THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW.

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