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Division

Section



A DEVOTIONAL COMMENTARY
ON THE
GOSPEL OF ST. MATTHEW

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A DEVOTIONAL COMMENTARY
ON THE
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BY
✓
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INTRODUCTION

IN *The Open Secret* I suggested the use of the Bible in devotion, and gave some illustrative passages; the plain text with the references of the R.V. was all that was required. But for the fuller and richer use of Scripture in a devotional way, some notes and comments are needed, especially for those who are not acquainted with the language of the original. The present commentary on the first of the Four Gospels is an attempt to give just those explanations, and references, which may be supposed to make the Gospel better available for the practice of devotion, and the nourishment of the Spiritual life.

There is no attempt to load the notes with illustrative extracts; all the space has been used simply to arrive at the meaning of the text, and to make the arrangement of the matter intelligible. The Commentaries which have been principally used are Dr. David Brown's, and Dr. A. B. Bruce's in the *Expositor's Greek Testament*, and Wellhausen's brief but invaluable translation and exposition. I have seldom ventured to obtrude my own interpretation, in a field which has been covered for so many centuries by the expositors

of the Christian Church. Where I have given a view of my own, e. g. in the explanation of the Parable of the Hired Labourers in the Vineyard, it is only with the utmost diffidence, and the wish to stand under correction.

While my book was in the Press, Mr. W. C. Allen's *St. Matthew* in the *International Critical Commentary* appeared. I have therefore only been able to use it in a supplementary way. But his object is so different from mine, that the two commentaries stand wholly apart from one another. His main interest, the thought that colours all the notes, is to establish the position that our first gospel is the work of an editor who pieced together (1) Mark, (2) the *Logia* of Matthew, (3) a book of Messianic forecasts from the O.T., and (4) certain Palestinian traditions of the infancy of Jesus, unknown to Mark. As a piece of critical work on the structure, the scope, and the historical value, of *St. Matthew*, Mr. Allen's book is invaluable. But for the reader of the Gospel whose one object is, to learn how to know Jesus Christ, and to shape his own life on the example and teaching of the Lord, the critical work is only a preliminary one; it must be well over and settled before the practical reading begins.

For a devotional purpose critical discussions are not brought forward, but are rather presupposed. The searching and remorseless criticism to which

the Gospel narrative is now being subjected, will leave the Gospels as books exactly where they are. It is a curious illusion that criticism can take away our Bible. There it is, when criticism has done its task, the same vital and life-giving literature as before. Whatever controversies may rage over the structure, composition, the authorship and the date, the text and the reading, this Gospel of Matthew is in our hands, a work of approved spiritual significance. By reading it, by brooding and praying over it, by permitting its influence to enter the soul, the reader, apart from all discussions, is led into the footprints of Jesus, sits at His feet and learns ; find his way to the Cross and to the empty tomb.

It is peculiarly valuable just now to bring out this practical value of the Gospel narrative, and to test it by experience. Such a devotional use of the book is not to be set as an argument against criticism, but it induces a singular serenity as to the results of criticism. When a man knows his gospel in that way, he has a possession which no one can take from him ; he knows the flavour, the nutriment, the power, of the story and the Person ; if criticism were to dispute or to discredit this truth of experience, he would treat criticism as he does the assaults which misguided men sometimes make on Homer or Shakespeare, on human responsibility or morality, on love and sacrifice

and loyalty, and the other nobilities of human life. No one, thus exercised in the Gospel, will have reason to complain 'they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him'. For the Lord, the Christ of Matthew, cannot be taken away by any one; after all arguments, refutations, and assaults His voice rises calmly in the stillness of the soul of the disciple, 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.'

ROBERT F. HORTON.

HAMPSTEAD,

May 24, 1907.

THE GOSPEL

ACCORDING TO

ST. MATTHEW

- 1 ¹ THE book of the ² generation of Jesus Christ, ¹ Or, *The genealogy of Jesus Christ.*
the son of David, the son of Abraham.
- 2 Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat ² Or, *birth: as in ver. 18.*
Jacob; and Jacob begat Judah and his brethren.
-

CH. i. 1-17. THE BOOK OF THE GENERATION OF JESUS CHRIST.

As Dr. Bruce says in the Expositor's Greek Testament, this genealogical tree seems a dry beginning to the Gospel. And so it would be, if we had not the Old Testament to interpret it. Matthew clings at every point to the Old Testament. For the heathen, Mark's or Luke's or even John's Gospel would be more intelligible. But for us who know and love the Old Testament, and are interested to see how the New grows out of the Old, Matthew is the right Gospel to begin with; and this genealogy, so far from being dry, is all-alive with interest, fills us with praise, and brings us to our knees.

Verse 1. *generation.* The word here, and in ver. 18, translated 'birth', is genesis. This at once suggests a comparison with the opening book of the Old Testament, and especially Gen. ii. 4. The Genesis of Heaven and Earth is, extrinsically, a greater thing, for it embraces this whole globe, the solar system, the vast stellar distances. But, intrinsically, the Genesis of Jesus Christ is, for us men, more important than the genesis of the heavens and the earth. The universe has no meaning except for consciousness, God's or man's, and Jesus Christ is the key to our consciousness and the connexion of ours with God's.

the son of David, the son of Abraham. The first object of the Gospel narrative was to show that Jesus was a man. Docetism was the earliest heresy; the Resurrection made it plain that Jesus was divine; and men thought that so divine a Being could never have been really flesh and blood. The humanity was phantasmal. The Gospel narrative wishes to show that He came of a human stock, was born as we are, and like us lived, suffered, was tempted, and died. Luke iii. 23-36 carries the genealogical line back to the first man; Matthew is content to go back to

ren; and Judah begat Perez and Zerah of 3
 Tamar; and Perez begat Hezron; and Hezron
 begat ¹Ram; and ¹Ram begat Amminadab; and ⁴
¹Gr. Amminadab begat Nahshon; and Nahshon
Aram. begat Salmon; and Salmon begat Boaz of 5
 Rahab; and Boaz begat Obed of Ruth; and
 Obed begat Jesse; and Jesse begat David the 6
 king.

And David begat Solomon of her *that had*
been the wife of Uriah; and Solomon begat 7
 Rehoboam; and Rehoboam begat Abijah; and
 Abijah begat ²Asa; and ²Asa begat Jehosha-
²Gr. phat; and Jehoshaphat begat Joram; and
Asaph.

Abraham; the predominant thought is—not only was He the son of man, but He was Messias, the scion of David, the promised seed of Abraham. This connexion with David was for all Jewish Christians vital (2 Sam. vii. 12-16; Ps. cxxxii. 11; Isa. xi. 1; Jer. xxiii. 5; Luke i. 32, 69; John vii. 42; Acts ii. 30, xiii. 23; Rom. i. 3; 2 Tim. ii. 8; Rev. xxii. 16). The connexion with Abraham followed (Gen. xxii. 18; Gal. iii. 16; Rom. ix. 5).

2. *Abraham.* The fourteen generations from Abraham to David are glorious; they belong to the Theocracy. They contain the Patriarchs, and the noble figure of Judah. Towards the end emerges Boaz with the idyl of Ruth. For the home-picture of Jesse at Bethlehem see 1 Samuel xvi. 1, xvii. 12.

3. *Tamar.* Four women appear in the genealogy. Why? Three—Tamar, Rahab, and Bathsheba—are stained with gross immorality! Two—Rahab and Ruth—are strangers, a Canaanite, and a hated Moabite! Of this stock comes Jesus, who receives sinners, and welcomes the heathen into His family.

6. *David the king.* Here the growth and glory of the family culminate. Thenceforward is a more or less arrested Decline and Fall. To spring of the loins of Abraham is beautiful—but through Tamar and Bathsheba, that gives us pause.

6^b-11. The fourteen generations from David to Jeremiah—a rapid summary of the monarchy—are a pitiful story of degeneration. The line which began with 'her that had been the wife of Uriah' had the seed of corruption in it. Solomon was apostate; Rehoboam was infatuated; and though Asa, Jehoshaphat, Uzziah, Hezekiah, and Josiah had noble traits, relents, and pieties, the darker tendency appears in Abijah, Joram, Jotham, and Ahaz, and came to a culmination of evil in Manasseh. Jechoniah, the

- 9 Joram begat Uzziah ; and Uzziah begat Jotham ;
 and Jotham begat Ahaz ; and Ahaz begat Heze-
 10 kiah ; and Hezekiah begat Manasseh ; and
 Manasseh begat ¹ Amon ; and ¹ Amon begat ¹ Gr.
 11 Josiah ; and Josiah begat Jechoniah and his *Amos.*
 brethren, at the time of the ² carrying away to ² Or, *re-*
 Babylon. *moval to*
 12 And after the ² carrying away to Babylon, Je-
 choniah begat ³ Shealtiel ; and ³ Shealtiel begat ³ Gr. *Sa-*
 13 Zerubbabel ; and Zerubbabel begat Abiud ; and *lathiel.*
 Abiud begat Eliakim ; and Eliakim begat Azor ;
 14 and Azor begat Sadoc ; and Sadoc begat Achim ;
 15 and Achim begat Eliud ; and Eliud begat Elea-
 zar ; and Eleazar begat Matthan ; and Matthan
 16 begat Jacob ; and Jacob begat Joseph the hus-
 band of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is
 called Christ.

grandson of Josiah (Jer. xxiv. 1, xxvii. 20), was a child, eight according to ² Chron. xxxvi. 9, eighteen according to ² Kings xxiv. 8, who only reigned three months and ten days, and then was taken into the lifelong captivity of Babylon. What a falling-off from David ! Compare the expression 'Judah and his brethren' in ver. 2 with 'Jechoniah and his brethren' in ver. 11, and you see the depth of the fall. The promise of the nation at its birth, the glory of the kingship in David, had dwindled down to the feebleness and ignominy of the Captivity. Through such a line of sin and punishment, a decline ending in a fall, Christ came.

12-16. The fourteen generations, which span the 588 years from Jechoniah to Christ, are an example of the indistinguishable obscurity of human lives. Zerubbabel emerges into historical light because he led back some of the exiles from Babylon, Ezra iii. 2. Joseph is famous for ever as the putative father of Jesus (Luke iii. 23, iv. 22 : also ii. 33, 41, 48) ; but for the rest, they lie in dateless and unchronicled darkness. We know nothing of them but their names. Through this fallen and indistinguishable posterity of a great line, Christ came.

16. *of whom was born*, i. e. of Mary. Though Joseph is called the father of Jesus—and it is only on the ground of his being His father that his genealogical tree is given—there is a mystery in the

¹ Or, *re-*
moval to
Babylon. So all the generations from Abraham unto **17**
David are fourteen generations; and from
² Or, *gene-*
ration: as
in ver. 1. David unto the ¹ carrying away to Babylon four-
³ Some
ancient
authori-
ties read teen generations; and from the ¹ carrying away
to Babylon unto the Christ fourteen generations.
Now the ² birth ³ of Jesus Christ was on this **18**

birth, which is unfolded in ver. 18–24. St. Luke, the other evangelist who records the singular operations of the Holy Ghost in the birth, speaks of Joseph and Mary as His parents, records the astonished inquiry of the Nazarenes, ‘Is not this Joseph’s son?’ and even represents Mary as calling Joseph His father (ii. 48). This is a mystery which we cannot hope to fathom. We are very sure, with Matthew and Luke, that Jesus was born of the Holy Ghost; but we are, with them and with St. Paul, to regard Him as the seed of David and Abraham, and Adam, through Joseph. If we maintain that this connexion with humanity was established only through Mary, we set aside the testimony of the two evangelists who record the virgin-birth.

The mystery may be stated thus: Joseph was the father of Jesus, but not in the ordinary way of human generation, his parenthood was the work of the Holy Ghost. It is enough for us that our Lord and Saviour was born of a human stock, and we may humbly inscribe ourselves among His relations, on the terms which He Himself has laid down in xii. 50.

Jesus, who is called Christ, i. e. Christ is the surname, xxvii. 22. Cf. ‘Simon who is called Peter’. It is as if the Evangelist wished to say: This Jesus, the seed of Abraham, the descendant of David, the expected Messiah of Israel, was, by Jewish hands, delivered to the Roman governor and, at the instance of Jewish prayers, crucified by the Gentile.

17. The symmetry of the fourteen is achieved by leaving out several generations; e. g. Josiah was the grandfather of Jechoniah. The comparison with the genealogy in Luke iii shows how divergent these family trees might be. The value of the lists is not in the exactness of the names, which might be a matter of doubt even to the most careful investigator, but in the connexion that is shown with David and with Abraham, ver. 1, and so with Adam, Luke iii. 38.

i. 18—ii. THE IDYL OF THE BIRTH AND INFANCY.

This passage, like the corresponding one in Luke i, ii, is composed of exquisite episodes which are, strictly speaking, poems—the first Christmas-carols, which have been sung ever since. They are the outcome of the Church’s surprise and joy in recognizing

wise: When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found with child of the ^{of the} ^{Christ.} ^{1 Or, Holy} ^{Spirit:} ^{and so} Holy Ghost.

that her Lord was divine. They are lyrics of rapture over the truth that He had come into humanity, and was not merely the outcome of humanity. In such compositions the substance is more important than the form. The substance is contained in that saying: 'I am from above, I am not of this world' (John viii. 23). The form varies; in John it is the pre-existent Logos that becomes flesh; in Paul it is One in the form of God, who emptied Himself to become man; here and in Luke it is a Child, born by direct operation of the Spirit of God, miraculously preserved from the wrath of kings, visited by adoring strangers from the East, heralded by angels, drawing simple shepherds to His infant feet.

In such an Idyl as this, where the substance is everything, and the form is secondary, we may miss the meaning by a dull literalism, and by laying the stress on details which are mere accidents, and not essentials. Poetry is as instructive as history, but not in the same way. From the religious point of view we learn as much from Milton's *Paradise Lost* as from the account which Science gives of the origin of things; and the opening chapters of Genesis are always there to remind us that an epic may be as valuable to men as history.

In the passage before us, therefore, the stress is to be laid on the faith which possessed the earliest believers in Christ, that He was God in the flesh; the several incidents which are chosen to illustrate this truth may have been derived from Mary or from Joseph. No wise person will presume to say that they are impossible or untrue; but a man may be a Christian without holding that they are facts of history. History, in the strict sense of the word, begins where Mark and John and Paul begin. The Idyl of the Infancy belongs to another kind of literature; but the experience of many centuries shows that it is no whit inferior in spiritual power and religious truth to the facts of history.

18-25. This paragraph contains a mystery, a suggestion of the way in which the Word became flesh. Joseph, in later years, told to intimate friends the story of his marriage and of the birth of his firstborn; the reminiscence took shape and, as years went on, was repeated among the first believers. Finally, this evangelist placed it in the forefront of his history, just as, later on, Luke, drawing upon reminiscences of Mary, inserted it in his.

18. *Now.* It should be 'But'. The first paragraph described the genesis of Jesus Christ through the tree of Abraham and David. 'But'—the narrative proceeds, 'the genesis of Jesus

through-
out this
book.

And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But when he thought on these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear

Christ was on this wise.' And then we are told something which seems to imply that the genealogy was irrelevant; for of what use was it to trace the descent of Jesus through Joseph, if Joseph was not in the strict sense His father at all?

Does the Evangelist simply put down these two accounts side by side, from his materials, with no thought of harmonizing them? Does he first give a prosaic genealogy, and then insert a poem from the circle of early Christian faith? Or does he see a reconciliation, does he regard Par. 1 and Par. 2 as equally matters of fact, which a wise reader will instinctively combine into a consistent whole? To these questions we can give no certain answer. But the exposition may bring the two facts into a kind of connexion which, spiritually at least, is satisfying.

betrothed . . . came together. These are the two steps which constituted marriage. When the suitor had paid the dowry to the maiden's father, she was from that moment his wife (see ver. 24). Months and even years might elapse before the day when he would go to the parents' home, in the evening, or in the dead of night (xxv. 6), and carry his wife to his own house with music and feasting. Joseph and Mary were already man and wife, but he had not yet brought her to his house; probably she was a girl, barely mature.

was found with child of the Holy Ghost. He found her with child, but did not know that it was of the Holy Ghost. He feared that some one had betrayed her, or that she had been false to him.

19. *a righteous man*: *δίκαιος*. See Matt. xx. 4, Mark vi. 20, Luke xx. 20, Rom. v. 7. These passages show that we are to understand by righteous, 'a good man,' not in the severe sense, one who could not tolerate an erring wife, but in the broader sense, one who, unable to retain an unfaithful wife, yet could not bear to expose her to unnecessary obloquy. His righteousness, that is, is shown not so much in putting her away, as in doing it privately, and not with the formality of the law (Deut. xxiv. 1).

20. *thought*: the correlative word in ix. 4, the inward revolving of the facts which none but God sees.

a dream. F. W. H. Myers, in his book on *Human Personality*, traces the facts of the sleep-life, and shows how much reality there is in it. Whether the dream life or the waking-life is the most real, is to him an open question. Sometimes in

not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is ¹conceived in her is of the Holy ^{1 Gr.}*begotten.*
 21 Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name JESUS; for it is he that

dreams we come into contact with the spiritual powers which encompass us, and can receive directions from them which are not perceived in waking moments. Perhaps most persons, once or twice in a lifetime, are directed by a dream just as Joseph is here. How far the dream was the result of his own reflections, the uprush of his subliminal consciousness, no one can determine; but the cases are quite common in which the dream authenticates itself as a reality to which attention and obedience must be given. Joseph believed that, though the angel was only in a dream, God was instructing him in that way; and he acted accordingly (ver. 24).

thou Son of David. Here the episode is linked on to the genealogy. As the son of David, he is to accept his wife and adopt her offspring, evidently in order that the child when born may be the son of David too (ver. 1). Thus the very vision which states that the birth is 'of the Holy Ghost' constitutes Joseph the father. In the eyes of the world, in the judgement of the law, Joseph was the parent of Jesus. Only in his own eyes he occupied a unique position. He was the father of Jesus by the operation of the Holy Ghost and not by the ordinary method of human propagation.

fear not. Was it fear of scandal? No, for by taking her at once that could be and was averted. It must have been fear of moral evil. If the maid had fallen and he took her, he would condone 'folly in Israel'. 'That which should be born' must be either most unholy or most holy: the dream-voice told him that it was most holy. He believed, and was justified by his faith, justified in passing as the father of the child. That Jesus was born in this way must rest on Joseph's testimony alone. It is obviously not a fact which could be otherwise verified. Jesus never alluded to it Himself, nor did Peter or John or Paul. It was not a fact on which objective religious truth could be based. If the Divinity of Jesus rested on it, we should indeed be in a perilous way. Rather it rests on the Divinity of Jesus. It is a domestic secret, a mystery such as fathers and mothers treasure in their hearts. They who believe in Jesus may believe it, but it could not convince unbelievers; never in the New Testament is it used or cited for such a purpose.

21. *Jesus* is the Hebrew Joshua, meaning 'Jehovah shall save'. The new meaning was this: He will save *from sins*. See Acts iv. 12, v. 31, xiii. 23, 38. What a vision of the night was this! He saw his son born, he saw his name, he saw the meaning of it.

shall save his people from their sins. Now all ²²
 this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled
 which was spoken by the Lord through the pro-
 phet, saying,

Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and ²³
 shall bring forth a son,

¹ Gr. *Em-
manuel.*

And they shall call his name ¹² Immanuel ;
 which is, being interpreted, God with us. And ²⁴
 Joseph arose from his sleep, and did as the

Luke gives the lyric of angels singing to the shepherds ' Unto you is born this day in the City of David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord ' ; but this single angel in the dreaming heart of Joseph is more explicit, more comforting—' He shall save His people from their sins.'

22, 23. It is Matthew's speciality to connect the events of the Gospel with prophetic oracles, a collection which he had by him, and used as one of his sources ; see W. C. Allen, *Critical Commentary on Matthew*, Introd. LXI, and XCVI. The connexion is often, as here, mainly verbal. Certainly the episodes cannot be invented as fulfilments of the prophecies ; the prophecies are too precarious. This citation from Is. vii. 14 only seems to be a prophecy of the virgin-birth if it is taken from the Greek, the Alexandrine version of the prophet. In the Hebrew הַעַלְמָה does not mean virgin at all. The Hebrew for virgin הַתְּלִמָּדָה is used fifty times in the Old Testament. But the LXX have translated the Hebrew, which simply means a young woman, by *ἡ παρθένος*, i. e. a virgin. In the original of Isaiah, all that is meant is, that before a young woman could conceive and bear a son, deliverance would have come to king Ahaz, and the new-born child could be called ' God with us '.

If, therefore, the Evangelist cites the passage it is somewhat inconclusive. If only it were included in Joseph's dream it would bear another, and far more interesting, aspect. In dreams familiar words are often charged with a new meaning, and we wake with the words on our lips but with the new meaning in our minds. Joseph knew the words of this old Isaianic oracle, but in the dream they came to him from the angel's lips with a sudden inspiration : his wife was the young woman, his child Jesus that should be born was Immanuel. He rose from his sleep with the word echoing in his ears—' God with us '. Perplexity was removed ; it was as if God had spoken.

24. *And Joseph . . . did as the angel of the Lord commanded him.* It is the characteristic of such experiences as this, that they carry

angel of the Lord commanded him, and took
 25 unto him his wife; and knew her not till she
 had brought forth a son: and he called his
 name JESUS.

with them an inner certitude which is above argument. He knew by the experience itself that the experience was of God. Without any hesitation, that same day he took his wife to his house, so that the child who should be born would be acknowledged as his.

25. He knew, and Mary knew, the mystery of the birth. She was, as the LXX rendered the Hebrew word, a virgin. She brought forth a son and named him Jesus; and they treasured the fact in their hearts, that he was conceived of the Holy Ghost.

The secret is one which Jesus Himself would call 'a pearl not to be cast before swine'. What the swine would do with it is seen in the disgusting Jewish story which was invented to dishonour Jesus, and in the fact that Haeckel quotes the story with approbation in his *Riddle of the Universe*. It is hard to conceive how any human mind could turn this exquisite idyl into ribaldry. Like a morning washed in dew and sparkling with the purity of the hoar-frost, it might, one would suppose, captivate all hearts. But no truth of poetry is secure against coarse and common minds. And our Lord, by His studied silence on the subject of His own birth, and His beloved disciple John by his references to Joseph as the father of Jesus (John i. 45, vi. 42) show us with what reticence we are to treat the narrative. It is not the foundation, but the coping-stone, of the edifice of faith; and it is the substance and not the form that is of value. The divinity of Jesus does not rest on His physical origin, but on His moral and spiritual character. His sinlessness is not the result of being free from the taint of Adam; it is the result of His own overcoming. If we believed in Him, 'who was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin,' on the ground that He was born in a different way from ourselves, we should miss the saving element of His victory over the world. And when we lay the stress on such a physical fact, logic drives us along the course which the Roman Church has taken: if He was to be sinless, then, not only must He be without a human father, but His human mother must be immaculately conceived, and practically divine: and then Mary's mother Anna must enjoy a similar immunity, and so back to Eve. The Roman logic has the advantage of showing the intrinsic fallacy of the whole argument. Jesus is divine because of His character and His acts. With simple literal truth we may be sure that He was born of the Holy Ghost. The part that His human father had in His birth is a secret over which reverence and delicacy would draw a veil. When unbelief assails the story we need not defend it, we should withdraw it, and direct the unbeliever to evidences which he is more capable of understanding.

¹ Gr.
Magi.
Compare
Esther i.
13; Dan.
ii. 12.

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of ² Judæa in the days of Herod the king, behold, ¹ wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, say-

CH. ii. THE IDYL OF THE MAGI.

The story contained in this chapter, which charmed our wondering childhood, has a deeper meaning for our mature age; its purpose is to bring out two striking contrasts, first, that between the homage brought to Jesus from afar, ver. 1-12, and the hostility at home, ver. 13-23; second, that between King Herod, and the rightful King of the World who came to bear witness of the truth. This twofold contrast comes out clearly in the study of the details. Observe, the story—the movement of the star, and the angelic warnings—is frankly supernatural; it is labour thrown away to rationalize it. Our object is mainly to learn the spiritual truths which it conveys in its rich colouring of narrative.

1. *in Bethlehem.* The author of this carol did not know that the parents of Jesus came from the obscure town of Nazareth, but thought that the Holy Family withdrew there, to escape the hand of Archelaus, and to fulfil a prophecy, ver. 23.

Herod the king. This great, magnificent, but tyrannical king, was an Idumean—thus Edom ruled over Israel!—and he maintained his rule by an understanding with Rome. He reigned for thirty-seven years, and died of a loathsome disease at the age of seventy in B.C. 4, so that if this narrative is historical the beginning of our era must be dated at least four years earlier than it is. He had murdered his sons and Mariamne his beautiful and beloved Jewish wife; he was so hated, in spite of his services in rebuilding the Temple, that there was none to mourn him, and he ordered his sister Salome, as he died, to shut up the chief of the Jews in the Hippodrome and massacre them, in order that there might be weeping on the occasion. The order was not carried out.

Thus Herod the King¹ is the perfect type of egotistical, tyrannical worldly governments. He symbolizes the harsh, successful, fearful rule of Self in the Soul. When Christ is born in the heart (Gal. iv. 19) it is under the reign of Herod the King, and that usurping sovereign does all in his power to crush the rightful Lord in His infancy.

¹ 'He was in a word a perfectly beautiful animal, a lion, in which you can only think of his broad chest and his thick mane, without expecting any moral sense' (Renan). 'His lance was unerring, and his arrow seldom missed its mark' (Josephus, *B. J.* i. 21. 13). His close alliance with the Cæsars is another point in the symbolic meaning of Herod. He was inaugurated king of the Jews in 37 B.C. with sacrifices to Jupiter Capitolinus by Antony and Octavianus (afterwards Augustus).

2 ing, ¹ Where is he that is born King of the Jews? ¹ Or,
 for we saw his star in the east, and are come to *Where is*
 3 worship him. And when Herod the king heard *the King*
 it, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. *of the Jews*
that is
born?

Bethlehem means the House of Bread. Christ born in the heart, the Bethlehem of the heart, is the true Bread that cometh down out of heaven. John vi. 48-51.

wise men from the east. The Greek is Magi (cf. Acts xiii. 6-8), astrologers, who studied the heavens to learn human destinies, the men of science of a prescientific age. Legend made them kings, gave them names, and determined the number three, perhaps because the gifts were threefold (ver. 11). But it is the Wisdom, not the Royalty, of the world that comes to the feet of Jesus. The students and seekers into curious lore stand in contrast with the rulers of this world, typified by Herod the King.

his star in the east. Rather, 'his star in its rising'—i. e. a miraculous star which dawned on them in their distant home, and reappeared guiding them to the spot where Jesus was (ver. 9). The meaning of the star in the story is explained by Num. xxiv. 17, 18—the Star out of Jacob was to vanquish Edom, and the Idumean king—and by Rev. xxii. 16, 'I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright, the morning star.'

to worship him. Better than the worship of the leper, viii. 2, for there is no interested motive. At last they will come from all lands to worship Him, and to bring their offerings, not for what they can get, but for what He is.

3. *was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.* We can understand why Herod was troubled, because 'uneasy lies the head that wears a crown'. He knew that there was an expectation of Messiah, and people were excitable, and ready to hail any extraordinary event as the herald of His appearance. Herod slew the Sanhedrists, and did his best to crush the Messianic hopes.¹ But why was Jerusalem, which hated Herod and longed for her Messiah, troubled with him? Because nothing troubles the soul more than Christ's coming. When He is born in the heart, to dispute the sovereignty of Self, the agitation is distressing: 'Depart from me, for I am an unclean man—why art thou come to trouble me?' is the cry of the man who yet desires Him.

¹ The Herodians were prepared to accept Herod himself as Messiah. They quoted Hagg. ii. 3-9 to show that Herod fulfilled the prophecy by his magnificent rebuilding of the Temple. Perhaps also they pointed to the Book of Enoch (xci. 13, ed. Dillmann), which spoke of a time when 'a house would be built to the praise of the Great King for ever and ever'.

And gathering together all the chief priests and 4
 scribes of the people, he inquired of them where
 the Christ should be born. And they said 5
 unto him, In Bethlehem, of Judæa: for thus
 it is written ¹ by the prophet,

¹ Or,
 through

And thou Bethlehem, land of Judah, 6
 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.

² Gr.
 Magi.

Then Herod privily called the ² wise men, and 7
 learned of them carefully ³ what time the star
 appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, 8
 and said, Go and search out carefully concern-
 ing the young child; and when ye have found
him, bring me word, that I also may come and
 worship him. And they, having heard the 9
 king, went their way; and lo, the star, which
 they saw in the east, went before them, till it

³ Or, the
 time of
 the star
 that ap-
 peared.

4. *where the Christ should be born.* The quotation from Mic. v. 2 is neither from the Hebrew nor the LXX, and the last clause of the quotation is from 2 Sam. v. 2. This shows that our author here is quoting from memory, or from the collection of Messianic prophecies, see i. 22. But the Targum put on the oracle in Micah a Messianic interpretation, though the Talmudists taught that Messiah should come out of a strange unknown place. Both views were justified in the event; Christ was born in Bethlehem, but He came out of the bosom of the Father, and His goings forth had been from of old.

7, 8. Herod's subtilty ¹ typifies the shifts and pretences of Self in its dealings with the inborn Christ. It always affects to worship Him, but wishes to destroy Him. It knows that with His coming its day is over, and yet it pretends to yield Him homage. As Monod shows, it is a gradual process from 'All of Self and none of Thee' to 'None of Self and all of Thee.'

9-10. The star moving before them and stopping over the

¹ *Cultum praetendit, cultrum intendit*, says Archb. Leighton.

came and stood over where the young child
 10 was. And when they saw the star, they re-
 11 joiced with exceeding great joy. And they
 came into the house and saw the young child
 with Mary his mother; and they fell down and
 worshipped him; and opening their treasures
 they offered unto him gifts, gold and frankin-
 12 cense and myrrh. And being warned of *God*
 in a dream that they should not return to

house in Bethlehem is clearly a supernatural event, and it is idle to seek a naturalistic explanation in Astronomical records of peculiar brilliancy in this or that star at that time, or in some unusual meteor—no meteor travels for months and stands over a particular spot. The leading of a star was worthy of so great an occasion as the birth into the world of the Son of God; but the story here told is not attested by any other source in the New Testament, and, from the literary character of the passage, is not to be offered as a proof of our Lord's divinity. The more convincing view is that the knowledge of His divinity gave birth to the story of the guiding star.

11. *into the house.* The birth in a manger belongs to another cycle of the Idyls of the Infancy; and the birth in a cave, which fills so large a space in Sacred Art, belongs to the extra-canonical legends. Our narrative here goes on the supposition that Joseph and Mary were living in Bethlehem and had a house of their own, and only moved to Nazareth later (ver. 23). It is a wholesome reminder that the religious and spiritual value of the Gospel does not depend in any degree on these details, about which there might well be many diverse accounts when the Gospels were written sixty or seventy years after the birth of our Lord.

gifts: as was common in visiting a ruler (1 Sam. ix. 7; 1 Kings x. 2). The gold and the frankincense were to be the gifts brought by kings to Zion in the brightness of her rising (Isa. lx. 1-6). Myrrh was a large ingredient in the anointing oil (Exod. xxx. 23) and was used in the embalming of Jesus (John xix. 39). Wealth, devotion, love, are the gifts men can bring to Christ, not divided but in a perpetual combination; the earthly goods because devotion and love are there; the incense of prayer and praise; the myrrh which proclaims Him King and Priest immortal, because without these the gift of money would be worthless to Him.

12. *in a dream.* This gospel gives a great place to dreams in divine direction: see Matt. i. 20; ii. 12, 13, 19, 22; xxvii. 19.

Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

Now when they were departed, behold, an ¹³ angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I tell thee : for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. And he arose ¹⁴ and took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt ; and was there ¹⁵ until the death of Herod : that it might be ful-

The Evangelist from his own experience or from careful inquiry had found how frequent this method of spiritual guidance is. It is one of the signs of the Spirit's presence that devout minds receive the visitations of God in the subconscious self, during the rest and impassiveness of sleep : see Joel ii. 28. If we lived nearer to God in our waking hours perhaps we should have more of His communications in sleep. We might sleep always at Bethel, and walk every day by heavenly direction.

13-23. The Magi with their devotion vanish to their own land ; we now see the treatment which the native king gives to the true King from Heaven. The symbols can be easily read. Self drives the new-born Christ into the land of exile and bondage ; but God, as always before, calls His Son out of Egypt. Self rages and storms, and even when subdued is succeeded by Archelaus, though only for a season (he was driven from the throne of his small tetrarchy in A. D. 6), and Christ finds His home only in despised Nazareth, the heart of the Nazarite. It is an allegory of the coming of Christ into the soul. The outward events are secondary, pictorial ; the inward truth is primary and real.

13. *an angel of the Lord.* So i. 20, ii. 19. In Joseph's dreams it was always an angel speaking to him.

flee into Egypt. Onias, son of Onias III, took refuge in Egypt, where Ptolemy Philometor allowed him to build the temple at Leontopolis, fulfilling, as he thought, the prophecy of Isa. xix. 18, 19. This temple of Jehovah lasted for 220 years, and was destroyed by Vespasian, about the time of the destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem, A. D. 70. The recent discovery of its site and remains is amongst the marvels of Egyptology. Ever since Joseph went down into Egypt, that land was the hiding-place for God's servants : out of it He called His Son.

15. *until the death of Herod.* That was in the year 4 before the

filled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt did I call
 16 my son. Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the ¹wise men, was exceeding
 wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the male children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the borders thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had carefully
 17 learned of the ¹wise men. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken ²by Jeremiah the pro-
 phet, saying, ²Or, through

birth of Christ according to our chronology. How long the holy family was in Egypt we do not know—only long enough, perhaps, to make this oracle of Hosea xi. 1 applicable. This and other citations from the prophets in this Gospel are not to be understood as meaning that the prophets consciously foretold Christ in using the language: but they used words which found a striking fulfilment in the events of Christ's life and death. 'It is with the prophetic references as with songs without words. The composer has a certain scene or state of mind in his view, and writes under its inspiration; but you are not in his secret, and cannot tell, when you hear the music, what it means. But let the key be given, and you find new meaning in the music. The prophecies are the music, the key is the history. Given the prophecies alone, you could with difficulty imagine the history; given the history, you can understand how religious fancy might discover corresponding prophecies. That the prophecies, once suggested, might react on the facts and lead to legendary modifications is, of course, not to be denied' (Prof. A. B. Bruce in *Expositor's Greek Testament*, p. 78).

16. *slew the male children.* History does not know of this massacre, but in 6 B. C. Herod executed his two sons Alexander and Aristobulus, and in 4 B. C. his eldest son Antipater. Macrobius, *Saturn.* ii. 4, confuses the execution of the sons with the massacre at Bethlehem.¹ He murdered his beloved wife Mariamne the Asmonean. Her brother Aristobulus, the high-priest, he drowned in the bath. 'And so through rivers of blood Herod waded to his doom' (Farrar). It is quite conceivable that in a fit of fear he murdered all the male children of Bethlehem under two; in a town so small the males born at the time with Jesus would be very few.

¹ 'Inter pueros, quos in Syria Herodes Rex Iudæorum intra bimatum iussit interfici.'

A voice was heard in Ramah,
Weeping and great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children ;
And she would not be comforted, because
they are not.

18

But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of 19
the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in
Egypt, saying, Arise and take the young child 20
and his mother, and go into the land of Israel :
for they are dead that sought the young child's
life. And he arose and took the young child 21
and his mother, and came into the land of
Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was

18. The citation from Jer. xxxi. 15 is pathetic and poetic. We are not to think of Jeremiah foretelling this massacre ; but, as we have seen, the description of a great sorrow in the prophet's day suggests the sorrow of Bethlehem. The passage in Jeremiah is rich in comfort : the land is mourning for her exiles, as Rachel was mourned for in Bethlehem (Gen. xxxv. 19, 20, xlviii. 7). Rachel's tomb was there, but Jeremiah was holding out golden prospects of restoration. It was one of those dreams of Jeremiah which on awaking he found to be sweet. We may read, therefore, a joy into the mourning at Bethlehem, and may believe with the Church tradition that the holy innocents who were massacred for Jesus were in a true sense martyrs. This exquisite evangelic thought is rendered by Holman Hunt in his 'Triumph of the Innocents', in which the infants wake from the brief sleep of death, and, crowned with flowers, or pointing joyously to the wounds by which they died, dance along the stream of the river of life as the spiritual companions of the infant Jesus. This is the testimony of Jesus and the patience of the saints. Christ's victory is such that the apparent outrages of the foe are turned into joy : cf. Acts v. 41.

19. *when Herod was dead.* The most splendid and successful king in alliance with Rome died of a loathsome disease in his seventieth year, after a reign of brilliant outward success. His crimes were innumerable ; his virtues gained no recognition from the Jews, who regarded him as an alien and a usurper.

20. *they are dead.* The evil power is vanquished, and Christ may now reign. In the hope of such security, the holy family comes back to its own land.

22. *Archelaus was reigning.* The power of evil is shattered but

reigning over Judæa in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither; and being warned *of God* in a dream, he withdrew into the
 23 parts of Galilee, and came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which

not slain. Herod's son Archelaus was but an ethnarch and divided his father's dominion with others,¹ but he was of the same temper and disposition as his father, naturally hostile to the Holy Child. The warning dream told Joseph that there was still need of care and retirement. Galilee was remote and despised, and beyond the jurisdiction of Archelaus. There the child might grow in quiet, unobserved and undisturbed by the powers of this world.

23. *Nazareth*, an obscure village among the hills, between Carmel and Tabor, about fifteen miles away from the busy shores of the lake, on which Capernaum was situated. All the evangelists show how despised the little place was, and how incredible it seemed that it should give birth to any one or anything remarkable. Matthew does not note that Joseph had lived there before. Mark tells us that Jesus issued from the town to begin His ministry (i. 9). Luke had learned that Joseph and Mary had both lived in Nazareth at the time of the betrothal (i. 26); it was 'their own city' (ii. 39), as well as the place where 'Jesus was brought up' (iv. 16). John knew that Jesus was designated on account of his home 'Jesus of Nazareth' (i. 45), and that designation was familiar in the Apostolic Age (Acts x. 38).

But our evangelist sees a mystical significance in the connexion of Jesus with this despised Nazareth. He had in view some prophecy, which we are unable to identify, declaring that Messiah should be called a Nazarene. He supposes that the holy family was led to settle in the Galilean village in order that this oracle of the prophet might be fulfilled.

There are two suggestions for finding a connexion between the name Nazareth and our Old Testament Scriptures; but neither is very satisfying. (1) We are referred to the law of the Nazarite, and by a pun on the name Nazarite, which means 'separated' (Num. vi. 13), a connexion with Nazareth is established. But even so, we have no passage in Scripture which says that Messiah, like Samson (Judges xiii. 7), should be called a Nazarite.² (2) In

¹ The ethnarch had Judæa, Samaria, and Idumæa; Antipas was made tetrarch of Galilee, and Philip tetrarch of Gaulanitis. After nine years of misrule, Archelaus was banished, with the consent of Augustus: with him the kingdom of the Jews disappeared (A. D. 6), and Judæa was administered by a Roman procurator.

² And in the Hebrew, נזיר, a Nazarite, is spelt with נ, not with ז, as in Nazareth: the two letters are never confounded.

¹ Or, *through* was spoken ¹ by the prophets, that he should be called a Nazarene.

Isa. xi. 2 there is a glorious description of Messias, as a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch (a Nezer) out of his roots shall bear fruit. But Isaiah does not say that he shall be called a Nazarene, only that he shall be called a Nezer (or Branch).

As, therefore, we do not know the prophecy which was fulfilled by this connexion with Nazareth, we can only trace the divine providence which brought Jesus to Nazareth on more general grounds.

He was born in Bethlehem, David's city; but He was chased out of Judæa by the despot who sat upon David's throne. He came to His own, and His own received Him not. Finding no place in His ancestral country, He was driven to an insignificant place in 'Galilee of the Gentiles', that part of Palestine which was then crowded with Hellenistic cities, and had become a highway of traffic between the East and the West. He would issue forth for His world-redeeming work, not from Jerusalem the capital, nor from Bethlehem with its famous traditions, but from a village, of which no one had ever heard; He would be called not a Jerusalemite or a Bethlehemite, but a Nazarene.

On the other hand, this ejection from His own country and banishment to a semi-Gentile district, identified Him from the first with the whole world rather than with Judaism, and enabled Him at the outset of His ministry to fulfil the prophecy of Isa. ix. 1, which foretold the emergence of Israel's light from that very region (ch. iv. 15).

Such a separation from the things of desire, such a repudiation of the lordly Self, such a withdrawal into the humility and obscurity which know nothing of the world's approbation, are essential to the Christian life. He must be meek and lowly of heart, He must be despised and rejected of men, because those whom He would save can only by such a way of the Cross attain to life which is life indeed. If we may not think of the Nazarite, the ascetic separated from the world and consecrated to God, we must at least think of Nazareth as the symbolic word for that humility which shuns the eye of men and that obscurity which excites their contempt. One of the main hindrances to faith in Christ is the ambition, which seeks the honour from one another, and not that which comes from God alone. 'He shall be called a Nazarene' has, therefore, a spiritual meaning for every believer in Jesus. When St. Francis asked that he might not be honoured or praised, he was a Nazarene. When Thomas à Kempis urges us to avoid distinction and to choose rather the obscurity of the cell, he is giving us a true lesson in the Imitation of Christ.

- 3 And in those days cometh John the Baptist,
preaching in the wilderness of Judæa, saying,
2 Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at

CH. iii-iv. II. THE PRELUDE TO THE MINISTRY OF JESUS.

(1) The ministry of John the Baptist. iii. 1-12; (2) The Baptism of Jesus, iii. 13-17; (3) The Temptation of Jesus, iv. 1-11.

iii. 1-12. THE MINISTRY OF JOHN.

This section expands Mark i. 1-8. Luke also expands Mark in another way, iii. 2-17.

1. *in those days.* The expression is suitable in Mark i. 9, which Matthew is following, but not here; the days of Archelaus, to which ii. 23 refers, had long passed away. A new emperor, Tiberius, was on the throne of the Cæsars.

But for an evangelist there is but one time, the time when Jesus came; that is in his mind. He glides naturally into the narrative with the conjunction 'and', as if it had begun in Eternity. So it had.

cometh John. The Greek word *παρῆγενται* is used in ver. 13 again. 'Cometh' is hardly the right rendering; 'makes his appearance' would be better. It suggests the startling emergence of a striking personality, as Josephus (*Antiq.* xviii. 5. 2) shows, a preacher of righteousness, who roused the jealous apprehensions of Herod Antipas, the ruler of Galilee. The Jewish historian tells us of the marriage with Herodias, and of the incarceration and execution of John in the Herodian castle of Machærus. John is a great figure in the history of the first century, which even the ordinary historian was bound to notice. The emergence of Jesus was too spiritual, too much without observation, to attract the notice of historians. Though nineteen centuries have passed, we do not yet see His infinite proportions.

preaching. An old word, signifying to act as a herald, here receives a new meaning. No object of the announcement is mentioned. Preaching henceforth becomes a function with the implied object, Jesus. It is heralding Jesus.

the wilderness of Judæa, the Arabah, the rocky and uncultivable land between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea; strictly speaking it did not reach to the Jordan Valley, El Ghor; but we are to suppose that John moved with the multitude from the wilderness to the river-bed when he wished to baptize.

2. *Repent ye.* The cry of the prophets from Hosea downward (Hos. xiv. 1). John means, Confess and turn from your sins, or vengeance will fall. When Jesus takes up the word (iv. 17) He means this, but something deeper and gladder: Turn from your sins, drawn by the good news of the Kingdom, Mark i. 15. For John the Kingdom of God means the punishment of rebels

¹ Or, *through* hand. For this is he that was spoken of ¹ by 3
Isaiah the prophet, saying,

The voice of one crying in the wilderness,
Make ye ready the way of the Lord,
Make his paths straight.

Now John himself had his raiment of camel's 4
hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and
his food was locusts and wild honey. Then 5

against the King; for Jesus it means the establishment of a
Father's rule in the heart of His child.

kingdom of heaven. A phrase in common use among the
Rabbis (see quotations from the Mishna in Dalman's *The Words
of Jesus*, p. 219). Heaven was the reverential synonym for God:
cf. Dan. iv. 23, 2 Chron. xxxii. 20. Dalman thinks that Jesus
used this synonym frequently. Wellhausen attributes the
phrase to the evangelist, writing for Jewish readers; in Mark
and Luke it is 'the Kingdom of God'. The meaning of the
phrase, on the lips of Jesus, differs widely from the common
Jewish thought. He lays the stress on the kingly rule, or
sovereignty of God, in the heart, in order to emphasize the truth
that the King is also the Father. Thus He speaks of 'the king-
dom of the Father', Matt. xiii. 43, xxvi. 29. When John used
the phrase he had in view some such vision as Dan. ii. 44. The
prayer for the Kingdom of God was familiar to Judaism, but the
idea of Jesus was new (vi. 10). John knew that the Kingdom
was coming, but did not know what it would be.

3. The quotation is from Isa. xl. 3, but all three evangelists, in
place of 'a highway for our God', simply speak of 'his paths', in
order to refer the words to Jesus, the bringer of the Kingdom of God.

paths: the word suggests a way made by constant treading.
Such are the paths of Jesus, worn first by the Master's feet, then
by the myriads who follow His footprints.

4. John's dress identifies him with Elijah, who was to come as
the forerunner of Messiah (Mal. iv. 5). 'He was an hairy man
and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins' (2 Kings i. 8).
Unhappily the ascetic's dress, like the monk's cowl, was often a
hypocritical garment, to deceive (Zech. xiii. 4). John's sincerity
was above suspicion and was confirmed by his martyrdom.

locusts: (Lev. xi. 22), still used as a food by the poor in Syria,
roasted, boiled or baked in cakes.

wild honey. Probably the liquid exuding from palms and fig-
trees, the food of the very poor. Bee-honey and milk were
delicacies, suggestions of a fruitful land. John drew men by his
austerities. Only by prayer and fasting can the worst evils of
this world be cast out.

went out unto him Jerusalem, and all Judæa,
 6 and all the region round about Jordan; and
 they were baptized of him in the river Jordan,
 7 confessing their sins. But when he saw many
 of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his
 baptism, he said unto them, Ye offspring of
 vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath

5. *Then.* That is a characteristic conjunction of our evangelist's, a mannerism, an unconscious watermark of his style. It is used ninety times in this gospel, only six in Mark.

Jerusalem. Even the proud and self-satisfied capital was touched; the Pharisees and Sadducees joined in the religious movement in order to control it, and were lashed by the prophet's invective accordingly (ver. 7).

the region round about Jordan includes not only the Kikkar of the Old Testament, viz. the plain of Jericho and the Dead Sea, but the whole Arabah and the Jordan valley.

6. *were baptized, . . . confessing.* Cf. Acts xix. 18. Such confession was quite in accord with the Law, Num. v. 7. The Baptism, a very natural symbol of a clean life ensuing on repentance, was John's own idea, and gave him his name in history. The later Jewish practice of subjecting proselytes to a complete submergence beneath water may have been observed before John; but direct proof is wanting. Not only is John's Baptism very distinctive, but it is the first Baptism which emerges into clear historic light.

7. The words which in Luke iii. 7-9 are directed to the people, are here turned specially to the religious leaders, the Pharisees, the party of piety, and the Sadducees, the party of a worldly wise legalism. Their application for Baptism was hypocritical, they were inwardly rejoicing in the fact that they were Abraham's seed, and thanking God that they were not as other men.

offspring of vipers. On a harvest-field when the stubble was burned, the vipers might be seen wriggling away and trying to escape. That is the immediate point of the comparison, here and in the words of Jesus, ch. xxiii. 33. But Jesus also compared the sneaking and venomous hypocrisy of His time to vipers, xii. 34.

who warned you. The Aramaic word which lies behind the Greek, *chavvi* (cf. Esth. ii. 10, 20; Tobit iv. 2, 18), would mean simply 'said that you were to'. John's question means: 'What, you here! I did not expect you to be moved. But if you do come to be baptized, if your repentance is real and not assumed, I must see some fruit, and not that idle reliance on your descent from Abraham'. John was doubtless severe, after the manner of the old order that was passing away; but his severity to the Pharisees and Sadducees far exceeded his severity to the common

to come? Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of 8
¹ Or, *your re-* ¹ repentance : and think not to say within your- 9
pentance selves, We have Abraham to our father : for
 I say unto you, that God is able of these stones
 to raise up children unto Abraham. And even 10
 now is the axe laid unto the root of the trees :
 every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good
 fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.
² Or, *in* I indeed baptize you ² with water unto repent- 11
 ance : but he that cometh after me is mightier
 than I, whose shoes I am not ³ worthy to bear :
³ Or, *suffi-* he shall baptize you ² with the Holy Ghost and
cient.

people, because he, like Jesus after him, did not believe in their sincerity.

8. *fruit.* Not fruits, but one harmonious whole, viz. a virtuous character. Cf. Gal. v. 22. The only test of real repentance is the result in life.

9. *We have Abraham, &c.* This denunciation against a false trust in Jewish birth is quite in the spirit of the noblest Hebrew prophecy. Cf. Amos iii. 2. Why should a favoured people trust in their privileges when God is able out of mere stones to make other such children of privilege? What is man? God *made* him. How can we boast? we are His workmanship, created out of nothing, only by His grace one whit better than the lifeless stones of the Judæan desert.

10. *good fruit.* In the Syriac 'good' is omitted, and rightly; for the contrast is not between good and bad fruit, but between fruit-bearing and fruitlessness. As he spoke to them he saw them as trees, fruitless trees, and the axe laid to their root, fit only for burning (cf. John xv. 2-6).

11. John's humility is beautiful. He knew that a baptism of water unto repentance was but a small beginning compared with the baptism of the Holy Ghost and of Fire which Christ would administer. A servant carries his master's sandals, but John does not feel worthy to do even this menial office for the Mighty One. At the same time, he by no means understood the true greatness of his successor. He thought that the Holy Spirit was a stormy wind of judgement, like Isa. lxiv. 6, xli. 16, xl. 7, iv. 4. And the fire was 'the spirit of burning' of the last cited passage, the fire which burns up the chaff when the wheat is garnered. He was not prepared to see the Holy Spirit *as a dove*; that was Christ's own vision, ver. 16. Nor did he dream that the fire would be the

- 12 *with* fire : whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse his threshing-floor ; and he will gather his wheat into the garner, but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire.
- 13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to the Jordan
- 14 unto John, to be baptized of him. But John

love that burns in the sacrifice of the Cross, Acts ii. 3. One should remember that Spirit in Greek, Latin and Hebrew, means 'wind'. The saying 'He shall baptize you with holy Wind and Fire', has a mystic meaning. He shall apply to you all the elements except earth, viz. water, air, and fire. In Mark i. 8, the fire is omitted. The mingling of fire and water was a paradox from which a reporter might shrink, but it is eminently like Jesus, and absolutely true, *in the Spirit*.

12. John's notion of the fire echoes the old prophets, Mal. iii. 2 seq. ; Amos vii. 4.

threshing-floor. Cf. 2 Esdras iv. 30 ; it means the piled-up sheaves of the field. The cleansing consists in winnowing the grain and getting rid of the chaff : see Ps. i. 4.

unquenchable fire. While the fire of Jesus is very different from what John conceived, that sterner element in His baptism is not to be forgotten : cf. Mark ix. 43, 48. 'Out of his mouth proceeds a sharp two-edged sword and his countenance is as the sun shineth in his strength' (Rev. i. 16). The Jesus of the Transfiguration is the real Jesus (Matt. xvii. 2). John was correct in thinking that our Lord is a consuming fire, but he had not yet apprehended the nature of that fire, the Love which burns with a destructive power against all that is opposed to love. As the object of the farmer is to get the pure wheat from chaff, so it is Christ's object to get pure souls, aflame with love, free from the dross and the impurities which depreciate them.

Such is the Fire, the Holy Spirit, which comes to us now from Galilee.

vv. 13-17. THE BAPTISM OF JESUS.

13. *Then cometh Jesus*. He comes from Galilee, the despised quarter of the land, and from that despised Nazareth ; not, like the Pharisees and Sadducees, from the exalted capital. Nor does He, like them, come merely 'to the baptism', ver. 7, i. e. to observe, to criticize, perhaps loftily to approve its application to the sinful crowd ; but He comes to the Baptizer himself, and comes to be baptized. Mark (i. 9) mentions Nazareth because he had not named it before. Matthew and Luke, having named it before, omit it. Its insignificance encourages such oversight. The Man of Nazareth means man at his lowliest, man despised and rejected of men, John i. 46.

14. Jesus comes straight to John, in humility surpassing John

would have hindered him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? But Jesus answering said unto him, **15**
 Suffer ¹ *it* now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffereth him. And **16**
 Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway from the water: and lo, the heavens were

himself. There is a struggle between the humilities of the forerunner and of the Christ; and in this, as in all things, Jesus is Conqueror. John alone had insight to see the amazing significance of this humiliation. He was baptizing 'for the remission of sins' Mark i. 4, he the sinner, who had not been himself baptized. And behold his Lord comes to him, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world (John i. 29), himself sinless, to be baptized of him! Matthew omits from iii. 1 the statement that the baptism was 'for the remission of sins', as if to make room for this baptism of the Sinless One. But Mark was right; Jesus was baptized 'for the remission of sins', but not for His own; it was for the sins of the whole world. The contrast with John, and still more with the Pharisees, is startling. John is the censor, baptizing, not baptized; the Pharisees feel no need of baptism for themselves. But the true sinlessness includes love, and love takes the place of sinners, identifies itself with their distressing case. He will be made like unto His brethren; in being baptized for the remission of sins, though He was free from sin, He was baptized for the remission of the sins of those whose place He had taken.

15. *all righteousness.* The phrase is pregnant. Like the opening heaven and the descending dove, it is a truth which no one, not even John, could apprehend at the time. When the *Twentieth Century New Testament* renders the words, 'since it is fitting for us thus to satisfy every claim of religion,' it gives only the most superficial meaning of the words. He would identify Himself with the sinful people by sharing their baptism, but the righteousness He had in view was something far more than the due discharge of existing religious claims; it was the righteousness of which St. Paul afterwards spoke in Rom. x. 6, the righteousness which is of God by faith, the righteousness of the Just for the unjust. The Baptism was the initial step, deliberately taken, in assuming the sins of the world, that He might bear them away. Here He began the work which He finished on the cross. John, by the Spirit, recognized this in his exclamation, John i. 29, and every one recognizes it in the moment when he casts his sins on Jesus as the Sin-bearer, and finds the regeneration which accompanies forgiveness.

16. With Jesus also the baptism precedes the descent of the Holy Spirit. It is with the act of obedience that the revelation

opened ¹ unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon ¹ him; and lo, a voice out of the heavens, say-

¹ Some ancient authorities omit *unto him.*

comes. The temptation is, to wait for the revelation before obeying. Many after adult baptism have experienced this opening of the heavens. Many more have experienced it after the simple and emotionless fulfilment of some known demand of God. The baptism in the chill wave has no apparent result; but going up straightway from the water, you see the heavens opened. The vision of the Dove expresses the inward thought of Jesus. Luke iii. 22, implying that the Dove was seen by others descending 'as a bodily form' on Him, is just that kind of change which the record of an inward experience undergoes, as narrators are further removed from the event. Matthew and Mark only say that Jesus Himself saw the dove. 'The evangelist,' says Chrysostom, 'did not say "in the nature", but "in the form", of a dove.' What does the form of a dove mean? An old commentator, Euthymius Zigabenus, says: 'The bird is a lover of men and bears ills patiently; for robbed of its young it endures and lets the robbers approach it just the same: it is the purest of creatures and delights in sweet odour.' The O. T. basis of the symbol is the dove which appeared with the olive-branch after the flood, Gen. viii. 9, 10.

17. Strange to say, while Luke represents the dove as visible to the people, he suggests that the voice came only to Jesus, 'Thou art my beloved son.' So also Mark. Matthew, on the other hand, implies that it was just the reverse: the voice was addressed to the crowd: 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,' and so Matt. xvii. 5. But evidently both the Dove and the authenticating voice ¹ are to be understood as the means by which to the consciousness of Jesus His person is accepted and His mission is authenticated. As time went on it became incredible that Jesus ever stood in need of such inward assurance. His divinity was understood to imply that from His cradle He was conscious of being the Divine Word, the Son of God. As a babe He pointed to His lips—so the old masters constantly represent it—indicating that He was the revelation, the Word, of God. But the plain and simple statement in St. Mark, i. 9-11, conveys the impression to which more and more modern theology inclines, that up to the time of the Baptism Jesus was developing in a thoroughly human way, striving like any one of us to understand His vocation and to know what He was, and what was His Father's business in which He must be occupied. The experiences and expectations of His parents influenced Him no more than

¹ The voice, in Hebrew the *bath-kol*, is a reverential phrase for the divine revelation: cf. Dan. iv. 31. It is definitely used to show that the confirmation of Jesus was supernatural.

¹Or, *This* ing, ¹This is my beloved Son, in whom I am
is my
Son; my well pleased.

those of our parents have influenced us. For the long years in Nazareth, before His manifestation to Israel, He pondered and studied the Scripture. That silent prelude has never been written; the struggles it implied are unrecorded; no one, not even the angels, can peer into the mystery of that Divine Nature assimilating human form and passing through human experience. Curiosity beats its wings against the secret growth and inward realization in vain.

When Jesus emerges from His obscurity, the conflict is over and the victory is won. Milton says of Cromwell, that he had gained his conquests before he began his public career, by the conquest over himself. In a far deeper and fuller sense Jesus during those thirty silent years had won His way to a clear self-consciousness, such as He expresses in Matt. xi. 25-7. But the inward conviction must be ratified by some outward experience. The opportunity for this was offered by the ministry of John. Jesus recognized that this was 'the voice crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight'. He went to that baptism to receive the witness which He required; not so much the witness of John, He needed not the witness of man, but the witness of His Father. The vision of the Dove, and the voice 'Thou art my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased', were the sufficient confirmation. He went from that baptism with the calm and unfaltering assurance which is among the most amazing of His characteristics. The authentication was no surprise to Him; but it was part of that orderly, inevitable development, by which He grew in the stature of His Divine humanity. Thus the Baptism of Jesus is no formal, or half-scenic, manifestation, to make appeal to men; it is a real point, an essential factor in the Person and mission of Jesus.

It was Baldensperger who first brought out the full significance of the Baptism as the dawn of the Messianic consciousness in our blessed Lord. Dr. Mackintosh, in vol. xvi of the *Expository Times*, has some interesting papers on the subject. He says that the vision and the voice were addressed to Jesus Himself, though John may have partially shared the experience. 'That is plainly affirmed in Mark; not less plainly, if in different words, in the First Gospel, nor is the language of the Third Gospel really inconsistent with this. Even Luke merely uses the language of antique realism, a terminology more or less shared by all our records. Where a modern Christian might say, "He saw in vision Heaven opened," and so forth, one Gospel says, "He saw Heaven opened," another "Heaven opened to Him," and another simply "Heaven opened"—probably according to their own thinking, with no discrepancy in meaning.'

my beloved Son—a tacit reference to i. 20.

4 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the
 2 wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And
 when he had fasted forty days and forty nights,

*beloved
 in whom
 I am well
 pleased.
 See ch.
 xii. 18.*

CH. IV. I-II. THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS.

1. *led up*: sc. from the deep Jordan valley, El Ghor, to the rocky and lonely heights which rise from Jericho to Jerusalem.

of the Spirit. The tempter is not God (Jas. i. 13), but Satan, Diabolus (1 Thess. iii. 5, 1 Cor. vii. 5). And yet, as in the prologue to Job, Satan is always under the control of God, and his work serves the Divine ends. Thus in 2 Sam. xxiv. 1 we read that the Lord moved David to number Israel, and the chronicler (1 Chron. xxi. 1) corrects the statement: 'Satan stood up against Israel and moved David to number Israel.' The Tempter only acts as the agent by whom the necessary tests and trials are offered to the soul, and can tempt no man above that he is able to bear. These temptations are necessary to the training of the soul. The word translated 'tempt' is in 2 Cor. xiii. 5 translated 'try'; and there it appears how such a testing whether we be in the faith, is really a condition of our being in the faith; so that even James, who will not admit that God tempts, yet says (ch. i. 2) 'Count it all joy when ye fall into manifold temptations'.

Thus it is the Holy Spirit that leads the soul. St. Mark uses a much stronger term, ἐκβάλλει, 'casts the soul out'—into the waste, the haunts of wild beasts—and of angels—Mark i. 13, 'to be tempted of the devil.' Iron wire, turned out of the mill, must be tested by a pressure equal to the utmost weight which it will have to bear, before it leaves the shed. To such a proof every soul must be subjected. We may face the trial in holy confidence when we observe that even Christ was led up by the Spirit to be tempted in all points like as we are.

2. Mark (i. 13) does not say that He fasted forty days and nights. The reminiscence of Deut. ix. 9, 1 Kings xix. 8 is plain. Luke alters the order of the temptations. But these things are not important. The point of the narrative is that this is Christ's own version of what befel Him; this is the imagery under which He thought it best to describe to His disciples the temptations by which He was assailed. To lay stress on the details is to forget His figurative mode of speech. The real object is to dive below the form, and to find where the trial of His soul really lay.

The spirit in the Baptism had just attested (1) His Sonship to God; (2) His Messianic mission. It is along the line of this twofold revelation to Him that a twofold temptation presents itself, viz: (1) To presume on His divine powers, overriding the laws of nature, for His own comfort, or for the vindication of His mission; (2) To secure His rule over the world by the ordinary

he afterward hungered. And the tempter came 3
 and said unto him, If thou art the Son of God,
^{1 Gr.} command that these stones become ¹ bread.
loaves. But he answered and said, It is written, Man 4
 shall not live by bread alone, but by every word
 that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then 5
 the devil taketh him into the holy city ; and he
^{2 Gr.} set him on the ² pinnacle of the temple, and 6
wing.

worldly way of making Himself a great leader and potentate, aspiring to an earthly throne.

3. *The first temptation* is this : I am hungry, I need food for the body ; shall I bring the supernatural powers entrusted to me, to make bread, and to satisfy my appetite ? Both this and the second temptation spring out of His assured position as the Son of God. Shall the Son of God be left hungry ? Shall not the Son of God be miraculously delivered from any danger to which He shall be exposed ? To the first question He replies with Deut. viii. 3, and gains the position once for all, that the food of His body shall be no concern to Him, but He will live by every word of God. Out of this victory springs the teaching of Matt. vi. 19-34.

5. *The second temptation.* Shall not the Son of God be miraculously delivered from every danger ? Shall not angels bear him up, according to Ps. xci. 11, 12 ? The answer comes at once : the purpose of the Son of God in the world is not to be delivered, but to deliver. Trial, suffering, and death await Him ; arrested by enemies, He will not summon legions of angels to help Him ; nailed to a cross, He, the Son of God, will not come down (Mark xv. 32 ; Luke xxiii. 35). Confident that the Father can and will deliver Him, if He wills, He will not 'tempt' Him, or make such self-chosen experiments the test of His faith. The word of Deut. vi. 16 comes to His mind and settles the question.

the holy city. That is frequently the scene of the sorest temptation. We are to suppose that He was carried to the temple in the same sense that Ezekiel was (Ezek. viii. 3).

the pinnacle of the temple. Lit. wing ; see Dan. ix. 27. As a bodily experience, there would be no great temptation to plunge down from that dizzy height into the Kedron valley ; but it was a vision, and the spiritual test clothed itself in this form. Was He to live among men 'giving signs', and overwhelming them with proofs of the supernatural ? No, here the question was settled ; 'no sign should be given.' He would not attest His Sonship by miracles. He would manifest it only by itself. Men should believe Him for what He was, because He had the twofold witness of Himself and of the Father, and not for the wonders He

saith unto him, If thou art the Son of God, cast thyself down : for it is written,

He shall give his angels charge concerning thee :

And on their hands they shall bear thee up,

Lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone.

7 Jesus said unto him, Again it is written, Thou
8 shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again, the
devil taketh him unto an exceeding high moun-
9 tain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the
world, and the glory of them ; and he said unto
him, All these things will I give thee, if thou
10 wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith
Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan : for it
is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy
11 God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the

wrought. He would, as Son of God, live the ordinary human life, exposed to all its accidents and sufferings. By this decision Gethsemane and Calvary became possible.

8. *The third temptation* arises out of His Messiahship, and the current expectation of a worldly sovereign who would raise up the tabernacle of David, and establish a throne in Jerusalem. Again, we must not seek the mountain in terrestrial geography ; nor must we imagine that the devil asking Him to fall down and worship Him would have presented any real seduction to the soul of Jesus. The principle of Deut. vi. 13 was far too axiomatic with Him to allow the possibility even for a moment of worshipping any being but God. Only this is the way in which He describes a conflict which He had to face. With His great powers He could rally men around Him. He could gain to His cause, not only the Herods and the Pilates, but Tiberius himself. He could establish an Empire at Rome, as Hildebrand did, as Julius II attempted to do. He could employ the earthly powers in His cause, as Ignatius Loyola and the Jesuits did. It is only when you see how the Church and the Jesuits yielded to this most subtle of all temptations, that you understand the greatness of Christ's victory in absolutely and for ever declining these worldly ways of establishing the heavenly kingdom.

11. *Then the devil leaveth him.* The prince of this world had come and had found nothing in Him. Wellhausen, noting how the

devil leaveth him; and behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

Now when he heard that John was delivered 12

temptation was renewed by Peter in Mark viii. 32, 33, and was met by the same indignant cry, ὑπάγε Σατανᾶ, leaps to the conclusion that Peter was the Satan of Matt. iv. 10. This is so far true, as, that the Principate of Peter at Rome has been the Church's greatest snare, and the successors of Peter have yielded to the temptation which Christ resisted. Dr. Bruce (*Expositor's New Testament*) thought that the devil left Him as a visionary who was too simple to interfere much with his designs, and that Christ gained the universal empire by spiritual methods which Satan could not understand and therefore did not fear. But the reason why the prince of this world left Him is given in John xiv. 30. 'Angels came and ministered unto Him,' as they did in Gethsemane (Luke xxii. 43), and would have done more visibly if He had wished (Matt. xxvi. 53). Whenever we are come to Jesus we are come also 'to innumerable hosts of angels' (Heb. xii. 22, 23).

Think not that a belief in angels is a disparagement of Jesus. He spoke most of them because He knew most. He was accompanied by them through His life — heralded by their song, comforted by their sympathy. They gazed on His cross, trying to gauge its mystery of redemption; they watched His resurrection and filled His tomb with light. One of the blessed results of His coming was to open our eyes to the presence of this heavenly company, and to assure us that they are sent forth to minister unto them who are heirs of salvation. As He was 'seen of angels' (1 Tim. iii. 16), so are we by faith to see them, not only the angels of little children beholding the Father's face, or the angels who will gather the wheat in the harvest of the world, but also the angels who, present in the Church assembly, exact a decorum becoming to a heavenly society (1 Cor. xi. 10).

Bengel thinks that the 'ministering' here was to bring Him food, and quotes 1 Kings xix. 5. That is part of the angelic function. But chiefly they bring us angels' food to eat.

iv. 12-18. THE GALILEAN MINISTRY, beginning here,
ends at xix. 1.

12. Did He go into Galilee because Herod, who imprisoned John, might also arrest Him? Or does it not rather mean that He went into the land of danger? Galilee was the mixing of the nations; it lay on the trade route from Mesopotamia to the Mediterranean. Large cities of the Roman type, tintured with Greek culture, and using the Greek language, clustered round the Sea of Galilee, cities with imperial names, like Cæsarea which was built by Philip the Tetrarch (B. C. 4—A. D. 34) and Tiberias, named after the Emperor.

- 13 up, he withdrew into Galilee ; and leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the borders of Zebulun and
- 14 Naphtali : that it might be fulfilled which was spoken ¹ by Isaiah the prophet, saying,
- 15 The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,
- 1 Or,
through
- 2 Toward the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the ³ Gentiles,
- 2 Gr. *The way of the sea.*
- 16 The people which sat in darkness Saw a great light,
- 3 Gr. *nations: and so elsewhere.*
- And to them which sat in the region and shadow of death,
- To them did light spring up.
- 17 From that time began Jesus to preach, and to say, Repent ye ; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

13. *leaving Nazareth*, the remote and tranquil hill town, He came down to the busy town on the Lake. The site of Capernaum is disputed. Exalted to heaven, it was thrust down to hell. At Tel Hum, however, the recent excavations have revealed the ruins of a fine building, which may have been the synagogue of Capernaum. He came to be among men. He would be either in a solitude with God, or in a crowd, ministering to the throng ; the first to make the second possible.

14-16. The citation from Isa. ix. 1, 2 would spring naturally to the evangelist's mind, nor would he wait to ask if the prophet had this event in view : enough that there was Jesus in that region, the Light rising on those that sat in darkness and the shadow of death. Always when men think of Him they are reminded of light. Galilee of the Nations (Gentiles) was first enlightened. Ultimately all the nations will see that great light : the whole circle (that is the meaning of Galilee) of the nations will rejoice in it.

17. The words echo what is said of John in iii. 1. The words which Jesus used in this 'beginning' of His preaching were the identical words of John ; but at once the deeper meaning was in them ; even the monkish commentator, Euthymius Zigabenus notes that 'repent' on John's lips means amendment—turning from what had been wrong in life ; but when Jesus uses it, He means

And walking by the sea of Galilee, he saw 18 two brethren, Simon who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea ; for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, 19 Come ye after me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left the nets, 20 and followed him. And going on from thence 21 he saw other two brethren, ¹ James the *son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets ; and he called them. And they straightway left 22 the boat and their father, and followed him.

¹ Or, *Jacob* : and so elsewhere.

‘turn from the old life to the new’. He has glad tidings of pardon and restoration and service ; and thus repentance does not linger in the past, but leaps at once into the possession of the future, the Kingdom of Heaven, the inward sovereignty of God. In every respect the ministry of Jesus, growing out of the ministry of John, is a singular contrast to it.

18. The first recorded words of Jesus in His ministry, leaving aside the echo from John the Baptist, are, ‘Come ye after me and I will make you fishers of men.’ His first thought is to draw disciples to His person, and to endow them with gifts to carry on His work, the saving of men.

The tropical sea, 600 feet below the Mediterranean, abounds with fish. These fishermen He requires for a nobler and richer fishery. (See ch. xiii. 47.) The four simple men became illustrious in His light ; fishing for men by Him, they have become famous among men. Jesus demands all from men, but He gives incomparably more than He takes. The swift obedience of these young fishermen, leaving at once nets and boat for the implements of their new calling, and their blood relatives for the new Master, is a vivid proof of the personal magnetism with which Jesus drew men to Himself.

19. *Come ye after me.* A Greek word is used which occurs again in xxv. 34, ‘Come, ye blessed of my Father.’ At first He would have us follow in the fishery, or in the sorrowful way, but only that at last we may follow Him to His glory, to His Father, to His throne. It would not do to show the issue at the beginning. We must follow Him for His own sake, in His humiliation and in His suffering, if we would reach the goal in His footsteps ; follow Him in His work, and His saving of the world, if we would see, with Him, of the travail of the soul, and be satisfied.

- 23 And ¹ Jesus went about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the ² gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness among
- 24 the people. And the report of him went forth into all Syria: and they brought unto him

¹ Some ancient authorities read *he*.

² Or, *good tidings*: and so elsewhere.

23. *their synagogues*; the models of the churches of Jesus. He entered them, and by His gospel made them churches.

teaching, preaching, healing. This is the formula of the Galilean ministry, repeated ix. 35. Matthew dwells much on the teaching, Luke more on the preaching; but the three synoptists all emphasize the healing. The healing stands first. This it was that most distinguished Him from John. By this He showed His pity and love to suffering mankind, and marked the transition from the prophet to the Saviour. Wonderful is the teaching, eternal in its validity, a fuller ultimate proof of His mission than the healing of the sick: but the compassion which healed is the element in Jesus—in God—which draws us to Him, to God in Him.

Unless the fishers of men heal and pity, as well as teach and preach, they do not really 'come after Him'.

The prominence given to healing in all the evangelists represents our Lord's own view of it. John the Baptist came preaching and teaching, but not healing. No prophet made it an integral part of his ministry; though there are lovely stories of Elijah and Elisha and of Isaiah, which are the protevangel of healing. But Jesus came healing. This is the true Christian Science: Jesus is the Healer.

disease, chronic, sickness, the weakness and ill-health which may pass into disease. Jesus has an equal compassion for our great troubles and little ailments, and is willing to heal both.

24. *into all Syria.* That sounds hyperbolic. Syria, from Antioch on the Orontes to the border of Arabia, is a great country. But Capernaum was a centre of traffic in all directions; and the statement at the most only anticipates a little. The fame of Him has gone out, first into all the Roman Empire, reaching the northern peoples, even Britain, the *Ultima Thule*; then it went out with Columbus to America and with Xavier to India; in the great missionary century, the nineteenth, it went through Africa, and captured Australia; it penetrated Madagascar and the islands of the sea; it entered New Guinea; it knocked at the doors of ancient civilizations like China and Japan.

Beginning from Galilee of the Gentiles, 'the mixing of the nations,' by the way of the sea, it went, or it must go, to the uttermost ends of the earth.

¹ Or, *de-*
moniacs

all that were sick, holden with divers diseases and torments, ¹ possessed with devils, and epileptic, and palsied ; and he healed them. And ²⁵ there followed him great multitudes from Galilee and Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judæa and *from* beyond Jordan.

torments. The Greek word *βάσανος*, used only here and in Luke xvi. 23. of the torments of hell, in the New Testament, means the touchstone by which gold was tried. This original meaning of the word should be kept in view : cf. Pindar, *πειρώντι δὲ καὶ ὁ χρυσοῦς ἐν βασάνῳ πρέπει καὶ νόος ὀρθός*—or, as our old song says,

As gold is tried in the fire,
So the heart must be tried by pain.

The torments are the terrible diseases of the mind, (1) Possession. The story of Pastor Hsi shows how real this is in China : the experiences there narrated enable us to understand the phenomena recorded under this head in the Gospels. (2) Epilepsy, with the sad mental derangement accompanying it. (3) Paralysis.

But these torments, like the milder diseases and sicknesses, are all touchstones of character, the means of eliciting and making the soul. Jesus does not come to announce that these sufferings of humanity are to be abolished. They serve their purpose, as the furnace serves the purpose of refining gold and silver. But He does come to heal them ; in His healing of them, their highest purpose is realized. For when He heals, He saves, and the healed body becomes the temple of a redeemed soul.

This element of His ministry, the healing, must not be omitted in our teaching, and in Christian work. The extraordinary recrudescence of faith in the miraculous Virgin at Lourdes may be due to the omission of this element from the faith and practice of the Church : when Jesus the Healer is forgotten, apparitions of virgins and saints will be invented to take His place and to do His work. In Protestant countries also Christian Science is the reaction from the omission of Christ's healing ministry. This wave of thought and teaching, which has flowed over America, and entered England, aims at showing that evil is non-existent, and thought can think it away. Many remarkable cures are effected ; and, so far as the mind can control the body and its functions, Christian Science has done well in reviving a forgotten truth. But the Gospel connects all healing with the person of Jesus. The good news of the kingdom (ver. 23) is the announcement of God's absolute sovereignty over nature, and the laws of nature ; and where Jesus is, the power of God is present to heal.

25. The district from which the people gathered around Jesus

5 And seeing the multitudes, he went up into the mountain : and when he had sat down, his

is less than the whole of Syria, into which his frame penetrated with the trade-caravans. Galilee represents the west and the north, Decapolis is the district of the ten cities on the east of the lake, Jerusalem and Judæa are the south, and 'beyond Jordan' is Peræa, the south-east. The description therefore implies, what history has confirmed, that to this unique ministry of teaching, preaching, and healing gather men of all countries and kindreds and tongues.

Far and wide, though all unknowing,
Pants for Him each human breast ;
Human tears for Him are flowing,
Human hearts in Him would rest.

CH. v-vii. THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

St. Luke vi. 20-49, gives an epitome of this discourse, after the appointment of the Twelve. He stood on a level place, and the multitude gathered about Him. St. Matthew implies rather that He withdrew from the multitudes to the mountain, and gathered only His disciples to Him. At that time, if Matthew is giving a chronological narrative, only four disciples were called—Matthew was only called later, in ix. 9, and the Twelve are not named till x. 2-4—and the audience that listened to the Sermon would be very restricted. But probably St. Luke preserves more accurately the order of events and the circumstances of the discourse, while St. Matthew in his *Logia* had a fuller record of the Sermon itself.

It has been suggested that the evangelist sums up the teaching of Jesus at the opening of His ministry, and puts it in this way at the commencement of his narrative, not implying that all this was said on the memorable occasion of the mountain-sermon, but rather indicating that the preaching which began on the mount contained these topics, and followed this order. But, whatever view may be taken of the circumstances, or of the composition, of the Sermon, nothing must hinder us from studying these three chapters on our knees, as containing the sum of all wisdom concerning life and redemption. The solemn close (vii. 22-27 : cf. Luke vi. 46-49) reminds us that, when scholarship has done its best to settle the details, the great passage, as it stands, challenges our obedience ; we cannot shirk it by critical discussions ; it is too plain and searching to admit of excuses. We can only say :

Saviour and Master, these sayings of Thine,
Help me to make them doings of mine.

CH. v. 1-12. THE BEATITUDES. The ministry of Jesus begins with the word, Blessed. Once, 1 Tim. i. 11, the word is applied

disciples came unto him : and he opened his ² mouth, and taught them, saying,

to God. To be godlike is to be blessed ; and these eight details show the way in which men may be godlike. They sound paradoxical ; for in each case it is the opposite of what men count happiness which is selected for commendation. The carnal mind is enmity against God ; the happiness, which consists in godlikeness, is a direct reversal of the tendencies which are held to be natural. Thus the Beatitudes are a call to conversion ; we can only be blessed like God by becoming the opposite of what we naturally are. Man says : 'Happy are the rich, the glad, the powerful, the satisfied, the great who trample on the small, those who indulge the appetites, the warriors, those who can force others to their way of thinking.' This ideal was common before Christ came ; it is common even now. These are the things which men naturally desire and admire. It is in direct antagonism to what men think and feel that Jesus declares who are really happy, giving the reasons ; in doing this He implies that men who are born of the flesh must be born again, born of the Spirit, by faith in Him. These Christian virtues form a complete chain, and follow in a natural order, each growing out of the one preceding.

1. *the mountain.* We know not which, but tradition identifies it with Khurun-Hattin, at the base of which Saladin defeated the Crusaders. The definite article might mean only the hills as distinct from the lake-level ; it might also mean the eminent and dominating mountain of the neighbourhood, Mount Tabor. Jesus had an affinity to the mountaintops. He went there to pray, to gather disciples, as here (see Mark iii. 13), and to teach (cf. ch. xiv. 23, xv. 29), and to be transfigured. His sayings are of the heights and of the open air. He has no esoteric teaching, like Buddha. His truth is in the open, and all may receive it who can. He has none but open secrets. He that hath ears may hear. But the great thing is to have ears.

sat down. The teacher's attitude : cf. Mark iv. 1.

2. *opened his mouth.* A Hebraism : cf. Ps. lxxviii. 2 ; quoted in xiii. 35 as peculiarly appropriate to Jesus ; He spoke in parables and uttered the dark sayings of old ; and so He 'opened the mouth' to teach. Though it may be originally a *naïf* and child-like description of the act of speaking, it suggests, to Greek and to Western ears, that there is a great body of truth pressing for utterance, as if it were necessary only to open the mouth, and the truth will issue forth. It suits the idea of inspiration. The phrase is also appropriate to those who spoke of Him, e.g. Philip instructing the eunuch, Acts viii. 35 ; Peter addressing Cornelius, Acts x. 34 ; Paul before Gallio, Acts xviii. 14. It implies eager, heartfelt speech, 2 Cor. vi. 11. It may, however, refer to language of passion in a bad sense, Rev. xiii. 6.

- 3 Blessed are the poor in spirit : for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- 4 ¹ Blessed are they that mourn : for they shall be comforted.

¹ Some ancient authorities transpose ver. 4 and 5.

3. *poor in spirit.* Probably St. Luke is accurate in his version 'blessed are ye poor'; but the addition 'in spirit' is the interpretation which Jesus Himself gave of His saying. The kingdom He preached is essentially a state of mind, and He attaches value only to that which we choose and determine. It is not, therefore, so much poverty which is blessed, but the mind which is indifferent to all earthly possessions, desiring only the kingdom of heaven. Thus the saying of Christ recorded by Clement interprets the beatitude. 'When shall Thy kingdom come?' He was asked. 'When the two shall be one,' was the reply, 'and when that which is without shall be as that which is within.' First comes the inner spirit, which must be right with God, then outward things must be harmonized with the inward spirit—and the sovereignty of God will be complete. The poor are they who lay not up for themselves treasure on earth, because their treasure is in heaven, they who seek first the kingdom of God, leaving all else to follow. The corresponding woe in St. Luke vi. 24 reminds us that earthly possessions may harden and fill the heart and make the poverty of which Jesus speaks, the right inward attitude towards God and towards material things, very difficult, and in some cases impossible. 'It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for the rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.'

One morning on the minister's desk was laid a folded paper containing these words: 'The prayers of this congregation are requested for a man who is growing rich.' That showed a right understanding of the first beatitude. 'Theirs is the kingdom'—the theocracy is the true property: cf. xix. 14 (Mark x. 14; Luke xviii. 16).

4. *they that mourn.* Sorrow often narrows us down to God. And as there is a heart of blessing in all sorrow, the mourners may be accounted blessed, though often by unbelief they mar the effects which God intends. Jesus in accepting Isa. lxi. 1-3 as the description of His own mission (Luke iv. 18) recognized His own function of comforting. Take away the person and the work of Jesus, and the beatitudes cease to be true. It is He who turns sorrow into joy (John xvi. 20). For this see that epistle of transformed sorrow, 2 Cor. i. 7, vii. 10. It is in His heavenly kingdom that tears are wiped away, Rev. xxi. 4. While mourning is thus to be taken in a general sense, we cannot help thinking specially of the mourning of repentance, Jas. iv. 9-10.

Blessed are the meek : for they shall inherit 5
the earth.

Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after 6
righteousness : for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful : for they shall obtain 7
mercy.

5. *the meek.* This beatitude is almost a quotation of Ps. xxxvii. 11, 'The meek shall inherit the land.' Dalman shows that even in the Jewish writings possessing the earth has a spiritual meaning, as having part in the future age (*Words of Jesus*, 126). In the Buddhist Canon we read: 'He who, when assailed, does not resist, but speaks mildly to his tormenter—him do I call a Brahmana.' Buddha learned from that spiritual Christ, who lighteth every man coming into the world. The originality of Christ's teaching is not to be sought in individual precepts, but in drawing out the precepts which are found scattered in the dust-heaps of other systems, and piecing them together into a new, simple, and perfect code.

Christ Himself is the example of meekness : cf. xi. 29, xxi. 5. They who learn of Him become meek too. This spirit is 'in the sight of God of great price' (1 Pet. iii. 4).

they shall inherit the earth. Jean Paul Richter said that 'the English inherit the sea, the French the land, the Germans the air'. But what a precarious tenure! No one by might or genius inherits sea or land or air, except that slip of land or that shroud of the 'vast and wandering deep' in which he is buried. The meek, because they are precious in God's sight, will inherit the new heaven and earth.

6. *hunger and thirst after righteousness.* The noun is in the accusative, which implies that the desire is to possess righteousness as a whole, a complete sanctification. The longing for a little righteousness, mixed with sin, is not gratified; but the passion for a perfect righteousness is (cf. Ps. xlii. 2; Isa. lv. 1, 2; John vii. 37). Others speak of 'following after' righteousness (2 Tim. ii. 22), but Christ prefers the figure of hunger and thirst (John vi. 33), for eating and drinking suggest a more intimate assimilation.

7. *the merciful.* Christ is the merciful and faithful high-priest (Heb. ii. 17). Mercy is God's property (Luke vi. 36; Rom. xi. 30, 31), and is conferred of His grace (1 Tim. i. 13, 16). 'It droppeth as the gentle dew from heaven.' But Christ was particular to show that the unmerciful servant shall not obtain mercy; and here the converse is declared: the merciful man shall (2 Tim. i. 16, 18; Heb. vi. 10). God's mercy is not bought,

- 8 Blessed are the pure in heart : for they shall see God.
- 9 Blessed are the peacemakers : for they shall be called sons of God.
- 10 Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake : for theirs is the kingdom
- 11 of heaven. Blessed are ye when *men* shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

but it is conditioned. 'Mercy is practised not by money alone, but by words and tears', says Euthymius Zigabenus.

8. *the pure in heart* : cf. Ps. xi. 7, xxiv. 4, lxxiii. 1. Purity is the end of the commandment (1 Tim. i. 5 ; 2 Tim. ii. 22). Out of purity comes love (1 Pet. i. 22), and Love is God. The pure see God (Heb. xii. 14). 'For as the mirror,' says Theophylact, 'if it be pure, then receives reflections, so the pure soul receives the vision of God.' Augustine explains purity as simplicity. 'cor mundum est cor simplex' ; the double-minded man is blind. But the pure is in the widest sense the purged (John xv. 2). We cannot think of a natural purity, but of the cleansing (1 John i. 7). Who apart from Christ is pure ?

9. *the peacemakers*. See ver. 23, 24. Jesus, the Son of God, is the great peacemaker (Eph. ii. 14). And as we share His work of peacemaking, we share His title, and are called sons of God. The peacemakers sow the seed which produces fruits of righteousness, Jas. iii. 18 : just as war-makers sow the Cadmus-teeth from which all forms of evil spring. They who as peacemakers are the sons of God are not loved, or even known, by the world (1 John iii. 1) ; but they are led by the Spirit of God, and are for that reason His sons (Rom. viii. 14). 'Pursue peace' is a counsel of blessedness (Heb. xii. 14). For the sonship regarded as reward, see Luke xx. 36 ; Rev. xxi. 7.

10. *they that have been persecuted*, and carry the scars on them, the marks of the Lord Jesus. The persecution while it lasts is not joyful, but grievous ; only afterwards it yields priceless fruit. The blessing of the persecuted is that of the poor (ver. 3).

11. *for my sake* (John xv. 21). So Henry Martyn in Persia enters in his Journal, speaking of Christ's Divinity : 'It is this doctrine that exposes me to the contempt of the learned Mahometans, in whom it is difficult to say whether pride or ignorance predominates. Their sneers are more difficult to bear than the brickbats which the boys sometimes throw at me ; however, both are an honour of which I am not worthy. How many times in the day have I occasion to repeat the words :

Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is ¹²
your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they
the prophets which were before you.

Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt ¹³
have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be
salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but
to be cast out and trodden under foot of men.

If on my face, for Thy dear name,
Shame and reproach should be,
All hail reproach, and welcome shame,
If Thou remember me.

The more they wish me to give up one point, the Divinity of Christ, the more I seem to feel the necessity of it and rejoice to glory in it. Indeed, I trust I would sooner give up my life than surrender it.'

12. *Rejoice, and be exceeding glad.* Read the letters of Ignatius, as he was carried to Rome, to be thrown to the wild beasts in the Amphitheatre for the name of Jesus. They are exultant: 'Now I am beginning to be a disciple . . . now am I made the fine-flour, ground by the teeth of the wild beasts, to be the bread of my God.' See the joy of the Apostles, Acts v. 41; Rom. v. 3; 2 Cor. xii. 10; Col. i. 11, 24; Heb. x. 34; Jas. i. 2; 1 Pet. iv. 13. None of the promises of Christ is more marvellously fulfilled than that of joy in suffering for His sake. All suffering, patiently accepted for His sake, turns into joy.

your reward is Jesus Himself: cf. Gen. xv. 1. In S. Maria sopra Minerva is Filippino Lippi's fresco of Thomas Aquinas. Christ says to him: 'Thou hast written good about me; what reward dost thou desire?' St. Thomas answers: 'None other than Thyself, O Lord.'

in heaven, i. e. with God: cf. vi. 1.

v. 13-16. The *salt of the earth* and the *light of the world*. 'Nil sole et sale utilius' (Pliny, *H. N.* xxxi. 9). In ver. 12 the eyes of the disciples are turned to heaven; here they are brought back to earth, where their conduct is to constitute the salt which gives savour, and the far-gleaming city of God which gives light to the world.

13. The *salt* (Mark ix. 50; Luke xiv. 34) may lose its savour. The Greek word means 'become foolish', which interprets the allegorical meaning. Salt in the storehouse, it is said in Palestine, undergoes a chemical change, losing the properties, while retaining the appearance, of salt. 'If your character is infatuated by love of praise, desire of money, eagerness for pleasures, the lust of revenge, the fear of dishonour, losses, or death' says Erasmus, 'the salt loses its savour.' Cf. Heb. vi. 6.

- 14 Ye are the light of the world. A city set on
 15 a hill cannot be hid. Neither do *men* light a
 lamp, and put it under the bushel, but on the
 stand ; and it shineth unto all that are in the
 16 house. Even so let your light shine before
 men, that they may see your good works, and
 glorify your Father which is in heaven.
 17 Think not that I came to destroy the law or
 the prophets : I came not to destroy, but to
 18 fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven

14. Famous Rabbis were called 'lamps of the world' (Dalman, p. 176). Cf. Wisd. xviii. 4, where the Law is called a 'light for the age'. The resplendent image of the hill-perched city is exquisitely combined with the lowly image of the one-roomed cottage, where the lamp set on a projecting stone is hidden by an earthenware shade when the family sleeps (Mark iv. 21 ; Luke viii. 16, xi. 33).

16. The shining brings no honour to the lamp, but to the objects illuminated. 'He does not bid us make a theatrical show of our virtue,' says Euthymius Zigabenus. The object of the shining is to glorify God in Christ (Cor. iv. 6), as the woman's good work in anointing the feet of Jesus shines round the world, ch. xxvi. 13. But incidentally the shining illuminates the prison-house, and liberates the prisoner, Acts xii. 7.

your Father. How quietly the great phrase is introduced ; to Jesus it was the most obvious of terms. He says 'your', not 'our' Father.

V. 17-20. CHRIST'S TEACHING DOES NOT REPEAL THE OLD LAW, BUT BRINGS IT OUT INTO ITS FULL EXPRESSION AND INTENTION.

On the one hand the Lord is supreme over Moses, and corrects, by deepening, Mosaic regulations ; on the other hand He preserves the continuity with Moses, justifies the divine character of the older revelation, and places low in the Kingdom of God any Christian teacher who discredits any commandment of the past. This is Christ's authority for the careful study of the Old Testament, and for seeking to evolve out of the old law the new Gospel.

17. *the law or the prophets* : these with the Psalms (Luke xxiv. 44) constitute the Old Testament. This saying is mentioned in the Talmud as springing from the Gospel (Dobschütz, *Christian Life in the Primitive Church*, p. 155).

18. *verily*, i. e. Amen. Christ's peculiar word of emphasis, He is Yea, Amen.

and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished. Whosoever therefore 19 shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven : but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, that 20 except your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.

jot or tittle (cf. Luke xvi. 17), i. e. the letter *jod*; or rather, perhaps, it is the Greek *iota*, as in the Lord's time the Hebrew or Aramaic *jod* was not written, as the smallest of the letters; or the part of a letter, e. g. the - in 2.

till all be fulfilled (Mark xiii. 30). The early fathers saw in the *jod* the upright, and in the *tittle* the transverse beam, of the Cross. Thus they read the New Testament into the Old.

19. The Christian teacher who gives due weight to the Old Testament is great in the kingdom. He who neglects it is little or even least. Joshua ben Levi said that men esteemed in this age will be despised in the age to come. His son Joseph on his deathbed had a vision of the world turned upside down, in which the highest found themselves lowest and the lowest highest (Dalman, *Words of Jesus*, p. 113). Perhaps our Lord was thinking of John the Baptist ('He that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he'), who neglected the temple and the sacrifices. Our Lord's ideal was not the reformer or the iconoclast, but the saintly soul that draws the good out of things evil, and educes the new order out of the old.

20. *For*. The meaning of the conjunction is not very obvious. He is adjusting the grades in the kingdom; highest, those who understand the Old and the New; lowest, those who impatiently sweep away the Old in their zeal for the New. Such valuations, He seems to say, I make among the children of the kingdom, but the Pharisee is not in the kingdom at all. 'For I say unto you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the Pharisees, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.'

righteousness is the Pharisaic ideal, and in Matthew it is also the Christian ideal. But there is a contrast between the two ideals: cf. Rom. x. 1-10.

enter into the kingdom. The Aramaic would rather be 'attain to', like the Rabbinical 'attain to the age to come'.

- 21 Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgement:
- 22 but I say unto you, that every one who is angry with his brother¹ shall be in danger of the judgement; and whosoever shall say to his brother, ²Raca, shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say, ³Thou fool, shall
- 23 be in danger ⁴of the ⁵hell of fire. If therefore thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught

¹ Many ancient authorities insert *without cause.*
² An expression of contempt.
³ Or, *Moroh*, a Hebrew expression of condemnation.
⁴ Gr. *unto* or *into.*
⁵ Gr. *Gehenna of fire.*

CH. V. 21-48. SIX INSTANCES OF THE LAW FULFILLED: MURDER, ADULTERY, DIVORCE, SWEARING, RETALIATION, AND LOVE OF ENEMIES.

'He claimed to be a new Lawgiver, and that in a manner which Jewish feeling regarded as an invasion of the divine prerogative; for, unlike Moses, who spoke in the name of God, He announced in His own name what should henceforth be regarded as law.' Dalman, *Words of Jesus*. p. 315.

v. 21-26. MURDER. Here the law to them of old time stands intact; but its principle is carried further. Of old it restrained the end, not the beginning, of the transgression (Euthym. Zigab.); now the evil is recognized at its source. The angry feeling, the contemptuous word, the implacable spirit, in Christ's law, receive the penalties which human law allots to murder.

21. *Thou shalt not kill* (Exod. xx. 13; Deut. v. 17).

the judgement, i. e. the bench of seven established in different localities to deal with criminal cases, Deut. xvi. 18; 2 Chron. xix. 5. Josephus, *Antiq.* iv. 8, § 14, says: 'Let there be seven men to judge in each city . . . if these are unable to give a just sentence . . . let them send the cause undetermined to the holy city, and there let the high-priest, the prophet, and the Sanhedrin determine as it shall seem good to them.'

22. Anger even with cause deserves the judgement of the local court! The brother is our fellow man: cf. vii. 3. Raca, Theophylact says, was only equivalent to the scornful *σὺ* in Greek: as if one said to another 'You — !' This contemptuous expression should make one obnoxious to the high court of the Sanhedrin.

fool, or 'rebel', as Moses said and was punished (Num. xx. 10). That contumely deserves the punishment of the valley of Hinnom, where criminals were burnt. Thus Christ strikes at the root of 'man's inhumanity to man'.

23. The gift is the offering, xxiii. 18, 19. This refers to the

against thee, leave there thy gift before the 24
 altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy
 brother, and then come and offer thy gift. *
 Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou 25
 art with him in the way ; lest haply the adver-
 sary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge
 1 deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast
 into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt 26
 by no means come out thence, till thou have
 paid the last farthing.

1 Some
 ancient
 authorities
 omit
deliver
thee.

Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt 27
 not commit adultery : but I say unto you, that 28
 every one that looketh on a woman to lust after
 her hath committed adultery with her already
 in his heart. And if thy right eye causeth thee 29
 to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee :
 for it is profitable for thee that one of thy mem-
 bers should perish, and not thy whole body be

temple at Jerusalem, and would not be so vivid in Galilee. Perhaps the original form is Mark xi. 25. Morality precedes worship ; mercy comes before sacrifice.

25. The implacability which will not forgive incurs the severest judgement: cf. xviii. 32-5. *Agree with thine adversary* ; Luke xii. 58 gives the words in another connexion. God is alike Prosecutor and Judge and executor of judgement (Allen).

27-30. ADULTERY (Ex. xx. 14 ; Deut. v. 18). The evil of adultery is recognized in Job xxxi. 9-12.

28. *a woman*, sc. a wife.

looketh, i. e. keeps looking, cherishes the thought. The eye and the heart are the two brokers of sin.

29. The strenuous measures to be taken to master sensual sin. These verses occur again in xviii. 8, 9. The reference to the right hand is not apposite here ; and ver. 30 is omitted in D and Syra S ; hand and foot are not guilty, like the eye, of adultery.

causeth thee to stumble. Scandalizes thee ; the scandalum is the trap-stick with bait on. Origen as a boy made himself a eunuch to escape the snares of passion ; he took the Lord's words literally. But with what vigilance and vigour the soul must watch and wrestle to check the first movements of illicit desire the strong figure shows.

- 30 cast into ¹hell. And if thy right hand causeth thee to stumble, cut it off, and cast it from thee : for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole
- 31 body go into ¹hell. It was said also, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a
- 32 writing of divorcement : but I say unto you, that every one that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress : and whosoever shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery.
- 33 Again, ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths :
- 34 but I say unto you, Swear not at all ; neither by

¹ Gr.
Gehenna.

31-2. DIVORCE. This is from Mark x. 1-12. The law of divorce is in Deut. xxiv. 1. But the prophets moved in Christ's direction : see Mal. ii. 15, 16.

32. *saving for the cause of fornication*, xix. 9. That is in effect a putting away on the wife's part, for which the husband is not responsible. But the saying as given by Mark does not admit even this exception.

Here Christ not only deepens, but corrects the Mosaic law. But He does not feel that His correction abolishes one tittle of the law. See the connexion in Luke xvi. 17, 18. Moses for the hardness of their hearts allowed his people a liberty which became questionable when clearer light shone, and when a higher stage of development was reached. While the moral sanction and law are eternal, the contents of the law advance, the standard rises with time.

33-7. SWEARING. Here the principle of the law is again only deepened. The swearing does not refer to an oath before a law-court, which the Lord himself implicitly allowed (Matt. xxvi. 63), but to the strong language used in ordinary conversation (cf. Jas. v. 12). The Law only provided against false swearing (Lev. xix. 12), and for the due performance of vows (Num. xxx. 2 ; Deut. xxiii. 21 ; Eccles. v. 4 ; Ecclus. xviii. 22). The new Law says that speech is to be simple, and the plain word is to suffice. Casuistry allowed the breach of an oath if it was not 'by God', but only 'by heaven' or 'by earth' or 'by Jerusalem', or 'by my head'. Christ said everything is 'by God', heaven is His throne, earth

the heaven, for it is the throne of God ; nor by 35
 the earth, for it is the footstool of his feet ; nor
¹ by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great
 King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, 36
 for thou canst not make one hair white or
 black. ² But let your speech be, Yea, yea ; 37
 Nay, nay : and whatsoever is more than these
 is of ³ the evil *one*.

¹ Or,
toward

² Some
 ancient
 authori-
 ties read
*But your
 speech
 shall be.*

³ Or, *evil* :
 as in ver.
 39 ; vi. 13.

⁴ Or, *evil*

Ye have heard that it was said, An eye for 38
 an eye, and a tooth for a tooth : but I say unto 39
 you, Resist not ⁴ him that is evil : but whoso-
 ever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to
 him the other also. And if any man would go 40
 to law with thee, and take away thy coat, let
 him have thy cloke also. And whosoever shall 41
⁵ compel thee to go one mile, go with him twain.
 Give to him that asketh thee, and from him 42
 that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

⁵ Gr.
impress.

(Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt 43

His footstool, Jerusalem His city, and your own body is entirely under His control. Christ discountenances casuistry, and loves simplicity.

38-42. RETALIATION. The old Law allows it (Ex. xxi. 24 ; Lev. xxiv. 20 ; Deut. xix. 29), though Lev. xix. 18, cited in the next paragraph, modifies the *lex talionis*. Christ says : Such must be the principle of the Law-court, but do not go to law. Bear injury to the person, to property, or to freedom, and give and lend.

40. Luke vi. 29 puts the outer and under garments in the right order.

41. *compel thee*. It is a military word for impressing, to carry soldiers' baggage. Cf. xxvii. 32, the man impressed to bear the cross. So Hervé Riel was impressed into the French fleet, but became its hero and deliverer !

42. *Giving to a beggar*. This is one of the worries of life ; but, He says, do not resist it. This wise yielding to the troubles and injustices of the world is a mystery which is only illuminated by the indwelling Spirit.

43-8. LOVE OF ENEMIES. The Law commanded love to a neigh-

- 44 love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy : but
 I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray
 45 for them that persecute you ; that ye may be
 sons of your Father which is in heaven : for he
 maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the
 good, and sendeth rain on the just and the un-
 46 just. For if ye love them that love you, what
 reward have ye ? do not even the ¹publicans
 47 the same ? And if ye salute your brethren
 only, what do ye more *than others* ? do not even
 48 the Gentiles the same ? Ye therefore shall be
 perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

¹ That is,
collectors
or renters
of Roman
taxes :
 and so
 elsewhere.

bour (Lev. xix. 18). It did not enjoin hate to an enemy ; far from it (Ex. xxiii. 4) ; it only encouraged indifference to foreigners generally (Deut. xxiii. 6). But the view of all men, before Christ came, was that it is an equal duty to love one's friends and to hate one's enemies.

44. Lu. xxiii. 34 shows how He did what He commanded.

45. *sons of the Father*. This means that all men are brothers, and yet literally it is 'that ye may *become* sons of the Father' (cf. Lu. vi. 35). We are our Father's children in the true sense only when we are like Him.

he maketh his sun. Seneca's language in his *De Beneficiis*, iv. 26, is strangely similar : 'If thou imitatest the gods, give benefits even to the ungrateful, for even on the wicked the sun rises, and to pirates the seas are open.'

46. How absolutely He speaks as a Jew in Matthew ; the publican and the Gentile represent a lower standard (cf. vi. 7, 32) ; ver. 47, however, is missing in Luke and in Syra S.

48. 'Ye shall be in character like God. Love is the fulfilling of the Law. When you love, and are merciful (Luke vi. 36), you approach His perfection. The Law of Moses is the germ, but it must blossom into the law of love if you are to be like God.' Phil. iii. 12 shows how perfection in a creature is only the attitude of aiming at and striving after the Divine character. 'Ye shall be perfect' is the formula ; but never on earth 'Ye are perfect', and still less 'I am perfect'.

Thus Christ's 'But I say unto you' proves to be not the destruction of the old Law, but always its evolution and fulfilment. No jot or tittle disappears ; the deeper insight and the higher interpretation only remove restrictions, and widen the applications of the things which were said 'to them of old time'.

Take heed that ye do not your righteousness **6**
before men, to be seen of them : else ye have
no reward with your Father which is in heaven.

When therefore thou doest alms, sound not **2**

CH. vi. 1-18. After dealing with the Law, Jesus turns to the 'works of supererogation' of Jewish piety. The chief work of this kind was almsgiving (Sir. vii. 10, xxix. 12; Tob. iv. 7; Acts x. 2, xxiv. 17); indeed almsgiving and righteousness became almost coextensive in their significance, so that the majority of our MSS. have 'almsgiving' in ver. 1, and only three preserve the obviously correct reading 'righteousness'. In the works of supererogation Jesus includes secret prayer, and fasting, which were not regulations of the Law.

The silence of Jesus is often very significant : He does not refer at all to the cultus or to circumcision, which did not belong to the essentials of religion. It is His characteristic to touch only the things which are of universal validity. His eye seems always to be on Humanity as a whole. The contrast between Him and the particularistic teachers of His day—the Scribes and Pharisees—is blunted for us by familiarity. But even we are constantly filled with new amazement to observe how applicable all His words are to our own time. Prof. G. J. Romanes said : 'One of the strongest pieces of objective evidence in favour of Christianity is not sufficiently enforced by apologists. Indeed I am not aware that I have ever seen it mentioned. It is the absence from the biography of Christ of any doctrines which the subsequent growth of human knowledge—whether in natural science, ethics, political economy, or elsewhere—has had to discount' (*Thoughts on Religion*, p. 157). Not only does he confine Himself to universal and eternal truths, but He says on each what seems to be final.

THE PRINCIPLE, ILLUSTRATED BY THE THREE EXAMPLES OF ALMSGIVING, PRAYER, AND FASTING, IS THAT PIETY MUST BE A RELATION BETWEEN THE SOUL AND THE HEAVENLY FATHER, IN WHICH THE THOUGHT OF WHAT MEN THINK OR SAY DOES NOT EVEN OCCUR.

1. The righteousness of the Pharisees was 'to be seen of men' (ch. xxiii. 5). The Greek word used is that from which 'theatre' is derived; their religion was theatrical. The word 'hypocrite' in Greek means 'stage player'. Theatrical religion wins the reward which good actors gain from men. With our Father in Heaven it is worthless. We must be Jews inwardly if we are to please Him, as Paul says (Rom. ii. 29). 'Though in some cases thou must be seen to do, yet in no case do to be seen' (Archb. Leighton).

your Father which is in heaven. Your, not our. The phrase explains how heaven stands for God in this gospel.

2. ALMS. The hypocrites (play actors) give their alms with a

- a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you,
- 3 They have received their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know
- 4 what thy right hand doeth: that thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret shall recompense thee.
- 5 And when ye pray, ye shall not be as the hypocrites: for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets,

flourish of trumpets. Consul Wetstein (*Expositor's Greek Testament*, p. 117) gives this apt illustration:—"When a man (in Damascus) wants to do a good act which may bring a blessing by way of divine recompense on his own family, e. g. healing to a sick child, he goes to a water-carrier with a good voice, gives him a piece of money, and says "Sebil"—i. e. give the thirsty a fresh drink of water. The water-carrier fills his skin, takes his stand in the market, and sings in varied tones: "O thirsty, come to the drink-offering!" the giver standing by, to whom the carrier says, as the thirsty drink, "God forgive thy sins, O giver of the drink". Such is the kind of almsgiving, to be seen of men, which our Lord forbids.

the streets. That is, the narrow streets in contrast with the broad streets (ver. 5).

they have received. The Greek word ἀπέχουσι (like the similar word Luke xvi. 25) means that they have the reward in full. The plaudits of men are the full recompense of that piety which is done to be seen of men.

3. In the Arabic the relation between right and left hand is symbolic of the closest and most intimate companionship. We are to give without self-consciousness or self-complacency.

4. 'Openly' of the A.V. is a gloss. The Father who sees in secret may make the reward secret too. The secrecy with God throughout is the condition of really shining for Him. The very thought of a public reward would taint the act. As Bengel says, 'Pii lucent, et tamen iatent.' 'The pious shine, and yet are hid.'

5, 6. PRAYER. In synagogues and corners of the streets, i. e. where crowds are. Methodizing in prayer, cf. Dan. vi. 10, 11. The danger of it becomes manifest in Mohammedanism; men pray in the streets at the appointed times. But is it prayer? The rule in religious action and expression would seem to be—Show, when tempted to hide; hide, when tempted to show: see v. 16.

that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine 6 inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall recompense thee. And in praying use not vain repetitions, as the 7 Gentiles do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not there- 8 fore like unto them: for ¹ your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father 9

¹ Some ancient authorities read *God your Father.*

thine inner chamber. It is the storehouse, mentioned in Sir. xxix. 12, 'Shut up alms in thy store-chambers, and it shall deliver thee out of all afflictions': cf. Luke xii. 24. The Father in secret, first found there, then recognized everywhere. Social prayer is only a reality among men accustomed to private prayers.

7-15. Another subject. The heathen, not the Pharisees, are in view. The slight to God of irreverent prayer. The Lord's Prayer is a model.

7. *vain repetitions.* It is rather 'babble not'—empty words said over and over again.

the Gentiles. So v. 47, vi. 7, 32. But the rabbis also attached importance to the length of prayer: 'He who makes his prayer long,' said R. Chanina, 'shall not go away empty.' The repetitions of Pater Nosters and Ave Marias in the Rosary would seem to be the kind of abuse which Jesus has in view.

8. *your Father knoweth.* Why then pray? Because He is your Father. A Father and child desire mutual intercourse: the one asks and the other gives in order to tie the bond closer. But the idle babble of words, and the thought of being heard for much speaking, is destructive of that sweet and trustful union between the soul and God. In contact with Him the words may be few. When Spirit with Spirit meets the intercourse may be silent. Verbiage is an offence because it implies want of thought and feeling.

9. *After this manner.* The prayer is thoroughly Jewish. The Kaddish begins with the request 'hallowed be thy Name', though it adds 'in the future world', and is indeed more eschatological and Messianic, so that it could not contain such a request as 'give us this day our bread'. But the Jews alone had the secret of prayer; the Gentiles had, and have, lost it.

Our Father. May the Father replace the Pantheon!

which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.
 10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in
 11 heaven, so on earth. Give us this day ¹our
 12 daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we
 13 also have forgiven our debtors. And bring us
 not into temptation, but deliver us from ²the
 14 evil *one*.³ For if ye forgive men their tres-
 passes, your heavenly Father will also forgive
 15 you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses,
 neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

¹ Gr. *our bread for the coming day.*
² Or, *evil*
³ Many authorities, some ancient, but with variations, add *For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the*

10. *Thy kingdom come.* That is also the second prayer in the Kaddish, though in place of 'Thy will be done' it has 'may your prayer be granted'. But Jesus interprets the 'kingdom of God', which was to the Jews an earthly and political expectation, as the sovereignty of God, an inward and spiritual fact.

When the first place has been given to the heavenly Father and His sovereignty, then, and not till then, we may press our personal wants. The order is essential.

11. *our daily bread.* This translation rests on two obscure MSS. of 2 Macc. i. 8, which render the 'continual bread' of Num. iv. 7, by the Greek word *ἐπιούσιον*. Origen suggested another interpretation, 'supersubstantial,' and used the phrase to emphasize the teaching of the heavenly bread in John vi. 34. Jerome says that the Gospel to the Hebrews read *mahar*, Aramaic for 'to-morrow'. That would mean that each day we ask just for to-morrow's bread.

12. *forgive us as we have forgiven.* This may be said to be a pivot of the teaching of Jesus: cf. xviii. 21-35.

13. *into temptation.* At first we dread it; afterwards we rejoice in it (Jas. i. 2).

the evil. It is neuter and not masculine. It is the constant prayer to escape temptation, which makes us able to resist when it comes; and the prayer to be delivered from the evil renders the evil inoperative. Prayer puts on the spiritual armour, and guarantees victory (Eph. vi. 16).

The beautiful liturgical ending 'for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory' is not in four of the best MSS., but it is in our hearts.

14. The fifth petition leads the evangelist to insert the saying from xviii. 35. As forgiveness of sins is the condition of all prayer and all spiritual growth, the forgiveness of those who have injured us is of transcendent importance, because that is the condition of being forgiven.

*glory, for
ever.
Amen.*

Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypo- 16
crites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure
their faces, that they may be seen of men to
fast. Verily I say unto you, They have received
their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, 17
anoint thy head, and wash thy face; that thou 18
be not seen of men to fast, but of thy Father
which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth
in secret, shall recompense thee.

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the 19

16-18. FASTING. The Pharisees fasted twice a week, on Mondays and Thursdays, the days of the ascent and descent of Moses on Sinai; just as Catholics fast on Wednesday and Friday. They 'disfigure' their faces; rather 'make their faces disappear', sc. by not washing or anointing them, and by an artificial gloom, in order that they may appear to men fasting. The reward they get is that reputation for piety which attaches to an ascetic countenance.

But fasting to be valid as an act of piety must be in secret. It is necessary entirely to disguise it from men, not to mention the time, nor to betray the physical effects. Therefore, the washing and anointing must be done as usual (cf. Ruth iii. 3; 2 Sam. xii. 20; Dan. x. 3). and the whole transaction must be one with God alone.

This great idea of a life lived with God, without reference to the thoughts or judgements of men, flows out of the nature of the God whom Jesus reveals. Zeus, or Allah, can be served with prescribed rites and outward acts. But the Father in Heaven can only be served with the heart. The intimate, secret, real communion is alone pleasing to Him. So far as public gifts, public prayers, and public fasts are the natural and inevitable outcome of the inward relation they may be acceptable to Him; but as a substitute for the spiritual realities, they are, as Isaiah (i. 10-17) says, an abomination.

19-34. WE CANNOT SERVE GOD AND MAMMON, NOR CAN WE SERVE GOD AND CARE. First we are forbidden to lay up earthly treasures for ourselves, because our heart follows our treasures; and a heart set on earthly treasures is like an eyeless body; there is only one Lord of the heart, that is God. He is the Master-light of all our seeing. Then we are warned against the care about our earthly life which is, like hoarding, inconsistent with the single devotion to God. The birds and the flowers teach us that we may remit to Him all anxiety for the future, and take each day as it comes.

earth, where moth and rust doth consume, and
 20 where thieves ¹break through and steal: but ¹Gr. *dig through*.
 lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where
 neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where
 21 thieves do not ¹break through nor steal: for
 where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be
 22 also. The lamp of the body is the eye: if
 therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body
 23 shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil,

19-21. There is a grim illustration of what laying up treasure for oneself may mean in Rom. ii. 5; and there is a suggestion of a legitimate laying up treasure for the service of God and man in 1 Cor. xvi. 2. It appears from the Parable of the Steward that the expenditure of money for the good of others is one way of laying up treasure in the heavens. And from 1 Tim. vi. 17-19 it appears that this right use of wealth may be the wisest expenditure for securing life that is life indeed. Our Lord's thought therefore is, implicitly, twofold: First, earthly treasure is too evanescent to be hoarded or to be the object of the heart's affections; Second, treasures in heaven are secured by a mastering concentration on God, which leads a man to consecrate all possessions to Him, and to use them for the good of others, for His sake.

19. *moth and rust*—or corrosion. What I kept I lost, is the constant experience of men: what I gave I have.

doth consume. It is the same word as in v. 16, which we rendered 'cause to disappear'. Earthly treasures, even before they are stolen or destroyed, become so mouldy, rusty, disfigured, that they are repulsive rather than attractive to their owners. See the remarkable passage in Hag. i. 6-9.

20. *treasures in heaven*. Luke xvi. 9 points to the nature of these treasures. If money is spent for the good of others, e. g. in sending the Gospel to the heathen, they who have benefited by it form a company to welcome the giver into the eternal habitations.

21. *where your treasure is*. If the heart is set on hoarding wealth it shows in the materialization and corruption of that treasure. Mammon is metal in heart and brain, and so are his worshippers. The heart's true object is God; when the heart is set on Him it cannot attach an undue value to money; love controls the wealth and gives.

22-3. This little parable of the eye connects the truth of the Heavenly Treasure with the need of serving only one Master, thus:—If the heart is set on earthly wealth, even in conjunction

thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness! No man can serve ²⁴ two masters : for either he will hate the one, and love the other ; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say unto you, Be not ²⁵ anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink ; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than the food,

with God, a double vision is produced ; the spiritual confusion is just the same as the bodily confusion when the sight is deranged—when, for example, the eyes present two planes of vision. If the eye, the organ of light, is darkness, the body is in darkness ; if the spiritual vision is confused, warped, or darkened, the spiritual life is similarly darkened. William Law's picture of *Negotius* in the *Serious Call* admirably illustrates the darkening which results from the preoccupation with earthly wealth.

24. The double service is impossible. Here Christ reveals a truth, which we do not naturally recognize. We all think that we can serve God and Mammon. We admit the general principle that a servant cannot serve two masters, that he will love one and hate the other (cf. Deut. xxi. 15 ; Gen. xxix. 31-3), or will support (so the word is translated in 1 Thess. v. 14) the one and scorn the other ; but we do not recognize that God and Mammon are two masters. We have therefore to accept Christ's word for it, that the two are irreconcilable, and that the choice has to be made between them.

Mammon. Augustine says that it is the Punic word for wealth ; he ought to know, as he was bishop of Hippo. Wellhausen says the etymology is unknown.

25-33. The 'therefore' is the same in Luke xii. 22, but there it connects the prohibition of anxiety with the Parable of the Rich Fool. Here it seems to be the inference from the impossibility of seeking earthly wealth and God together to the further impossibility of seeking God and being occupied with earthly care. The preoccupation of the rich man with his money-making is paralleled with the absorbing anxiety of the poor man to get necessities. Both passions are forbidden ; he who is absorbed in the Kingdom of Heaven and his righteousness escapes both.

25. *the life more than the food.* $\Psi\upsilon\chi\eta$ is either 'life' or 'soul'. The point is that as we must seek God and not money, so the personality, body and soul, is to be considered, rather than the

26 and the body than the raiment? Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of
 27 much more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto
 28 his ¹ stature? And why are ye anxious concern- ¹ Or, *age*
 ing raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they
 29 spin: yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.
 30 But if God doth so clothe the grass of the field,

things it possesses. God will provide for these wants of our dual nature, but to be anxious about them is to give up faith in Him:

For other things mild Heaven a time ordains,
 And disapproves that care though wise in show)
 That with superfluous burden loads the day,
 And when God sends a cheerful hour, refrains.

Care destroys both body and life. God gives life and body; He will give food and clothing.

26. *The birds*—in Luke xii. 24, the ravens—teach us the simplicity of trust. They are busy, it is true, all day in finding their food, but they have no anxiety; God puts in their way what they need. The expression ‘your Heavenly Father’ is a great argument. If he looks after the little birds, will He not look after His children? ‘He who takes such care of the little fishes will surely care for the keeper of the fishes,’ said Frank Buckland on his deathbed.

27. *one cubit*. A short man was *τέριππηχυσ*, a tall man was *τετραπίπηχυσ*; thus the difference of one cubit is the difference between tallness and shortness. God makes a little man like Zaccheus, or ‘rears the form to stately height’. God who makes the stature will provide the nurture. He raised the span-long infant to the six-foot man! Can we not trust Him to supply all necessaries?

28. *the lilies*: the *Lilium Persicum* and the red anemone, which cover the fields of Palestine in spring, neither toil, like men, nor spin, like women; and yet no clothing is so beautiful as they. They are the raiment of the common grasses which are plucked and burnt in the earthen jar, to heat it for baking. The opulent power of Him who gives such beauty to things so frail will surely provide necessary clothing for His children!

which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, *shall he* not much more *clothe* you, O ye of little faith? Be not therefore anxious, saying, 31 What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after 32 all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first his kingdom, 33 and his righteousness; and all these things shall

32. *the Gentiles.* These earthly goods limit the aspirations of the heathen. Prof. A. B. Bruce says he never realized the truth of Christ's statement till he read the Vedic hymn, in which, with the exception of a few prayers for pardon addressed to Varuna, the things asked for are material goods—cows, horses, green pastures. Thus Indra is addressed:—

To wifeless men thou givest wives,
And joyful mak'st their joyless lives;
Thou givest sons, courageous, strong,
To guard their aged sires from wrong;
Lands, jewels, horses, herds of kine,
All kinds of wealth are gifts of thine:
Thy friend is never slain; his might
Is never worsted in the fight.

(D. Muir, *Sanskrit Texts*, vol. v, p. 137.)

33. *seek first.* Luke (xii. 31) omits 'first', and also 'righteousness'. The reading 'His kingdom and His righteousness' is quite justified. 'Your heavenly Father' had just been mentioned. Let the one thought be to have him reigning in your heart and in all hearts—'Thy kingdom come'—and to realize, not the Pharisaic righteousness, but the righteousness of God, that which is revealed in the Kingdom of God, and—so says our Lord—a wonderful thing will happen; all the forces of nature will contribute to your help and your support. You will be in tune with the Infinite, and such things will come to you as you require, such friends will be raised up as will best help you: all things will work together for good. Remember, we are not dealing here with a law deduced from the observation of facts, but with a law revealed by Him who knows. Only they who have faith to act upon the principle find the facts in accord with it. The majority of men, even of Christians, still live encircled with care and anxiety, laying up treasure for the uncertain future or uneasy because they cannot lay it up. Very few yet venture to seek the Kingdom with all their hearts, secure about earthly things, in all the liberty and liberality of

34 be added unto you. Be not therefore anxious for the morrow: for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

7 Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with

the divine sonship. But they who do possess the kingdom of heaven also possess the earth; all things, present and to come, are theirs.

34. The concluding word speaks not about food or raiment or money, but about the future, as such. Have no anxiety about the future, says the great Teacher; let the principle be that all anxiety shall be in the future, not about it. The evil (i. e. the misery, or suffering, or affliction, not the moral evil) which the day brings, is all that has to be borne; we need not add to it by the slightest feather of to-morrow's. Perhaps to-morrow will dawn quite free from care. Our deliverance may always be to-day.

CH. vii. 1-12. THE ROYAL LAW. It is commonly supposed that we have here a few disconnected precepts, and ver. 6 is especially regarded as an isolated fragment embedded in the discourse. But the passage is far more fruitful if it is treated as a connected argument. And the 'therefore' of ver. 12 can have no meaning unless that verse is the conclusion of the argument. Keeping our eye on that conclusion we can see the drift of the whole passage, and though the movement is not very patent, it is, when once pointed out, perfectly clear, while the appearance of discontinuity is explained by the aphoristic mode of speech. The evangelist lays together the sayings of Jesus, but does not presume to weld them into a single argument. A brief analysis will make the matter plain:—The golden rule, derived from prophets and lawgivers is, that you should do to men what you would have them do to you. You should judge them as you would be judged, and treat them as you would be treated; for indeed you will ultimately be judged and treated as you judge and treat. You should correct yourself and not others, as you expect them to correct themselves, and not you (ver. 1-5). But this does not mean that you are not to form correct notions of men's characters; on the contrary, you must attempt to do that, or you will make the mistake of exposing sacred things to contumely, and yourself to merited punishment (ver. 6). But how can any one have the wisdom, the insight, the self-restraint, to carry out this principle, to see clearly, and yet refrain from judging, to recognize the beast in man, and yet be wholly bent on subduing the beast in himself? It can be done only by prayer. This precious bread from heaven, the character expressed in the golden rule, is given by the Father; He will not mock the heart's desire for that food. This pearl of

what judgement ye judge, ye shall be judged :
 and with what measure ye mete, it shall be
 measured unto you. And why beholdest thou 3
 the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but con-
 siderest not the beam that is in thine own eye?
 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me 4
 cast out the mote out of thine eye ; and lo, the
 beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, 5
 cast out first the beam out of thine own eye ;
 and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the
 mote out of thy brother's eye.

price is found by seeking. Into that house of rest one is admitted by knocking (ver. 7-11). One need not, therefore, despair of adopting and even of realizing the golden rule, fulfilling the law and the prophets (ver. 12).

Now let us go back to the details.

1. *Judge not.* The limitation to the prohibition is obvious from the context. Our Lord is not forbidding us to form clear-sighted opinions about others, or even to censure the evil. It is enough to read on to vii. 15 to see that that is not His thought. The epigrammatic style lays the brief precept open to this misinterpretation. The meaning is, Judge always in view of the way you would be judged ; because, as a fact—this is Christ's decision—you will be judged exactly as you judge. In the long run you will be treated exactly according to the measure which you use to others.

2. *with what measure, &c.* So the Rabbis, 'with the measure wherewith one measures, therewith is it measured in return,' (Sota. i. 7).

3. *the mote*, a minute particle of chaff or dust ; the *beam* is the joist of the roof. It is a hyperbole, but not so extravagant as it seems. An object which looks tiny in another's eye, in one's own appears very big. And it is common sense that if a particle, however small, is dimming the eye of the critic, it will be as bad as a beam in preventing him from extracting a similar particle from another's eye.

4. The only basis of effectively correcting another is first to correct yourself.

5. *Thou hypocrite.* You are immediately involved in the charge of hypocrisy if you reverse the order and attempt to correct the other first.

then shalt thou see clearly. By being first severe on yourself and getting rid of your own fault you will get insight and

- 6 Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast your pearls before the swine, lest haply they trample them under their feet, and turn and rend you.
- 7 Ask, and it shall be given you ; seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened unto you : for every one that asketh receiveth ; and he that seeketh findeth ; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of

discrimination for helping others. So far is Christ from wishing to forbid clear insight !

6. This discernment is needed, to do any good in the world. Some men are like dogs (Phil. iii. 2 ; Rev. xxii. 15), the dirty, prowling beasts of prey that haunt the alleys of an Eastern town. To give these men the opportunity of desecrating the sanctities of your being would be folly, and would bring the rending which you deserve for your want of reticence and noble reserve. Other men are like swine, who would only increase their own guilt by trampling on the shy delicacies and refinements of an exquisite nature. One must therefore gain the faculty of discerning spirits, and knowing what kind of men we have to deal with.

Wellhausen treats the pearls as the Gospel, the dogs as the heathen (cf. xv. 26), and quotes x. 5 to show that Christ forbids the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles and the Samaritans. How easy it is to pervert the words of heavenly wisdom !

7. So much was said on prayer in vi. 5-15 that it is hardly possible to treat this new reference to it as an inconsequent return to the subject. One is bound to connect the prayer here with the precepts just given. In order to judge in the way that Christ requires, without censoriousness, judging oneself first, and others only with the clear insight gained from such self-discipline, it is necessary to ask the Father in heaven for wisdom and power and love.

We *ask* for what we *wish* ; we *seek* for what we *miss* ; we *knock* for that from which we feel ourselves *shut out* (David Brown). We ask for wisdom, and God gives (Jas. i. 5). We seek the gift of discernment from Him who knows what is in men. We knock for admission into that Hall of Divine Judgement. In a word, we crave for the Spirit (cf. Luke xi. 13).

8. The context fixes the limit to this great saying. It is every one who seeks for this wisdom of the Golden Rule that is answered. Only the most inattentive reader can imagine that Christ promises an answer to every request of every one.

9. Bad as our fallen nature is, the Father in us is not extin-

you, who, if his son shall ask him for a loaf, will give him a stone; or if he shall ask for a fish, ¹⁰ will give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, ¹¹ know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him? All things therefore whatsoever ye would that ¹² men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets.

guished, says David Brown. A father may refuse, but will not mock, a child's request. The child wants bread; he will not give him a stone which looks like a loaf. If he wants fish to eat, he will not give him the sea-serpent, that scaleless fish found in the Sea of Galilee, forbidden in the law (Lev. xi. 12). And if we passionately desire right conduct, the power to act to men as we should, our Father will not mock us by giving a mere sham fulfilment of the golden rule.

11. *know how to give.* See 2 Pet. ii. 9; it means, know the moral principle, and the way to fulfil it. The argument is overwhelming, though it is what logicians call an *enthymema*; there is a suppressed premiss, viz. God is the Father of men, wiser and kinder and stronger than earthly fathers. Fathers do not mock their children, but give them what is best for them: (God is your Father) therefore God will give you in answer to prayer this rich moral gift.

12. This is Christ's supreme law. Rosenmüller says it is the law of Nature; and, so far as Christ lighteth every man coming into the world, it ought to be. But it is a law much effaced. In the innumerable parallels to it which Wetstein collected from Greek, Roman, and Rabbinical sources, the rule is only stated in a *negative* way; e. g. in Tobit iv. 15 it runs: 'What thou thyself hatest do to no man'; or Confucius: 'Do not to others what you would not wish done to yourself' (Legge, *Chinese Classics*, i. 191). Christ puts the great law in the positive form: not only refrain from doing to others what you would not have done to you; go farther than this, and do to them all that you would have them do to you. The difference is great and vital.

But the distinction of Christ's precept is the connexion with the great principle of judging, and the recognition that so lofty a type of conduct is only rendered possible by a loving trust in a Heavenly Father and by believing prayer for the grace to realize it. The Sermon on the Mount is not, as we have seen, a reversal of all the religious truth which preceded it; on the contrary, it is the

- 13 Enter ye in by the narrow gate : for wide ¹ is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many be they that enter in
 14 thereby. ² For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few be they that find it.

¹ Some ancient authorities omit *is the gate.*

² Many ancient authorities read *How*

fulfilment of the law and the prophets. Christ does not show His originality by propounding new laws of conduct—they have been from the beginning, for they rest in the constitution of man as the son of God—but by carrying these laws into deeper strata of human life, and by showing the spiritual method of fulfilling them.

vii. 13-29. CONCLUSION OF THE SERMON: The two ways; False prophets; False disciples; the rock and the sand; the effect of the discourse.

13-14. THE NARROW AND BROAD WAY. The idea is found in Deut. xxx. 19; Jer. xxi. 8; and in Ps. i. 6. But the interpretation is determined here by the context—an interpretation which probably underlies Luke xiii. 24 as well. The narrow gate and the straitened way is the character and conduct which have just been epitomized in the Golden Rule (ver. 12). In Luke the emphasis 'strive, or agonize, to enter in' is justified by what we saw of the difficulty of judging others as we would be judged, and the striving is described here in ver. 7. The Golden Rule leads to life, and its opposite to spiritual ruin. But the Golden Rule is necessarily a kind of Cross-taking, while the selfish reverse is quite easy—you drift along it naturally. Hence, as the Lord says, while the broad way of self-indulgence is thronged, there are only few who take the way of the Cross. In 2 Esdras viii. 3 this language is used concerning the ultimate salvation of men: 'There be many created, but few shall be saved'; and Esdras is rebuked for thinking that he can love God's creature more than He does (ver. 47). As the question is raised in Luke xiii. 24 it seems to refer to the final doom of souls; but the language in the Sermon on the Mount is more limited, more practical. As surely as the Way which Christ describes is the Way of Life (cf. Acts ix. 2, xix. 9, &c.), so surely is it one which is trodden by comparatively few. Whatever may be the explanation, the fact stares every inquirer in the face:—

But two ways are offered to our will—

Toil, with rare triumph, Ease with safe disgrace;

Nor deem that acts heroic wait on chance!

The man's whole life precludes the single deed

That shall decide if his inheritance

Be with the sifted few of matchless breed,

Or with the unnoticed herd that only sleep and feed.

(Lowell.)

*narrow
is the
gate, &c.*

Beware of false prophets, which come to you 15
in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening
wolves. By their fruits ye shall know them. Do 16
men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?
Even so every good tree bringeth forth good 17
fruit; but the corrupt tree bringeth forth evil
fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, 18
neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.
Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is 19
hewn down, and cast into the fire. Therefore 20
by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every 21
one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter

15-20. THE FALSE PROPHET IS A ROTTEN TREE. The connexion implies that the false prophet is one who would represent the way of life as broad, and the way of death as narrow. He makes havoc of Christ's flock, a wolf disguised in sheep-skin (Ezek. xxii. 27; Acts xx. 29; and see Mic. iii. 5; John x. 12). A tree is degenerate by age or bad soil; and the false prophet appears, when with the lapse of time the Church becomes corrupt. Such are Simon Magus, Hymenæus and Alexander (1 Tim. i. 20); and in the *Teaching of the Twelve* (ch. xii) already there were prophets who travelling about, without means of living, were a burden on the churches; they are described as *Χριστέμποροι*, 'making merchandize of Christ.'

16. There are thorns with a grapelike fruit and thistles with a figlike head (Bruce). But these appearances do not deceive; if we are trained to judge, as we are taught in ver. 1-12, we see the fruits in character and life. The sheep is only in the skin; in the heart is the wolf. The fruits of character described in the whole Sermon on the Mount, summed up in Gal. v. 22, are the real test of every religious teacher and teaching.

21-3. FALSE DISCIPLES. From the warning against false teachers who speak of Him as Lord but bring forth no corresponding fruits, He passes to warn all disciples, whether teachers or not, that the test in the day of judgment, which must come to all of us, will be not What did he say? but What did he do? The lofty thought of the Beatitudes may be admitted by all; the inwardness of the Law, the dependence on God and not upon stored wealth, may be recognized as just, and even talked about; the Golden Rule is as a matter of fact accepted by the whole world as the true principle of conduct. But the question will be, not Did you allow the truth and justice of this teaching? but Did you practise it?

into the kingdom of heaven ; but he that doeth
 22 the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many
 will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we
 not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name
 cast out ¹ devils, and by thy name do many
 23 ² mighty works? And then will I profess unto
 them, I never knew you : depart from me, ye

¹ Gr.
demons.

² Gr.
powers.

‘ There is a great temptation to substitute sentimental or æsthetic admiration for heroic conduct ’ (Bruce).

21. *my Father which is in heaven.* This is the first time in our Gospel that Christ uses this peculiarly personal phrase ; at xi. 27 it is explained. Freely as He treats the Fatherhood of God, allowing that all men are His children, He instinctively guards against the mistake which men so easily make, that His own Sonship is of that general character. The sense in which He says ‘ My Father in heaven ’ is one in which He alone can use the phrase ; others by a relation to Him may use it with vivid consciousness and profound gratitude, but under no circumstances can others claim the exclusiveness of it, as He did. And yet He asserts His Sonship neither to boast, nor to overawe mankind, but simply and inevitably because of His intrinsic truthfulness.

enter into the kingdom. Rather ‘ attain to ’ (Dalman, p. 116).

22. *prophesy.* That is the inspired preaching referred to in 1 Cor. xii. 28, and shown to be sometimes very valueless in ch. xiii. 2. The casting out devils, too, was possible in the charged atmosphere of Christ’s manifestation (Mark ix. 38), and yet it might not be connected with the person who used the words at all.

mighty works. These are the miracles referred to in 1 Cor. xii. 29. For it is plain in all the history of the Church that men have and exercise spiritual gifts without that goodness of life and character which constitutes real discipleship to Christ. It is of supreme importance not to weaken by the intrusion of dogmatic ideas this close connexion which it pleased our Lord to establish between a certain type of character on earth and His final recognition in the world to come.

23. *will I profess.* The Greek word always means ‘ acknowledge ’ ; it is ‘ confess ’ in John i. 20 ; Heb. xi. 13 ; Acts xxiv. 14. And by keeping the correct meaning here we get a lovely revelation of the heart of Jesus. ‘ I shall confess,’ He says, ‘ that I never knew them,’ as if implying that He would have liked to know them, and in a sense He ought to know them ; but He is bound to admit that He does not, because that moral and spiritual tie is wanting.

depart from me, sounds menacing in the English, but it is

that work iniquity. Every one therefore which²⁴ heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, which built his

not; it is even doubtful whether it is imperative at all. The word suggests a voluntary withdrawing (Luke ix. 39; Acts xiii. 13); and it should be read 'You withdraw from me, you who work iniquity'—not because they did it once, but because they are still doing it. Christ can only know those who work in harmony with His own character and requirements. Evidently 2 Tim. ii. 19 is an echo of this: 'Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord *knoweth* them that are his, and let every one that nameth the *name* of Christ depart from iniquity.'

The words, as one listens attentively to the Speaker, do not sound as a menace or even as a verdict, but rather as the sad statement of a law, as certain and immovable as the foundations of the earth, the law which the conscience affirms both before and after it is stated by Him: Moral values are essential and permanent. There is a type of character which is heavenly, and other types are earthly. The heavenly can and must enter Heaven; the earthly must not, because it cannot.

24-7. THE ROCK AND THE SAND.

24. *these words.* In Luke vi. 47-9 this simile follows on the paragraph about the mote and the beam, though not referring exclusively to that; for the expression is general: 'Every one that heareth my words.' Here the reference seems to be specifically to all the contents of the Sermon on the Mount. The Beatitudes, the Inner Law, the Secret Life, the Freedom from Care, the Golden Rule, constitute a scheme or ideal of life; every one who hears and realizes this teaching is like a house built on a rock, while he who only hears and does not realize it is like a house built on the sand. But clearly our Lord used the image with a wider reference than to the Sermon on the Mount or any other part of His teaching. The mention of a rock reminds us that a rock (*πέτρα*) is needed, on which to rear the fabric of His religion. And that rock (ch. xvi. 18) is found in the confession: 'Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.' Possibly, therefore, the best commentary on the passage is that saying in St. John (v. 24): 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth Him that sent me hath eternal life and cometh not into judgement, but hath passed out of death into life.' And there is the more reason for seeking this explanation of the words, and for finding the security rather in Him, the sure foundation (1 Pet. ii. 3-6), than in His teaching by itself, because, if the test were to be an absolute hearing and doing of all the things contained in this Sermon, there would indeed be few who attain

25 house upon the rock : and the rain descended,
and the floods came, and the winds blew, and
beat upon that house; and it fell not : for it was
26 founded upon the rock. And every one that
heareth these words of mine, and doeth them
not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which
27 built his house upon the sand : and the rain
descended, and the floods came, and the winds
blew, and smote upon that house ; and it fell :
and great was the fall thereof.

to life. Unless salvation is by faith, and not by works, who can be saved?

shall be likened. Not only 'compared with', but 'assimilated to'.

a wise man, i. e. thoughtful, prudent.

built his house. The image of the wall with untempered mortar in Ezek. xiii. 10-14, may be set side by side with this.

25. *beat upon.* In the Greek it is 'fell upon'. The rain and the wind *fell upon* the house, but it *fell* not. We may wonder whether any one can so fulfil the Law of the Mount that his life and character would stand impregnable : if it was asked about the Mosaic Law, 'Which of you keepeth the law?' and the rabbis could say that if any Israelite should keep the whole Law even for one day then Messias would come, is it not still more impossible to keep this deeper and more inward law? In many things we offend and come short. No, a Man must be as a shelter in this storm of wind and rain ; as the flood comes in, the Spirit of the Lord must lift up a standard against it. Only a Gospel of Grace, a salvation by faith in Christ, can build the house on the rock ; He must be the end of the Law to every one that believeth, the end of His own Law, as well as of the Law from Sinai. It is only against the building on this rock, that the gates of Hell cannot prevail.

26. *a foolish man.* It is the very term which man is forbidden to apply to his brother (v. 22) ; but God may and does apply it. 'Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee' (Luke xii. 20). He built his house on some alluvial deposit, in a torrent which, having carried it there, may carry it away. 'So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.'

27. *smote upon.* A stronger word than 'fell upon' in ver. 25, as if the stormy winds 'fulfilling His will' attacked with added vigour the ill-founded structure. The sorry builder is he who, having no vital faith in Christ, leaves his religion to his priest or

And it came to pass, when Jesus ended these 28 words, the multitudes were astonished at his teaching: for he taught them as *one* having 29 authority, and not as their scribes.

And when he was come down from the 8 mountain, great multitudes followed him. And 2

parson, as in Milton's scathing description: 'What should a wealthy man do, addicted to his pleasure and his profits? Fain he would have the name to be religious; what does he therefore but resolve to give over toiling, and to find himself out some divine of note and estimation? To him he adheres, resigns the whole warehouse of his religion, with all the locks and keys, into his custody; and indeed makes the very person of that man his religion. He entertains him, gives him gifts, feasts him, lodges him; his religion comes home at night, prays, is liberally supped and sumptuously laid to sleep; rises, is saluted, and better breakfasted than he whose morning appetite would have gladly fed on green figs between Bethany and Jerusalem. His religion walks abroad at eight, and leaves his kind entertainer in the shop, trading all day without his religion' (*Prose Works*, vol. ii, p. 97, &c.).

28. The astonishment of the multitudes, who contrast Jesus with the Scribes. The Scribes were not astonished, but only angry with Him and the multitudes.

29. *as having authority*, i. e. in Himself. This personality of Jesus is the seat of authority in Religion, which one in vain seeks elsewhere.

CH. viii. 1-17. When Matthew has given the sum of the Lord's teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, he proceeds to illustrate His healings by a series of examples selected from the whole course of the ministry. It will be observed at once (v. 17) that the evangelist regards the cures as symbolical. Sin is the underlying disease; and the healing of diseases points to Christ's mode of dealing with sin. Accordingly, all the details of the cures are found to be symbolic of the soul's relation with the Saviour in getting rid of its sins. On the one hand we must apprehend the heart of love and pity, which made Jesus 'take our infirmities and bear our sins'; but, on the other hand, we must see through the parable to the deeper truth, present to the evangelist, that He took our sins upon Himself, and bore them too.

The three illustrative cures, of the leper, the centurion's servant, and Peter's wife's mother, are brought together, in order to show the variety and range of His healing power. They must be studied apart, and then put together, if we are to receive their full effect.

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

It may be observed that the connexion between the disease and the sin in Isa. liii. 4 is brought out by the LXX; for while the Hebrew says: 'Surely He hath borne our sicknesses and carried our sorrows,' the Greek translation says: 'He bears our sins and suffers for us'; and accordingly, while Matthew quotes the prophecy literally, we habitually quote it in the metaphorical sense on the authority of 1 Pet. ii. 24, who interpreted Isa. liii for us: 'Himself bore our sins . . . we were as sheep going astray, but are returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls.'

Observe that Christ's miracles are done, not by prayer, nor by spells, but by commands; He has divine authority (ix. 6; Mark vii. 34, &c.).

1-4. **THE LEPER.** By examining Mark i. 40-5 and Luke v. 12-16, it will be seen that no stress is to be laid on the date of this cure, or on its connexion in time with those that follow. This is the first case of leprosy healed recorded by the Synoptic evangelists; and Matthew places it first in his account of the cures, because the disease, (1) loathsome, (2) contagious, and (3) incurable, was always the type of Sin. The ceremonial cleansing of leprosy, in Lev. xiii. 14, was typical of a promised cure of sin and uncleanness, as we see in Ps. li. 7 (cf. Naaman's cure, 2 Kings v. 1-14).

Observe, the leper is an Israelite, and his cure follows strictly the ordinance of the Mosaic Law (v. 4).

2. *And behold.* This lively way of introducing a narrative is, says Weiss, the sign-mark of the apostolic document.

The leper came *and worshipped him*. Matthew alone uses this word here. The word is sometimes used of the obeisance made to a man in power; nor does the appellation 'Lord' necessarily mean more than Sir; at the same time the leper's sublime confidence in Christ's power proves that, even if he did not know Christ's divinity, he yet prayed to Him, as he might have done to God. He makes no question of His power.

Accordingly, all the Gospel is in this brief dialogue: 'If thou wilt' . . . 'I will.'

3. *touched him.* This brought ceremonial defilement (Lev. v. 3, xiii. 46). But Christ incurs the defilement in bearing the sins; therein lies the atonement.

4. The reason why the cured man was not to tell any one is shown by Mark (i. 45). The disobedience to the prohibition brought about the Healer such a crowd and a *furor*, that He

was cleansed. And Jesus saith unto him, See 4
thou tell no man ; but go thy way, shew thyself
to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses com-
manded, for a testimony unto them.

And when he was entered into Capernaum, 5
there came unto him a centurion, beseeching
1 Or, boy him, and saying, Lord, my ¹ servant lieth in the 6
house sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.
And he saith unto him, I will come and heal 7

could no longer go into a city. The confession of the cure to the priest was prescribed by the Law (Lev. xiv. 10-21). The testimony to them, i. e. the public, means the certificate that the leper was fit for human society again. But when we turn to Heb. iii. 5, and see how Moses was a testimony of Spiritual truth, we cannot help reading the words 'for a testimony unto them' in a wider sense. The leper's cure symbolizes Christ's cure of sin.

5-13. THE CENTURION'S SERVANT. Luke (vii. 1-10) narrates the same cure, connected also with the return to Capernaum after preaching the Sermon on the Mount.

In the scale of Christ's redemptive work this marks another step in two ways : (1) it is a Gentile who gains the boon by faith, and (2) the healing is effected without contact, merely by a word spoken at a distance.

5. The centurion, a Roman who was drawn to the religion of the country in which he was serving, built the people a synagogue in token of his sympathy (Luke vii. 3), and now was better able to recognize Christ than the Jews themselves. Though he employed the elders of the Jews as his messengers (Matthew thought that he came himself), it would seem from the Lord's words (v. 10) that they had not his faith.

Wellhausen mentions that the centurion is in the Syriac version and some Latin versions a chiliarch, i. e. a court official (Mark vi. 21). But v. 8 shows that he was a soldier.

6. *servant*. The Greek word *παῖς* means a boy ; but in usage it meant a servant, just as *garçon* does in French. The love for his servant is a fine trait : 'He is not worthy to be well served,' says Bishop Hall, 'who will not sometimes wait upon his followers.' The servant was paralysed, and—an aggravation not often accompanying paralysis—in great torment. It was a nerve disease, and might have been healed by faith ; but the healing by the faith of another puts it out of the category of natural cures, and into that of Christ's divine authority and power.

7. *I will come*. Except in this case, and that of the Syrophœ-

- 8 him. And the centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not ¹worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: but only say ²the word, and my ³servant shall be healed. For I also am a man ⁴under authority, having under myself soldiers: and I say to this one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my ⁵servant, Do this, and he doeth it.
- 10 And when Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, ⁶I have not found so great faith, no, not
- 11 in Israel. And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall ⁷sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in

¹ Gr. *sufficient.*

² Gr. *with a word.*

³ Or, *boy*

⁴ Some ancient authorities insert *set:* as in Luke vii. 8.

⁵ Gr. *bond-servant.*

⁶ Many ancient authorities read *With no man in Israel have I found so great faith.*

⁷ Gr. *recline.*

nician woman's daughter, Christ always went to the sick, or they were brought to Him. But the exceptional faith secured the astonishing result of healing at a distance. How signal the faith is, Christ shows in ver. 10.

8. *I am not worthy that.* The English is the same as iii. 11: but there we have only the infinitive, here we have *iva*; 'I am not sufficient, in order that thou mayest come.' This is a stage in the process by which *iva* became in later Greek the constant sign of the infinitive. But we may let the expression give its peculiar emphasis to this exclamation of deep humility, an emphasis increased by the prominent position of the 'my'. 'There is nothing in me which could bring thee under *my* poor roof; but only speak a word'—or according to another reading: 'speak with a word.' The inference from his own position of authority as a centurion, and of subordination to the tribune or the prætor above him, is the noblest expression of faith in Christ. The disease will own His power as readily as a soldier obeys his officer.

10. This delighted Jesus, who, as Bengel says, wondered only at two things, faith and unbelief (Mark vi. 6). That a Gentile should have such faith in Him immediately opens to Him the vista of the future.

11, 12. *sons of the kingdom.* Only Matthew uses 'kingdom' without further designation (cf. iv. 23, ix. 35, xiii. 19, 38, xxiv. 14; Dalman, *Words of Jesus*, 115). Only Matthew connects this grand vision with the healing of the centurion's servant. Luke puts it after the exhortation to enter in at the strait gate

the kingdom of heaven: but the sons of the ¹² kingdom shall be cast forth into the outer darkness: there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth. And Jesus said unto the centurion, ¹³ Go thy way; as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And the ¹ servant was healed in that hour.

¹ Or, boy

And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, ¹⁴ he saw his wife's mother lying sick of a fever.

(xiii. 28-30). Mark never introduces these missionary forecasts; he represents that Petrine Gospel which thought only of the Jews. Matthew, notwithstanding the prevailing Jewish tinge of his Gospel (the imagery here is intensely Jewish), always sees all the nations, the whole world, brought under the sway of his Lord.

The Kingdom of God in the Jewish writers was figured as a feast, at which the meat would be behemoth, and the fish leviathan (Apoc. of Baruch xxix. 4; Enoch lx. 7-9, 24; 2 Esdras vi. 49-52). The mention of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob shows that this was in Christ's mind. But He saw that faith, the great faculty, would be rare in the favoured people, and that it would be men of faith from every race and country who would be the true children of faithful Abraham. The darkness, wailing, and gnashing of teeth are part of the familiar Jewish imagery of the future world of punishment, which was typified by Gehenna.

13. The joy of finding such faith diverted His attention from the sufferer, but He quickly remembered. In that hour the paralytic was cured.

Weizsäcker points out how beautifully these two cures follow on the Sermon, the one illustrating His fidelity to the Law, the other His concern for the Gentile World.

14, 15. PETER'S WIFE'S MOTHER. Evidently (v. 10) the preceding cure occurred far on in the ministry, and not immediately after His opening discourse; Matthew's arrangement is topical, not chronological. This third cure belonged apparently to the earliest part of the ministry (Mark i. 32; Luke iv. 38). He began by blessing the home of His disciple. To bring joy to the domestic circle, and start His Gospel from that obscure centre, is typical of the Son of Man.

14. *sick of a fever*. Luke (iv. 38), with a doctor's accuracy, says it was 'a great fever', to distinguish it from the malarial feverishness which is not very serious, and also he observes how the Healer 'stood over' the sufferer. The woman was so completely

- 15 And he touched her hand, and the fever left her; and she arose, and ministered unto him.
- 16 And when even was come, they brought unto him many ¹ possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all that
- 17 were sick: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken ² by Isaiah the prophet, saying, Himself ² Or, *through* took our infirmities, and bare our diseases.
- 18 Now when Jesus saw great multitudes about him, he gave commandment to depart unto the
- 19 other side. And there came ³ a scribe, and said ³ Gr. *one scribe.*

recovered, that no weakness remained; she was able at once to serve at the table. When Christ subdues the fever of sin in the soul, the soul is prepared at once for ministry.

16. The evening healing, quoted from Mark i. 32, though here it is a little later. Up to the last Jesus heals, as the sun sets (Mark), when the night has fallen (Matthew). In Mark, they brought all, and some were cured: in Matthew, they bring many, and all were cured. The crowd was due to the great cure of the demoniac that day (Mark i. 21-8.)

17. Did He take our sins and bear them in the same way as He took the infirmities and bore the diseases?

viii. 18-34. THE SON OF MAN HOMELESS AND REJECTED.

18-22. In St. Luke this episode, of the disciples deterred from following, is placed, with three instances instead of two, in connexion, not with the crossing to Gerasa (Luke viii. 22-39), but with the start on the journey to Jerusalem (Luke ix. 57-62). The occasion was when Jesus had left His home at Capernaum, and in the prosecution of His missionary enterprise was homeless. Note that verses 19-22 are inserted; the narrative goes on from ver. 18 to ver. 23. But Matthew's arrangement, inserting the offer of the scribe, and the call of the man who would bury his father, just before the stilling of the storm on the lake, and the rejection from Gerasa, brings out as the dominant idea of the whole passage the *Loneliness of Jesus*. He is homeless and unaccompanied (ver. 18-22); the solitude is awful (ver. 23-7) and mysterious (ver. 28-34). He is alone, and yet not alone, for His Father is with Him.

18. The solitude of Jesus is of the kind which is emphasized by the presence of a multitude. See John vi. 16-21: evidently Jesus took these quiet excursions on the lakes in order to escape the pressure which His work occasioned on the shore.

19. *a scribe*. It is actually 'one scribe', but in Hellenistic Greek

¹ Or, *Teacher* unto him, ¹ Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. And Jesus saith unto him, ²⁰ The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven *have* ² nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. And another of the ²¹ disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to

'one' was used for 'a' (Moulton's *Grammar*, p. 96). Though one of the official and teaching class, he had so far recognized Jesus as to address Him as 'Teacher' (so rightly margin of R. V.). It is a great confession for the Scribe to give Him that appellation; and the enthusiastic promise to follow Him anywhere might have been very pleasing to Him. But He knew what was in the man; He repressed the fervent offer by the pathetic statement that He had no lodging to offer him.

^{20.} *nests*: roosts, the verb in xiii. 32.

the Son of man. Here occurs for the first time the designation which Jesus chose for Himself (in Mark for the first time ii. 10, in Luke v. 24). It has been maintained that it is (1) the Aramaic phrase for 'man'; (2) a term indicating the frailty of humanity; cf. the application of it to Ezekiel; (3) an implied claim to Messiahship, referring to Dan. vii. 13, and the use of the term in certain Apocalyptic literature. It will be noted that in different places Jesus uses the title with one or other of these implications, as the occasion suits. Here He is thinking of the second meaning; the Son of Man is homeless; His earthly state is pitiable. The wild beasts and birds have their resting-places in the earth, but He is a pilgrim and a stranger. It has been said that 'philosophy is home-sickness'; the pathos of man's condition is, that he thinks, and immediately he finds himself in a desert, and far from home. In Mark and Luke, on the other hand, the term is first used in declaring that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins.

Apparently the Scribe turned away from the homeless Teacher.

^{21.} The Scribe was one of His disciples (save the mark!). Another wished to follow Him—in time; but for the present he proposed to wait until his father died, that he might perform the last act of filial duty. How specious that seemed! The Lord's answer sounds stern, but while the shell is hard, the kernel is soft and sweet. Using the word 'dead' in a double sense, He says that those who are not spiritually awakened will tend the old man in his closing days, but this disciple was spiritually awakened and was capable of preaching the Gospel (see Luke ix. 60). For him, therefore, a higher duty superseded the lower. Thus Christ meets the excuses which have kept so many from going out to the mission field: cf. Elisha in 1 Kings xix. 19.

- 22 go and bury my father. But Jesus saith unto him, Follow me ; and leave the dead to bury their own dead.
- 23 And when he was entered into a boat, his
24 disciples followed him. And behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the boat was covered with the waves : but he was
25 asleep. And they came to him, and awoke him,
26 saying, Save, Lord ; we perish. And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith ? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds
27 and the sea ; and there was a great calm. And the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man

23-7. THE AWFUL DETACHMENT FROM HUMAN COMPANIONSHIP IN THE STORM.

23. *his disciples followed him* : in body but not in spirit.

24. *and behold* : see ver. 2.

a tempest. Lit. an earthquake, a very strong term, not as in Luke (viii. 23) a mere gust of wind such as often falls on a lake shut in by mountains. This description of the ship's peril is strong too ; the ship disappeared in the waves.

but he was asleep. In Mark the journey occurs after the parables not recorded in Matthew till ch. 13. If Matthew's connexion is followed, it seems from the answers given in ver. 18-22, that the Lord was under great tension. He was tired out, and slept in the storm. It has been observed that a storm is a lullaby to a great spirit ; and His was the courage of faith.

25. The disciples were different. They had little faith, and were therefore cowards. Their waking Him showed that they had little faith in Him, as His serene slumber showed that He had perfect faith in God.

Lord : in Luke viii. 24, Master ; in Mark iv. 38, Teacher.

26. *fearful.* So John xiv. 27 ; 'cowardly' is a closer translation. Jesus always marvelled at their little faith (vi. 30). The rebuke, as given in Mark iv. 39, is most majestic and striking—'Silence, be muzzled !' The miracle is recorded in the most impressive simplicity of statement, without explanation or apology. Bengel's pregnant remark should be remembered : 'He calmed first His disciples' minds, and then the sea.'

27. *the men marvelled* ; in Mark 'disciples'. Does it mean 'men' generally, wherever the story was told ? 'What manner of being (not man) is this ?' *ποταπός*, cf. Ps. lxxxix. 9, xciii. 4.

is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?

And when he was come to the other side into ²⁸ the country of the Gadarenes, there met him two ¹ possessed with devils, coming forth out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man could

¹ Or, *demoniacs*

28-34. THE LAND WHICH ASKED JESUS TO DEPART FROM IT.

The narrative is given with more fullness in Mark, whose twenty verses (v. 1-20) are here compressed into seven. The details, as the variations show, are quite immaterial. Mark's name for the place is Gerasa, not Gadara, which was not near the shore; and we may identify the spot with Khersa, where the cliff is steep. Matthew oddly says there were two demoniacs, evidently influenced by the plural voice of the sufferer, saying, we are Legion. Demoniac possession is met with in China; in the life of Pastor Hsi, for example, there are episodes which closely resemble this narrative. Insanity takes the form of a double consciousness, and the sufferer believes that he is possessed by a demon. To help the sufferer it is necessary to humour the illusion, and to address the indwelling spirit that obsesses him as a person. If our Lord had all the knowledge which modern medical science has on the subject He might still, for curative purposes, have used exactly the language which is recorded here. The destruction of the swine has been ridiculed by Huxley and his followers, and has been made hardly less ridiculous by certain well-meaning apologists; Wetstein, e. g., perhaps sardonically, suggests that the drowned swine might have been salted and sold to the Gentiles, and so the owners would have been recouped! Our evangelist does not countenance Mark's statement, 'He gave them leave to enter into the swine,' but reports the word of Jesus as 'go', i. e. 'begone'. But the consent of the evangelists shows that the stampede of the herd of swine was in the popular judgement connected with the cure of the demoniac. His wild cries suggested that the swine should plunge down the precipice, and may even have caused the panic which produced the catastrophe. But these difficulties are put in a false perspective. Read by an impartial mind in any of the evangelists the narrative produces only one overwhelming effect—a sense of the mercy, the majesty, the meekness, of Jesus; who, lonely and homeless Himself, after rejecting a learned scribe, turned all his attention to a houseless and dangerous maniac, healed him by the divine power that resided in His own Personality, and then without resentment or censure withdrew at the request of the misguided people.

²⁸. *no man could pass that way.* Lit. had power to pass that

29 pass by that way. And behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us
 30 before the time? Now there was afar off from
 31 them a herd of many swine feeding. And the

way. The maniac was strong enough to overpower any ordinary man, and fell upon a passer-by with the fierceness of a wild beast.

29. *thou Son of God.* That the first confession of Christ's divinity should come from a disordered mind (in which all the Synoptists agree) is a stumbling-block. But the mystery of insanity is that it is often accompanied by an abnormal insight. Later on the disciples reached the same conclusion, and used the same address (xiv. 33). It is true we must step cautiously in estimating the testimony of the insane. No wise man would base the truth of Christ's Divine Sonship on this admission. We hail Him Son of God for reasons, ethical and religious, which are perfectly independent of this passage. But it is possible that we have a glimpse into that invisible spiritual world, of which we know so little: there are principalities and powers, spiritual personalities, working for evil and against Christ. They know Him, who He is, while it is their great concern to darken our human minds, and prevent us from recognizing Him (Eph. vi. 12). These evil spirits will be vanquished: their time is relatively short (Rev. xii. 12).

30. The number of the swine in Mark is 2,000, and they are not, as here, 'far off,' but on 'the mountain-side'. There is no inconsistency, but there is a variation.

The destruction of property arouses the indignation, not only of the owners, but of the whole people, as Luke puts it. The desire for Jesus to depart was unanimous and decisive. He yielded to the wish, because it is not His way to force Himself on those who do not want Him. In a sense it is only too easy to get rid of Him. He has no ambition, no personal end to serve in saving men; He wants their hearts, and to save them without their choice would not be to save them in His sense at all. This is the secret of His loneliness in the world, that when men see Him, few desire Him; of those who would follow Him, many are discouraged by the least difficulty. Even when He heals and saves, men are shy of Him, and if His presence affects their property, they will bid Him depart.

Matthew does not tell us the comforting detail given elsewhere (Mark v. 19), that the healed man was so grateful that he wished to follow his Healer, but was commanded to remain as a witness to Jesus among his friends; and he became a missionary through the whole region of the Ten Cities.

¹ Gr.
demons.

¹ devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, send us away into the herd of swine. And ³² he said unto them, Go. And they came out, and went into the swine: and behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep into the sea, and perished in the waters. And they that fed them ³³ fled, and went away into the city, and told everything, and what was befallen to them that were ² possessed with devils. And behold, all the city ³⁴ came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they besought *him* that he would depart from their borders.

² Or, *demoniacs*

And he entered into a boat, and crossed over, ⁹ and came into his own city. And behold, they ²

CH. IX. 1-17. THE BRIDAL JOY OF THE HEALING MINISTRY.

This paragraph (Mark ii. 3-12; Luke v. 18-26) is replete with joy. It is leading up to the crown of His beneficent work. Jesus appears as the Bridegroom, in whose presence the whole wedding party must rejoice. Though a season of sadness is foreshadowed, and the invidious vigilance of the Pharisees portends hostility and persecution, for the moment the planet of love is on high; the religion of joy has come, and the exquisite light of Heaven breaks over the earth:

Light of the intellect replete with love,
Love of true good replete with perfect bliss,
Bliss that doth far above all sweetness prove.

This exquisite movement introduces the phases of the palsied man forgiven, the call of Matthew the publican, the physician's festal reception of the sinners, and the justification of the joy as suitable to the changed conditions. It will be obvious how the healing is the outward symbol of a spiritual grace.

1-8. THE PALSIED MAN. In Mark (ii. 1-12) this healing comes at once after the healing of the leper; Luke (v. 17-26) follows Mark. Matthew, for reasons of his own (v. Allen, p. 86) places this cure after the return from Gerasa; but the effect of the arrangement is to suggest that Christ can not only cure the leper, who was considered incurable, and the demoniac who was the terror of the country-side, but rouse into activity one who is actually paralysed, even when, as seems to be implied, the paralysis has been produced by sin; He can forgive and heal.

1. *his own city*, sc. Capernaum (iv. 13). The other account in

brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed : and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy, ¹ Son, be of good cheer ; ¹ Gr. *Child.*
 3 thy sins are forgiven. And behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man
 4 blasphemeth. And Jesus ² knowing their thoughts ² Many ancient authorities read *seeing.*
 said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?
 5 For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins are for-

Mark and Luke places the cure just after returning to Capernaum from an excursion.

2. *And behold* (viii. 2).

sick of the palsy, i. e. paralytic ; the creeping paralysis which is often the dread result of sensual excesses.

seeing their faith. We understand better the faith of the bearers by reading the more detailed account in Mark and Luke.

son. Rather 'child', probably little more than a boy. Jesus reads at once the profound depression, and hopelessness, which comes with the disease ; and meets him with the word of cheer (cf. ver. 22). Forgiveness is the Law of the Kingdom of God. He proclaims it, not as the result of His own saving work, but rather as the purpose of Divine grace, which devised and carried out that saving work. The disease and the sin are focussed as one ; perhaps in this instance they were related as effect and cause ; but in every instance the disease is the outward and visible sign of the inward and spiritual fault.

The amazing feature of the pronouncement is, that He declares the man's sins to be forgiven on the ground of the faith of the friends who brought him.

3. *the scribes.* See Luke v. 17 ; they had come to watch Him, not perhaps very sympathetically. But they were genuinely scandalized by this assumption of authority. It was a Divine prerogative claimed by Jesus, Isa. xliii. 25 ; Mic. vii. 18 ; Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. If Jesus was merely a man, they were right in saying 'He blasphemeth'.

4. He sees or reads their thoughts : because He is the Word of God (Heb. iv. 12).

5. *whether is easier?* It was easy enough to say 'Thy sins are forgiven thee', but to know that they were forgiven was hard. On the other hand, to say 'Arise and walk' was difficult, for every one could at once see whether the result followed. If, therefore, the hard fact of restoring the paralytic came from the word 'Arise', that would be some evidence that the invisible result of pardon came from the apparently easy word of forgiveness. 'He makes the visible power a testimony of the invisible',

¹Or,
authority

given; or to say, Arise, and walk? But that ye ⁶ may know that the Son of man hath ¹ power on earth to forgive sins (then saith he to the sick of the palsy), Arise, and take up thy bed, and go unto thy house. And he arose, and departed ⁷ to his house. But when the multitudes saw it, ⁸ they were afraid, and glorified God, which had given such ¹ power unto men.

And as Jesus passed by from thence, he saw ⁹ a man, called Matthew, sitting at the place of toll: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him.

says Euthymius Zigabcnus. Here the tallying of disease with sin is expressly declared.

6. The bed was a reed-mattress. As Bengel puts it: 'The bed bore the man, now the man the bed.' Might we not also say the faith of the others had brought him to Jesus, now his own faith enabled him to go home?

8. *were afraid* (Luke vii. 16). A manifestation of Divine power, even when it is beneficent, thrills our hearts with fear.

such power unto men. The multitude understood the title 'Son of Man' as the admission of human infirmity; they had not yet learnt its meaning as a Messianic claim (ver. 26). Dalman, *Words of Jesus*, 254.

9-13. THE PHYSICIAN SEEKS THE SICK: FIRST MATTHEW AND THEN HIS FELLOW PUBLICANS.

9. *Matthew*, in Mark and Luke called Levi, the son of Alphæus (Mark ii. 14). He was a sinner, he was sick, and the Physician saw him and said unto his dead soul 'Live'—as Jacob Behmen records of his own similar experience. Matthew obeyed, unlike the precipitate disciples in viii. 18-22.

The place of toll. It was on the shore, we are told elsewhere. Capernaum was a busy centre where the great trunk roads running north and south and east and west crossed. But the lake shore was also a frontier; the other side, Decapolis, did not belong to Herod Antipas. Duties were therefore collected on everything that was brought to the quays. The collector of taxes was called to be a fisher of men. And it is evident that he was an example of the sinners whom Jesus came to save. A Chinese convert employed as an evangelist was offered a place in the customs at double the salary that he was receiving. He

- 10 And it came to pass, as he ¹sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with Jesus and his disciples. ¹ Gr. *reclined:* and so always.
- 11 And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your ²Master with the ²Or, *Teacher*
- 12 publicans and sinners? But when he heard it, he said, They that are ³whole have no need of ³Gr. *strong.*
- 13 a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what *this* meaneth, I desire mercy, and not sacrifice: for I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.

replied: 'Matthew left the receipt of customs to seek men; shall I leave the seeking of men to sit at the receipt of customs?'

10. Through Matthew Jesus was introduced to the whole circle of the publicans, and the people who were regarded as outcasts by Jewish orthodoxy. It was a company of what in India would be called Pariahs that gathered now in the house. Mark says it was Matthew's house. Does Matthew withhold this fact out of modesty? We are to think perhaps of the courtyard of the house filled with the unorthodox company; and the scandal would be patent. But they who are too anxious to conciliate the prejudices of the present do nothing for the future, as Dr. Bruce says. And Jesus was quite ready to justify His unconventional conduct.

11. *Master.* Teacher, in the Greek, your Rabbi, in Aramaic (Dalman, p. 338).

12. Jesus expressly declares that He is the Physician and the Saviour. The meaning of the healing becomes apparent. He wishes to show that just as He could raise up the paralytic, so He could forgive and cure the sinful. He taught by an acted parable. He manifested God who 'healeth all our diseases and forgiveth all our iniquities' (Ps. ciii. 3).

13. The orthodoxy of the day had no conception of the Holy love which seeks the sinful to make them good. It prided itself on its own virtue, and used the wicked to exalt its own righteousness. It did not know 'mercy' in the prophet's deep sense of the word, i. e. the pitying love which seeks to save. Jesus quotes Hos. vi. 6, which was a favourite text of His (xii. 7: cf. xxiii. 23). Then comes the great utterance which is all His own. In the Bible Society's report for 1904 (p. 208) is an account of a convert in Mahoba (North India), who as a lad received a Gospel of St. Matthew. For twelve years he read it day by day until its message was borne in upon his soul, that Jesus is indeed the Saviour of all men. When the missionary who gave him the

Then come to him the disciples of John, ¹⁴ saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast ¹ oft, but thy disciples fast not? And Jesus said unto ¹⁵ them, Can the sons of the bride-chamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then will they fast. And no man putteth a piece of undressed cloth ¹⁶

Gospel returned to the village he confessed that Jesus is the World's Redeemer, and at once yielded himself to His claims. The saying in this verse is enough to save the world.

but sinners. The words 'to repentance' were inserted in some MSS. from Luke, but the calling here is rather the beautiful invitation to His board.

14-17. FASTING INAPPROPRIATE IN THE BRIDECAMBER. In Mark ii. 18 and Luke v. 33, the question seems put by the Pharisees. But in respect of fasting the disciples of John the Baptist and the Pharisees occupied the same position. Fasting was a regular and necessary part of the religious life: it was a token of penitence; it was also an instrument for subduing the evil tendencies of nature; and in either case it was a confession of a forlorn and dubious position, the effort of the soul to win acceptance with God. Fasting is an institution of the Law and not of the Gospel, of Righteousness rather than of Grace.

15. Jesus abolishes Fasting because the Religion of Joy has come. The Gospel is the good news of a free pardon and of a preserving grace, of earth vanquished and of Heaven secured; even death is abolished, and the Kingdom of Heaven is open to all believers. While Christ the Bridegroom is with us, fasting must not stain the festal joy.

sons of the bridechamber. The wedding guests: cf. for the Hebrew phrase Luke xvi. 8.

then shall they fast. When were the days of the absence of the Bridegroom? (Luke xvii. 22). Were they the days following the Crucifixion? Hardly, for that sorrow was immediately turned into joy (John xvi. 20). He can only refer to the false teaching of the Church, which has taken away the Bridegroom, and restored the fasting and gloom of the older dispensation. But He is with those who will have Him all the days (xxviii. 20), and for them fasting is inappropriate.

16. Unfulled or undressed cloth shrinks when wetted, and tears the old piece to which it is sewn. You cannot combine the penitential religion of the Law with that of Jesus.

- upon an old garment ; for that which should fill it up taketh from the garment, and a worse rent
 17 is made. Neither do *men* put new wine into old ¹ wine-skins : else the skins burst, and the wine is spilled, and the skins perish : but they put new wine into fresh wine-skins, and both are preserved.
- 18 While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came ² a ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead : but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall
 19 live. And Jesus arose, and followed him, and
 20 *so did* his disciples. And behold, a woman, who had an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the border of his garment :

¹ That is, skins used as bottles.

² Gr. *one ruler*.

17. The religion of the Divine Father, of Grace and Atoning Love, of Forgiveness and the cleansed heart, of the filling with the Holy Ghost, is like new wine, and at your peril do you confine it in the antiquated bottles of the past. 'The mongrel mixture of the ascetic ritualism of the old with the spiritual freedom of the new economy' (David Brown) is condemned by anticipation.

ix. 18-37. CLIMAX AND SUMMARY OF THE MINISTRY OF TEACHING AND HEALING.

18-26. The raising of Jairus's daughter is the climax of the Lord's healing power, and the gospel of the Resurrection which it symbolizes is the climax of His teaching. In Mark (v. 21-43) and in Luke (viii. 40-66) it is recorded just after the return from the eastern shore of the lake. Matthew places it in its moral, rather than its historical, order. All the beneficent work of Jesus leads up to the supreme miracle of raising the dead.

18. *a ruler*. 'One ruler' (see on viii. 19). He was an exception, as the question in John vii. 48 shows : 'Hath any of the rulers believed on Him ?'

dead. In Mark and Luke 'dying'.

19. *arose*, sc. from the table (ver. 10). See how the chequered scenes follow each other in the life of the Son of Man, as in all human life : Feasting (ver. 10-13), Fasting (ver. 14-17), Dying (ver. 18), Resurrection (ver. 25).

20. A woman with an issue of blood touched Him ; that touch, according to the Law, was defilement.

the border of his garment. From Num. xv. 38 it will be seen

for she said within herself, If I do but touch his ²¹
¹Or, *saved* garment, I shall be ¹made whole. But Jesus ²²
 turning and seeing her said, Daughter, be of
²Or, *saved* good cheer; thy faith hath ²made thee whole.
thee
 And the woman was ¹made whole from that
 hour. And when Jesus came into the ruler's ²³
 house, and saw the flute-players, and the crowd
 making a tumult, he said, Give place: for the ²⁴
 damsel is not dead, but sleepeth. And they

that the tassels, which were the reminders to every Israelite of the commandments of the Law, are meant. Though it was only the outermost part of His person she touched, yet it was a very significant part. In Jesus at least the keeping of the divine commandments was a tender spot.

21. This is evidently self-revelation; thus she described the experience afterwards.

22. Matthew condenses the story. But he does not omit the exquisite word of encouragement, as in ver. 2. To the timorous woman, as to the helpless paralytic, His first word is 'Courage'. To her also He can add what He could not to the paralytic: 'Thy faith hath made thee whole' (Luke viii. 48). It is a saying which was always on His lips (cf. Luke vii. 50, xvii. 19, xviii. 42). Paul learnt it from his Master (Acts xiv. 9). It became a cardinal doctrine of Christianity (Heb. iv. 2).

made whole, or 'saved'. The double meaning of the word admirably covers the physical symbol and the spiritual reality. The pitiable state of a sinner is hinted at in those twelve years of searching for a physician; for Old Testament descriptions of that state cf. Ezek. xvi. 5, 6; Hos. v. 13.

23. The narrative now moves on to the house of Jairus. There already a crowd of mourners has gathered. All was very conventional: professional mourners (Latin, *praeficae*) were hired, to chant dirges (Jer. ix. 17). Two flutes and one mourning woman were incumbent at the burial of a wife, even of the poorest man. In Rome the number of flute-players at a funeral was by the Twelve Tables limited to twelve, a check upon the luxury of woe. Perhaps Christ's putting this motley crowd out is an indication that He disapproves the trappings of grief, and would have us bury our dead without affectation, in the simplicity of a quiet faith and an assured hope.

24. *but sleepeth*. This exactly tallies with the fuller narrative of the raising of Lazarus. What Jesus says is, not that the maiden or Lazarus was not dead, but that death is only a sleep. From the Master's lips the disciple learned to speak of the dead merely

- 25 laughed him to scorn. But when the crowd was put forth, he entered in, and took her by the
 26 hand; and the damsel arose. And ¹ the fame ^{1 Gr. this fame.} hereof went forth into all that land.
- 27 And as Jesus passed by from thence, two blind men followed him, crying out, and saying,
 28 Have mercy on us, thou son of David. And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They

as sleeping, 1 Thess. v. 10, and to describe their resting-place as a sleeping-room (i. e. a cemetery).

25. Matthew omits the words spoken to the dead girl. He lays the whole stress on the wonderful hand-touch (cf. Mk. ix. 27).

26. The fame of the miracle, against His wish, necessarily spread (see ver. 30); the excitement caused by such a cure hindered His spiritual work. We surmise that He would rather have taught without working miracles; but He did what seemed to Him the lower work, partly because He was moved by a constant compassion, and partly because He was giving the outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual grace.

27-34. Two other typical cures are added; they are rather of the nature of an anticlimax after the narrative just given; but the object seems to be to illustrate completely the whole range of wonderful and merciful works referred to in xi. 5.

27-31. TWO BLIND MEN HEALED. In blindness and in the opening of the eyes there is a deep spiritual meaning (see John ix. 5). The glaring sun and the limestone dust in the air, not to mention the ill-ventilated houses and unclean habits of the country, made eye-troubles common, just as similar spiritual causes account for the prevalent spiritual blindness.

27. *thou son of David.* Jesus ignored the address, and went on, apparently unheeding, to the house, as in the narrative which is an echo of this, xx. 30 (so xv. 22, xxi. 9-15). He did not wish to be called by a name which was equivalent to Messiah, considering all the misleading Messianic associations and expectations which were current at the time. Yet, that He was the son of David, was well established (Matt. i. 1-17; Acts xiii. 23; Rom. i. 3; 2 Tim. ii. 8; Apoc. v. 5, xxii. 16).

28. *Believe ye?* Again the whole question is, Have you faith? All things are possible to him that believeth. That once assured, the cure is immediate. Thus by His healing work He engrains in man the truth of saving Faith.

say unto him, Yea, Lord. Then touched he ²⁹ their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it done unto you. And their eyes were opened. ³⁰

¹ Or, sternly

And Jesus ¹ strictly charged them, saying, See that no man know it. But they went forth, and ³¹ spread abroad his fame in all that land.

² Gr. demon.

And as they went forth, behold, there was ³² brought to him a dumb man possessed with a ² devil. And when the ² devil was cast out, the ³³ dumb man spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel. But the ³⁴

³ Or, In

⁴ Gr. demons.

Pharisees said, ³ By the prince of the ⁴ devils casteth he out ⁴ devils.

30. *strictly charged*. It is more 'sternly enjoined' (cf. Mark i. 43). But the fulfilment of the glorious prophecy: 'When the eyes of the blind shall be opened' (Isa. xxxv. 5) was too wonderful and intoxicating an experience. They could not help telling what the Lord had done for them, though He Himself forbade them.

32-4. A DUMB MAN HEALED. This healing of the dumb man is echoed in xii. 22-4; Luke xi. 14. But in the ministry of healing there were many repetitions. The duplicates are not so much in the narratives as in the facts. The cure of this particular dumb demoniac provoked the same blasphemous comment as the other in xii. 22-4, but it also elicited the cry of the multitude, which is a valuable evidence, to us, 'It was never so seen in Israel.'

32. *as they went forth*, sc. of the house. Jesús was at this time like a consulting-physician, and patients poured in to Him. The mystery of demon-possession need not hinder the spiritual value of Christ's work; granted that the possession was only a theory to explain the disease, yet the dumbness was indisputable, and the recovery of speech was as if the dumb devil had left him.

33. *marvelled*. Some think that this remark applies to the long series of miracles. But Matthew's intention is clearly to state that this particular cure excited the feeling of the unprecedented power.

34. Here is a striking instance of the different impressions which the same event will make on different minds; to the people the dumb man speaking is an evidence of divine grace mastering the devil, to the Pharisees it is an evidence of the devil playing tricks with his own emissaries. According to the eye is the vision.

- 35 And Jesus went about all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness.
- 36 But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a
- 37 shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers

35-8. SUMMARY. This is a careful *resumé* of all that has been recorded in these nine chapters of the Gospel. It is a picture of the Galilean ministry during the period of the Lord's popularity and manifest success. To the brief description is added a suggestion of the feelings with which He regarded the people. And then a statement of the need for labourers leads up to the conversion of the Twelve.

35. This repeats the general statement with which the picture of the teaching and the healing was opened (iv. 23, 24). It gives the key to the arrangement of these chapters, and shows that the evangelist's design is not so much to give a connected narrative as to group together the discourses which express His teaching and preaching, and the incidents which illustrate His healing. This is that Jesus who 'went about doing good' (Acts x. 38), and was for the time being the object of general admiration. The muttered criticisms of the Pharisees were hardly as yet heard, and the opposition which was to gather so quickly to a head was at present perceptible only to Him. This is the first act of the drama, but it passes into the second act (x-xiv. 12), in which He becomes the object of hostility.

36. This is an invaluable picture of humanity as seen with Christ's eyes. First He describes them as neglected sheep, then as an unreaped harvest. His feeling is not blame but pity. He blamed the leaders and teachers of the people, as neglectful shepherds (cf. Num. xxvii. 17; 1 Kings xxii. 17; Ezek. xxxiv. 5). The neglect of the shepherds was proved out of their own lips, when they asked the amazing question: 'Why eateth your master with publicans and sinners?' (ver. 11). What need we any further witness? They condemn themselves. The sheep are 'flayed and scattered', and the shepherds make that a reason for not gathering or tending them.

37. The 'plenteous harvest' is the religious possibility of mankind. What they might be if there were some labourers to gather in the sheaves, fills Him with concern. The labourers are few, as yet only One qualified expert. The way to increase the

are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the ³⁸ harvest, that he send forth labourers into his harvest. And he called unto him his twelve ¹⁰ disciples, and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of disease and all manner of sickness.

labourers is to pray; perhaps partly because those who pray thereby become labourers. All this is echoed in the appointment of the Seventy recorded by Luke (x. 2).

the Lord of the harvest. Cf. John xv. 1, 'My Father is the husbandman.' Here lies the hope that the great Proprietor will not suffer His sheep to remain scattered, and His harvest to be unreaped. He is chiefly concerned to get the work of His estate done. If the law of its being demands human agents to carry on the work, He will send forth, nay even 'thrust' forth such labourers. Indeed, when men begin to pray in earnest, they are already at the gate of the harvest-field themselves.

CH. X. MARCHING ORDERS OF APOSTLES. After the direction to pray for more labourers, the Master proceeded to commission Twelve; St. Luke gives an account of Seventy more commissioned in a similar way, later on (Luke x. 1-16). The Twelve, it has been thought, represent Christ's mission to the Twelve Tribes of Israel, the Seventy His mission to the whole world, which was believed to contain seventy nations. The call of four disciples—Peter and Andrew, James and John—is recorded in iv. 18-22, and of a fifth, Matthew, in ix. 9. The process of gathering disciples is indicated in viii. 18-22. But here the Twelve are mentioned as if they had been already selected. In Mark it is the same. Luke, on the other hand, assumes that there was already a larger body of disciples from which the Twelve were selected (Luke vi. 13). By the time that the first Gospel narratives were written down the Twelve had become an established and recognized institution; the number seemed necessary and pre-ordained; the title 'The Twelve' was equivalent to 'the Apostles'. The five already mentioned are the prominent group in the Twelve. Philip and Thomas emerge out of obscurity in the Fourth Gospel; and Bartholomew too, if he is to be identified with Nathanael (John i. 46). Simon the Cananæan—could that mean 'of Cana', as Jerome says?—called by St. Luke 'Zelotes' (Luke vi. 15; Acts i. 13) remains only a name, and so do the rest, with the exception of Judas, who attained not fame but infamy as the betrayer. The eminence of Peter and John is due to the obscurity of the other ten.

It will be noted that the paragraphs ver. 16-39 break the continuity of the charge, which goes on smoothly from ver. 15 to ver. 40,

2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the *son* of
 3 Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the *son* of Alphæus, and Thaddæus;
 4 Simon the ¹ Cananæan, and Judas Iscariot, who
 5 also ² betrayed him. These twelve Jesus sent forth, and charged them, saying,

¹ Or, *Zealot*.
 See Luke vi. 15; Acts i. 13.
² Or, *delivered him up*: and so always.

Go not into *any* way of the Gentiles, and

‘Whosoever shall not receive . . .’ to ‘he that receiveth you’. The interpolated paragraphs are introduced according to Matthew’s custom of grouping together the material under certain heads. The chapter, therefore, represents all that our Lord gave as direction, warning, or encouragement to the Twelve at various times.

We have to distinguish, as the Holy Spirit guides us, between the temporary directions of the commission and the eternal principles which underlie them.

1. **THE WORK** of apostles. The first work of the disciple, as of the Master, was to be a divine healer, casting out evil spirits and curing disease. From Mark vi. 12 it appears that he also preached repentance, but here also the stress is laid on the anointing with oil and healing the sick. Here the preaching is in the form, ‘The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand’ (ver. 7). It has been too often assumed that the healing was temporary, but the preaching was permanent. Perhaps the time is at hand when it will be seen that the commission cannot be thus bisected.

2. **THE MEN**. Here alone in this gospel are the men called apostles (cf. Mark vi. 30). But in the later Gospel of Luke it is a frequent designation. At first it means simply messengers; it was the grandeur of the message which gave to the messenger the style and title and repute which are implied in our word Apostolic.

The Twelve are grouped in pairs, in the case of the first two pairs because the pairs were brothers, in the case of the others for reasons we do not know.

4. *Iscariot*. This may mean ‘the man of Kerioth’, a town of Judah (Josh. xv. 25; Jer. xlvi. 41); if this be so, the traitor was the only Judæan in the company; the rest were provincials, Galileans.

5-42. **THE COMMISSION**. This may be analysed thus: (1) The scope of the present mission, ver. 5-15. (2) The reproach of

enter not into any city of the Samaritans : but 6
 go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.
 And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of 7
 heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, raise the 8
 dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out ¹ devils : freely
 ye received, freely give. Get you no gold, nor 9
 silver, nor brass in your ² purses ; no wallet for 10
 your journey, neither two coats, nor shoes, nor
 staff : for the labourer is worthy of his food.
 And into whatsoever city or village ye shall 11

¹ Gr.
demons.

² Gr.
girdles.

Christ, ver. 16-23. (3) The security in the Master, ver. 24-33.
 (4) The warfare and fidelity unto death, ver. 34-9. (5) The
 blessing on those who receive an apostle, ver. 40-2.

5-15. THE SCOPE OF THE PRESENT MISSION. This is obviously a temporary direction, applying only to the particular tour now enjoined. It was a mission to Israel, before any effort should be made for the Gentiles. 'It was necessary that the gospel should be first preached' to the House of Israel, and only when the Jews rejected it might the apostles turn to the Gentiles (Acts xiii. 46). The Samaritans the Lord visited Himself, but apostles were not sent to them until after Pentecost (Acts viii. 5). The restriction was necessary, because the messengers themselves had to be trained, and they were not fit for a mission to the Gentiles until Jesus was glorified and the Holy Spirit was given. Perhaps the permanent principle underlying the passage is, that we are bound first of all to make Christ known to those of our own house, and only when the home duty is performed are we fitted for efforts farther afield.

6. Christ yearned over the lost sheep : cf. ix. 36.

8. *raise the dead.* We are not told of any instance of raising the dead at this time. But Peter remembered his commission when he stood by the bier of Dorcas.

12. The old commentator, Euthymius Zigabenus, rightly apprehends the significance of this injunction, when he says that the Lord enjoins on His disciples 'a simple life'. It need, therefore, be no difficulty that in Mark vi. 8-10 the staff and sandals, here forbidden, are commanded. The details are secondary ; the main thought is, that the messengers are not to be impeded, not to entangle themselves with possessions, not to get or carry money, and so to become, as preachers in the days of the Didaché became, *Χριστέμποροι*, Christ-merchants. They need not even carry food, for their ministry would always entitle them to support from those whom they taught and healed.

enter, search out who in it is worthy; and there
 12 abide till ye go forth. And as ye enter into the
 13 house, salute it. And if the house be worthy,
 let your peace come upon it: but if it be not
 14 worthy, let your peace return to you. And whoso-
 ever shall not receive you, nor hear your words,
 as ye go forth out of that house or that city,
 15 shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say
 unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land
 of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judge-
 ment, than for that city.

16 Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the
 midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents,

17 and ¹harmless as doves. But beware of men: ¹Or, *simple*

13. *your peace.* That was the salutation: cf. 1 Sam. xxv. 6; 1 Chron. xii. 18. The returning of the 'peace' means the withdrawal of the salutation, as the visitor finds that he is not welcome, and therefore will not stay.

14. *shake the dust.* It was the custom in returning from a Gentile land to the sacred soil of Israel, to shake off the alien dust. They of the House of Israel who would not receive the messengers of Christ, were treated as 'not of Israel', they became a sort of spiritual Gentile. The 'Israelite indeed' was he who recognized and welcomed the Messiah who had come. The rejection of the opportunity ranked the town or village with the 'cities of the plain'.

16-39. By referring to Luke x. 3, where much of this commission is given later to the Seventy, we justify the view, that this long paragraph is interpolated by Matthew between ver. 15 and 40, according to his manner of grouping together the sayings which refer to a particular subject.

16-23. THE REPROACH OF CHRIST.

16. *in the midst of wolves.* Not 'to the wolves', but always surrounded by powers that would destroy them. Are the wolves men, or the principalities and powers in spiritual places? From the contrast presented in the next verse, of 'men', we suppose that the wolves are the unhuman enemies. The serpent's wisdom is seen in Gen. iii. 1 and implied in Ps. lviii. 5. On the other hand, the dove is silly (Hos. vii. 11), but harmless; the same word as in Rom. xvi. 19.

17. *men.* The same as the 'world' in St. John. The scourging is recorded in Acts xxii. 19; 2 Cor. xi. 24.

for they will deliver you up to councils, and in their synagogues they will scourge you ; yea and 18 before governors and kings shall ye be brought for my sake, for a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, be not 19 anxious how or what ye shall speak : for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your 20 Father that speaketh in you. And brother shall 21 deliver up brother to death, and the father his child : and children shall rise up against parents, and ¹ cause them to be put to death. And ye 22 shall be hated of all men for my name's sake : but he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved. But when they persecute you in this 23 city, flee into the next : for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.

¹ Or, *put them to death*

18. *for a testimony.* It is the appearance of martyrs in their sufferings which has again and again won converts to Christ. St. Alban so behaved before the magistrate that the soldier who was to behead him knelt beside him and was beheaded as a Christian. So it has always been. The Greek word is *martyrium*.

20. *the Spirit of your Father.* An echo of vi. 32. The Father knows and cares.

22. *the end* might be the end of the persecution ; but more probably 'the end of the age' (xiii. 39).

23. The obscurity of the saying would be relieved if, with Lutteroth, we might take the title 'Son of Man' not as a mere synonym for the personal pronoun, but as the significant name of Christ, in opposition to the strictly Jewish title 'Son of David'. Then the meaning of the verse would be : 'Do not linger in the evangelistic mission to the cities of Israel (cf. ver. 6), but pass rapidly through, because before you finish the homeland I shall have taken on my more universal title of Son of Man, i. e. the messenger of God to humanity at large.' Cf. xvi. 28, where 'the Son of Man comes' in the Transfiguration. This also shows how temporary was the restriction of the message to Israel.

- 24 A disciple is not above his ¹master, nor a
 25 ²servant above his lord. It is enough for the
 disciple that he be as his ¹master, and the
²servant as his lord. If they have called the
 master of the house ³Beelzebub, how much
 more *shall they call* them of his household!
 26 Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing
 covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid,
 27 that shall not be known. What I tell you in
 the darkness, speak ye in the light: and what
 ye hear in the ear, proclaim upon the housetops.
 28 And be not afraid of them which kill the body,
 but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear
 him which is able to destroy both soul and
 29 body in ⁴hell. Are not two sparrows sold for
 a farthing? and not one of them shall fall on

¹ Or,
teacher
² Gr. *bond-*
servant.

³ Gr.
Beelzebub:
 and so
 elsewhere.

⁴ Gr.
Gehenna.

The Gospel of the Son of Man can apply to nothing short of all mankind.

24-33. THE SECURITY OF THE DISCIPLE IN THE MASTER. Let us not expect a better reception than Christ met with here, if we wish to share His reception hereafter. He was called Beelzebub (ix. 3, xii. 24). Let us welcome reproach for His dear name, as Henry Martyn did.

24. *master*, i. e. Rabbi.

26. *Fear them not*. Repeated, ver. 28 and ver. 31. The flowing tide is with the Christian. The faith is at first a secret in a hole or corner; but it is to spread. The apostle is to utter the secret boldly in the daylight of human intercourse, even from the housetop, the most public of all positions.

28. Fear not the persecutor; but the tempter. The former has no power over the soul; the latter aims only at the soul. See v. 29, where the words of Jesus explain the phrase here. On the other hand, Jas. iv. 12 would suggest that not the tempter, but God is meant. So Luke.—Mr. Allen explains ‘fear not physical death. But fear the wrath of God against unfaithfulness to Him, for He can destroy soul and body together in Gehenna.’

29. *farthing*. The Roman coin, the *as*, is of the value of $\frac{3}{4}d$. The Father is by the sparrow’s death-bed: He is not likely to forget one who is witnessing for His Well-beloved Son. The hairs are numbered: cf. 1 Sam. xiv. 45. The gentle humour of

the ground without your Father : but the very 30
 hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not 31
 therefore ; ye are of more value than many
 sparrows. Every one therefore who shall confess 32
¹ me before men, ² him will I also confess before
 my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever 33
² shall deny me before men, him will I also deny
 before my Father which is in heaven.
³ Think not that I came to ³ send peace on the 34
 earth : I came not to ³ send peace, but a sword.

the words, ' ye are of more value than many sparrows,' gives an unspeakably intimate assurance to the disciple in his hour of peril.

32. *shall confess me.* It is really ' shall confess in me ', because, as Chrysostom says, we confess by the grace of Christ. We confess by being in Him. On the other hand, we deny Him, of ourselves, by being out of Him altogether. But the wonder comes in the parallel clause : ' I also will confess in Him.' This does not mean merely that He will own the faithful disciple before the throne of the Father, but that He will be so in the disciple that in that great day the response of the disciple before God will be Christ speaking in him. The only parallel is ' abide in me and I in you ' (John xv. 4).

33. On the other hand, the denial of Christ here puts a man out of Christ, and necessarily there Christ will declare that the man is out of Him. We are only complete in Him : if any man be in Christ he is a new creature. Christ must necessarily disown those who are not in Him.

34-9. **THE WARFARE AND FIDELITY.** This is a hard saying, one which we are tempted to reverse, but for that very reason our Lord was explicit in forewarning us what was to be expected. Naturally, from His whole character of love and mercy, and from His exquisite law of conduct, His disciples would anticipate the immediate dawn of peace and harmony. But that could not be. The immediate effect of accepting Christ and His claim was that the disciple had to choose between Christ and the relatives or housemates who were set against Him. Nothing would excite more bitter and envenomed hostility than the calm tenacity with which the true believer would cling to his invisible Lord. Homes would be divided ; parents would attempt to coerce their children, and even to kill them if they were obdurate. It cannot be doubted that the Lord foresaw what would happen, and in this way from the very first prepared His followers for the result.

34. The sword is perhaps only symbolical of the conflict which

35 For I came to set a man at variance against his
 father, and the daughter against her mother, and
 the daughter in law against her mother in law :
 36 and a man's foes *shall be* they of his own house-
 37 hold. He that loveth father or mother more
 than me is not worthy of me ; and he that loveth
 son or daughter more than me is not worthy of

would ensue when a man or woman had determined to follow Christ. In the event the sword has often been literal enough. The Crusaders fought the infidel under the banner of the Cross. Catholics and Protestants waged the Thirty Years' war. Scotland was desolated by the Episcopal attempt to destroy the Covenant. But these wars of religion were not contemplated by our Lord, still less approved. And the domestic scene of the strife described in ver. 35-6 justifies us in taking the sword merely as a symbol of discord.

The younger people are the converts to the new faith ; the young naturally begin the revolution in thought. They are confronted by the opposition of parents and relatives, and they have to make the momentous choice. Christ or filial obedience, which? In that arduous conflict a scene is produced which appears to be like the scene described by Micah vii. 6. Indeed, the Lord is actually quoting the description of the apostate and rebellious land given by the prophet : 'For the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law ; a man's enemies are the men of his own house.' But the resemblance is only on the surface. The strife described by Micah is the disintegration of a corrupt and avaricious society, in which the contending parties are equally guilty ; but the strife described by our Lord is the struggle between truth and error, between light and darkness, between God and man. The great new truth of the Gospel has entered a family ; traditional prejudices and superstitions war against it ; the conflict is severe ; but truth will gain the day, and out of the strife will come a higher kind of peace. All this is implied in the context ; it is not expressed in these verses, because the object here is simply to nerve the disciples to make the right choice, and to prepare them to set Christ even before the dearest earthly ties. The great argument has been frequently abused and turned to perilous accounts, but it is essential and irrevocable.

37. What a claim it is ! No earthly ties are closer than those between parents and children, and yet one who loves these more than Christ is not worthy of Him. Who can that be who makes

me. And he that doth not take his cross and ³⁸ follow after me, is not worthy of me. He that ³⁹

¹ Or, *found*

² Or, *soul*

³ Or, *lost*

¹ findeth his ² life shall lose it; and he that ² loseth his ² life for my sake shall find it.

He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he ⁴⁰ that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

such a claim—king, prophet, philosopher, priest? None of these could demand love greater than the instinct of parental or filial affection. Only the Creator, or a Saviour, could demand it, a Creator-Saviour.

38. This saying about the Cross occurs again in xvi. 24-5. It was a Roman form of punishment, made familiar to the Jew by the Roman government of the country; the criminal carried his own cross to the place of execution. From this familiar fact grew up many figurative allusions. The disciples listening to the saying before events had unrolled their Master's crucifixion would take it to mean that their fidelity must go the length of bearing the extremity of shameful suffering incurred at the hands of governments (see ver. 22). But when, in process of time, the disciples saw their own Master carry His cross and die upon it, they gave to the saying the deeper meaning which now comes most readily to our mind.

39. The Greek word $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$ means life and soul. Naturally it meant the former, but more and more in Christian usage it meant the latter. It is the double meaning which explains the paradox. Suppose we are speaking only of the vital principle which makes the organism of the body; a man finds it at birth, it comes to him naturally; but it disappears again at death; he finds and keeps it only to lose it. But suppose he freely surrenders it, and is willing to die for Christ's sake, that vital principle is a deeper and more lasting entity, a 'soul', an immortal soul. Where Christ comes in, the hope of glory, and the seed of eternal life, a man lays down his 'life', but finds his 'soul'.

40-2. THE BLESSING ON THOSE WHO RECEIVE AN APOSTLE. This obviously follows closely on ver. 15. The Lord had just said what would happen to those who would *not* receive His messengers: now He shows what will happen to those who will receive them.

40. He takes the reception given to His representatives as given to Himself; He claims that a reception given to Him is given to God (Luke x. 16; John xiii. 20). So Paul: 'Ye received me as a messenger of God, even as Christ Jesus' (Gal. iv. 14): cf. ch. xviii. 5, xxv. 40. The Spirit of the Father would speak through the disciple, and in that sense it would be God Himself who was received or rejected. In Mark ix. 37 every little child is in this sense made an apostle (so Luke ix. 48). Christ's own

- 41 He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's
 42 reward. And 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.
- 11 And it came to pass, when Jesus had made

relation with the Father is stated in John xii. 44-5. Thus the Divinity of Jesus is primary, but there is a secondary divinity of those who believe in Him and speak for Him.

41. *prophet*. Compare the old prophets, Elijah at Zarephath (1 Kings xvii. 10-15) or those protected by Obadiah (1 Kings xviii. 4) or Elisha received by the Shunammite (2 Kings iv. 8). But the minister of Christ is still called 'prophet' and 'scribe' xiii. 51, xxiii. 34. To receive a prophet is as good as to be a prophet. But some prophets were not righteous; Christ therefore adds: 'He that receiveth a righteous man.' The phrase might mean only a fulfiller of the law, but it carries in its bosom also the righteousness which is of God by faith. The righteous man in that deep evangelic sense is equivalent to Christian, or apostle of Christ. 'See how He cares for their morals,' exclaims Chrysostom. He makes no claim for His messengers except so far as they are good.

42. *these little ones*, viz. the Apostles! Even the greatest disciples of Christ are little ones, mere children, in comparison with Him. Cf. xxv. 40: 'a cup of cold water' is mentioned as a very little gift; but, as a modern traveller says: 'In this hot and dry land, where one can wander for hours without coming on a brook or an accessible cistern, you say "thank you" for a drink of fresh water with very different feelings than we do at home' (Furrer).

Thus the Lord has identified Himself with His representatives: the world's treatment of them He accepts as meted out to Himself. In all their afflictions He is afflicted: in their victories He triumphs. Those who further and help them become His creditors, whom He will assuredly repay.

We see, then, in full what we are to expect, good and ill, suffering and joy, when we follow Him. There is no secret; all is made plain.

CH. XI. THE OPPOSITION TO JESUS BEGINS.

Even John the Baptist questions (ver. 1-19); the busy commercial centres refuse Him (ver. 20-4); the 'wise and understanding' are

an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and preach in their cities.

Now when John heard in the prison the works² of the Christ, he sent by his disciples, and said³ unto him, Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another? And Jesus answered and said unto⁴ them, Go your way and tell John the things

blind to Him (ver. 25). The pious in the nation, the Pharisees, show a hostility which deepens and strengthens (ch. xii, &c.).

1. In Luke the matter of this chapter comes before the dispatch of the apostles in ch. x, but here it is implied that the Twelve were away on their mission, and He withdrew, in order to leave them for awhile cast on their own resources.

2-19. EVEN JOHN THE BAPTIST DOUBTS.

2. *the Christ*, i.e. Messiah. The Forerunner, who had recognized and announced Jesus as Messiah, was in prison (iv. 12), in Herod's stronghold of Machærus (Jos. *Ant.* xviii. 5. 2). There he had lain for a year. He thought that Messiah, whose function it was to set at liberty them that are bound, would have liberated him. The 'works of the Christ' were not what he had anticipated. He foretold that Christ would lay the axe to the root of the tree, and would come with His fan in His hand, winnowing. The baptism he expected was of fire, burning the chaff. He belonged to the order of Old Testament prophets, and had no idea that love was the chief Messianic charisma. His disciples still clung to him in prison; only a few of them had gone over to his great Successor. And probably they deepened the depression and gloom of the prison atmosphere by representing Christ as indifferent to him, and him as an injured and ill-rewarded prophet. The magnanimity, which saw at the first that he must decrease while Christ increased, was not proof against the prison atmosphere. He had said that Jesus was 'He that should come' (iii. 11). Now he was in doubt himself.

4. The answer of Jesus to the question, whether He was Messiah, is very characteristic. He does not rebuke John for his doubt, but only says: 'Blessed is he who is not offended in me.' He does not lay loud claim to His lofty title, but only directs attention to His works, and leaves John to judge from them, who He is. In the later narrative (Luke vii. 21) Jesus works miracles there and then, to convince the messengers; here He appeals to the constant incidents of His ministry, the events which have happened and are now on everybody's tongue (viii. 1-4, ix. 1-7, 18-33).

5 which ye do hear and see: the blind receive
 their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are
 cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are
 raised up, and the poor have ^{1 Or, the} good tidings _{gospel}
 6 preached to them. And blessed is he, whoso-
 ever shall find none occasion of stumbling in
 7 me. And as these went their way, Jesus began
 to say unto the multitudes concerning John,
 What went ye out into the wilderness to behold?
 8 a reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye

5. *have good tidings preached to them.* The Greek word in the passive (so Heb. iv. 2) is simpler: 'The dead are raised, and the poor are evangelized.' As the Gospel is the chief thing, we may assume that the spiritual significance of the miracles is more important than the miracles themselves. The blind, the lame, the lepers, the deaf and the dead, are types of the sinful souls who are saved by the Gospel. Thus the 'dead' may mean those who are spiritually dead, as in viii. 22, those who were lost to heaven and home, like the son in the parable (Luke xv. 24-32). But we must not, with Wellhausen, cast a doubt on the physical miracles, because their importance lay in their spiritual meaning. It was the actual healing of the blind and the deaf and the lame which showed to John how exactly Jesus fulfilled the Messianic prophecy (Isa. xxxv. 5. lxi. 1). And Christ's power to raise men to spiritual life is the reflex of His power to raise them from the dead. On this point the witness of the fourth Gospel is explicit (v. 24-8). Yet Jesus knew how these miracles of power were and would be a stumblingblock to many.

6. All His disciples found an occasion of stumbling in Him (xxvi. 31). We cannot help hoping that the message to John in prison produced the desired effect, that he was convinced, and did not find an occasion of stumbling. But we are not told.

7-10. When the messengers had set off for Machærus, Jesus turned to the crowds and explained exactly who and what John was. He induces them to reflect by asking them what it was that they went out into the Arabah—that is the wilderness of Jordan—to see. In the Arabah the reeds grow, an emblem of instability (1 Kings xiv. 15). 'What a vast space of time,' says Furrer, a modern traveller, 'lies between the days of the Baptist and us! Yet the stream flows in the old bed. Still gently blows the wind among the sighing reeds.' But it was not the supple unstable reeds they went out to see.

out for to see? a man clothed in soft *raiment*? Behold, they that wear soft *raiment* are in kings' houses. ¹ But wherefore went ye out? to see a ⁹ prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet. This is he, of whom it is written, ¹⁰ Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, Who shall prepare thy way before thee.

¹ Many ancient authorities read *But what went ye out to see? a prophet?*

Verily I say unto you, Among them that are ¹¹ born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist: yet he that is ² but little in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. And from the days of John the Baptist until ¹² now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence,

² Gr. *lesser.*

8. Nor was it a courtier, or adviser of kings, that they went out to see.

9. It was a prophet, the exact opposite of reed or courtier, a great prophet, the last of the order, and greater than all, because he lived to see the day which all had foretold.

Yea. The same meaning as the Amen, so often on His lips (cf. 2 Cor. i. 20; Rev. i. 7). Then in express words Jesus says that John was the fulfilment of the prophecy of Mal. iii. 1.

11-15. These verses seem as if they were addressed rather to the disciples than to the crowds, but see note on ver. 1. In Luke (xvi. 16) ver. 12 is addressed to the Pharisees.

11. *greater.* This refers to John's intrinsic worth.

arisen, i. e. the Lord raised him up (cf. Judges ii. 18, iii. 9). And yet the future belongs not to him, but to Another. The least believer, admitted into the Kingdom of God by faith in Christ, is greater even than this greatest representative of the old order, greater not in intrinsic worth, but in the possession of a richer inheritance. Erasmus and Luther oddly explain 'the lesser in the Kingdom' to mean Christ himself, but Christ in His humility never represented Himself as little in the Kingdom of God. And the antithesis is spoilt by this freak of interpretation.

12. Cf. Luke xvi. 16, 'from the days of John the Baptist until now'—a short interval in time, but so eventful in the transformation of human hope that it seemed a great epoch. The character of the epoch is now described in words which remain ambiguous. The 'men of violence', thinks Wellhausen, are the zealots who wished to make war with Rome on behalf of the Kingdom; fellow-soldiers with the Christians, though deluded,

13 and men of violence take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.
 14 And if ye are willing to receive ¹it, this is Elijah,
 15 which is to come. He that hath ears ²to hear,
 16 let him hear. But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the marketplaces, which call unto their fellows, and say, We piped unto you, and ye did not

¹ Or, him
² Some ancient authorities omit *to hear*.

nearer the Kingdom than John, though not yet knowing what spirit they were of. Dalman (*Words of Jesus*, p. 142), failing to find an Aramaic original for the phrase, urges that we should not give it a meaning contrary to the general tenor of the teaching of Jesus: he inclines to refer the violence to rulers and other authorities who persecute the Kingdom of God, and its subjects; 'take it by force' would then mean, 'seize or arrest the persons of those who constitute the Kingdom of God.'

But Bruce expresses the commoner view: the violence is approved; it represents the eager rush for the Kingdom of God, reflected in the Gospel narrative (ver. 25, ix. 9-12) which followed on the moral reformation of John. This view harmonizes better with ver. 11 and ver. 13. Until John the Old Testament *régime*, the prophets, and the Law continued. With him the new *régime* began, and though he did not himself belong to it, the eager entrance into the kingdom, the production of others greater than himself, was due to him.

14. If they would lay aside prejudice they would see that John was the Elijah expected on account of Malachi's prophecy (Mal. iv. 5; in LXX, 'Elijah the Tishbite'). Jesus stated this even more explicitly (Mark ix. 11-13).

15. *He that hath ears.* The first use in the Gospel of this solemn formulary. It is Christ's thought throughout that all defects lie in the recipient, the perceiver. If we would see, hear, believe, all truth, all power, is there.

16-19. The perversity of our human judgements in the estimate of Divine revelation is illustrated by a homely reference to a children's game. From Luke vii. 29-30 we may infer that by 'this generation' He means the Pharisees and Scribes in contrast with the people. The people as a whole listened to John, and to Christ. But the Pharisees reject both (ix. 11); see xii. 38-45.

17. When these words are put back into Aramaic they appear as a song:

We played and you would not dance,
 We mourned and you would not weep.

The value of the illustration for us is not so much its aptness.

¹ Gr. *beat the breast.* dance ; we wailed, and ye did not ¹ mourn. For 18
² Gr. *demon.* John came neither eating nor drinking, and they
³ Or, *was* say, He hath a ² devil. The Son of man came 19
⁴ Many ancient authorities read eating and drinking, and they say, Behold, a
⁵ *children :* gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of
⁶ as in Luke publicans and sinners ! And wisdom ⁸ is justified
⁷ vii. 35. by her ⁴ works.

as the delightful suggestion it gives us of our Lord's observation of children at their play.

18. The illustration shows the perversity and waywardness of mind which, resolved to reject God and truth in every form, will have an objection ready for the most opposite forms in which it may come. 'John came neither eating nor drinking.' The negative in the Greek expresses a subjective idea ; it is equivalent to 'neither (so they said) eating nor drinking.' It was a charge, not the fact. They took exception to his asceticism ; he was, they declared, deranged.

19. *The son of man.* The title is used significantly, suggesting that He was human, genial, fraternal. And they charged Him with loose living. They affixed the title of reproach (cf. ix. 11) which has been taken up as His greatest glory. They called Him a friend of publicans and sinners. And so He is.

But as they objected to both modes, which was right ? Both were right. The Prophet and the Saviour, the Old Testament and the New Testament, the Forerunner and He who was to come. They represent the two processes in the spiritual life, 'repenting and believing the Gospel'. To reject each separately is indeed folly : for the two, like a binary star, shed their true light in combination. This generation of Pharisees had shown their folly by rejecting John ; and they were going to confirm it by rejecting Jesus.

wisdom is justified by her works. The aorist tense is what is called gnomic ; it is a proverbial saying. Wisdom shows that she is wisdom by results. To fools she appears folly ; and even to the would-be-wise her ways are not immediately clear. This wisdom (Ahamoth) is the wisdom of God ; cf. Luke xi. 49. See Rom. xi. 33 ; 1 Cor. i. 21-4, where Christ Himself is that Wisdom. Also Eph. iii. 10 ; Rev. vii. 12. The alternative reading, 'children' for 'works', is from Luke vii. 35. Her children are certainly not the Pharisees ; the sons of the Kingdom are cast out (viii. 12). They are those enlightened souls to whom the Kingdom taken from the wise is given (xi. 25). The paradox is that the wisdom of men is often found to be elaborate folly, and only the wisdom which is from above deserves the name. But the wise in this

20 Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein
 most of his ¹ mighty works were done, because ¹ Gi.
 21 they repented not. Woe unto thee, Chorazin! ^{power}
 woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the ¹ mighty
 works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which
 were done in you, they would have repented
 22 long ago in sackcloth and ashes. Howbeit I

world remain strangely ignorant of this; the wise by whom
 Wisdom is justified, are often the babes.

20-30. THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THOSE WHO REJECT AND THOSE
 WHO RECEIVE HIM.

20-4. THOSE WHO REJECT.

20. *Then*, as Matthew arranges his material, this description of
 the cities that would not repent follows on the general charge
 against the 'generation' that would not receive either John or
 John's Lord. 'The wise and understanding' of ver. 27 are in
 contrast with the 'wisdom' and her works, or children, of
 ver. 19.

the cities. These towns in the busy district of Galilee stand for
 the commercial spirit, which is too absorbed in the pursuit of gain
 to have ears to hear Christ. Though some few from these towns
 gave ear to Him and repented, we gather that the community as
 a whole remained unmoved.

21. *Chorazin*, not mentioned elsewhere, must have been on the
 west of the lake, near Capernaum; perhaps the road to Tyre ran
 through it. It shows how few details we have of Christ's ministry,
 that nothing is recorded of the mighty works that were done in this
 town.

Bethsaida, on the east shore, near the mouth of the Jordan;
 the name means 'fishing-house', mentioned Mark vi. 45, in
 connexion with the 'walking on the sea'; Mark viii. 22, in con-
 nexion with the healing of the blind; Luke ix. 10, in connexion
 with the feeding of the multitude. Bethsaida therefore had
 seen mighty works done. The town gave the Lord three of His
 first disciples—Andrew, Simon and Philip. And yet it did not
 repent.

Tyre and Sidon, as great commercial cities, had been de-
 nounced by the prophets for their pride and luxury (Amos i. 9, 10;
 Isa. xxiii; Ezek. xxvi, xxviii). Yet their moral hardness was not
 equal to that of Galilee.

in sackcloth and ashes, the signs of penitence (Job xiii. 6,
 Jonah iii. 8). As cities the judgement has been passed with an
 equal severity on all. For the wretched remains of Tyre and
 Sidon are no more 'tolerable' than the disappearance of Chorazin
 and Bethsaida. But the day of judgement (Acts xvii. 31) points

say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgement, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, shalt thou be ex-²³alted unto heaven? thou shalt ¹go down unto Hades: for if the ²mighty works had been done in Sodom which were done in thee, it would have remained until this day. Howbeit I say unto ²⁴you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgement, than for thee.

¹ Many ancient authorities read *be brought down*.

² Gr. *powers*.

to the doom of the individuals who inhabited the cities. And the responsibility of having seen Christ and remained impenitent is greater than that of those who never saw His earthly day, and will confront Him first in His heavenly reign.

23. *Capernaum*. The question 'shalt thou be exalted to heaven?' implies that in the expectation of the inhabitants, it was or would be. The words are an echo of what is said of Babylon and her king in Isa. xiv. 13-14; cf. Lam. ii. 1. Grotius, followed by some moderns, like De Wette, supposed that the exaltation was the sense of abounding prosperity. Capernaum was the Babylon, or the Tyre, of Galilee; she considered her mercantile supremacy secured. The thrusting down to Hades is thus the same fate that was predicted for the other commercial queen, Tyre, in Ezek. xxvi. 23. At Tel Khum, which is the more probable site of Capernaum, more probable than Khan Minyeh, a mile or two south, the Franciscans, who now guard the spot, have unearthed the ruins of a fine Graeco-Roman building, which one is tempted to identify with the synagogue which the centurion built. The writer, standing among those ruins in the blazing heat, sought protection under a shrub, which, looking up, he found to be a mustard-plant, and putting out his hand to pluck what appeared to be an ear of barley, he discovered that it was a tare.

But if the old reading 'thou that wast exalted to heaven' might be kept, or if its meaning could be found in the question, we might say that Capernaum was exalted to heaven because, as the residence of Jesus, it was the most favoured spot on earth. There He lived as a man among men, and the whole series of His miracles was unfolded before those fortunate eyes. Even Sodom would have repented at that display of grace. Dean Stanley's suggestion that there are more ruins traceable of Sodom by the Dead Sea than there are of Capernaum, would hardly cover the idea of Sodom's superiority. But the unspeakable sins of Sodom were not in Christ's eyes so incurable, or beyond repentance, as the callous indifference of Capernaum.

24. *the land of Sodom* stands for the people. That population

25 At that season Jesus answered and said, I
 1 thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and ^{1 Or,}
 earth, that thou didst hide these things from the ^{praise}
 wise and understanding, and didst reveal them
 26 unto babes: yea, Father, ² for so it was well- ^{2 Or, that}
 27 pleasing in thy sight. All things have been

in which there were not ten righteous will receive a doom bearable in comparison with the 'depart from me' pronounced on the people of Capernaum. This is the most solemn verdict of Christ's consciousness against those who are too immersed in business to come to Him.

25-30. THOSE WHO COME UNTO HIM.

25. *At that season.* Cf. Luke x. 21, 22; we cannot take the term as a specific note of time (xii. 1). At the most it means 'during that Galilean ministry'.

answered. As it stands here, the 'answer' seems to be to the general neglect and rejection of His ministry, which might have produced annoyance or remonstrance. On the contrary He joyfully (see Luke) accepts the law of His Father's will, and sees the true success where nothing but failure appeared.

I thank thee. It is the same word as in Ps. lxxv. 1. It is more than our common thanks. It is adoring acquiescence—the unquestioning and absolute acceptance of the Father's 'good pleasure' (ver. 26).

Father. Jesus never addresses the Father in the form He appoints for us. 'Our Father which art in heaven'; but only as Father, the Father (ver. 26), or my Father (xxvi. 39, 42).

Lord of heaven and earth. The veil lifts, and He is gazing on the majesty of God; as He gazes, our eyes follow His gaze, and we, too, see the Supreme.

these things, i. e. the whole burden of His teaching and works, a scandal to that generation and the subsequent generations.

the wise and understanding. The wise are the philosophers, the understanding are the shrewd, practical men. The epithets were designed by God for Israel (Deut. iv. 6); who were, presumably, the 'children of Wisdom' (Luke vii. 35). But their wisdom had become blind; their understanding was perverted; Wisdom was justified of her children, in disclaiming them.

babes. He thought literally of children, who have a heavenly wisdom before they are darkened by the wisdom of this world. But He also meant those who retain or recover their childlikeness. There is a childishness which we must outgrow (1 Cor. xiii. 11, xiv. 20; Heb. v. 13). But Jesus is thinking of the childlikeness which witnesses to our origin (xviii. 3).

26. *well-pleasing.* For this good pleasure of the Father, see

delivered unto me of my Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal *him*. Come 28

Eph. i. 5-9; Phil. ii. 13. It is the acceptance of God's good pleasure as decisive and sufficient that gives the zest to the joy of Jesus: the same word, in its verbal form, in iii. 17.

27. Here the *corporeal* Gospel, as the Fathers call the Synoptics in contrast with the Fourth Gospel, seems to speak the same language as the *spiritual* gospel.

have been delivered. The word suggests the 'tradition' of which Jewish religion consisted; but 'tradition' undergoes a change of meaning when it signifies that which is handed down from God to His well-beloved Son. This is the only tradition in which the soul can finally rest. The 'all things' include not only truths of doctrine, but power and authority (xxviii. 18; John iii. 25, xvii. 2; Eph. i. 22). This absolute use of Son and Father occurs also in Mark xiii. 32, but it is the normal language of the Fourth Gospel.

no one knoweth the Son save the Father. Wellhausen holds this to be an interpolation, a kind of balance to the subsequent clause. How true it is that these things are not revealed to the wise! It was the sense that His Father alone knew Him which kept Him so calm in the midst of universal misunderstanding, when He was called a glutton, and supposed to be possessed by a devil; when John the Baptist doubted Him, and when His disciples forsook Him, leaving Him alone, yet not alone, for the Father was with Him. And this side of His great saying each one of us can appropriate; though we cannot say, 'No one knoweth the Father, but I,' we can say 'No one knoweth *me* but the Father'.

On the other hand, the Son's peculiar knowledge of the Father is the truth which rings all through the Fourth Gospel (i. 18, vi. 46, vii. 29, viii. 19, x. 15, xvii. 25). It is the intimate revelation of Christianity (cf. Heb. i. 1). And the power He has to reveal the Father to men, *is* the Gospel (John xvii. 26). The uniqueness of Christ's nature is here unequivocally stated. We can become sons of God mediately through Him. He is intrinsically the Son of God. 'Nowhere do we find that Jesus called Himself the Son of God in such a sense as to suggest a merely religious and ethical relation to God—a relation which others also actually possessed, or which they were capable of attaining or destined to acquire' (Dalman, *Words of Jesus*, p. 287).

To whomsoever the Son willeth. That, if it stood alone, as it does in Luke, might fill the soul with apprehension. For it seems to imply that if we know not the Father, it is because the Son has not wished to reveal Him to *us*. But here at least all

unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden,
 29 and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon
 you, and learn of me ; for I am meek and lowly

doubt is removed ; for the statement of Christ's exclusive know-
 ledge is followed at once by His universal invitation.

28. Pfeleiderer dismisses the invitation as an invention concocted
 out of certain Old Testament passages. But, as Dr. Bruce says,
 this passage does not smell of the lamp. It is the most sponta-
 neous and inevitable exclamation of the heart of the Son, whose
 function it is to show men the Father.

Its significance is only apprehended when the parallelism with
 Eccus. li. 23-7 is pointed out.¹ There, Jesus ben Sirach, speaking
 in the name of Wisdom, uses the words which form the ground-
 plan of our passage : here Jesus, Son of God, takes the words, and
 as the Heavenly Wisdom gives them a personal meaning which
 none but He could claim ; and in using the words in that personal
 way, He shows who He is.

The echo of such Old Testament passages as Isa. xiv. 3 ; xxviii.
 12, lv. 1-3 ; Jer. vi. 16, xxxi. 2, 25 (Eccus. vi. 24, 25, 28, 29 ;
 li. 23-7) brings out, by contrast, the wonder of Jesus bidding men
 come to Him personally, implying that He is the Wisdom of God.
 But no one could have compiled these few words and put them
 into His mouth, unless it were one who had learnt from His own
 lips who He is.

heavy laden, with the burdens of the Jewish law (xxiii. 4)
 and its false traditions (Mark vii. 6-13, contrasted with the new
 tradition of living Godship. Or the burdens may be more general
 —it is sorrowful, overdone, humanity, that the Son comes to bring
 into His rest.

29. *my yoke* ; the yoke which Christ lays on the soul. This is,
 perhaps, His teaching, as in Eccus. li. 26. But it may be His
 authority, as Yokhanan ben Zakkai (A.D. 80) speaks of 'the
 yoke of the heavenly sovereignty', in contrast with 'the yoke of
 flesh and blood' (Dalman, *Words of Jesus*, p. 92).

meek and lowly in heart, i. e. ready to accommodate Himself
 to 'babes'. Martineau suspects the words, because they seem to

¹ Draw near unto me, ye unlearned,
 And lodge in the house of instruction.

Put your neck under the yoke,
 And let your soul receive instruction.

Behold with your eyes,
 How that I laboured but a little,
 And found for myself much rest.

in heart : and ye shall find rest unto your souls.
For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. 30

At that season Jesus went on the sabbath day 12
through the cornfields ; and his disciples were
an hungred, and began to pluck ears of corn,
and to eat. But the Pharisees, when they saw 2
it, said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that
which it is not lawful to do upon the sabbath.

him incompatible with the humility of Jesus. But He, if no one else, could reach the lowliness of heart which can describe itself accurately. It would be more reasonable to reject the words because one who alone knew the Father and was able to reveal Him could hardly be 'lowly'. But that is the moral miracle of Jesus, the Divine Greatness in the form of an absolute lowliness (Phil. ii. 6-8). The yoke is not the attempt to imitate Jesus, nor is the burden that which He bore. But coming to Him and learning of Him, we find the yoke of His obedience easy, and the burden of allegiance to Him light.

CH. xii. THE WEARY AND HEAVY-LADEN COME TO HIM, AND ARE WELCOMED AS HIS MOTHER AND BRETHREN. THE WISE AND UNDERSTANDING, THE PHARISEES, HARDEN INTO AN OPPOSITION WHICH BECOMES MURDEROUS.

1-21. Jesus appears as Lord of the Sabbath. His withdrawal from the wrath of the Pharisees gives the evangelist occasion to sketch His portrait in the words of Isa. xlii. 1-3.

1-8. The Sabbath was the idol of contemporary Pharisaiism. It had become, instead of an aid to religion, a tyrannical burden to souls. The Son of Man was bound to rescue the institution from its degradation and to reassert its spiritual significance. The first occasion of doing this necessary work was a breach of Sabbath rigorism which only a very watchful enmity would have observed. It was the end of March, the time of the barley harvest, and of Passover. Perhaps we may connect the season with John v. 1. It was, says Luke vi. 1, the first-second Sabbath, if that inexplicable adjective is not, as Bruce thinks, a gloss. It was legal to pluck ears in passing through a cornfield, though not to use a sickle (Deut. xxiii. 25). But to do so on the Sabbath seemed to Pharisaiism outrageous, for it was a kind of *reaping*. So in Scotland at one time the use of a razor on Sunday was forbidden as a kind of reaping. To rub the ears in the hand (Luke) was a kind of threshing.

1. They hungred, not He. He always had meat which they knew not of.

2. *that which it is not lawful to do.* The Law was silent on

3 But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred, and they
 4 that were with him; how he entered into the house of God, and ¹did eat the shewbread, ¹ Some ancient authorities read *they did eat.*
 which it was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them that were with him, but only for the
 5 priests? Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath day the priests in the temple
 6 profane the sabbath, and are guiltless? But I say unto you, that ²one greater than the temple ² Gr. a greater thing.
 7 is here. But if ye had known what this meaneth, I desire mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not

the point. But Jesus prefers to cite positive and unexpected examples rather than to use the silence of Scripture.

3. *Have ye not read?* so xxi. 16. They had read the Scriptures with blind eyes. 1 Sam. xxi. 6 tells how David went alone to Abimelech—yet it was in the lifetime of David's friend Abiathar, as Mark says (ii. 26 marg.)—but it is implied that 'they that were with him' ate too. The shewbread might only be eaten by the priests (Ex. xxv. 30; Lev. xxiv. 5-9).

4. Entering into the house of God was a violation of the regulations, still more so was the eating of the shewbread; perhaps also it was on the Sabbath day. The instance shows how the strictest ordinances of the cultus might give way to a real necessity, and God, who loves mercy more than sacrifice, will approve.

5. This more general instance is not in Mark (ii. 23, 27), who, on the other hand, gives us the saying which is not here, 'the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath.' The priests defile the Sabbath, if these necessary acts of utility *are* profanation, by killing the lamb for the morning and evening sacrifice (Num. xxviii. 9, 10), by setting the shewbread on the table (Lev. xxiv. 8; 1 Chron. ix. 32), and by circumcizing on that day, if it was the eighth day after birth.

6. *greater than the temple*—or 'something greater'. If the former, He Himself, cf. ver. 41, 42; and see in John ii. 21 how He speaks of Himself as the Temple. But the something greater may be the Law of Love referred to in ver. 7.

7. His favourite quotation from Hos. vi. 6 (see ix. 13), the echo of Mic. vi. 6-8. It was shocking to Him that the so-called law of God should forbid the hungry to eat.

have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of 8
man is lord of the sabbath.

And he departed thence, and went into their 9
synagogue : and behold, a man having a withered 10
hand. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful
to heal on the sabbath day? that they might
accuse him. And he said unto them, What man 11
shall there be of you, that shall have one sheep,
and if this fall into a pit on the sabbath day,
will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How 12
much then is a man of more value than a sheep !

8. This inexhaustible oracle deepens in meaning as we read into 'the Son of Man' all its possible references. As Christ, He can claim the institution of the Sabbath ; it is His prerogative to own it, to interpret it, to preside over it, to ennoble it, to enlarge it into the Lord's day (Rev. i. 10). As the typical man, embodied humanity, he insists on making the institution human. Chrysostom perceived this bearing of the words when he commented : 'He was speaking about Himself, but Mark says that He spoke about our common nature', referring to Mark ii. 27.

9-14. On another Sabbath (Luke vi. 6) He healed a withered hand.

10. The man, according to the Gospel of the Hebrews, and Jerome, was a mason. As he could not work on the Sabbath, the cure might have been postponed till next day. In Mark (iii. 2) they watched malignantly, here they ask expressly if the cure may be wrought on the Sabbath.

11. The illustration of the sheep is used again by Jesus in Luke xiv. 1-6. In the Talmud, perhaps in order to censure His use of the illustration, it is written that if an animal falls into the ditch on the Sabbath, provided it is in no danger, it shall be left there. The question of Jesus lays a stress on the 'man' as if He meant 'Which of you with the feelings of a man will leave an animal in a pit?' A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast (Prov. xii. 10).

12. Mark iii. 5 tells us that the words were hot with indignation ; but Matthew tends to tone down the human traits in Jesus. The supreme value of humanity was with Jesus an axiom, to man himself it is a hard discovery. He goes right to a spiritual instinct, past all laws and institutions ; and it is the force of that appeal which exasperates the objectors. God does good on the Sabbath (John v. 16-17), therefore Christ must, therefore man may.

- Wherefore it is lawful to do good on the sabbath
 13 day. Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth
 thy hand. And he stretched it forth ; and it was
 14 restored whole, as the other. But the Pharisees
 went out, and took counsel against him, how
 15 they might destroy him. And Jesus perceiving
it withdrew from thence : and many followed
 16 him ; and he healed them all, and charged them
 17 that they should not make him known : that it
 might be fulfilled which was spoken ¹ by Isaiah ^{Or,}
 the prophet, saying, *through*
- 18 Behold, my servant whom I have chosen ;
 My beloved in whom my soul is well pleased :
 I will put my Spirit upon him.
 And he shall declare judgement to the Gen-
 tiles.

13. And yet He did not violate even the most rigid rules of Pharisaism, for, after all, He healed the arm by a *word*. Thus it was evident that the work, if work it was, was God's ; and to bring accusation against Him was to bring it against His heavenly Father. The life-giving word of Jesus is an actual force : it is creative (Heb. xi. 3) as well as restorative. No material resistance can avail against it.

14. This evidence of His union with God, and of the Divine love at work, was irresistible. But determined prejudice against truth is only irritated by additional evidence. And this act of mercy decided the Pharisees (and the Herodians, says Mark iii. 6) to kill Him.

15-21. As Jesus withdraws to escape the plots to kill Him (to the sea, says Mark), the evangelist takes the opportunity to draw His portrait, and to present all the activities which have been described, in a loose quotation of Isa. xlii. 1-6, a quotation not taken from the Hebrew nor from the Greek (LXX) but perhaps from the Chaldee Targum (Lutteroth).

16. This is a condensation of Mark's far fuller epitome of His work (iii. 7-12).

18-21. In contrast with the distorted image of Jesus in the minds of the Pharisees, here is the real Jesus, foreseen in the mind of an old prophet. The evangelist is surprised at the closeness of the delineation. He understands the withdrawal,

He shall not strive, nor cry aloud ;	19
Neither shall any one hear his voice in the streets.	
A bruised reed shall he not break,	20
And smoking flax shall he not quench, Till he send forth judgement unto victory.	
And in his name shall the Gentiles hope.	21

and the injunction not to make him known, as the fulfilment of that clause in the prophecy which seemed at first most unsuitable to describe one whose message and work must go to the ends of the earth (ver. 19). He sees in the opposition of the Jewish leaders the preparation for a world-wide evangel (ver. 18, 21). He drops out the words of Isa. xlii. 4, 'He shall not fail nor be discouraged,' because his eyes are exclusively on Christ's gentle and encouraging way with others (ver. 20).

This beautiful description follows the events which have been up to this point described by the evangelist. The opening words of ver. 18 point to the baptism (iii. 13-17); ver. 19 seems to describe the gentleness of the Sermon on the Mount (v-vii); ver. 20 describes the healing ministry to discouraged and broken people, with His favourite word 'be of good cheer'; ver. 21 points to the ingathering of Gentiles, e.g. the centurion (viii. 5-13).

But the words cover far more than the incidents which have been recorded. Their meaning is only apprehended when we trace the actual work of Christ in the Spirit. Looking back on what Christ has done in the world, and forward to what He is yet to do, one cannot but marvel that the words of an ancient prophet should so long beforehand anticipate the spiritual influence of Christ, to the end of time.

The description of the nature of Christ as the chosen servant, and the beloved of God, on whom the Spirit is put, is the most satisfactory solution of the mysterious personality that we can obtain. The assertion that He will be the hope of the Gentiles, and will bring judgement to them, and never cease until His judgement issues in victory (or truth, according to LXX), explains the missionary element of Christianity which may slumber, but never dies. The stillness and inwardness of His work, in contrast with the noise, the self-advertisement, the contentiousness of His followers, recall His followers to their original. And the heart of mercy which uttered the great invitation of xi. 28, is perfectly explained in the promise that He will not crush the weak, the dispirited, the contrite; nor will He quench even the faintest hope of good in any human soul.

If the evangelist had drawn the portrait in his own words it

22 Then was brought unto him ¹one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the dumb man spake and
 23 saw. And all the multitudes were amazed, and
 24 said, Is this the son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This man doth not cast out ²devils, but ³by Beelzebub the prince
 25 of the ²devils. And knowing their thoughts he said unto them, Every kingdom divided against

¹ Or, a
demoniac

² Gr.
demons.
³ Or, *in*

would have been sufficiently impressive, but to find the exact portrait drawn for him in the marvellous book of the exile written five centuries before, brings home to us with a shock of revelation who He is that is thus portrayed.

22-37. THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE JESUS OF PROPHECY AND FACT (VER. 18-21), AND THE JESUS OF THE PHARISEES' PERVERSE FANCY.

THE PHARISEES COMMIT THE UNPARDONABLE SIN.

22. *one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb.* It may be the same incident as ix. 32-4: cf. Luke xi. 14, for differences of detail; here repeated to introduce the malicious charge of the Pharisees and its refutation (see ix. 34). From the parallel in Mark iii. 30, where the libel is rebutted without any specific narrative of the cure, we gather that the *exposé* of the Pharisees was made in the presence of a multitude, and at the time when Jesus's own relatives had come to arrest Him, thinking He was 'beside himself' (cf. 2 Cor. v. 13).

23. *Is this?* The form of the question in the Greek implies a negative answer. They think He may be Messiah, but are afraid to offend the Pharisees by saying so: cf. the question of the woman (John iv. 29) and that of the blind man (John ix. 27).

the son of David. Messiah, ix. 27, xxi. 9, 15 (cf. Mark xi. 10).

24. In Mark's account the Pharisees had come down from Jerusalem to watch and to report, not to act; for the jurisdiction of the Sanhedrin did not extend to Galilee. It was agreed to parry the effect of Jesus's cures by saying that they were wrought by the personal prince of evil spirits, in whose existence and activity the popular religion of the time implicitly believed.

25. So Luke xii. 17: 'Knowing (not only their words, but also) their thoughts,' viz. that they did not believe their own theory, but invented it in order to discredit Him. The argument He advances is, like all His teaching, an appeal to common sense

itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: and if Satan casteth out Satan, he is divided ²⁶ against himself; how then shall his kingdom stand? And if I ¹ by Beelzebub cast out ² devils, ²⁷ ¹ by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges. But if I ¹ by the ²⁸ Spirit of God cast out ² devils, then is the kingdom of God come upon you. Or how can one ²⁹ enter into the house of the strong *man*, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong *man*?

¹ Or, *in*
² Gr.
demons.

against prejudice. A divided kingdom, city, or house, is ruined. If Satan casts out Satan, there is an end of the power of darkness. The theory is shown to be absurd.

27. But He pushes them farther.

your sons. According to a familiar Hebrew idiom, sons are they who are of a cognate disposition, e. g. 'the sons of the kingdom' and 'the sons of the evil one', xiii. 38, so 'the sons of those who slew the prophets' (Matt. xxiii. 31). We may compare Acts xiii. 10, 'son of the devil,' and 2 Kings vi. 32. So the Rabbis spoke of 'a son of the age to come' or 'the sons of the upper room (the heavenly world).' Their sons, then, people who agreed with the Pharisees, were exorcists. By incantation and formulæ they attempted to heal the insane. Did they work by Beelzebub? That of course they would not say: their own 'sons' would condemn them if they said so. But how could they suggest that when Jesus was doing, more effectually, what they did, He was an agent of Satan? The prejudice of the theory was exposed.

28. *But if I by the Spirit, &c.* That is the only alternative. There are only two powers – God and Satan. Good and Evil. For 'Spirit of God', the Aramaic original would be 'the Holy Spirit', cf. x. 20; Luke has 'finger of God', referring to the Divine Power, rather than the Divine indwelling. 'The Kingdom of God' is not only near (x. 7), but is come! It has, in the person of the Messiah, alighted upon them! The power of Jesus against evil spirits makes the theocracy recognizable even to outward vision; and they deny it.

29. Strong is Satan, but the stronger is here, who binds the owner of the world and spoils thoroughly his goods. The Son of Man is manifested to destroy the works of the devil. The parable suggests Isa. xlix. 24-5.

30 and then he will spoil his house. He that is not
 with me is against me; and he that gathereth
 31 not with me scattereth. Therefore I say unto
 you, Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven
 1 unto men; but the blasphemy against the Spirit
 32 shall not be forgiven. And whosoever shall

¹ Some
 ancient
 authorities
 read *unto*
you men.

30. The sayings that follow are perhaps attached to the preceding on Matthew's principle of grouping; in Luke xi. 23-6 a different sequence is given. If this be so we need not torture the words to find connexion between this verse and ver. 29.

He that is not with me describes a half-hearted follower, rather than avowed opponents like the Pharisees. It is the note of exclusiveness in the service of Christ which we heard in x. 37. Because Christ is one with God, and God is one, whoever is not with Christ will scatter instead of gathering. The converse side of the paradox (Mark ix. 40) states 'he that is not against *us*, or you, is for us'; there the personal claim of Christ is in the background.

31. *Therefore.* This connexion is not given in Mark iii. 28, nor in Luke xii. 10, where the saying stands quite isolated. Here the illative particle must refer to the whole paragraph, and the assertion of the Pharisees that Jesus cast out devils by Beelzebub. This is brought out in Mark iii. 30 by the words 'because they said, He hath an unclean spirit'.

Perhaps Wellhausen is right in saying that Mark's is the original version of this hard saying; if so, the eye should be kept on Mark iii. 28-30, in expounding it. In Mark the phrase 'sons of men' occurs, but not the specific Son of Man; which raises the question whether in the words of Jesus a contrast between the Son of Man and the Spirit was made. It seems, as Dalman says, impossible that Jesus should make a distinction between two persons in the Godhead, and imply that it was venial to blaspheme the second, but not the third. The distinction must be between Jesus the man and the Divine Spirit working through Him. Invective against the man Jesus may be forgiven; blasphemy against the divine power inherent in Him is unpardonable, because it is blasphemy against God.

The stress is to be laid on the truth, the great truth of the Gospel, that all sins can be forgiven (cf. Acts xiii. 38, 39; Rom. iii. 22-4; 1 John i. 7, &c.). But there is something which lies in another category altogether; as an act of spiritual suicide it is irreparable, it cannot be forgiven here nor hereafter. Blasphemy against Jesus (e.g. that of Saul of Tarsus) is forgiven. The repudiation which tormented Bunyan's conscience, 'If Christ will go, let him!' and seemed to him for so long the unpardonable sin, was

speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him ; but whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this ¹ world, nor in that which is to come. Either make the tree good, and its fruit 33 good ; or make the tree corrupt, and its fruit corrupt : for the tree is known by its fruit. Ye 34 offspring of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. The good man out 35 of his good treasure bringeth forth good things : and the evil man out of his evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. And I say unto you, that 36 every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgement.

forgiven. But the act which, it seems, was perpetrated by the Pharisees is different ; it involves the perpetrator in 'æonian sin' (Mark iii. 29). Briefly this fateful act, which, the apostles taught, is beyond pardon (Heb. x. 26-9 ; 1 John v. 16, 17) is to see the working of the Holy Spirit, to recognize it, and to know it to be God, as the Pharisees did (for so Jesus read their thoughts), and then to say that this was the work of Satan. With that fatal utterance the soul slays itself.

33. This recalls the saying in the Sermon on the Mount (vii. 16-20). It is thrown in here to suggest that the Pharisees were acting according to their acquired nature, producing the natural fruit of the wicked root.

34. *offspring of vipers.* So John called them (iii. 7). The speech is only the overflow of the thought.

35. Luke gives this saying in his version of the Sermon on the Mount (vi. 45). The 'treasure' is the heart itself.

36. This solemn saying is not in the other sources ; in this connexion it clinches the doom of the Pharisees, whose 'idle word' was the blasphemy against the Spirit. Though standing alone in the Gospels its echoes are caught through the rest of the New Testament (Eph. v. 4, 11 ; 2 Pet. ii. 18 ; Rom. xiv. 12 ; 1 Pet. iv. 5 ; Jas. iii. 2-12).

Words as actual deeds are causes. Oddly enough the 'idle' means literally 'without deed', and perhaps we should press the meaning : every *word*, though unaccompanied by deeds ; cf. v. 21-37.

- 37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.
- 38 Then certain of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, ¹ Master, we would see a ^{1 Or, Teacher} sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to

How solemn it is! Not only a blasphemous and soul-killing word, like that of the Pharisees, but every word we utter must come up in the review of our lives and the verdict on them, because the words are a great part of our activity; they go out from us accomplishing results as tangible as the work of our hands or the books produced from the brain. We in our limited way say '*littera scripta manet*', but Christ in His searching way adds: '*the unwritten letter also remains.*'

It is not to the point to wonder how the words can be recorded for the Supreme Court; for there is an equal difficulty in conceiving how our deeds, and how the countless lives of men, can be held in memory and come up for review. There is a phonograph all-recording: words spoken in the air will be proclaimed from the housetops of the universe; and in daily living and use of the tongue we must lay our account with this certainty.

38-50. THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE EVIL, ADULTEROUS GENERATION, AND THE GENUINE, HOLY GENERATION, THE BROTHERS, SISTERS, AND MOTHER OF JESUS.

38-42. *we would see a sign.* Luke xi. 16 shows that they were another set of the Pharisaic opposition, and not the same who charged Him with employing the power of Beelzebub. In xvi. 1 they ask for 'a sign from heaven'. The healing of the demoniac was, according to them, a sign from hell. In Mark viii. 11, 12 the demand is briefly dismissed, but according to Luke xi. 29-32 the sign of Jonah was given, viz. his successful preaching to Nineveh, and then the Queen of Sheba. But here the sign of Jonah means in the first instance the illustration of Jesus's resurrection from the sojourn of the prophet in the whale. And strictly speaking it is only that which constitutes in any sense a 'sign'. When he arose from the dead, that sign would be intelligible (cf. John ii. 19).

38. Master, i. e. Teacher, in mock deference, but it is like that in xxvii. 27-31. Men who could think that His cures were the work of Satan, could not in good faith ask for a sign from heaven. Therefore it would not be given.

39. *Adulterous generation*, i. e. a group of men who had departed from God, as described by the prophet Jeremiah (iii. 20).

it but the sign of Jonah the prophet: for as ⁴⁰ Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the ¹ whale; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh shall stand up in ⁴¹ the judgement with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, ² a greater than Jonah is here. The queen of the south shall rise up in ⁴² the judgement with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, ² a greater than Solomon is here. But the ⁴³ unclean spirit, when ³ he is gone out of the man, passeth through waterless places, seeking rest,

¹ Gr. *sea-monster*.

² Gr. *more than*.

³ Or, *it*

40. It was no immediate sign, such as they demanded, but it was a sign none the less. Jonah's ejection from the fish was miraculous, but Christ's rising from the grave was the pledge of a general resurrection, the assertion of a principle.

Three days and three nights (Jonah i. 17). The stress is not on the exact time, but on the rising. Jesus was in the grave only two nights. But the Jewish reckoning was always very vague (1 Sam. xxx. 12-13; Esther iv. 16, v. 1). The expression is more what we mean by 'two or three days'.

41. *stand up in judgement*. In the Aramaic the phrase means 'accuse'. They will measure themselves in the judgement with this generation (Isa. liv. 17; Ps. xciv. 16). The accusation would be not in words but in the fact, that they repented, while this generation did not.

Greater than Jonah, cf. v. 6. Christ's egotism is the humility of truth.

42. *queen of the south*. Here for the first time SW. Arabia is described by this term. The story of 1 Kings x. 1-9 shows the eager recognition of even Solomon's wisdom; but these 'children of wisdom' (xi. 19) could not detect the incarnate Wisdom.

43-5. This passage follows more naturally on ver. 37 as in Luke (xi. 24-6). It is most interesting as a picture and criticism of Exorcism as practised by the Pharisees. Jesus describes the thing in their own language, in order to apply the illustration to

- 44 and findeth it not. Then ¹ he saith, I will return ¹ Or, *it*
 into my house whence I came out ; and when
¹ he is come, ¹ he findeth it empty, swept, and
 45 garnished. Then goeth ¹ he, and taketh with
² himself seven other spirits more evil than ² him- ² Or, *itself*
 self, and they enter in and dwell there : and the
 last state of that man becometh worse than the
 first. Even so shall it be also unto this evil
 generation.
- 46 While he was yet speaking to the multitudes,
 behold, his mother and his brethren stood with-

their own case. According to current demonology the demon had no body (Tobit viii. 3 ; Baruch iv. 35), and must therefore seek a house to dwell in. Expelled for a time from its abode in the human body it wanders homeless. Then it comes back, finding the poor victim healed, 'in his right mind,' like a room swept and garnished. He says—here Jesus is speaking with ironical acceptance of the current view—'I will return to my house'—as if he had only gone out while it was cleaned. Then a legion of demons settles in the house with the one. This was what happened to the generation which had 'blasphemed the Holy Ghost', a grim picture of spiritual ruin.

These verses must be set side by side with verses 26, 27. Unless Christ comes in, when the demon is expelled, the expulsion is temporary, and the relapse is worse than the original attack. In this way ver. 30 is justified in the passage. Whoever is not with Christ is against Him, and scatters instead of gathering.

46-50. Here in Luke's account, xi. 26-28, comes the exclamation of the woman about the blessedness of the mother of Jesus, to which Jesus replied, as always, by refusing to His earthly mother a special pre-eminence. The episode of the mother and brethren coming to speak to him is given by Luke earlier (viii. 19 21).

46. He was speaking in the house now as Mark shows (iii. 19), and as appears from the first verse of ch. xiii. His relatives came to the door. Their object was, as Mark shows (iii. 21), to take Him home, because they thought He was 'beside himself'. His brothers were, so far as we know, the sons of Mary (xiii. 55 ; Mark vi. 3 ; John ii. 12, vii. 3. 5. 10 ; Acts i. 14 ; 1 Cor. ix. 5 ; Gal. i. 19). When the Church raised the Virgin mother to a throne in heaven it was held necessary to deny that she had any other children beside Jesus.

1 Some ancient authorities omit ver. 47. out, seeking to speak to him. ¹ And one said 47
 unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren
 stand without, seeking to speak to thee. But 48
 he answered and said unto him that told him,
 Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?
 And he stretched forth his hand towards his 49
 disciples, and said, Behold, my mother and my
 brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of 50
 my Father which is in heaven, he is my brother,
 and sister, and mother.

On that day went Jesus out of the house, and 13
 sat by the sea side. And there were gathered 2

49. *stretched forth his hand.* This eloquent gesture emphasizes the assertion. Here it is directed only to the disciples, but in Mark iii. 32 to a 'multitude'.

The spiritual relations alone last; they who do the will of His heavenly Father are His relatives. He always taught that our earthly ties, even marriage, do not hold in the spiritual world. The will of God is the sole determinant. To accept that will and do it constitutes the one family in heaven and in earth.

CH. xiii. MATTHEW NOW PROCEEDS TO ILLUSTRATE THE LORD'S METHOD OF TEACHING BY PARABLES. The teaching from the beginning teemed with this attractive and arresting element; but it is implied by the explanation (ver. 13) that Jesus adopted the parabolic style more specifically when the Pharisees had developed their malignant antagonism to Him.¹

Seven parables are now collected, in the evangelist's usual style, not of course that they were all spoken together (Mark iv. 1-32 gives four on this occasion, Luke viii. 1-18 only two), but they are chosen with great care to make the perfect number, seven. That of the Sower is introductory; the other six go in pairs; thus, the Tares and the Drag-net go together, the Mustard-seed and the Leaven, the Treasure and the Goodly Pearl. It will be observed also from ver. 34 that four are addressed to the multitude, and three (36-47) to the disciples. The numbers, 7, 4, 3, are symbolic; fancy sees in seven the perfect number, in four the suggestion of the cardinal points of the compass, and in three the ideal group of disciples. But on this no stress is to be laid. 'To the parable of our Lord there is nothing in all language to

¹ In the later Jewish Literature parables abound. The form usually is: 'A parable. To what is the matter like? To &c.'

unto him great multitudes, so that he entered into a boat, and sat ; and all the multitude stood
 3 on the beach. And he spake to them many things in parables, saying, Behold, the sower
 4 went forth to sow ; and as he sowed, some *seeds* fell by the way side, and the birds came and
 5 devoured them : and others fell upon the rocky places, where they had not much earth : and
 6 straightway they sprang up, because they had no deepness of earth : and when the sun was risen,
 7 they were scorched ; and because they had no root, they withered away. And others fell upon
 8 the thorns ; and the thorns grew up, and choked them : and others fell upon the good ground,
 and yielded fruit, some a hundredfold, some

be compared for simplicity, grace, fullness, and variety of spiritual teaching' (Bruce). There is this peculiarity in them, as ver. 9 indicates, that each person draws from them truth in proportion to his own power of perception. Like sunshine they enter, according to the capacity, and the largest or smallest mind is equally filled. It is this quality which must guide our interpretation of the difficult passages, verses 10-15.

1-9. *the sower*. The picture of ver. 1, 2 is very graphic ; the boat, the sea, the shore, the preacher sitting, the hearers standing ; the suggestion in 'behold', that there was a sower actually at work in sight, with the birds wheeling in the air and swooping on the grain.

4. *the way side*. A trodden path running through the cornfield, not the highway.

5. *rocky places*. Not merely stony soil, but places where only a thin layer of soil covered the rock. The warmth of the rock made the growth precocious. Strictly speaking, the blades had a root, but, as the root could not strike down into the soil, it would get no nourishment, and quickly wither in the heat of the noonday sun.

7. *fell on the thorns*, i. e. where the soil was full of the thorn seedlings.

8. *a hundredfold*. This was a rare and exceptional fertility, such as Isaac found in the country of Abimelech, 'when the Lord blessed him' (Gen. xxvi. 12). But the lesser returns are still good.

¹ Some ancient authorities add here, and in ver. 43, *to hear*: as in Mark iv. 9; Luke viii. 8.

sixty, some thirty. He that hath ears¹, let him hear.

And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why ¹⁰ speakest thou unto them in parables? And he ¹¹ answered and said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For who- ¹² soever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath.

Clearly by far the greater part of the grain fell on the good ground, for no sower would drop the seed on the unproductive places voluntarily. Our impression of Nature is 'that of fifty seeds she only brings but one to bear'. But we judge superficially; probably Nature's economy surpasses our wisest thrift.

10. In Mark and Luke the disciples ask for the meaning of the parable, and to their question the answer in ver. 18-23 is fitly given. But the question here is different; they ask why He used the method of parables at all. The answer given to this more general question is, in Matthew's account, quite intelligible and unexceptionable. The difficulty in the parallels of Mark and Luke arises from not observing how Christ altered Isaiah in quoting him. In Isaiah it seems as if God hardened the hearts of the people, to prevent them from being converted. This was a view conceivable in the Old Testament theology; but Christ rejected it: as He quotes the words of the prophet, from the Greek version, He takes care to put 'because' for 'in order that', ver. 13, and to show that the people make their own hearts gross, lest God should heal them. We must, therefore, correct Mark iv. 12 and Luke viii. 10 by this fuller version of our Lord's words.

11. *the mysteries*. The word is not to be taken in the heathen sense, of some esoteric secrets, which only the initiated can know, but in the special New Testament sense, of things which once were obscure in the older dispensation, but now are clear in the new. See St. Paul's use of the word 1 Cor. ii. 6-10; Eph. iii. 3-6, 8, 9; Col. i. 26. The sole reason why to know these revelations was not given to the Pharisees was that they had hardened their hearts in prejudice. For there is a law in nature.

12. Spiritual openness is rewarded with spiritual revelation. When the heart is set against Divine truth, the little faculty of reception, which was implied even in resisting, dies away. He who was unwilling becomes incapable.

13. *Therefore speak I . . . in parables*. Why? Because when He

- 13 Therefore speak I to them in parables ; because
 seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not,
 14 neither do they understand. And unto them is
 fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which saith,
 By hearing ye shall hear, and shall in no wise
 understand ;
 And seeing ye shall see, and shall in no wise
 perceive :
- 15 For this people's heart is waxed gross,
 And their ears are dull of hearing,
 And their eyes they have closed ;
 Lest haply they should perceive with their eyes,
 And hear with their ears,
 And understand with their heart,
 And should turn again,
 And I should heal them.
- 16 But blessed are your eyes, for they see : and
 17 your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto

spoke in plain language, as in the Sermon on the Mount, or by the indisputable acts of healing and mercy, they closed their eyes, their ears, and their understanding. The parabolic method was adopted, not to hide the truth, but to present it to minds which rejected it in its plainer garb. He spoke in parables because they were in the case described by Isaiah, vi. 9-10 (quoted also in John xii. 40 ; Acts xxviii. 26-7). He uses the language of the LXX because that alone makes the quotation appropriate for His purpose. Thus it was plain that the grossness of perception was self-caused and not a penal infliction. They hardened their hearts against God.

15. *And I should heal them.* This is not the reading of the LXX, nor is it the reading of our great uncials. It is hard to see why it should be adopted when the real sense is exactly what Jesus would choose and mean, viz. 'And I will heal them'—i. e. in spite of their perversity the Lord has an unchanging purpose of salvation towards them.

16. The sole reason why the disciples could see and receive, could turn and be healed, was that they had not hardened their hearts. They were open to truth.

17. This is the utterance of the Divine self-consciousness. The

you, that many prophets and righteous men desired to see the things which ye see, and saw them not ; and to hear the things which ye hear, and heard them not. Hear then ye the parable 18 of the sower. When any one heareth the word 19 of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, *then* cometh the evil *one*, and snatcheth away that which hath been sown in his heart. This is he that was sown by the way side. And he that 20

prophets and righteous men (kings, in Luke, like David) have desired exactly the revelation of God which is given in Christ.

Far and wide, though all unknowing,
Pants for Him each human breast.

18. The interpretation of the introductory parable is given, not because it is specially difficult (on the contrary, see Mark iv. 13), but that He may show them how to deal with all His parables.

19. The interpretation shows that the idea of the parable of the sower is, *The effect of the word is dependent on the state of the heart.*

The seed is the word, and as here defined, 'the word of the kingdom' (cf. iv. 23, ix. 35), i. e. the gospel. The sower is Jesus Himself, and any of His messengers who declare the same truth. The field is the world (cf. ver. 38), and not, as some insist, the Christian community or the Church. Each hearer is likened to the blade of corn springing up as the result of the word spoken, as if the germinal word made the soul. The hearers are viewed in four classes :—

(1) The trite hearts, hard and unbroken, into which the message makes no entrance at all. The evil one, Satan, snatches it away, as the bird (*improbans anser* of Virgil) picks up the grain on the trodden path (ver. 19).

(2) Hearts superficially impressed, but not reached at the centre, which are pleased with God's truth before they see what it involves, but when they find that a persecution arises, because the world is impatient of new truth, throw off the gospel as quickly as they received it.

(3) Hearts which really receive the truth, but, preoccupied with other seeds, such as absorbing earthly interests, wealth (or, as in Mark and Luke, pleasures and desires of other things) bear no fruit. The truth of God is choked in them by the more persistent 'truths of the world'.

(4) Honest and good hearts, as Luke calls them, which like a

was sown upon the rocky places, this is he that
 heareth the word, and straightway with joy re-
 21 ceiveth it ; yet hath he not root in himself, but
 endureth for a while ; and when tribulation or
 persecution ariseth because of the word, straight-
 22 way he stumbleth. And he that was sown among
 the thorns, this is he that heareth the word ; and
 the care of the ¹ world, and the deceitfulness of ¹ Or, *age*
 riches, choke the word, and he becometh un-
 23 fruitful. And he that was sown upon the good
 ground, this is he that heareth the word, and
 understandeth it ; who verily beareth fruit, and
 bringeth forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty,
 some thirty.

24 Another parable set he before them, saying,

soil soft, deep, and clean, receive the truth, and it grows to a perfection proportionate to the endowment of the nature.

If we pressed the words of the parable, it would seem that only the good can receive the gospel, or that some persons are precluded by their nature or circumstances from making the Divine seed fruitful. But 'he that hath ears to hear' (ver. 9) will understand that the parable has one specific object, and must not be perverted by refinements or ingenuities. The object is to awake the conscience in hearing. God's truth is always the same, and calculated to produce the same results in all. But we must take heed how we hear. The responsibility lies with us ; we are not the victims of circumstances. We can give heed to the word of the kingdom or we can refuse it. Every man can hear in one of four ways, and he may repent of one and hear in another afterwards. He can either give his *attention*, or withhold it. He can open his nature, by *meditation*, to receive the truth to the centre, or keep it on the surface. He can give the truth of God an *opportunity* of working, or let it be overborne by the multiplicity of other things. He can give his *best powers* to understanding, receiving, and testing ('in an honest and good heart,' Luke viii. 15), not that he is good, but exerting the will to be good. And this honest and earnest hearing ensures the fruit.

22. *The care of the world.* It is a Hebrew phrase for the care of that which is temporal (Dalman, *Words of Jesus*, 154).

24-50. SIX PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM. Three are addressed

The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man that sowed good seed in his field: but while ²⁵ men slept, his enemy came and sowed ¹tares also among the wheat, and went away. But ²⁶ when the blade sprang up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. And the ²⁷ ²servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? whence then hath it tares? And he said ²⁸ unto them, ³An enemy hath done this. And the ²servants say unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he saith, Nay; ²⁹ lest haply while ye gather up the tares, ye root

¹ Or, *darnel*

² Gr. *bond-servants*.

³ Gr. *A man that is an enemy*.

to the multitude, and three to the disciples (ver. 36). The first and the last form a pair, the Tares and the Drag-net, showing that there is an end, and then only will the separation between good and evil be made. The second and third form another pair; the Mustard-seed and the Leaven show how the Kingdom of God grows and works silently but effectively. The third pair, the Hid Treasure and the Priceless Pearl, illustrate the supreme value of the Kingdom of God, as compared with all other possessions.

24. *set he before them.* As food is served at a banquet. *his field.* The world is Christ's.

tares. The Greek word, *σίχαινα*, occurs only here. What is meant is darnel, *loium temulentum*, a weed which has much the same appearance as stalks of barley.

25. *while men slept*, in the negligence and unconsciousness of human affairs. The evil is produced by a sowing just as the good is. The seed is not, as in the parable of the Sower, the word, but a child of the kingdom (Jas. i. 18). Christ's enemy is man's enemy (Gen. iii. 15; 1 John iii. 8). Evil is personified; it is impossible to conceive of moral evil, except in a person.

28. *an enemy.* Lit. 'a man that is an enemy,' but that is only the Aramaic phrase for *quidam inimicus*. The proposal to weed out the tares was quite reasonable. Thus a modern traveller in the Holy Land, Furrer, says: 'Men, women, and children were in many fields engaged in pulling up the weeds (tares).' It is only a law of the spiritual kingdom that they should be left to grow, and to that the horticultural fact is adapted. Explanation, ver. 36-43.

30 up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest : and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather up first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them : but gather the wheat into my barn.

31 Another parable set he before them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in
32 his field : which indeed is less than all seeds ; but when it is grown, it is greater than the herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the heaven come and lodge in the branches thereof.

33 Another parable spake he unto them ; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three ¹ measures of meal, till it was all leavened.

¹ The word in the Greek denotes the Hebrew seah, a measure containing nearly a peck and a half.

31-3. The silent, but persistent, growth of the Kingdom is shown, in its outward aspect, by a mustard-seed, in its inner aspect by the working of leaven.

32. The language is general, and not precise. There are smaller seeds than the mustard, e. g. *lycopodium* ; there are larger herbs. But a mustard-seed grows into so large a herb that it is like a little tree. The birds could hardly build in it, but they can rest and shelter in the stalks ; and, so far, it represents the shelter and repose, as the pungent and grateful taste represents the blessedness, of the Kingdom. The plant referred to is not the *salvadora persica*, which is actually a tree, but the common mustard. Note how the Lord loves to illustrate a great theme from a very little and humble thing ; and so a modern poet will take the meanest flower that grows, or one 'in a crannied wall', and draw his moral from it.

33. The illustration of the inward working of the Kingdom is bolder still ; for leaven was always used by the rabbis as an illustration of evil. Jesus characteristically turns it to good.

three measures. Gen. xviii. 6 : too much for an ordinary baking.

all leavened. 1 Cor. v. 6 ; Gal. v. 9 ; the thoroughness of the leaven's work is most consoling. The word of the Kingdom will not fail till the whole world is leavened by it. There is a consummation, a victory, when God shall be all in all.

All these things spake Jesus in parables unto 34
the multitudes; and without a parable spake he
nothing unto them: that it might be fulfilled 35
which was spoken ¹ by the prophet, saying,

¹ Or,
through

I will open my mouth in parables;

I will utter things hidden from the foundation
² of the world.

² Many
ancient
authori-
ties omit
of the
world.

Then he left the multitudes, and went into 36
the house: and his disciples came unto him,
saying, Explain unto us the parable of the tares

34. *without a parable*, i. e. at that time He confined Himself to this method; though perhaps one might say that the parabolic form of teaching, interesting, allowing, leading to inquiry, was habitual to Him.

35. *the prophet*, i. e. author of Ps. lxxviii. It will be noted that the 'hidden things' of the Psalm are only the stories of Israel. Perhaps the evangelist means that the meaning which underlies those histories is brought out by the parables of Christ. The Book of Exodus in Christ's light becomes a parable; Christ's parables are a Genesis, an Exodus, a Kingdom of the Soul.

the foundation of the earth. Cf. 2 Esdras ii. 41, 'Thy people which have been called from the beginning.' The New Testament often refers to the origins, e. g. xxv. 34; Luke xi. 50; Heb. iv. 3; John xvii. 24; Eph. i. 4; 1 Pet. i. 20. It is characteristic of Scripture that here on the same page the eye sweeps from 'the foundation of the world' to 'the end of the world' (ver. 40).

36-43. *Explain unto us the parable of the tares*. The field is not the Kingdom of God, but the world in which it develops. John viii. 44 explains in what sense the good are called children of God, and the bad children of the evil one. The purpose of the parable, however, is not to explain the existence of evil, but only to show that God allows the evil to remain among the good until the end. Why? We are not told. The sole object is to discourage a too zealous purism. The Kingdom does not mean an inquisition, or an attempt to weed out the evil. The inquisitorial passion is not of the spirit of Christ (Luke ix. 54; Jas. i. 20). The spirit of judgement must be left to the Judge of all the earth. A wonder creeps in whether even the discipline of 1 Cor. v was quite within the terms of Christ's thought; and St. John fleeing from the bath because Cerinthus was under the roof (cf. 2 John 10, 11) seems a lapse into an unregenerate condition. At any rate the discipline of the Church can only be permitted when Christ is present (1 Cor. v. 4).

37 of the field. And he answered and said, He
 that soweth the good seed is the Son of man ;
 38 and the field is the world ; and the good seed,
 these are the sons of the kingdom ; and the tares
 39 are the sons of the evil *one* ; and the enemy that
 sowed them is the devil : and the harvest is ¹ the
 end of the world ; and the reapers are angels. <sup>1 Or, the
consummation
of the age</sup>
 40 As therefore the tares are gathered up and burned
 with fire ; so shall it be in ¹ the end of the world.
 41 The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and
 they shall gather out of his kingdom all things
 that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity.
 42 and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there
 shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then
 shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the

38. *sons of the kingdom.* In viii. 12 the Jews, but here, in contrast with 'the son of the evil one', they are the men of a cognate character with the theocracy.

39. *the end of the world,* v. 49. xxiv. 3, xxviii. 20, but not in Mark or Luke, a phrase of the evangelist's which he had in common with the author of Heb. ix. 26. This implies that the present condition of things, mixed good and evil, will continue until that glad day of Christ's coming.

41. *his angels,* they are Christ's. The Son of Man is God. The Kingdom also is His; for He and the Father are one (ver. 43). It is in this suggestive way that the deity of Jesus is expressed (cf. xix. 28, xx. 21; 1 Pet. iii. 22).

things that cause stumbling. Σκάνδαλα, everything that brings or can bring people to fall—but this includes persons who do iniquity (cf. vii. 23). It is an echo of Ps. i. 5.

42. cf. iii. 12. When the wicked have gone away into punishment, then, and not till then, will the good shine forth unclouded and untarnished. Jesus thinks of Dan. xii. 3, but for 'the understanding' there He substitutes 'the righteous'.

We cannot say that Jesus here wishes to describe the punishment of the future world in any original way; the whole point of this parable, and of the repetition of the idea in the parable of the Drag-net (ver. 47-50), is to forbid the attempt to separate good from bad *before* the end.

kingdom of their Father. He that hath ears, let him hear.

The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure 44
hidden in the field; which a man found, and
hid; and ¹in his joy he goeth and selleth all
that he hath, and buyeth that field.

¹ Or,
for joy
thereof

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a 45
man that is a merchant seeking goodly pearls:
and having found one pearl of great price, he 46
went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a 47
² Gr.
drag-net. ² net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered

44-6. *treasure hidden . . . goodly pearls.* The two parables illustrate the two cases, first, where the truth of God is found without seeking (Isa. lxxv. 1) as a glad surprise; second, where it is the result of a diligent search.

44. Cf. Prov. ii. 4. In days before banks, treasure was often buried; treasure-troves were not, therefore, uncommon (Jer. xli. 8; Job iii. 21). The supreme value of the find; cf. Mark x. 21, 28; it is worth sacrificing everything to gain it, if only for this reason, that it includes everything. Call the Kingdom of God the consciousness of absolute and unbroken union with Him who is Love, Wisdom, Goodness, and Power, and it is plain that everything may be freely sacrificed to gain it.

45. The merchant ransacking the stores for pearls finds one that excels all in value. The fact is hardly likely as a commercial bargain. To gain the Koh-i-noor a diamond-merchant would give much, but scarcely all. But the Kingdom is a jewel of a price transcending earthly illustration.

For the searching, see Jer. xxix. 13.

47-50. *a drag-net.* Σαγήνη; in contrast with ἀμφίβληστρον and δικτυον, the commoner names for 'net', a net carried out in a boat and dropped into the sea, then drawn to the land. It would bring in all sorts and conditions. In this illustration the separation is more emphasized; but still the object of the parable is simply to show how the great net (the Church, or visible community of souls) must be allowed to hold its mixed contents, until on the quiet shore of eternity those fitted for the task can make the just discrimination. The furnace of fire and the weeping and gnashing of teeth are the accepted features of the state of the bad; but we should miss the point of the parable if we supposed that this was the truth which Jesus was revealing.

48 of every kind : which, when it was filled, they
 drew up on the beach ; and they sat down, and
 gathered the good into vessels, but the bad they
 49 cast away. So shall it be in ¹ the end of the *Or, the*
 world : the angels shall come forth, and sever *consum-*
 50 the wicked from among the righteous, and shall *mation of*
 cast them into the furnace of fire : there shall *the age*
 be the weeping and gnashing of teeth.

51 Have ye understood all these things ? They
 52 say unto him, Yea. And he said unto them,
 Therefore every scribe who hath been made a
 disciple to the kingdom of heaven is like unto
 a man that is a householder, which bringeth forth
 out of his treasure things new and old.

53 And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished
 54 these parables, he departed thence. And coming
 into his own country he taught them in their
 synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished,
 and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom,
 55 and these ² mighty works ? Is not this the car- *Gr.*
powers.

51-2. The disciples were satisfied that they understood these pregnant stories. The Lord allowed their understanding, imperfect as it probably was. And He appoints His disciples as exponents of His word. The 'scribe made a disciple in the Kingdom' (cf. the active voice of the verb, xxviii. 19) is a beautiful designation of the preacher of the Gospel. As a scribe he is still a student of the Old Testament, the Law and the Prophets, but as a disciple in the Kingdom, he finds new depths and meanings in the old truth. Scripture becomes an allegory to him, and the world a parable. His Father's house, over which He is set, is stored with treasures obvious and recondite. Jesus designates His ministers scribes, and prophets (xxiii. 34), but not priests.

53-8. JESUS RETURNS TO NAZARETH, TO EXPERIENCE THE COLD RECEPTION OF 'HIS OWN'.

54. *his own country*, John iv. 44. This is most likely the visit to Nazareth which Luke was able to expand into the instructive narrative of iv. 16-30.

mighty works. Rather 'powers'.

penter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joseph, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all ⁵⁶ with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? And they were ¹offended in him. But ⁵⁷ Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house. And he did not many ²mighty works ⁵⁸ there because of their unbelief.

¹ Gr.
caused to
stumble.

² Gr.
powers.

At that season Herod the tetrarch heard the 14

55. Mark (vi. 3) implies that Jesus was not only the carpenter's son, but himself the Carpenter. When Holman Hunt ventured to represent Him in the shop, the piety of the time was outraged. On the other hand the working men of the north crowded to see 'The Shadow of the Cross', and saved their money to buy the two-guinea plates. Religious people take offence at His humanity and humility; for that very reason the common people receive Him gladly.

For His brothers, see xii. 46.

56. His sisters were married and settled in Nazareth; they had their babes, whom no doubt Jesus nursed and embraced. What further proof was needed that he was but man!

57. *they were offended*. Note the irony of ver. 41. There all the 'scandals' or things which make men stumble are gathered out. Here Jesus Himself is the cause of stumbling. The same word is used in the verbal form. The good make the bad to stumble, just as the bad make the good; hence the need of the separation described in ver. 41. Hence also the swift recognition of the fact, and the speedy withdrawal on the part of Jesus. Where He causes to stumble, He does not stay. The proverbial saying which He quotes is common in all countries, from Pindar (Olymp. xiii. 3), 'Fame fades at the family hearth', to 'No man is a hero to his *valet de chambre*', though Carlyle's comment may be remembered: 'Not because he is not a hero but because the valet is a valet.'

58. *because of their unbelief*, see xvii. 20. He does not punish them for their unbelief by refusing to exhibit His powers; but they by their unbelief make His works impossible. His works are all in the mind of man; when the mind refuses Him, He can only stand at the door and knock. Unbelief is spiritual suicide, self-separation from the source of truth and life and love.

CH. XIV. JESUS FLEEING FOR LIFE. This wonderful chapter has, it has been well said, like the five loaves and two fishes (ver. 17), fed great multitudes. Jesus withdraws from the dangerous attention

2 report concerning Jesus, and said unto his
servants, This is John the Baptist ; he is risen
from the dead ; and therefore do these powers
3 work in him. For Herod had laid hold on John,
and bound him, and put him in prison for the
4 sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. For
John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to
5 have her. And when he would have put him

of an arbitrary king, and in his retirement heals the sick (v. 14, 35, 36), feeds the hungry, and manifests Himself to His troubled disciples in the storm. He touches heart and imagination so powerfully, that at this point, as St. John tells us, the people wished to make Him king. The threatened and exiled prophet reached the zenith of His acceptance and influence with the people. Then with victorious serenity He faced death.

1-12. HEROD WISHES TO SEE JESUS, Herod who had already executed John the Baptist. The death of John is inserted in the narrative because it was the warning and presage of the death of Jesus : the forerunner went before Him in death.

1. Herod, surnamed Antipas, brother of Archelaus (ii. 22), son of Herod the Great. He was tetrarch, only by courtesy a king, of Galilee and Peræa ; his wife was the daughter of Aretas the Arabian king. Like his father, he was a builder, and founded Tiberias in honour of the emperor. His brother Philip must not be confused with Philip the governor of Gaulonitis, into which territory Jesus withdrew (ver. 14) ; the husband of Herodias was a weak man who remained in a private station all his life, and the ambitious woman left him for a reigning tetrarch. The daughter of Philip and Herodias, Salome, married Philip the tetrarch of Gaulonitis, an able and honourable ruler, who rebuilt Paneas, and called it Cæsarea Philippi, the town which is identified with the first open confession of our Lord (xvi. 13).

3. Herod Antipas was a man with a haunted conscience. The murdered John was always present to his imagination. The hope seized him that his victim was alive again, and these powers were working in him, because he had returned from the grave. Vain hope ! And doubtless when he found that Jesus was not John, his disappointment would have expressed itself in a new act of violence. 'That fox,' as Jesus called him, would probably have imprisoned Jesus. That is why Jesus withdrew.

5. In Mark vi. 19, the blame of the murder lies at the door of Herodias. Here Herod had always wished to murder him, but had been restrained by the people. Tyrants live in terror of the very multitude whom they terrify.

to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet. But when Herod's 6 birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced in the midst, and pleased Herod. Whereupon 7 he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she should ask. And she, being put forward by 8 her mother, saith, Give me here in a charger the head of John the Baptist. And the king was 9 grieved; but for the sake of his oaths, and of them which sat at meat with him, he commanded it to be given; and he sent, and beheaded John 10 in the prison. And his head was brought in 11 a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought it to her mother. And his disciples 12 came, and took up the corpse, and buried him; and they went and told Jesus.

Now when Jesus heard *it*, he withdrew from 13 thence in a boat, to a desert place apart: and when the multitudes heard *thereof*, they followed

6. The dance was of that immodest kind which delights a corrupt court; and the connexion between lasciviousness and cruelty is illustrated in what follows. The feast evidently took place at Machærus, the castle-palace, which lay some miles east of the Dead Sea. Josephus mentions the fortress; this shows it was also a palace.

8. *being put forward*. This phrase is better explained by the fuller narrative in Mark. But the word perhaps means, 'brought to such a point' of cruelty and depravity, as to ask for the head of the holy man as a dainty dish.

12. The disciples of John (see xi. 2) were implicitly disciples of Jesus; they brought Him the sad news of the execution apparently to warn Him of His own danger.

13-21. JESUS, WITHDRAWING FROM THE TERRITORY OF HEROD ANTIPAS, THE MULTITUDE FOLLOW HIM, AND HE HEALS AND FEEDS THEM ALL. This section is one of the very few which appear in all four of the Evangelists. We are at liberty therefore to illustrate our rather bald narrative from the parallel passages Mark vi. 30-44; Luke ix. 10-17; John vi. 1-14. From Mark it appears that the disciples had just returned from their mission, and Jesus wished

14 him ¹ on foot from the cities. And he came ¹ Or,
 forth, and saw a great multitude, and he had ^{by land}
 15 compassion on them, and healed their sick. And
 when even was come, the disciples came to him,
 saying, The place is desert, and the time is
 already past; send the multitudes away, that
 they may go into the villages, and buy them-
 16 selves food. But Jesus said unto them, They
 have no need to go away; give ye them to eat.
 17 And they say unto him, We have here but five
 18 loaves, and two fishes. And he said, Bring them
 19 hither to me. And he commanded the multi-

them to come aside and rest awhile. From John it seems that it was the time of Passover, and Jesus did not go up to Jerusalem; the multitude therefore which followed Him consisted largely of those who were going up to the Feast. The motives for withdrawal were, Herod's wish to see Him, the disciples' need of a rest, and the wish to avoid a journey to Jerusalem. For these reasons He sought 'a desert place apart'; but He could not be hid, He could not enjoy privacy. The people from Gennesaret, the plain in which Capernaum stood, walked round the head of the lake ('on foot' $\pi\acute{\epsilon}\xi\eta$, means only 'by land'; the sick may have ridden or been carried), and when Jesus landed at Bethsaida (Julias), the town on the left bank of the Jordan, where it enters the lake, the multitude were there waiting for Him.

14. His compassion failed not; so ix. 36. Whether their ignorance or their sicknesses appealed most to Him we cannot say. But the sight of their needs banished all thought of rest or retirement. From John we learn that He was in danger not only from Herod but from the Jews also.

15. *when even was come.* The same mark of time in ver. 23. But in Jewish reckoning there were two evenings, the first when the sun declined, from three to six, the second when the sun set. The feeding of the multitude was therefore in the afternoon.

the time is already past, i. e. 'They have been with us long enough, let us dismiss them.' But Jesus does not want to get rid of them, He loves them.

17. There was a lad carrying five loaves and two fishes (says John vi. 8), a rather scant supply for the disciples alone. This was to feed a crowd of over five thousand.

¹ Gr.
recline.

tudes to ¹ sit down on the grass; and he took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake and gave the loaves to the disciples, and the disciples to the multitudes. And they did all eat, and were ²⁰ filled; and they took up that which remained over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. And they that did eat were about five thousand ²¹ men, beside women and children.

And straightway he constrained the disciples ²² to enter into the boat, and to go before him unto the other side, till he should send the

19. There was much grass in the place, says John vi. 10. Mark in his vivid way mentions that it was green.

he blessed. In John it is *εὐχαριστήσας*, i. e. 'gave thanks'. It was a Eucharist: 'Twas springtime when He blessed the bread, And harvest when He brake.' It is vital to realize the spiritual meaning of the miracle. The compassion of Jesus feeds His people with abundance.

20. The baskets here, unlike those in the Feeding of the Four Thousand, are the *κόφιννοι*, which formed the travelling trunks of Jews, in which they carried food. So Juvenal speaks of Jews, 'quorum cophinus faenumque supellex.' Ordinarily, therefore, the twelve *cophini* of the disciples would have had a fair supply, but they chanced to be empty. Now they were filled with the fragments!

21. The women and children would be few, as the men were going to the Feast. The power of Jesus over matter, creating as well as controlling, cannot be to us an evidence of His nature, as it was to those who saw it; rather His nature is to us the evidence for that other power, the ground on which we are able to accept the present incident, and the still more wonderful one which now follows.

22-36. HE STILLS THE STORM; HE CONFIRMS FAITH. HE RETURNS CHARGED WITH HEALING POWER. Retreat and retirement are only further work, until His task is done.

22. *constrained them.* He was now bent on getting a little solitude:

When from our better selves we have too long
Been parted by the hurrying world, and droop,
Sick of its business, of its pleasures tired,
How gracious, how benign is solitude!

23 multitudes away. And after he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into the mountain apart to pray: and when even was come, he
 24 was there alone. But the boat ¹ was now in the midst of the sea, distressed by the waves; for
 25 the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night he came unto them, walking upon
 26 the sea. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is
 27 an apparition; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be
 28 of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be

¹ Some ancient authorities read *was many furlongs distant from the land.*

He was wearied too by the attempt to make Him a king, mentioned by John, an elevation to a temporal Messiahship which would have frustrated His life-work.

the other side. In Mark vi. 45, Bethsaida, viz.: Bethsaida of Galilee (John xii. 21), a few miles south of Capernaum on the western shore, not Bethsaida (Julias) at the north-east of the lake.

23. *he was there alone.* At last, the needed solitude and the time for prayer!

24. The boat was distressed by the waves, *lit.* tormented. In Mark vi. 48 the men were.

25. *the fourth watch.* That is the Roman reckoning; between three and six A.M. In eight hours they were only half across; i. e. had only made three and a half miles (John vi. 19).

26. From the mountain He saw them, and He came down and walked the waves to be near them. They recognized His form, but took it for a spectre; till He spoke.

27. They knew His familiar 'Be of good cheer', His favourite word to troubled spirits (ix. 4, 22). And then the great 'Εγὼ εἰμί: so John viii. 58; cf. Exod. vi. 2-9, where God reveals Himself to Moses as 'Εγὼ εἰμί, i. e. 'I am'. What a song in the night is this, to hear across the welter of waters, the 'I am' of Jesus:

Thou framer of the light and dark,
 Steer through the tempest thine own ark.
 Amid the howling wintry sea
 We are in port if we have Thee!

Accordingly John (vi. 21) says that they were immediately at the land.

28-31. The story of Peter coming on the sea, to Jesus, and sinking, the great example of the power of faith and the result of

thou, bid me come unto thee upon the waters. And he said, Come. And Peter went down from 29 the boat, and walked upon the waters, ¹ to come to Jesus. But when he saw the wind ², he was 30 afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus 31 stretched forth his hand, and took hold of him, and saith unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? And when they were 32 gone up into the boat, the wind ceased. And 33 they that were in the boat worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.

And when they had crossed over, they came 34 to the land, unto Gennesaret. And when the 35 men of that place knew him, they sent into all

¹ Some ancient authorities read *and came*.

² Many ancient authorities add *strong*.

doubt, is told only by Matthew. No narrative is more charged with spiritual meaning. The impulse of faith launches us towards Jesus. We are afraid, when the obstacles appear. The cry of distress elicits at once the rebuke and the saving power of Jesus. His hand is stretched out: we are in safety with Him. It is a passage to brood over, and to make our own, because the time comes to every man when he sinks in the deep waters, and they threaten to go over his head. Then to experience the helping hand of Jesus is salvation: 'We are in port if we have Thee!'

31. *O thou of little faith.* That is the constant designation of His disciples (vi. 30). None yet has wholly believed, with a faith unweakened by doubt (Jas. i. 6).

33. While Matthew records a glad confession, Mark (vi. 51, 52) speaks only of unintelligent amazement and hardening (cf. the contrast of Matt. xiii. 16, 17 with Mark iv. 13). Can it be that in Mark we have Peter's own self-reproach, his wonder at the dense stupidity which did not escape the charge 'O thou of little faith'? But doubtless Matthew is right; some at least in the boat recognized who He was. On the former occasion (viii. 27) they said, 'What manner of man is this?'—now they answer their inquiry: 'Thou art the Son of God.'

34. *Gennesaret.* Luke v. 1. The plain in which Capernaum and Bethsaida stood, between the lake and the hills, gave the most familiar name to the lake.

35. The rest snatched so hardly, the experience of the short journey, had endued Him with new power. A swift recognition

that region round about, and brought unto him
 36 all that were sick ; and they besought him that
 they might only touch the border of his garment :
 and as many as touched were made whole.

15 Then there come to Jesus from Jerusalem
 2 Pharisees and scribes, saying, Why do thy disci-

came to men's minds, and they saw that they had among them the Healer, the Feeder, the Calmer of the storms of life. Now the example of the woman who touched His garment (ix. 20) was followed by many. They perceived that virtue went out of Him that might heal them all.

It is a marvellous passage. Persecuted, driven out from His land, Jesus is always the same, compassionate, beneficent, in communion with God, ready to help His distressed followers. We are not often in the storm, which requires His miraculous approach across the waves ; but we are always in need of the bread which He alone can give. 'They have no need to go away' is very reassuring. Out of the scantiest material His presence and power will make a sufficing meal.

Here may we sit and dream
 Over the heavenly theme,
 Till to our soul the former days return ;
 Till on the grassy bed,
 Where thousands once He fed
 The world's incarnate Maker we discern.

CH. xv. Here the Lord brings out His great truth that it is the inward and spiritual, which is important, and not the outward and material, and yet—He feeds the hungry with bread ; He also shows that His earthly ministry was to Israel, and yet—He could not refuse the appeal of a heathen mother. His character is *teres atque rotundus*.

He had reached the summit of His earthly popularity, and now the opposition of His own nation steadily pursues Him, till it brings Him to the Cross. Henceforth He is essentially a persecuted fugitive in the service of heavenly truth.

1-20. OUTWARD AND INWARD RELIGION. This is one of the paragraphs in the Gospels which, standing even alone, would constitute a spiritual revolution.

1. The Scribes and Pharisees were perhaps deputed by the authorities at Jerusalem to come and watch Him because He had not gone up to the Passover (John vii. 1). He was prominent enough to make His absence noticeable, and His absence was sufficiently a breach of the Law to make the legalists watchful.

2. The ground which the critics from Jerusalem take is not, to our minds, a strong one. The washing before meat was a cleanly

ples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. And he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition? For God said, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, He that speaketh evil of father or mother, let him ¹ die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, That wherewith thou mightest have been profited by me is given to God; he shall not honour his father². And ye have made void the ³ word of God because of your tradition.

¹ Or, *surely die*

² Some ancient authorities add *or his mother.*

³ Some ancient authorities read *law.*

custom, but it was not a requirement of the law; it was, as they said, a 'tradition of the elders', a rabbinical regulation. But where tradition is once admitted as an authority it rapidly takes precedence. In the Church of Rome the ecclesiastical regulations, e. g. the Fasts and Feasts, or the celibacy of the clergy and monastic vows, are enforced with a greater severity than the original requirements of the Gospel. Fanaticism is easily awakened in the defence of Tradition.'

3. Our Lord does not answer the question, but retorts with another. He brings out the weakness of all Tradition; its tyranny gradually but surely reverses the primal principles of the religion which it endeavours to develop. Had His disciples broken the tradition of the elders? The Pharisaic tradition had violated the commandment of God.

4. *God said*; in Mark vii. 10, 'Moses said.' Thus Jesus attributes the Law of Moses to God. This is the Fifth Commandment (Exod. xx. 12) with the striking enforcement of Exod. xxi. 17. Jesus evidently includes in 'honouring', the duty of supporting, parents.

5. The usage was, that if a man allocated his money to God, and called it A Gift (Corban) he would be exempt from the natural claim of his parents on his help. This apparent piety Jesus calls 'making void the word of God'. He thus places filial duty on the highest plane; a religious service which violates it is not acceptable to God. This incidental judgement of Christ on the relative importance of duties must not be missed in the broader question of the conflict between tradition and revelation.

- 7 Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you,
saying,
8 This people honoureth me with their lips ;
But their heart is far from me.
9 But in vain do they worship me,
Teaching *as their* doctrines the precepts of
men.
10 And he called to him the multitude, and said
11 unto them, Hear, and understand : Not that
which entereth into the mouth defileth the man ;
but that which proceeded out of the mouth, this
12 defileth the man. Then came the disciples, and
said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees

7. The quotation from Isa. xxix. 13 is remarkably apt. 'The precepts of men' are always creeping into religion and overriding it ; cf. Col. ii. 22 ; Tit. i. 14. The Roman Church, accepting the principle of Tradition, has made the precepts of men into doctrines, to such a degree that the New Testament is rightly regarded as a danger to the laity. A passage like the one before us is subversive of Roman teaching.

10. He turned to the multitude which, since His recent miracles, was attentive to His word, ready even to crown Him, and spoke the emancipating word which implicitly rescinds the Levitical regulations. But it does more than that, it shifts the whole of religion from the outward and material to the inward and the moral. And though His appeal 'Hear and understand' still falls on unhearing ears and ununderstanding hearts, the word is spoken and can never be withdrawn ; it wins its widening way and regenerates wherever it is accepted.

11. *defileth*. The verb is identical with the adjective in Mark vii. 5 applied to the hands. It means to make common, to remove the barriers and restrictions of sanctity. The religion of the Law sought to sanctify the people by prescribing clean food, and by protecting the body from ceremonial defilement. It did not overlook the moral and spiritual altogether. But if any religious stress is laid on outward things—such is human nature—the multitude will lay a disproportionate stress on them, to the neglect of the far more difficult things of the spirit. It is so easy to wash the hands, or to use a certain kind of food ; it is so hard to wash the heart, to make the personal influence exercised in the world clean.

¹ Gr.
*caused to
stumble.*
² Gr.
planting.

were ¹offended, when they heard this saying?
But he answered and said, Every ² plant which ¹³
my heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted
up. Let them alone: they are blind guides. ¹⁴
And if the blind guide the blind, both shall fall
into a pit. And Peter answered and said unto ¹⁵
him, Declare unto us the parable. And he said, ¹⁶
Are ye also even yet without understanding?
Perceive ye not, that whatsoever goeth into the ¹⁷
mouth passeth into the belly, and is cast out into

^{12.} The Pharisees were offended, scandalized; that was inevitable, because with the emancipating word, the whole carefully reared structure of Tradition toppled to the ground.

^{13.} Jesus was not affected by their indignation. He fell back on the great principle, that in the long run only what God produces lasts. The word used for 'plant' distinctly means a cultivated, as distinguished from a wild, plant. The Pharisee was a product not of the Heavenly Father's planting, but of man's perverted ingenuity. Bruce explains the plant as the teaching or tradition of the Pharisees. But as ver. 18 goes on to speak of the Pharisees themselves, it is more probable that they are meant. The Scribes and Pharisees were not, as Paul would say, 'God's husbandry, God's building' (1 Cor. iii. 9). How the word searches us! If we are not of His planting, however holy and religious we seem, we shall be rooted up.

^{14.} The Lord's serene indifference to blind guides, and His certainty that they will fall into the ditch, should give us greater composure in the face of errors, and calm the polemical spirit. His example here is the more impressive because the Tradition and the externalism against which He was contending last almost unbroken still.

^{15.} Peter is always ready to be spokesman. What he says here is a little inept. The Lord had not uttered a parable, but a clear moral principle. That it seemed a parable, a dark saying, an enigma, to Peter, shows what a depth of prejudice he had to be raised from. The density surprised even Jesus—He thought they had at least got so far as to recognize a clear direct truth like this.

^{17.} Perhaps the broad outspoken tone of the answer is itself a reproach to this stupidity. He uses great plainness of speech, to convince great crassness of spirit. Food goes through the body, and never touches the soul. What we eat cannot make us the better or the worse in a moral sense. This far-reaching

18 the draught? But the things which proceed out of the mouth come forth out of the heart; and
 19 they defile the man. For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings: these are the things which defile the man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not the man.

21 And Jesus went out thence, and withdrew into
 22 the parts of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a Canaanitish woman came out from those borders, and cried, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed
 23 with a ¹ devil. But he answered her not a word. ¹ Gr. *demon*.

utterance might have saved the Church from all her superstitions if she had had ears to hear.

18. What comes out of the heart—through the mouth or otherwise—defiles the man: evil thoughts, such casuistry of tradition as was then under discussion. Examine the conclusions of Probabilism in the Jesuit schools, and you see the real springs of human corruption; the intellect is employed to excuse and condone all the sins which are here enumerated: murders, adulteries and fornications, thefts, false witness, are the violations of the sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth commandments, as the casuistry of the Pharisees was of the fifth. The ‘railings’ are ‘blasphemies’ against God or man. In Mark vii. 22 the list is enlarged. All evil within is included; these are the things which defile, just as all merely outward things are excluded, as well as eating with unwashen hands. The principle is wide and deep and universal.

21-8. JESUS HEALS THE DAUGHTER OF A CANAANITISH WOMAN.

21. He went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon to get quiet, and to escape the angry Pharisees. As He sent His disciples only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (x. 6) so, He conceives His own personal mission limited to His own people.

22. The woman is called a Syro-Phœnician by Mark. The Phœnicians were descended from a colony of Canaanites (Gen. x. 15). She was a heathen, but her respectful address shows that she had incipient faith in Him. Her ascription to Him of the Messianic title ‘Son of David’ was perhaps to win the favour and intercession of His disciples. She knew at any rate that the title was applied to Him.

23. The silence of Jesus is explained by Bruce: ‘There was

And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away ; for she crieth after us. But he ²⁴ answered and said, I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But she came ²⁵ and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. And he answered and said, It is not meet to ²⁶ take the children's ¹ bread and cast it to the dogs. But she said, Yea, Lord : for even the ²⁷ dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said ²⁸ unto her, O woman, great is thy faith : be it done

probably a mixture of feelings in Christ's mind at this time ; an aversion to recommence just then a healing ministry at all, a craving for rest and retirement ; a disinclination to be drawn into a ministry among a heathen people, which would mar the unity of His career as a prophet of God to Israel (the drama of His life to serve its purpose must respect the limits of time and place), a secret inclination to do this woman a kindness if it could in any way be made exceptional ; and last but not least, a feeling that her request was really not isolated but representative, the Gentile world in her inviting Him, a fugitive from His own land, to come over and help them, an omen of the transference of the kingdom from Jewish to Pagan soil.'

23. The disciples wanted to be rid of her. Jesus felt otherwise. No one ever came to Him in vain. His silence and His apparent refusal were only the barriers which would go down before His pity.

24. He stated the limits of His personal mission in such a way that the woman conceived hope from the refusal, and fell at His feet in worship. Still He kept up the reluctance. But listen closely and you perceive why she recognized His intention behind the barrier. He was testing, and deepening, her faith. He was eliciting, and forming, her character.

26. *dogs*. The Greek word, diminutive, a pet name, i.e. not the outcast dogs of street or field, but the dogs at the hearth, whose right to food was admitted. She catches at this implication, with a wit, humility, and faith, which won Christ's admiration.

27. This woman asks for nothing better than to be a dog in the household of Jesus, picking up the mere crumbs from His rich table. The Syriac adds to the verse 'and live'.

28. The way in which the Master grants the request, whole-

unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was healed from that hour.

29 And Jesus departed thence, and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee; and he went up into
30 the mountain, and sat there. And there came unto him great multitudes, having with them the lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and they cast them down at his feet; and he
31 healed them: insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb speaking, the maimed whole, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing: and they glorified the God of Israel.

32 And Jesus called unto him his disciples, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, be-

heartedly, shows how willing He was to be entreated. Even while His mission was to Israel, no human being, Phœnician, Greek, or Roman, could appeal to Him in vain.

29-39. HE RETIRES TO THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF THE SEA OF GALILEE, HEALING AND FEEDING THE PEOPLE. Matthew is not interested in the geography or in the travelling. Mark is a little more distinct. Jesus came to Decapolis, the group of Greek cities which lay in the heart of the territory of Herod Philip. In the place of the very general description of healing ministry here, Mark gives the beautiful incident of the deaf and dumb man cured by the word 'Ephphatha' (vii. 31-7).

29. *the mountain*. How did the lame and the helpless climb the hill? The Aramaic *tīra*, which means hill also, is applied to a desert (see ver. 33), because in Palestine the deserts are hilly, very much as the word 'forest' came to mean a wood, because 'forests' were generally wooded. Perhaps, therefore, we may think here only of the hilly desert which is so characteristic of the country, not of a high mountain.

30. *maimed*. According to Euthymius Zigabenus, this meant 'handless'. Often the lepers are seen in this maimed state. It is implied that Christ's healing power included the restoration of lost limbs. The vital sap, induced by faith, re-creates.

32-9. THE SECOND MIRACLE OF FEEDING. It is quite clear that the evangelist wishes to record two miraculous feedings of the multitude; the criticism which attempts to blend them into one

cause they continue with me now three days and have nothing to eat : and I would not send them away fasting, lest haply they faint in the way. And the disciples say unto him, Whence should 33 we have so many loaves in a desert place, as to fill so great a multitude? And Jesus saith unto 34 them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven, and a few small fishes. And he 35 commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground ; and he took the seven loaves and the 36 fishes ; and he gave thanks and brake, and gave

is broken on the specific differences—the number fed in the two cases, 5,000 and 4,000 ; the supplies in ch. xiv five, and here seven loaves ; the fragments, there filling twelve *cophini* and here seven *spurides*. Besides, when Jesus refers to His miracles He definitely mentions the two (xvi. 9-10). It is also plain that if He did this act of supernatural grace once He could do it twice. Westcott mooted an old theory, that the first miracle was wrought for Israelites, and the second for strangers. If this be so, the spiritual bearing of the work is plain, the flesh that He gives, His body, is for the life, not of Israel only, but of the whole world.

32. *I have compassion.* This second narrative is justified, if only by these lovely words on the lips of Jesus. We hear Him speaking ; we feel the human heart, so far removed from the callousness of the doctrinaire. He who is so emphatic in declaring that what enters into a man is of secondary importance, He who urges men to labour not for the meat which perishes, is the first to feel the pathos of the hungry crowd, which for three days has been hanging on His lips or seeking the touch of His hand for their sick.

33. The disciples had not learnt to count on the Lord's power. It is curious how quickly we forget His miraculous interferences and deliverances. We try to explain them away, or to resolve them into natural occurrences and coincidences. Consequently, when another trouble comes, we are in the old state of unbelief and dejection, instead of confident from past experience, that His love and power will suffice.

36. *gave thanks.* This is the *εὐχαριστήσας*, which in the former narrative was used by John ; cf. xxvi. 27 ; and Acts xxvii. 35. It was not yet the Eucharist, but it typifies that miraculous meal by which the body of Christ is fed. In the Old Testament the miracle of Elisha foreshadows this miracle of our Lord (2 Kings iv. 42-4).

to the disciples, and the disciples to the multi-
 37 tudes. And they did all eat, and were filled :
 and they took up that which remained over of
 38 the broken pieces, seven baskets full. And they
 that did eat were four thousand men, beside
 39 women and children. And he sent away the
 multitudes, and entered into the boat, and came
 into the borders of Magadan.

16 And the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and
 tempting him asked him to shew them a sign

37. The basket here (*συνψίς*) is much larger than the *κόφινος* of ch. xiv. In one case, at any rate, a *συνψίς* was large enough to hold a man, though perhaps only a little man (Acts ix. 25). Each loaf, when the 4,000 are fed, is big enough to fill this large receptacle. It is a sign. Christ's grace is only indefinitely increased for each, when we have shared it with the multitude.

39. *Magadan*. Of this town there is no trace. Mark (viii. 10) mentions Dalmanutha; but that is equally unknown. From the mention of 'the other side' in xvi. 5 we should infer that it was on the western shore of the Lake. On the other hand, some think it is to be sought in Maked of 1 Macc. v. 26, 36. Cheyne suggests Migdalnunia, a suburb of Tiberias. For us, at any rate, we only can say that after His deed of mercy He withdrew again into a place of obscurity, seeking it as a retreat from the now avowed hostility of the religious leaders. When some MSS. read Magdala, it is only to substitute a known for an unknown place. But the point for us is that it is unknown.

CH. xvi. This great chapter forms a climax in the Gospel. It opens with a fresh picture of the hostility gathering among the Jewish parties; it moves on to the critical point at which one disciple confessed the Lord, and thereby the foundation of the Church was laid; and immediately the Cross was opened up, as the means of the Church's victory. Bruce marks the significance of the chapter by calling it the opening of the fifth act of the drama. We may therefore divide it thus:—A SIGN DEMANDED (1-12); THE CONFESSION MADE (13-20); THE CROSS IN VIEW (21-28).

1-12. *Pharisees and Sadducees*. The two hostile sects combine against Jesus. In Mark the Herodians are referred to (viii. 15). Probably the Sadducees, the intellectual and aristocratic party, were to a large extent identical with the Herod-party. They gathered round a great earthly potentate, and saw in the political power of a native prince the security for their thoroughly material and worldly religious state.

¹ The following words, to the end of ver. 3, are omitted by some of the most ancient and other important authorities.

from heaven. But he answered and said unto ² them, ¹ When it is evening, ye say, *It will be fair weather*: for the heaven is red. And in the ³ morning, *It will be foul weather to-day*: for the heaven is red and lowring. Ye know how to discern the face of the heaven; but ye cannot *discern* the signs of the times. An evil and ⁴ adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of Jonah. And he left them, and departed.

² Gr. *loaves*.

And the disciples came to the other side and ⁵ forgot to take ² bread. And Jesus said unto them, ⁶ Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. And they reasoned ⁷ among themselves, saying, ³ We took no ² bread. And Jesus perceiving it said, O ye of little faith, ⁸

³ Or, it is because we took no bread.

1. This is a doublet of xii. 38. The two passages may refer to the same occasion; they are inserted to give the full answer of Jesus to this natural demand for a 'sign'.

2. He sighed, says Mark, at the spiritual blindness of the rulers of His people. A sign was before them clear as the familiar signs of the weather in the sky. He himself was the sign, and they could not read it.

3. The red in the sky they thought was the eve of a good time coming; it was the morning of the judgement day, red and lowering.

4. In brief and almost scornful directness He threw at them the sign of Jonah; Jonah's fruitless preaching to the men of Nineveh—fruitless because Nineveh repented only to relapse—and departed.

5. They crossed the Lake from the western shore (Magadan?) to the north-east, where they could start for the Lebanon. Mark implies that the conversation took place on board, and that they had one loaf with them. At any rate, the supply was insufficient, and Jesus left to them the commissariat. Their thought was full of the material; Jesus was absorbed in the late encounter with Pharisees and Sadducees.

8. Jesus was grieved with them that they should think Him concerned about so secondary a thing as the supply of bread; grieved also, because they did not read the lesson of the two miraculous multiplications of the loaves.

- why reason ye among yourselves, because ye
 9 have no ¹ bread? Do ye not yet perceive, neither
 remember the five loaves of the five thousand,
 10 and how many ² baskets ye took up? Neither
 the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how
 11 many ² baskets ye took up? How is it that ye
 do not perceive that I spake not to you concern-
 ing ¹ bread? But beware of the leaven of the
 12 Pharisees and Sadducees. Then understood they
 how that he bade them not beware of the leaven
 of ¹ bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees
 and Sadducees.
- 13 Now when Jesus came into the parts of
 Cæsarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying,

¹ Gr.
loaves.

² *Basket*
 in ver. 9
 and 10 re-
 presents
 different
 Greek
 words.

9. The careful mention of the two miracles, with the specific baskets, *cophini* in one case and *spurides* in the other, is proof that two miracles were performed, as far as literary or historic proof can be offered of such events.

11. By the leaven He meant (Matthew thinks) the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees (cf. v. 20). Mark, referring to the 'leaven of Herod', does not take the leaven to be teaching, for Herod was no teacher. By the leaven He most probably meant the whole influence of the Jewish leaders (cf. xxiii. 3), the spirit they showed, the hardened inaccessibility to new truth. It was not so much a doctrine as a *Zeitgeist*, which was in the mind of Jesus. The doctrine might have been true and impeccable, but the spirit which prevailed would have made it poison.

13-20. THE CHURCH IS BUILT ON THE CONFESSION OF ONE BELIEVER IN CHRIST. The scene of the great confession was beyond the borders of Israel. The name of the place, Cæsarea Philippi, anciently Paneas, now Baniyas, is significant. Paneas was named after Pan, the god of universal nature; it was rebuilt and renamed by Herod Philip, the only good son of Herod the Great; he called it Cæsarea as a compliment to the Roman Emperor. It thus seemed to embody the religious and the political ideals of the ancient world, and especially of Israel. Situated at the foot of Lebanon, it is 'a place of exceedingly beautiful picturesque surroundings, with which few spots in the Holy Land can be compared. What a rush of many waters! what a wealth and variety of vegetation!' exclaims Furrer. It was then a fit scene for the momentous confession which founded the Church (ver. 13). The question put by

¹ Many ancient authorities read that I the Son of man am. See Mark viii. 27; Luke ix. 18.

Who do men say ¹ that the Son of man is? And ¹⁴ they said, Some say John the Baptist; some, Elijah: and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But who say ye ¹⁵ that I am? And Simon Peter answered and ¹⁶ said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, ¹⁷ Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh

Jesus gave the opportunity. He wished to see if in His immediate circle the kind of faith was yet apparent which was manifestly lacking outside. He led up to the personal question by asking what men in general thought of Him. Opinions were divided between the prophets, who, according to popular expectation, were all to come back to life. The expectation about John is expressed in the fear of Herod Antipas (xiv. 2). The expectation about Elijah was derived from Mal. iv. 5. The expectation that Jeremiah would return rested on the slender ground of 2 Macc. ii. 1-8. All that the most enthusiastic people discerned in Jesus was 'one of the prophets'.

15. But what idea had the disciples formed of their Master after these many months of intimate experience? Their dullness of perception had just been illustrated afresh (ver. 11). It is difficult to imagine that any of them had come to a clear conclusion. The answer which broke from the impetuous lips of Peter was, therefore, flashed into his mind by God; it was one of those utterances to which the second epistle of Peter afterwards referred: 'men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost' (2 Pet. i. 21). The confession of Jesus was from the first recognized as a supernatural revelation (1 John iv. 2); it never comes from 'flesh and blood', i. e. the simply human part of us.

16. Strange to say, the form of confession varies in our three sources. In Mark (viii. 29), which we suppose represents Peter's version of the incident, the words are only: 'Thou art the Christ.' In Luke ix. 20 it is: 'Thou art the Christ of God.' Matthew combines and expands the two.

Son of the living God. For 'living' D has 'saving' (i. e. *σώζοντος* for *ζώντος*). Undoubtedly the main point of the confession was that Peter recognized in Jesus the Messiah (Christ) and thereby became a Christian (cf. 1 Pet. iv. 16). The peculiar relation of the Son to the Father on which Jesus had Himself expatiated (Matt. xi. 25-30) was understood; and, therefore, Matthew does not hesitate to express it in the form of the confession.

17-19. PETER AND THE ROCK. These verses occur only in

and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but
 18 my Father which is in heaven. And I also say
 unto thee, that thou art ^{1 Gr.} Peter, and upon this ^{Petros.}
^{2 Gr.} rock I will build my church; and the gates of ^{petra.}

Matthew. It is very remarkable that the earliest source, Mark, giving Peter's version, says nothing of the dignity conferred on Peter, but only records the rebuke, 'Get thee behind me, Satan' (Mark viii. 33). Luke omits all that was said to Peter personally. His confession stands, but he is neither praised nor rebuked. Wellhausen thinks that the words could not have been known to Peter or written in his lifetime. Certainly there is no indication in the Acts or the Epistles that Peter was aware of them. We may surmise that the saying of ver. 18 is reported by one evangelist because it is important, but it is only reported by one, lest its importance should be exaggerated. It must be evident to all, that if the saying had meant what the Papal See says it did, it would not only have been carefully recorded in each of the Gospels, but also referred to in all the New Testament literature. If Christ conferred on the Popes a universal supremacy in the Church, He conferred it on Peter; for on these words to Peter the claim rests. But if He conferred it on Peter, Peter was ignorant of it (see 1 Peter v. 1-4), and certainly Paul did not recognize it (Gal. ii. 11).

17. The blessing is given in set and stately phrase, and the full name of Peter is uttered, 'Simon, son of Jonah,' just as under strong feeling we still sometimes address a friend with his full tale of names and titles. 'Flesh and blood,' according to Wellhausen, includes Jesus Himself during the time of His incarnate life. The truth had come from the Father, through the Spirit (see 1 Cor. xii. 3).

18. Already, very early in their mutual relations, according to John i. 42, Jesus had given to Simon the Aramaic name, Kepha, meaning a stone. This, no doubt, is the Fourth Evangelist's way of minimizing the personal element in these words of Matthew. The name Kepha or Peter was given to Simon at once, without any reference to the meaning of the word. There were two Simons among the Twelve (x. 2, 4), and it was necessary to distinguish them. When Kepha was the first to confess Him, Jesus played upon his name: 'Thou art Kepha, on Kepha (sc. rock) will I build.' Wellhausen thinks that the Church was built on the Risen Lord, and Peter was the first to see Him. The commoner view is that the Church is built on the confession of Christ, and Peter was the first to make that confession.

my church. Only here and in xviii. 17, on the lips of Jesus. He would use the Aramaic *K'nischta*, which meant a synagogue.

Hades shall not prevail against it. I will give 19
 unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven :
 and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall
 be bound in heaven : and whatsoever thou shalt
 loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Then 20
 charged he the disciples that they should tell no
 man that he was the Christ.

¹ Some
 ancient
 authori-
 ties read
Jesus
Christ.

From that time began ¹ Jesus to shew unto his 21
 disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem,
 and suffer many things of the elders and chief
 priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third

The Greek word 'ecclesia' occurs in the LXX (Deut. xviii. 16, xxiii. 2) for the 'assembly of the Lord'.

the gates of Hades (Job xxxviii. 17; Isa. xxxviii. 10) is equivalent to the grave, that is, the bourne of all things mortal; but Christ's Church, the assembly of souls founded on belief in Him as Messias, is not mortal.

19. For Church is immediately substituted kingdom. The key is a symbol of rule (Isa. xxii. 22) because it unlocks the gates. Cf. Wisd. xvi. 13: Wisdom leads down to the gates of Hades and leads up again. In Rev. i. 18, iii. 7 Christ Himself retains the key. But this first believer wields the authority of Christ; as fresh believers are added, they receive the same authority (xviii. 18). This authority is wielded through teaching, for to bind and loose is the Jewish phrase for pronouncing anything forbidden or permissible. Thus the Church is extended and governed by Truth, communicated to, and by, those who confess Christ (cf. xiii. 52). It is by teaching, not by sacerdotal mysteries, that Christ intends us to wield the powers of His kingdom. His agents are not a special order in the Church, but the Church itself composed of faithful men.

20. This follows at once on ver. 16, in Mark's version viii. 30. Directly Peter confessed Christ, the disciples were forbidden to make known who Jesus was, because the main anxiety of Jesus was, that there should be no popular movement, involving mistaken ideas and misleading hopes; He wanted believers to be gathered quietly and deliberately, and by silent processes of conviction.

21-8. THE CROSS IN VIEW. Directly the faith of the disciples had struck root, it had to bear the strain of this dread announcement. We do not know when Jesus reached the conviction that the hostility of the authorities would end in His death; but from the time that He began to communicate it to His disciples, it

- 22 day be raised up. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, ¹ Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall never be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art a stumblingblock unto me: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man would come after me, let him

¹ Or, God have mercy on thee

filled His mind and coloured all His teaching. Henceforth we see Him going consciously and deliberately forward to be murdered; but He is as sure of being raised on the third day as He is of dying.

21. The elders, chief priests, and scribes, are the three orders that constituted the Sanhedrin; His death was to be the work of the highest authority in Israel.

22. Was Peter elated by the praise and promise which had just been given to him? Was his head turned by the personal dignity which seemed to be implied? His rebuke to his Master is patronizing. Peter would have Him a conquering, not a suffering Messiah. He had the notion that the kingdom could be established by the sword (John xviii. 10).

Be it far from thee, Lord! literally, 'God be propitious to thee,' which would be even more insolent to the Lord whom he had just acknowledged as Son of God. But the Greek idiom only means: 'God forbid' (cf. 1 Macc. ii. 21; 2 Sam. xxiii. 17). If the Roman Church were right in basing the Papal authority on the promise to Peter, it would be an ominous start for infallible Popes that the founder of the order should begin his utterances with this foolish and irreverent remark.

this shall never be unto thee! The very thing which was to purchase the Church as the Lord's possession, and to cleanse the hearts of all true believers. We wonder whether Peter's confession in ver. 16 was worth much, whether it was not after all a movement of the Spirit in him with which his own intelligence and conviction had little to do. But for our weak and unthinking faith it is a consolation, that Christ sees a potency in a thing so small.

23. Nothing, however, hinders the Master from frankly rebuking the first believer. At once he is a Satan, a tempter, and a stumblingblock (*σκάνδαλον*) to his Lord. The Greek phrase translated 'mindest not the things, &c.' is equivalent to saying: 'you are not on God's side but on men's' (Rom. viii. 5; Phil. iii. 19; Col. iii. 2; on the other hand see Phil. ii. 5 for having the mind of Christ).

deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow
¹ Or, *soul* me. For whosoever would save his ¹ life shall ²⁵
lose it: and whosoever shall lose his ¹ life for
my sake shall find it. For what shall a man be ²⁶
profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and
forfeit his ¹ life? or what shall a man give in
exchange for his ¹ life? For the Son of man ²⁷
shall come in the glory of his Father with his
angels; and then shall he render unto every
² Gr. *doing*. man according to his ² deeds. Verily I say unto ²⁸
you, There be some of them that stand here,

24. So far from evading the Cross Himself, Jesus now explains that His true disciples must take it too. This is a doublet of x. 38, 39. As His own Cross comes nearer, He lays more stress on the cross of His followers. At first He used the phrase 'taking up the Cross' as a metaphorical expression for suffering and ignominy. But now it becomes distinct as a literal experience.

25. *for my sake*. In Mark is added 'and the gospel's', to show that the cross would be chiefly incurred in proclaiming His gospel. The cross comes to us in many forms, but we cannot be quite satisfied with ourselves, unless we find it coming in this specific form, 'for the gospel's sake.'

26. As one word in Greek means 'life' and 'soul' it is almost impossible to render accurately in English. But if one alternative is to be taken, 'soul' here comes nearer to the meaning than 'life'. We can only get the real thought, however, by translating *ψυχή* 'life' in ver. 25, and 'soul' in ver. 26. This deep utterance reveals the worth of the individual soul in Christ's eyes. Life in the physical sense is not of transcendent importance; and though we will give much to keep it, no good man, no brave man, would give all. Certainly Jesus did not wish to imply that life was to be kept at all costs; rather He was preparing men to lay it down for His sake. But the soul, the immortal and heavenly principle in us, is worth everything, and we may well sacrifice all to save it; for there is a future.

27. *Respice finem*: we are to keep our eyes on the final scene, when the Son of Man will award finally on each man's deeds. In that assize of Father, Son and angels, the laying down of *life*, for Christ's sake and the gospel's, will appear to have been the gaining of the *soul*.

28. It is difficult to be sure of the reference in this saying. The 'coming in the kingdom' seems to mean the apocalyptic

which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

17 And after six days Jesus taketh with him

coming of Dan. vii. 13. But if that were the Lord's meaning, we should have to admit that His words were not fulfilled. All that circle of hearers died, and generations have passed, and the kingdom is not yet come in that full and final sense. The phrase 'taste of death' limits the meaning to the span of earthly life: He declared that some of His disciples would see the coming before their term of years on earth was over. What did He mean? However great may be the objections against the received view, it is more plausible than any other, viz. we must connect this promise with the event next recorded in the synoptic narrative, the Transfiguration. And if John xii. 20-36 may be regarded as the Johannine equivalent of the Transfiguration, the voice from heaven (ver. 28) saying that the divine name should be glorified, that confirms the interpretation. The Son of Man came in His kingdom, not by the apocalyptic advent at the end only, but by those manifestations of His glory and the confirming voice from heaven which made the Transfiguration so memorable (see especially 2 Pet. i. 17). Though this explanation seems hardly to give full value to the solemn asseveration 'shall not taste of death until', it enables us to grasp a great principle, which we too easily let slip, viz. that Christ's coming began from the first and is manifested gradually to the end. Possibly in every assembly of His people He could repeat the promise of this verse; and we should pray that we may have eyes to see His coming.

CH. xvii. TRANSFIGURATION; HEALING THE DEMONIAK; RENEWED FORESHOWING OF DEATH; PAYING THE TRIBUTE-MONEY. 'From the mount of transfiguration to money demands which one is too poor to meet, what a descent!' exclaims Bruce: and the descent is through a lamentable instance of His disciples' little faith (ver. 20), and through a fresh realization of the approaching sacrifice. Raphael's picture in the Vatican attempts to bring into one view the glory on the mount, and the scene of distraction and healing at the foot. Matthew presents an even greater contrast; he shows at one glance the wonderful Person of Jesus, and an effect of that unique personality in its hour of unique dedication (A. B. Davidson), and the poverty which has not a coin to give as tribute, the humiliation of the Lord of all being taxed as a subject. Yet, rightly understood, the glory of Jesus is as manifest in 'that take, and give unto them for thee and me' as in 'his face did shine as the sun, and his garments became white as the light'.

1-13. THE TRANSFIGURATION. This is to be regarded as the formal preparation for the death, as the baptism was the formal prepara-

Peter, and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart : and he was transfigured before them : and his

tion for the life. At the baptism the Spirit descended on Him ; here the spiritual light streams from Him. As a manifestation to the prepared inner circle of the disciples, the scene was designed to irradiate the Redeemer's sufferings, to transfigure the Cross. Before He was exposed to the humiliation and ignominy of that bitter death, it was necessary to show who He was, the Lord from Heaven, that was thus to die. The Transfiguration, therefore, is an integral factor in the life of the Lord, and not a casual episode. The Fourth Gospel omits it, but introduces an equivalent in John xii. 20-36, which is also an interpretation. The Greeks ask to see Him. He says that He must die as a corn of wheat dies. The voice from heaven applauds (ver. 28, cf. Matt. xvii. 5). He declares Himself the Light, and bids His disciples become sons of light. John after his manner sees his Lord's transfiguration not in this night-scene on the mount, but in a certain manifestation of His inner thought, the confident triumph of His sacrifice drawing all men unto Himself. Peter, on the other hand, never ceased to talk of the visible transfiguration (2 Pet. i. 16-18). For James the vision remained as a power of ethical transformation ; it became a diffused light of Christlike goodness. For Paul, who was not present, and for all who share Paul's faith, Christ remained transfigured, known no longer after the flesh, the emblem of the eternal light, set over against the powers of darkness (Col. i. 13). It was perhaps a childish wish of Peter's to keep the heavenly visitants in tents, but he was right in thought, 'Lord, it is good for us to be here.' Let the reader remain long enough on the Transfiguration mount, to be transfigured.

1. *after six days*, sc. since He began to speak to them of His death. In those days of quiet or of travel (it depends on the question of which mountain is meant, whether they rested at Cæsarea or travelled far) He explained to them the scriptures which anticipated His death, showed them how the corn of wheat must die to bear a harvest, and how He must die to draw all men to Him.

Peter, and James, and John. The three witnesses of the raising of Jairus's daughter (Mark v. 37) and of the agony in the Garden (Mark xiv. 33). They saw the vision, not in order to tell it (see ver. 9)—so far as we know John and James never mentioned it even after the Son of Man was risen—but that they might themselves be overwhelmingly convinced (e.g. John i. 14 ; 1 John i. 1, 2). They did not speak of the Transfiguration, but of the Person who had been revealed to them in the occurrence.

a high mountain. Mount Tabor, according to tradition. Modern

face did shine as the sun, and his garments be-
 3 came white as the light. And behold, there
 appeared unto them Moses and Elijah talking

commentators incline to Hermon because it is 'exceeding high'. More probably it was Jebel Jermuk (4,000 feet), the highest point of Palestine proper; it stands over against the Safed uplands, separated from them by the deep gorge Wady Leimun (*Expos. Times*, xviii. 333). But as Holtzmann wisely says: 'The mount of Transfiguration does not concern geography.'

apart, i. e. privately.

2. The Transfiguration, according to Luke, took place while He prayed. The companions of St. Francis and of other saints have seen similar things; the face has shone, and even the garments have seemed luminous. Though commonly the body effectually curtains and conceals the spirit, at times the spirit shines brilliantly through. This effect is only rare, because the intense and transfiguring spiritual experience which causes it is rare.

An experience of James Russell Lowell (*Letters*, i. 75) may serve as an illustration: 'I had a revelation last Friday evening. I was at Mary's, and happening to say something of the presence of spirits (of whom I said I was often dimly aware). Mr. Putnam entered into an argument with me on spiritual matters. As I was speaking, the whole system rose up before me like a vague destiny looming from the Abyss. I never before so clearly felt the Spirit of God in me and around me. The whole room seemed to me full of God. The air seemed to waver to and fro with the presence of Something I knew not what. I spoke with the calmness and clearness of a prophet. I cannot tell you what this revelation was. I have not yet studied it enough. But I shall perfect it one day, and then you shall hear it, and acknowledge its grandeur.'

his face did shine as the sun. This is the Lord of heaven on earth (Rev. i. 16, x. 1). Peter's memory of it is vaguer, but even more glorious (2 Pet. i. 16-18).

3. The three sleepy and bewildered disciples could ill judge who the heavenly visitants were. But they were sure of the point. They even knew the subject of conversation, according to Luke; it was the 'exodus' which Jesus was soon to accomplish at Jerusalem. So rooted was this in Peter's mind, that to mention his own approaching 'exodus' (2 Pet. i. 15) was at once to recall this conversation on the Mount between Moses, who was grandly rapt to God, Elijah, who was borne in a chariot to heaven, and Jesus, who was to go by the awful way of the Cross.

Incidentally, the appearance of the two ancient prophets will teach believing hearts that the dead behind the veil live.

¹ Or,
booths

with him. And Peter answered, and said unto 4
Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here : if thou
wilt, I will make here three ¹ tabernacles ; one
for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.
While he was yet speaking, behold, a bright 5
cloud overshadowed them : and behold, a voice
out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son,
in whom I am well pleased ; hear ye him. And 6
when the disciples heard it, they fell on their
face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came 7
and touched them and said, Arise, and be not 8
afraid. And lifting up their eyes, they saw no
one, save Jesus only.

And as they were coming down from the 9
mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, Tell

4. Granted, Peter's proposal was childish, an utterance of dazed stupidity, such as comes to one impetuous to speak when he has nothing to say ; yet, what verisimilitude is in the narrative ! When in the Church's history would a writer have invented so silly a speech for the Primate of Apostles ?

5. *a bright cloud.* That 'excellent glory' which Peter remembered (2 Pet. i. 17). The voice at the baptism spoke to Jesus to assure Him (iii. 17). Now it speaks to the disciples, to enforce their attention. Deeply as the voice impressed Peter, and convinced him (2 Pet. i. 18), it is striking that he regarded the scriptures as a clearer evidence of Christ than the voice from heaven (verses 19-21), apparently because a voice may be only of 'private interpretation', while the scriptures are open to all, in all ages.

6. The fear of the supernatural is engrained in human nature. But it is the gracious function of Jesus to remove the fear. He touches us, we rise, and are not afraid.

8. *Jesus only.* Moses and Elijah have gone : the law and the prophets are merged in Jesus. He is enough without them ; and yet as His witnesses and forerunners they retain their place in our gratitude and veneration. The Bible is not truly transfigured for us, until we lift up our eyes and see in it Jesus only.

9. Jesus did not wish the vision to be used as evidence to others, and for that reason John abstained from recording it. It is only the moral and spiritual elements in our Lord, never the miraculous signs, which carry lasting conviction all down the

the vision to no man, until the Son of man be
 10 risen from the dead. And his disciples asked
 him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elijah
 11 must first come? And he answered and said,
 Elijah indeed cometh, and shall restore all things :
 12 but I say unto you, that Elijah is come already,
 and they knew him not, but did unto him what-
 soever they listed. Even so shall the Son of
 13 man also suffer of them. Then understood the
 disciples that he spake unto them of John the
 Baptist.

14 And when they were come to the multitude,
 there came to him a man, kneeling to him, and

ages. We dwell on the Vision now, not to prove Christ to unbelievers, but to refresh and encourage our hearts, because we believe.

10. *Why then say the scribes?* The conjunction *οὐν*, 'then,' is a little difficult to understand. Perhaps the thought is this: 'We have just seen Elijah, and yet thou forbiddest us to mention it; but the scribes regard Elijah as the forerunner of Christ on the strength of Mal. iv. 6; if we said that we had seen him, that might convince them who Thou art.' The force of the *then* is in the undercurrents of thought. If Jesus does not wish to lay stress on Elijah's appearing, why then do the scribes make so much of it?

11. The answer of Jesus is most perplexing to the disciples, and Mark does not say that they understood it. We may question whether ver. 13 does not refer to a discovery made long after. It was a staggering suggestion that the Elijah foretold by the prophet Malachi, who should 'restore all things' (Mal. iv. 5, LXX) was not that Elijah who went up to heaven in a chariot, but that lonely prophet who was beheaded in the dungeon of Machærus. What a disenchantment! not the glorified visitant of the night vision, but the beheaded preacher of the wilderness.

12. *they knew him not.* The scribes taught that Elijah's function was to lead Israel to the Great Repentance; but they did not detect him in John the Baptist, whose denunciations of themselves laid the axe to the root of the tree.

Even so shall the Son of man. Jesus saw in the treatment of John a forecast of the treatment which the same men would accord to Him.

14-20. THE DEMONIAK BOY. Mark's graphic pen gives life to

saying, Lord, have mercy on my son : for he is ¹⁵ epileptic, and suffereth grievously : for oft-times he falleth into the fire, and oft-times into the water. And I brought him to thy disciples, and ¹⁶ they could not cure him. And Jesus answered ¹⁷ and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I bear with you? bring him hither to me. And ¹⁸ Jesus rebuked him; and the ¹ devil went out from him: and the boy was cured from that hour. Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, ¹⁹ and said, Why could not we cast it out? And ²⁰ he saith unto them, Because of your little faith: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.²

¹ Gr.
demon.

² Many authorities, some ancient, insert ver. 21
But this kind goeth not out save by prayer and fasting.
See Mark ix. 29.

this narrative. The face of Jesus evidently shone, as Moses' face had done (Ex. xxxiv. 29, 30), and filled the people with wonder (Mark ix. 15).

15. The boy was an epileptic, but the Greek word means 'he is lunatic'. Epilepsy was supposed to be affected by lunar changes. From Mark it appears that there was paralysis as well.

16. The three strongest disciples were absent. Look at the undistinguished names of the other nine, and you cannot wonder that they were unequal to the task. And yet Jesus knew that if they had had faith they would have been able to heal the boy.

17. It is a bitter cry of that Lord, whose glory had just been manifested in contact with dull and unresponsive hearts. Think of faithless Thomas (John xx. 27). But these very men were soon to stand out as lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. To-day failure, to-morrow transfiguration and success (Phil. ii. 15).

18. *the devil went out.* No mention had been made of a devil. This may indicate that all disease was spoken of in this way. Every cure was an exorcism.

20. *little faith.* A word only here, but the corresponding adjective is in vi. 30, viii. 26, xiv. 31, xvi. 8. Does it stand as

- 22 And while they ¹abode in Galilee, Jesus said ¹Some ancient authorities read
unto them, 'The Son of man shall be delivered ²were gathering them-
23 up into the hands of men; and they shall kill ³themselves together.
him, and the third day he shall be raised up.
And they were exceeding sorry.
- 24 And when they were come to Capernaum,
they that received the ²half-shekel came to ²Gr. di-
Peter, and said, Doth not your ³master pay the ³Or, *teacher*
25 ²half-shekel? He saith, Yea. And when he

a gentle expression for 'no faith'? For even a grain of faith can work the greatest miracle. Observe the answer is a constant one on the lips of Jesus (cf. xxi. 21). It was a Jewish expression to call a good Rabbi 'an uprooter of mountains' because he took difficulties out of the way. Faith can do more than all rabbinical lore. A blind literalism would make the saying absurd. It is a strong figure of speech. But it is well to realize how plastic and mobile the material universe is to Jesus. 'Our globe seen by God is a transparent law, not a mass of facts,' says Emerson. Made by a creative word, it can develop, change, or disappear by the same word that made it.

Verse 21 was inserted here from the parallel in Mark. In the best uncials it is wanting. At the same time we know from Mark that Jesus said this.

22-3. A SECOND ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE APPROACHING DEATH. Mark makes the circumstances clear. But the three synoptists all record the striking form of the saying: 'The Son of *man* shall be delivered into the hands of *men*.' He is their own flesh and blood; they kill him; his death saves them.

24-7. THE TRIBUTE MONEY. We owe a great debt to Matthew for recording this incident. He alone remembered it, perhaps because his trade had been to sit at the receipt of custom. But it is of singular beauty and value. It shows the divine Lord of the Transfiguration-mount accepting His lowly place as a man, wishing to conciliate the turbulent and insolent race among whom He sojourned. What Wordsworth says of Milton applies more exactly to Milton's Lord:

Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

24. *the half-shekel*, in Greek money worth two drachmas, about 1s. 3d., was the tax for sacred uses enjoined by Exod. xxx. 13, xxxviii. 26, cf. 2 Chron. xxiv. 6, 9, collected in the month Adar (March). After the fall of the Temple the Romans claimed this

came into the house, Jesus spake first to him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? the kings of the earth, from whom do they receive toll or tribute? from their sons, or from strangers? And when he said, From strangers, Jesus said ²⁶ unto him, 'Therefore the sons are free. But, lest ²⁷ we cause them to stumble, go thou to the sea, and cast a hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a ¹ shekel: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.

¹ Gr.
stater.

poll-tax, but that is, of course, not alluded to here, though the reference to kings of the earth in ver. 25 sounds as if it were.

Doth not your master pay. The tax was of the nature of a voluntary assessment, never apparently enforced by the arm of the civil authority. The question therefore was almost equivalent to this: Is He a good Jew, loyal to the institutions of Moses?

25. As Wellhausen points out, the form of the answer seems designed to meet a difficulty which occurred in the early days of the Church in the Roman Empire. Were Christians to pay imperial taxes? The action of Jesus forestalled the question. Ideally they were free, but their object is to be men among men, and to avoid unnecessary offence. Therefore they should conform to the requirements of the State to which they belong.

the kings of the earth. In Oriental monarchies a certain paternal element is recognized, and the king taxes strangers in his realm rather than his own subjects. But the thought of Jesus seems to draw the distinction between the subjects and the royal house (cf. xxi. 12 ff., xxiv. 30 f.). This gives point to the question here. Jesus is conscious of being the King's Son: the Temple, for which the didrachma was demanded, was His Father's house. He seems to imply that Peter as the first believer shared His privileges of sonship. The deduction therefore was legitimate, that they were free.

toll or tribute, τέλη, customs, such as Matthew collected, and κήνος, the poll-tax for the temple.

27. Incidentally this reveals the fact that Jesus had no money; 'though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor' (2 Cor. viii. 9). And yet in His Father's world, the silver and the gold were His; even in a fish's mouth.

the shekel, Gk. stater, was worth four drachmas, about 2s. 6d., and would serve for Jesus and Peter. It is a touching and

- 18 In that hour came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who then is ¹greatest in the kingdom of ¹Gr. *greater.* heaven? And he called to him a little child,

beautiful prelude to the discourse in ch. xviii on humility. The Lord of Heaven pays the tax on earth, lest he should cause men to stumble. This accommodation to the present life is a great principle from which all our rules of living, in town or state, may be deduced.

The evangelist does not tell us whether Peter found the stater in the fish, because the importance of the narrative lies not in that extraordinary incident, but in the resolution of our penniless Lord to pay the tribute. But coins are found in fish. In the *Academia at Venice* great pictures show how the fisherman had found in the fish a signet ring which had been dropped from the Doge's galley. And the Lord's swift perception, that a fish with the swallowed coin could be immediately caught, is not incredible. It belongs to a class of phenomena becoming daily more familiar, in which a clairvoyant mind sees what is just about to happen. No wise person now will dispute the possibility of the stater being obtained in this way; but as Matthew did not lay stress on it, and certainly did not use it as an evidence of our Lord's divine nature, neither are we entitled to do so.

CH. xviii. THE CHAPTER OF THE CHURCH. It admits us into the secret of that holy institution to which Jesus referred in xvi. 18. All that the apostles tell us on this subject springs out of this. Childlikeness, brotherly love, and forgiveness are the notes of the Church. When the reader has studied this chapter, let him read Col. iii. 12-15, and he will get a unique impression of the unity of God's revelation, and also of Love as the foundation and coping-stone of His house. There are three sections in this charter of the Church: (1) Be childlike (ver. 1-14). (2) Gain the brother in the Church fellowship (15-20). (3) Forgive (ver. 21-35).

1-14. BE CHILDLIKE. This occurred at Capernaum, Mark ix. 33. Christ's mind was full of the sacrifice; the apostles' minds were full of pre-eminence. Here is the first sign of that hideous growth, Ecclesiastical Ambition, and here Christ condemns it for ever beforehand.

1. *Who then is greater?* greater among the disciples: cf. Mark ix. 34; Luke ix. 46. We are justified in translating 'greatest', for Hellenistic Greek had lost the superlative, as Moulton shows in his *Grammar of N. T. Greek*, i. 78. The illative conjunction connects the question with the preceding incidents, with the prominence of Peter in xvi. 15, and in the story of the Tribute-money, and perhaps with the eminence of the three who witnessed the Transfiguration. They did not

and set him in the midst of them, and said,
 Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn, and be-
 come as little children, ye shall in no wise enter
 into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever there-
 fore shall humble himself as this little child, the
 same is the ¹greatest in the kingdom of heaven.
 And whoso shall receive one such little child in
 my name receiveth me: but whoso shall cause

¹ Gr.
greater.

recognize Peter's primacy. Nor did Jesus. If He had intended to make Peter Pope, the answer to this question would have been simple; as it was, He answered the question by making a child His text. He nipped Pharisaism in the bud. He taught Peter a lesson, which that warmhearted disciple at least never forgot (1 Pet. v. 1-3).

2. The child in the midst is presented more tenderly in Mark ix. 36—Peter's gospel—for Jesus there takes the child in His arms.

3. *Except ye turn.* This is better than a theological term 'be converted'. It is a very practical requirement, to 'become as little children', depending on the will, and not on a supernatural and uncertain operation of the Spirit. Every one can become like a little child (Ps. cxxxi. 2). How the thought echoed in Peter's mind, see 1 Pet. ii. 2, 'as new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word.' We can all receive the Kingdom of God as a little child (x. 15). The Kingdom of Heaven is composed of childlike people.

enter into. Rather 'attain to' as in ver. 8; xxv. 21, 23.

4. Insensibly Jesus passes from the idea of children literally to that of the childlike, whom He calls, 'these little ones who believe in me.' The comparison turns on the virtue of humility. Children are not always humble; but the childlike are. When a fullgrown person takes the lowly place as a child of God, obedient and docile, that self-emptying constitutes the only greatness which can be recognized in God's Kingdom. Who exalts himself, and trusts himself, is a tiny egoism in the vast order of the Spirit; who loses himself, and lets God's life flow through him, is an integral part of that harmonious order, acts with the fullness of omnipotence, and shares the majesty of God. The humility must be genuine, not like the hoods of children adopted by Egyptian monks as a badge of humility.

5. The discourse turns from the childlike to those who are brought into contact with them. Thus in these few verses the whole subject of God and the Child is completely handled. Christ is with the little one, as the angels are (ver. 10).

one of these little ones which believe on me to stumble, it is profitable for him that ¹a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and *that* he should be sunk in the depth of the sea.

¹ Gr. a millstone turned by an ass.

7 Woe unto the world because of occasions of stumbling! for it must needs be that the occasions come; but woe to that man through whom
8 the occasion cometh! And if thy hand or thy foot causeth thee to stumble, cut it off, and cast it from thee: it is good for thee to enter into life maimed or halt, rather than having two hands
9 or two feet to be cast into the eternal fire. And

6. *these little ones which believe on me.* The phrase is unique, but what a description of the true Christian! And what a sentence passed on all those who put stumblingblocks in the way of Christians! It is better for such an opponent of the Christian to be drowned in the Dead Sea, with a millstone tied round his neck, to make him sink, not the ordinary handmillstone, but the ass-turned millstone—that is the meaning of ‘great’ here.

7. This gives a glimpse into a great mystery. The world is a scene of trial. There must be temptations, just as the Canaanites were left in Canaan, to try the Israelites (Judges iii. 1). But this by no means exonerates the persons who serve as tests to the people of God. The sin is punished, though it is turned to account in the training of the saints. Balaam only blessed Israel, but his punishment is sure, because he had it in his heart to curse him, and moved the Moabites to tempt him.

8. See v. 29, 30; Mark ix. 43-8. The hand and foot and eye here are the instruments of offence to Christ’s little ones. There is no doubt concerning the fate of those who cause the stumbling, it is æonian fire, the Gehenna of fire, i. e. a punishment like the burning of the bodies of criminals in the valley of Hinnom, prolonged into that world beyond space and time, called æonian. The hand may strike a ‘little one of Christ’; the foot may lead him astray; the eye may flash contempt or ridicule upon him.

enter into life, prob. ‘eternal life’: cf. xix. 17.

The notion that by these members may be meant bad people in the Christian community, who must be excommunicated, leads up well to the next section, ver. 15, &c., but could not be derived from those verses alone.

if thine eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee : it is good for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into the ¹hell of fire. See that ¹⁰ye despise not one of these little ones ; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.² How think ye? if any man have a hundred sheep, ¹²and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and go unto the mountains, and seek that which goeth astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto ¹³you, he rejoiceth over it more than over the

¹ Gr.
Gehenna
of fire.

² Many
authori-
ties, some
ancient,
insert
ver. 11
For the
Son of
man came
to save
that which
was lost.
See Luke
xix. 10.

10. The reason why the eye may not look with scorn on a Christian is, that every one has his angel before God. In the book of Daniel each nation has its angel : in the Gospel each Christian has. The ancients believed that every man has an attendant genius, or spirit. In Jewish angelology the genius became an angel. Christ adopts the current idea to illustrate the personal and observant care which God has of each of His own. 'To see the face of the Father,' means to have access to the person of the Sovereign (2 Kings xxv. 19). The Christian is in high grace, and has direct representatives at court. The world is blind and foolish in treating him with such contempt. To offend the invisible hierarchies and to provoke the guardian spirits that are before the throne, is not the part of courage but of temerity. Yet all who have persecuted and hindered Christ's little ones have incurred this vague nemesis ; better indeed that they had been drowned in the sea, that they had lost hand or foot or eye.

Verse 11 disappears ; it is imported from Luke xix. 10, but it serves as a good introduction to ver. 12-14.

12. The image of the shepherd and the lost sheep is used in Luke xv. 4-7 to show Christ's love for the lost. Here it illustrates the Father's love for His little ones. No effort will be spared to save them ; as no injury done to them will go unavenged.

We should like to read the passage as showing that Christ will even seek and save those who have persecuted and offended His little ones, but that would be going beyond the text. If hand and foot and eye mean erring members of the Church, the thought of ver. 15 would be that such shall be restored.

- ninety and nine which have not gone astray.
- 14 Even so it is not ¹ the will of ² your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.
- 15 And if thy brother sin ³ against thee, go, shew him his fault between thee and him alone: if he
- 16 hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he hear *thee* not, take with thee one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses or three every
- 17 word may be established. And if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the ⁴ church: and if he

¹ Gr. *a thing willed before your Father.*

² Some ancient authorities read *my*.

³ Some ancient authorities omit *against thee*.

⁴ Or, *congregation*

14. *the will of your Father.* A Hebrew phrase (1 Macc. iii 60).

15-20. GAIN THY BROTHER IN THE CHURCH FELLOWSHIP. If the Lord takes such pains to save His little ones, they too must take pains to gain one another, by realizing His presence in prayer.

Another connexion with the preceding passage may be—not only avoid giving offence, but try by all means to win the erring.

Or yet another connexion emerges if the hand, foot, and eye are members of the Church that are cut off to avoid offence; then, this paragraph shows the steps which are to be taken to restore such a one.

But the general connexion is perhaps sufficient: instead of contending for pre-eminence in the Church, make it a society of mutual love, forbearance, forgiveness, because *I am in the midst*.

Possibly Peter had been specially assailed by the jealousy of the others, and the Lord is giving him directions for dealing with the assailants; if so, it is a very striking explanation of the inner meaning of the Church to the Primate, the Rock on which the Church is built. Not ecclesiastical authority and the terror of the keys, but the loving fellowship of brethren, constitutes the power of the Church.

15. *sin against thee.* Or more likely 'sin', as many MSS. omit the other words. The passage has in view not personal affronts but all irregularities and sins in the Christian community.

The personal faithful dealing would settle most quarrels, and would lead to deliverance from most sins. Men are amenable to truth and love combined.

16. The witnesses are borrowed from the old Law (Deut. xix. 15). There is nothing official in this deputation. Two or three combine (see ver. 19 and 20, to plead with the erring one, to touch his conscience, and to bring him to repentance by intercessory prayer.

17. If the few fail, the whole community must be brought to

¹ Or,
congregation.

refuse to hear the ¹ church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican. Verily I ¹⁸ say unto you, What things soever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and what things soever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, that ¹⁹ if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For ²⁰

bear. The Church is here the local fellowship of believing men. In xvi. 18 it seemed to be the larger community. But, as Wellhausen says, at the time the whole community of Christ's Church was in one local group of people. The transition from a local assembly to a world-wide society is not explicitly arranged for by Christ. The local assembly always remains and is the concrete, working, actuality of the Church (cf. Herrmann's *Communion with God*, p. 190, 'a church which does not direct all its efforts to developing a fellowship of moral intercourse is lifeless and dead').

Gentile and the publican, i. e. those who are outside the Christian community (cf. v. 46, 47). The term only becomes opprobrious when the incomparable glory and privilege of the Church fellowship are appreciated.

18. The task entrusted to Peter as the first believer in xvi. 19 is here extended to the community of believers. The 'binding and loosing' which in Judaism was the function of the Rabbis is in Christianity the responsibility of the Church fellowship. Nothing is said here about forgiveness of sins; that power was given to the Church community after the resurrection (John xx. 22, 23). Not as apostles but as disciples, Christian believers in community receive these powers. As the idea of the decisions of the pious being ratified in heaven was taken from current Rabbinical teaching (e. g. Targum, Cant. viii. 13, God says to the community of Israel: 'Let me hear the Law, the sound of thy words, when thou sittest to acquit and to condemn, and I will consent to all that thou doest'), so the exaggeration of the principle in the priesthood of the Roman Church was anticipated by the Rabbis, e. g. 1 Taan. 67 a: 'the Blessed One, blessed be he, makes his determination invalid, if it contradict the determination of a pious person,' and 6 Mo. K., 16 b: 'I, God, rule over men; who rules over me? The pious, for I enact and he annuls.' This is precisely what St. Alfonso claims for the priest.

19. Two in agreement are the Church in germ; their prayer is heard.

where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

- 21 Then came Peter, and said to him, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and
 22 I forgive him? until seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven
 23 times; but, Until ¹ seventy times seven. Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto
 a certain king, which would make a reckoning
 24 with his ²servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which
 25 owed him ten thousand ³talents. But forasmuch as he had not *wherewith* to pay, his

¹ Or, *seventy times and seven*

² Gr. *bond-servants*.

³ This talent was probably worth about £240.

20. Two or three, met in His name, have Christ among them. This is the secret of their authority, whether in declaring truth, loosing and binding, or in exercising discipline, forgiving or retaining sins (see 1 Cor. v. 4, 5); cf. Aboth iii. 3, 'Two that sit together and are occupied in the words of the Law have the Shekinah among them.'

21-35. FORGIVING. Peter, it seems, was the aggrieved one, and wondered how often he ought to forgive. He had been able to forgive six or seven times, and thought he had nearly reached the limit; next time surely he would be able to gratify his indignation. The answer of Jesus to his question struck at all his hopes of revenge.

21. The Rabbinical casuistry said three times. Peter, conscious of Christ's spirit, stretches it to seven. The seventy times seven took his breath away. This number in such a connexion is practically infinity. Moulton's *Grammar of New Testament Greek*, i, p. 98, decides that the translation should be 'seventy-seven times' (cf. Gen. iv. 24, LXX).

23. This gives occasion for drawing the picture which, if any, should be hung in every church. For here is the principle of the Church life as the organized attempt to realize the Kingdom of God upon earth: being freely and fully forgiven by God's grace, we must endlessly and freely forgive one another. The king and his bond-servants represent the relation between God and men. What have we which we have not received? If He be strict to mark iniquity who can stand?

make a reckoning: cf. xxv. 19, a Greek phrase found in the papyri of 1st and 2nd cent. A.D.

24. A debt of £2,400,000 implies that the servant was a Pasha of a province, and had appropriated and lost the public money.

lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The ¹ servant therefore fell down and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And the lord of that ¹ servant, being moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the ² debt. But that ¹ servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, which owed him a hundred pence : and he laid hold on him, and took *him* by the throat, saying, Pay what thou owest. So his fellow-servant fell down and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee. And he would not : but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay that which was due. So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were exceeding sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord called him unto him, and saith to him, Thou wicked ¹ servant, I forgave thee all that

¹ Gr. *bond-servant.*

² Gr. *loan.*

³ The word in the Greek denotes a coin worth about eight pence halfpenny.

25. Pasha, wife, children, and goods would not realize the sum ; when all was paid he would still be a hopeless debtor. For the selling of a debtor in old Israelitic law, cf. 2 Kings iv. 1 ; Neh. v. 8 ; Lev. xxv. 39.

26. The appeal for mercy comes from a resolution of honesty to make amends, and pay all. The lord's reply illustrates the grace of God, who on repentance not only revokes the sentence of punishment, but actually forgives the debt, so that the pardoned slave will not have to 'pay all'.

28. Here is the thoroughly bad man, see ver. 32, 'O wicked slave!' The small debt of 100 denars, about £4, represents in proportion to £2,400,000, the greatest offence which a man can commit against us, in comparison with our delinquencies to God.

29. The servant uses, to his fellow-servant, the very words which that fellow-servant had used to their common lord. But with what a different result ! That piteous appeal of ver. 26 proceeded from a heart hard as the nether millstone. He could not hear the very plea he urged.

33 debt, because thou besoughtest me : shouldest
not thou also have had mercy on thy fellow-
34 servant, even as I had mercy on thee? And his
lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tor-
35 mentors, till he should pay all that was due. So
shall also my heavenly Father do unto you, if
ye forgive not every one his brother from your
hearts.

19 And it came to pass when Jesus had finished
these words, he departed from Galilee, and came

34. Was not the wrath justified? The conscience of mankind goes with the sentence, though it does not appear how in the tormentor's hands the culprit could ever pay his £2,400,000, seeing he had not wherewith to pay before.

Perhaps what the Lord wanted was not the money, but only the softened, humbled, and forgiving heart; and that might be gained under the tormentor's hands.

all that was due is the heart of grace. God leaves no means untried to produce that which is due to Him.

35. It is not, therefore, inappropriate to say, in place of that outraged lord, 'my heavenly father.'

It is a significant picture of the forces which make the Church, and of the God who presides over that spiritual assembly. Egotism contending for supremacy! Chrysostom thought that we do not reach even the faults of the apostles. We ask who is greatest in the kingdom of the *world*? But is not Christ's thought rather that this ambition *in* His Church is worse than ambition in the world. 'The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship, but so it shall not be among you.'

In the Church there can be no lordship but Christ's; no rivalry but love; no hardness of heart. The Church is love, pure, tender, forgiving, aiming always at goodness, achieving it only in love's ways.

CH. XIX. THE DISCIPLES AT SCHOOL ON THE WAY. TEACHING ON WIVES, CHILDREN, AND PROPERTY.

1, 2. *he departed from Galilee*. This leaving of the dear native region of His youth is passed over very quietly by Matthew and Mark; but in Luke it is announced with a certain impressiveness, and the journey towards Jerusalem is told in much detail (Luke ix. 51—xviii. 15). St. John also gives a fuller significance to the incidents connected with the change from Galilee to Judæa (vii. 2—xi. 54). We ought to read behind this briefer narrative those more elaborate records. Apart altogether from the suffering

into the borders of Judæa beyond Jordan ; and a great multitudes followed him ; and he healed them there.

¹ Many authorities, some ancient, insert *the*.

² Some ancient authorities read *created*.

And there came unto him ¹ Pharisees, tempt-
ing him, and saying, Is it lawful *for a man* to
put away his wife for every cause? And he ⁴
answered and said, Have ye not read, that he
which ² made *them* from the beginning made

and sacrifice which awaited Him at Jerusalem, Jesus must have felt the sorrow of leaving scenes so beautiful and so sacred as those in which His Galilean ministry had been exercised.

1. *borders of Judæa, beyond Jordan.* The language is a little confusing, for it implies that the borders of Judæa were beyond Jordan. That was not the case. What is meant is that He made the journey to Judæa on the other side of the river, and not through Samaria ; perhaps the reason was the unwillingness of the Samaritans to receive Him (Luke ix. 53).

2. In Mark we are told that on this journey He taught as well as healed ; and what follows in this and the next six chapters (xix—xxv) may be taken to show the teaching which occupied those days.

3-12. WIVES. Considering that the Church has just been formed we cannot help remembering how intimately the image of marriage came to be identified with the relation of Christ to the Church (Eph. v). Here Christ lays down what is a new law on the subject of marriage ; and the ideal of a pure and inviolable marriage is prepared as the symbol of the Church's life.

3. The question was rather a dangerous one in the territory of Herod Antipas, which, it may be remembered, embraced Peræa beyond Jordan. Herod's marriage with Herodias might provoke the Pharisees to involve Jesus in a decision on the subject of marriage. Perhaps they also wished to embroil Him in the discussion which raged between the two schools of Shammai and Hillel. Shammai interpreted Deut. xxiv. 1 strictly, Hillel more loosely. If Jesus were committed to either opinion, He would incur the hostility of the other side.

4. The reply of Jesus is divine. He keeps within the law, and yet He gives to marriage a new and deep meaning which none of the Rabbinical schools had dreamed of. Notwithstanding the familiar passages of scripture which Jesus referred to, women were regarded by the Rabbis as inferior to men, belonging even to a lower order of being. A Rabbi would not be seen speaking

5 them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the twain shall
6 become one flesh? So that they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath
7 joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why then did Moses command to give a bill of divorcement, and to put *her* away?
8 He saith unto them, Moses for your hardness of heart suffered you to put away your wives: but

to a woman; the woman was an object of contempt. And yet there in the very story of man's creation was the divine charter of woman's equality. God made male and female as one. In marriage the twain become one. In the Syriac version a slightly different reading brings out the meaning better still, implying that the same who made the man made the woman. Now the Legislator adds a precept of his own: 'What God has joined together let not man put asunder.' The originality of this prohibition of divorce was recognized by the Church from the first. 'Not I, but the Lord' says Paul, 'gives charge that the wife depart not from her husband' (1 Cor. vii. 10).

In Palestine and the East generally a man can divorce his wife for every cause. Throughout the Turkish dominions the wife can be dismissed by a word in the presence of witnesses, simply because the man no longer wants her. This helpless inferiority of woman is fatal to all progress. Perhaps no single precept of Christ has done more to establish or to make possible a higher civilization than this which settles the sanctity of the marriage tie on the original divine intention of man's creation.

7. Here was a case in which to recognize 'Moses' as final was to put a bar across the development of humanity. Deut. xxiv. 1-4, which in its time was a restraint on the unchartered freedom of the husband, became a fatal limitation to the emancipation of woman.

8. This instance of treating the Mosaic Law as provisional, a concession to the spiritual hardness of Israel, leads to a general principle by which Christ's higher law supersedes the old. It gives us the key to the whole treatment of the earlier religion. There is a 'hardness of heart' (Deut. x. 16; cf. Sir. xvi. 10) which has always to be allowed for in primitive institutions. The race has to be fed with milk before it can stand strong meat. Nor must we assume that this 'hardness of heart' is altogether removed now, or that the Lord has not more light and truth to

¹ Some ancient authorities read *saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress*: as in ch. v. 32.

² The following words, to

from the beginning it hath not been so. And I 9 say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, ¹ except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: ² and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery. The 10 disciples say unto him, If the case of the man is so with his wife, it is not expedient to marry. But he said unto them, All men cannot receive 11 this saying, but they to whom it is given. For 12

break forth from His word. In a sense, the principle of development is secured in the word of God itself, as this passage well shows. Whatever moral or spiritual limitation there may be in our principles of conduct or religion, 'from the beginning it was not so.' In God's high ideal, however dimly it may be revealed, or however weak our faculties may be to perceive it, the ultimate perfection is already expressed. And this lofty teaching of our Lord, bringing out an unsuspected meaning from the familiar words of Genesis (i. 27, ii. 24), is typical of the transforming revelation which runs through all that He did and said.

9. The single exception to the prohibition of divorce is repeated from v. 32. The counterpart on the wife's side is given in Mark x. 12.

10-12. A chance remark of the disciples gives occasion for a mysterious injunction, which seems rather to detract from the high honour just placed upon marriage. But a quiet and impartial meditation on the words makes all clear. The disciples think it is better not to marry at all, if a man cannot get rid of his wife without sin. Jesus gives no opinion on this, but He takes up the remark 'not expedient to marry', and explains that there are some people who do better not to marry, people 'to whom it is given'. He does not suggest that the unmarried are ever better than the married; that would indeed be to contradict ver. 4. But for some, marriage is not appointed, because they are incapable of it from birth; others are prevented by the action of men; and there are others who deny themselves the comfort and the joy of marriage in order to serve God. This was what He did Himself. Paul also was a eunuch in that sense (1 Cor. vii. 7). With such examples, supported by Paul's argument in 1 Cor. vii, and by the statement in Rev. xiv. 4, it is not surprising that some have exalted the state of virginity above that of the married relation. But whenever we are tempted to do this on the authority of Christ or of Paul, we should reread these verses 4-9, and Paul's commentary on them (Eph. v. 24-33). It will be seen

there are eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb : and there are eunuchs, which were made eunuchs by men : and there are eunuchs, which made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.

the end of the verse, are omitted by some ancient authorities.

- 13 Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should lay his hands on them,
 14 and pray : and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me : for of such is the
 15 kingdom of heaven. And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence.

that the idea of discrediting marriage in the name of Christianity is the suggestion of seducing spirits, the doctrine of devils (1 Tim. iv. 3).

13-15. THE CHILDREN. Remembering the relation of this chapter to the idea of the Church, we cannot hesitate to see that the Church is a Christian nursery, in which the tendency of the disciples to despise the little ones is corrected by Christ's own loving interest and welcome of them.

13. As the parents are not mentioned here (see Mark x. 13-16 ; Luke xviii. 15-17), but a passive verb is used, the impression is left, that the disciples rebuked the children themselves, rather than those who brought them (Mark x. 48). And this is borne out by the next verse, where Jesus says 'forbid them not'. We infer, therefore, that the children, with the trustful love which is natural to them, pressed towards Him and sought His touch. Mark x. 15 had been introduced at Matt. xviii. 3.

14. Keble saw the beauty of the children's trust in One so intrinsically great and perfect :

Then as each fond unconscious child
 On the everlasting Parent sweetly smiled,
 Like infants sporting on the shore,
 That tremble not at ocean's boundless roar.

of such is the kingdom of heaven. Here we pass again from the child to the childlike, the transition which we observed in xviii. 1-6. In the Kingdom of Heaven, the reign of God over men, everything is a Fatherhood eliciting the lowly, dutiful, and adoring devotion of children.

15. We miss the greater tenderness of Mark's description

- And behold, one came to him and said, ¹⁶
¹ Or, *Teacher*
² Some ancient authorities read *Good Master*. See Mark x. 17; Luke xviii. 18.
³ Some ancient
- Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, ¹⁷
³ Why askest thou me concerning that which is good? One there is who is good: but if thou wouldest enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which? And Jesus ¹⁸
 said, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not commit

(x. 16). On the other hand, Matthew explains the blessing and laying on of the hands, by suggesting that He prayed for them (ver. 13). John xvii has taught us what His prayers for His little flock are like.

16-30. PROPERTY. Next to the question of wife and children, the most important practical regulation in the Church is that on property. The Lord's teaching on this subject, given in vi. 19-34, is further enforced by a characteristic incident. The point of the incident is this: worldly possessions may obtain such a hold over even a well-intentioned mind, that wealth will be a real hindrance to living the life of filial obedience to God. In the case of this rich young ruler (Luke xviii. 18) the whole danger is laid bare. His great possessions were an idol (Covetousness, which is idolatry, Col. iii. 5). The suggestion of surrendering this idol showed him his own heart; notwithstanding all his other good purposes he was the servant of Mammon.

The duty of surrendering and following Jesus at all costs is fully brought out, on the one hand, by the young ruler's failure to fulfil the test (ver. 22), and on the other hand, by the surrender which the Twelve had made (ver. 29).

16. The rendering of the R. V. here relieves us from the discussion of the question which arises if Jesus said, 'Why callest thou me Good?' As the conversation stands, the question of the ruler, 'What good thing should I do?' is met by the question of Jesus, 'Why askest thou me concerning that which is good?' The brief assertion that God is good implies that 'no good in creatures can be found'. Earthly possessions are not really 'goods'. Even a correct morality does not yet deserve the epithet. One is the good, even God.

17. Putting aside, then, the discussion of the Good, Jesus says that to enter into life you must keep the commandments.

18. *Which?* Rather 'which kind of commandments'? There were so many and of such various kinds in the Law; some estimated them at 419. No one, it was thought, had ever kept them all. Indeed, it was said that if any Jew even for one day completely kept the whole Law, Messiah would come. When,

- adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not
 19 bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy
 mother : and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as
 20 thyself. The young man saith unto him, All
 these things have I observed : what lack I yet ?
 21 Jesus said unto him, If thou wouldest be perfect,
 go, sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and
 thou shalt have treasure in heaven : and come,
 22 follow me. But when the young man heard the
 saying, he went away sorrowful : for he was one
 that had great possessions.

authorities read
Why callest thou me good? None is good save one, even God. See Mark x. 18; Luke xviii. 19.

however, the ruler found that Jesus was referring to the second table of the Decalogue, and the duty to one's neighbour (Lev. xix. 18) he felt that he was on firm ground. These commandments at least he had kept. If the young man was a malcontent with Rabbinical teaching, we may suppose him to have been greatly relieved to find a Teacher who laid the whole stress on the moral law.

21. Matthew does not tell us how Christ's love was kindled to this irreproachable young man (see Mark x. 21). If Jesus loved him, He showed His love by a stern severity. He showed it indeed by offering him a counsel of perfection : 'If thou wouldest be perfect.' The tone is like ver. 12, as if there were an excellence not of obligation but of choice. Out of this has grown the Church doctrine of voluntary Poverty. St. Francis married this austere wife in obedience to the word of Jesus. And who can doubt the virtue of his obedience? The corrupted monastic Orders, with their vast accumulations of wealth, must not blind our eyes to the sincerity and virtue of the early founders. Jesus certainly implies that some men, of aspiring soul, are called to a complete surrender of property, and to a vocation of personal service to Himself.

22. If the narrative ended here we should conclude that the young ruler had refused the highest, and yet by his obedience to the lower laws of morality, had entered into life. But the discourse of Jesus which follows shows us the inwardness of the situation. That sorrowful refusal was indeed the surrender of every high ideal ; it was the refusal to follow Christ ; it marked the man's failure to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. For him at any rate the rejection of the best proved to be the loss of the good. When we are confronted with the highest, and decline it, we sink swiftly and surely.

And Jesus said unto his disciples, Verily I ²³ say unto you, It is hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say ²⁴ unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. And when the disciples ²⁵ heard it, they were astonished exceedingly, saying, Who then can be saved? And Jesus looking ²⁶ upon *them* said to them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

23. The 'verily I say unto you' (and so ver. 28) marks a special emphasis in the speech of Jesus. The emphasis is increased by the repetition of ver. 24. It is not only hard, it is impossible; for the strong image of the camel and the needle's eye must be accepted as it stands. There is no authority for thinking of a postern-gate in the wall of Jerusalem called 'The needle's eye'. Of course, ver. 26 modifies the impossibility. But Jesus states in the broadest, strongest way the antagonism between money, and the love of it, Mammon, to use His own word, and God. We should let His clear and searching thought have its full effect on us. The degradation and misery caused, especially in England and in America, by the wild pursuit of wealth, more than justifies Christ's strongest language. The possession of property, when men are dying of poverty, is an obvious breach of the law of Love, which no casuistry can excuse. As Emerson says in his serene way: 'Of course, while another man has no land, my title to mine, your title to yours, is at once vitiated' (*Man the Reformer*). Let us not endeavour to gloze the teaching of our Lord. It is a fact that there are myriads to-day who are excluded from Heaven, and the Heavenly kingdom, simply by having great possessions; and their one hope would lie in selling all that they have, in giving to the poor, and in coming to follow Jesus.

26. *looking upon them*. The word implies a searching, pitying gaze. The disciples were amazed and bewildered. The habit of property is ingrained. And as riches is only a question of degree, they had the readiness to observe that a fortune of £20 may be as dangerous as a fortune of £20,000. It cannot be the amount of the riches that constitutes the danger; the danger must lie in the fact and sense of possession itself.

Christ here states the only remedy for possessions, the only way by which riches, great or small, can cease to bar the entrance to the Kingdom of Heaven. It is to let God in, and to let Him work. If God has complete control, and if He is recognized as

- 27 Then answered Peter and said unto him, Lo, we have left all, and followed thee ; what then shall
 28 we have? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes
 29 of Israel. And every one that hath left houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother,¹ or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive ² a hundredfold, and shall inherit eternal

¹ Many ancient authorities add *or wife*: as in Luke xviii. 29.
² Some ancient authorities read *manifold*.

the only Good, goods are no longer dangerous. As His stewards we can use what He entrusts to us. But when we mistake stewardship for ownership, and with the conviction 'What's mine 's mine', lose all conscience in the possession of property, as this young man had, it proves to be our spiritual ruin. Well may we seek to use this Mammon of unrighteousness to make to ourselves friends, that when we fail they may receive us into eternal habitations.

27. The Twelve had left their poor bits of things, which to them were riches.

28. Their reward is great. Jesus is the King: they shall be as Princes (see Luke xxii. 30). This is an echo of words used in the Rabbinical schools; cf. Midr. Tanchuma ed. Buber. Vay xxxvi. 6: 'What mean the thrones (Dan. vii. 9)? One day God will be seated, and the angels will give thrones to the great ones of Israel that they too may sit, while God sits among them as president of the court of justice, and thus they judge the peoples of the world.' Christ's disciples take the place of 'the great ones of Israel'.

The *Regeneration* is used here in a new and special sense. Josephus (*Antiq.* xi. 66) uses the word of the restoration after the Exile; Philo uses it of the recovery of the earth after the Flood (*Vita Mos.* ii. 12), and of restoration after fire (*de Mundo* 15). But here it evidently means the Messianic days, when Christ's reign shall be established.

We may conjecture that the fulfilment of the promise is found in the part which the Apostles had in the foundation of the Church. But there may be a function of the Twelve in relation to Israel yet to be revealed (cf. Jas. i. i).

29. This rich promise is repeatedly proved true in experience. The fellowship and mutual helpfulness of Christians make up for all the sacrifices incurred in accepting and confessing Christ.

life. But many shall be last *that are* first ; and 30
 first *that are* last. For the kingdom of heaven 20
 is like unto a man that is a householder, which
 went out early in the morning to hire labourers

30. This reversal of present conditions in the future is illustrated by the parable which follows (xx. 16). It is one of the most searching sayings of Jesus. The Dives of earth will be the Lazarus of heaven. The persecuted followers of Jesus will shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. It is His way to divert our attention from present and material conditions, to the future, and to things of the Spirit. But for the moment the rebuke is to His disciples.

CHAP. XX. THE TRAINING OF THE TWELVE CONTINUES. Their Lord is walking consciously to death (ver. 17-19, 28) ; they are thinking which shall be greatest, set on their own aggrandisement, and quarreling about the faults in others which are manifest in themselves. He trains them by a parable : by His example in giving His own life ; by His compassionate care for the blind men.

1-16. THE PARABLE OF THE HOURS. This is only given by Matthew. It follows immediately on the claim of the disciples to special privilege because of their special devotion. The key to the meaning is in xix. 27: 'We have left all and followed thee; what, then, shall we have?' They shall have, as He said, full recognition; at the same time they must not expect exclusive pre-eminence, for in the Kingdom of God's grace the last may be made equal to them. The saying, xix. 30, repeated at xx. 16, in a slightly different form, gives as clearly as possible the meaning of the parable. The disciples could not have misunderstood it; they were the labourers hired in the early morning, and the stipulated reward would be theirs; but they must be prepared for others, hired later, to be made equal with them by the grace of the Lord, and they must take care that their eye should not be evil, because His was good. What need there was of this blunt teaching, is shown by the selfish ambition of James and John exhibited soon after. The Lord could not cure them by teaching, but only by suffering and dying for them. It was much easier to open the eyes of the two blind beggars at Jericho than to open the spiritual eyes of the two sons of Zebedee.

As the meaning of the parable is clear, the difficulties of the story, taken merely as a story, melt away. If it were an apologue to show how we are to act in hiring and paying labourers, it would be unjust. Ruskin's use of the phrase, 'Unto this last,' to expound his new political economy, is only legitimate if we remember that the parable has no such intentional teaching. It does not even intend to show Christ's sympathy with the unemployed, and His wish to give them work. The first principle of interpreting

2 into his vineyard. And when he had agreed
 with the labourers for a ¹penny a day, he sent
 3 them into his vineyard. And he went out about
 the third hour, and saw others standing in the
 4 marketplace idle; and to them he said, Go ye
 also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I

¹ See
 marginal
 note on
 ch. xviii.
 28.

parables is to seize the central truth which is to be illustrated, and to avoid pressing the incidents, which are merely the colouring of draping of the tale. Possibly no employer ever behaved like this 'householder', it is not right that any one should. God, the great Householder, acts in a way which results from His being God and not man. His way of grace is to give His gifts to men on a large principle of His own, which will humble the pride of those who think they are specially deserving, and surprise with unexpected favour those who think they deserve little. His plan greatly reverses human judgements, putting many who seemed first last, and *vice versa*. To bring home this fact our Lord constructs a story, not such as happened, but such as may suggest the singular attitude of God to us all, an attitude which is necessarily different from ours to one another. As we read the parable we may try to interpret it in the light of the general drift which the context makes plain.

1. To conceive of the Kingdom of God as a vineyard would seem natural to men who knew the Old Testament, e. g. Isa. v; Jer. ii. 21; Ps. lxxx. 8-16. Christ is the Householder, and the vineyard which He cultivates is the world; the labourers are His disciples whom He hires for the vintage.

a man that is a householder. This idiom is both Hebrew and Greek; cf. xviii. 23, xxii. 2; Luke xxiv. 19; Lev. xxi. 9 (a man a priest); Judges vi. 8 (marg.).

At the time of vintage labourers are all too few for the work; the master therefore goes out early to get the men He wants. The Twelve were this first draft of labourers.

2. *a penny a day.* If we said a franc it would give us a better notion of what is meant, for the drachma (or Latin *denarius*) was about the value of a franc. But to understand fully we should translate the word by the average labourer's wage at any given time. The drachma of that time (see Tobit v. 14) would be the equivalent of 5s. to-day. What is the interpretation of the drachma? It is the Lord's 'Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord'.

3. This was at six o'clock; at nine, at twelve, at three o'clock, he hired more. It is a long day; the vintage is great, and the labourers are few. He summons them age after age to the great service.

will give you. And they went their way. Again 5
 he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour,
 and did likewise. And about the eleventh *hour* 6
 he went out, and found others standing; and he
 saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day
 idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath 7
 hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into
 the vineyard. And when even was come, the 8
 lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call
 the labourers, and pay them their hire, beginning
 from the last unto the first. And when they came 9
 that *were hired* about the eleventh hour, they
 received every man a ¹ penny. And when the 10
 first came, they supposed that they would receive
 more; and they likewise received every man a
¹ penny. And when they received it, they mur- 11
 mured against the householder, saying, These 12
 last have spent *but* one hour, and thou hast made
 them equal unto us, which have borne the burden
 of the day and the ² scorching heat. But he 13
 answered and said to one of them, Friend, I do
 thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me

¹ See
 marginal
 note on
 ch. xviii.
 28.

² Or,
hot wind

6. At length the day declines, and the end is near. It is five o'clock, and the work will stop at six. Christ in that last hour is still employing His servants, and promising them the great reward.

8. The evening comes, and the labourers are paid. By an accident the last hired are paid first. Now here comes the application of the story: will the Twelve, the first disciples, come, and expect something more, because they were the first called. Shall they point to the later generations of Christ's servants and say: 'These have made but one hour; wilt thou make them equal with us who toiled from the beginning?'

No, let them be warned. Christ has quite other thoughts. Let them not desire great things for themselves, and grudge against their later brethren. The Lord's rich payment, being the gift of grace, is the same for all.

14 for a ¹ penny? Take up that which is thine, and
 go thy way; it is my will to give unto this last,
 15 even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do
 what I will with mine own? or is thine eye evil,
 16 because I am good? So the last shall be first,
 and the first last.

¹ See
 marginal
 note on
 ch. xviii.
 28.

17 And as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he
 took the twelve disciples apart, and in the way he
 18 said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem;
 and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the
 chief priests and scribes; and they shall condemn
 19 him to death, and shall deliver him unto the
 Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify;
 and the third day he shall be raised up.

20 Then came to him the mother of the sons of
 Zebedee with her sons, worshipping *him*, and
 21 asking a certain thing of him. And he said unto
 her, What wouldest thou? She saith unto him,

15. *good*, i. e. generous. More than just (Rom. v. 7). The Twelve, as we see in ver. 20-8. did not understand at the time, but perhaps afterwards they did; for no one ever claimed less than these apostles. They said nothing about their pre-eminence. The doctrine of apostolic succession never came from them; they never sought to be princes, or to lord it over the flock of God. The subsequent modesty and insignificance of the Twelve in the Testament are the best commentary on this parable.

17-19. The disciples thought of thrones (xix. 28), their Lord of the Cross. This is the third formal announcement of His death (see xvi. 21, xvii. 22). It is more explicit than the other two. The Gentiles are now to have a part in the murder; the mocking, scourging and crucifying are foreseen. But there is the reiteration of the rising on the third day. Mark is here more vivid (x. 32).

20-8. The way to eminence in Christ's kingdom is the way He took Himself, viz. the Cross, and giving His life a ransom for many.

20. The mother of the sons of Zebedee was Salome (Mark xvi. 1). She was evidently travelling up with the disciples to Jerusalem (xxvii. 56).

Command that these my two sons may sit, one on thy right hand, and one on thy left hand, in thy kingdom. But Jesus answered and said, Ye ²² know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink the cup that I am about to drink? They say unto him, We are able. He saith unto them, My cup ²³ indeed ye shall drink: but to sit on my right hand, and on *my* left hand, is not mine to give, but *it is for them* for whom it hath been prepared of my Father. And when the ten heard it, they ²⁴ were moved with indignation concerning the two brethren. But Jesus called them unto him, and ²⁵

21. *thy kingdom*: she realized then that He was King: cf. xvi. 28, with Mark ix. 1; Luke ix. 27. In Mark x. 35 the ambitious request is preferred by James and John themselves. The demand of a mother is pardonable. But the presumption of the men themselves was not. The two important places in the coming reign of Christ were demanded, as Eastern courtiers are always intriguing for themselves. The deluded men imagine that Christ's kingdom is like that of a Cæsar, or a Pharaoh or a Sultan. But how gentle is Christ's answer!

22. The principle of ennoblement in His kingdom is sacrifice. Can they drink the cup? It is an expression to describe sometimes blessing (Ps. xvi. 5, xxiii. 5, cxvi. 13; Jer. xvi. 7), sometimes ill (Ps. lxxv. 8; John xviii. 11; Rev. xiv. 10). Christ is thinking of His own bitter cup of suffering (John xviii. 11). Did the two think He was referring to His cup of joy? (Ps. xvi. 5). The aplomb of their answer is incredible, if they knew what it meant.

23. They drank His cup, James by martyrdom (Acts xii. 1, 2), and John, if tradition is to be trusted, by banishment and torture, and the long weary waiting for the end. But the place of honour at His right hand is determined only by the Father. Thrones are for the fit. For the idea of the preparation of the theocracy cf. xxii. 4, 8, xxv. 34. They are won by waiting and toil and devotion. We may fancy that the Father had prepared it for one of those presumptuous men—the disciple whom Jesus loved; after long years of discipline perhaps the author of the Fourth Gospel might share with Paul the thrones of honour in Christ's kingdom. But if so Christ would not anticipate, or pledge Himself. For the present the wholesome word was, 'the last shall be first and the first last.'

said, Ye know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise
 26 authority over them. Not so shall it be among
 you : but whosoever would become great among
 27 you shall be your ¹ minister ; and whosoever
 would be first among you shall be your ² servant :
 28 even as the Son of man came not to be ministered
 unto, but to minister, and to give his life
 a ransom for many.

29 And as they went out from Jericho, a great
 30 multitude followed him. And behold, two blind

¹ Or,
servant
² Gr. *bond-servant*.

25. *lord it.* For the expression see Gen. i. 28 ; Ps. lxxii. 8 ; and especially 1 Pet. v. 3. In Christ's kingdom there is no lording except His ; no authority of one man over another, but only Christ's authority over all. That is rather startling in view of the history of the Church, and the prelacy and papacy which some think inseparable from it. But this verse, with the serene majesty of eternal birth, stands as the touchstone of Church history. The Lord knows them that are His ; by the aid of this verse we may partly know also.

26. The servant, or minister, is the only officer allowed in the Church.

28. The model is Christ Himself, 'in the form of a servant,' giving His life a ransom for many (Phil. ii. 8).

To understand the 'ransom' is to dive into the depths of the atonement. Go back to xvii. 27. The half-shekel was a ransom, paid, as Jesus says 'in place of thee and me' (see Exod. xxx. 12). So in the spiritual, and infinite sense, Christ's life was given 'in place of many'. The illustration is inadequate ; every illustration is inadequate. Nothing in the world or in human life interprets this unique fact, which yet these disciples recorded, and used as the means of saving the world, that Christ gave his life, a ransom for men. In vain we try to press the metaphor and determine to whom the ransom was paid, or what precisely it was. He died, He gave Himself, absolutely and fully ; and in that self-giving was the potency of saving all men ; this is the fact to which He refers as the example to be followed by the disciples. He asked of the world a cross to die on. His true followers will prefer a similar request. Not to be exalted, but to minister, to suffer, and to save, is their object.

29-34. Have the eyes of James and John been opened? AS SYMBOL OF THE FACT THAT THEY WILL BE, THE TWO BLIND BEGGARS

men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying, Lord, have mercy on us, thou son of David. And the multitude rebuked them, that they 31 should hold their peace : but they cried out the more, saying, Lord, have mercy on us, thou son of David. And Jesus stood still, and called 32 them, and said, What will ye that I should do unto you? They say unto him, Lord, that our 33 eyes may be opened. And Jesus, being moved 34 with compassion, touched their eyes: and straightway they received their sight, and followed him.

And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, 21 and came unto Bethphage, unto the mount of

OF JERICHO ARE HEALED. In ix. 27 already two blind men have been cured. Mark and Luke mention only one here. Wellhausen thinks that Matthew has put together one healed at Bethsaida and one healed at Jericho. But the duplication is not so artful. Thinking of the two blind brothers James and John, the evangelist has unconsciously represented the blind Bartimæus of Mark as two.

30. *thou son of David*, that is, Messias (ix. 27, xii. 23, xv. 22, xxi. 9, 15). There were evidently many who began to think of Him as Messias.

was passing by. There is a favourable moment when He comes within reach of the needy soul. Seize that moment. Cry out to Him again and again. Let not the officious crowd silence you. He has compassion.

34. The moving of Christ's compassionate heart (ix. 36, xiv. 14, xv. 32) is the great hope of men. If Christ has for us the value of God, and God pities in the same way, there is hope for all. Even the blind may receive their sight and follow Him.

CH. XXI. THE REBEL CITY. The King approaches His city—or His vineyard—to be rejected and slain by His own. This theme is worked out in ; (1) The entrance on the ass's foal, in accordance with prophecy (1-11). (2) The symbolical cleansing of the Temple, with the indignant protests of the chief priests and elders (12-32); in the middle of this episode is inserted the withering of the fig-tree, which is a sign (18-22). (3) The parable which shows how the rebel husbandmen receive their Lord (33-46). Almost every verse of the chapter deepens the

Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying unto
 2 them, Go into the village that is over against
 you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied,
 and a colt with her: loose *them*, and bring *them*
 3 unto me. And if any one say aught unto you,
 ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and
 4 straightway he will send them. Now this is come
 to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was
 spoken ¹ by the prophet, saying,
 5 Tell ye the daughter of Zion,
 Behold, thy King cometh unto thee,

¹ Or,
through

impression of the tragedy, that He should come unto His own, and His own should receive Him not.

I-II. THE ENTRANCE INTO THE CITY. It was the first day of the week, the tenth of Nisan, the day on which the lamb was set apart for the sacrifice on the fourteenth. But the thought of Jesus was not on the sacrificial side so much as on the prophetic coming of the King to claim His own. It was Zech. ix. 9 that was in His mind as the keynote of His entry into Jerusalem; and Malachi iii with its cleansing of Temple and Levite, rather than the regulations of Leviticus and the slaying of the lamb. This latter thought is hinted at in ver. 38, 39, but it only acquires predominance later in the week. For the moment Jerusalem is to be told: 'Behold thy King cometh unto thee.'

1. *Bethphage*. The house of Figs, as Bethany (ver. 17) is the house of Dates. The latter still is, the former is not, discoverable, but it must have been on the east of the Mount of Olives, about where the Inn of the Twelve Apostles stands to-day.

2. In this unknown village stood the ass with the colt, that should serve to fulfil the prophecy of Zech. ix. The other evangelists only mention the foal; Matthew's eyes, as usual, were more upon the prophet's words than on the details of fact.

3. The Lord's exact knowledge of what would happen is to be noted as an illustration of the clairvoyant condition of His mind at this momentous crisis of approaching fate.

The Lord. This title then was accepted in the apostolic circle; cf. xxiv. 42. In xxvi. 18 it is Teacher.

4. The prophecy was very wonderful. Israel's king was to come not on a war-horse, as a conqueror, but in the simple guise of a rustic. In the days of the Judges asses were ridden by kings' sons; but in the later growth of luxury the great rode only on horses.

Meek, and riding upon an ass,
 And upon a colt the foal of an ass.
 And the disciples went, and did even as Jesus 6
 appointed them, and brought the ass, and the 7
 colt, and put on them their garments; and he
 sat thereon. And the most part of the multitude 8
 spread their garments in the way; and others
 cut branches from the trees, and spread them in
 the way. And the multitudes that went before 9
 him, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna
 to the son of David: Blessed *is* he that cometh

5. *meek*. It was easy to get the ass to ride on, but the harder part of the prophecy was to get a ruler who was meek. This Jesus was (xi. 29).

7. There was no saddle; the garments of the disciples served instead.

thereon. In the Greek it looks as if He rode both ass and foal; but perhaps the plural (happily evaded by the English 'thereon') refers to the garments. Matthew does not mention the point which to Mark and Luke is significant, that the ass was one on which no one had ever ridden before.

8. The multitude, most of whom spread their garments before the humble beast (the homage paid to a king, 2 Kings ix. 13, in the crowning of Jehu), others of whom cut the tree branches for a like demonstration, was evidently the pilgrim company from Galilee, and not the people of Jerusalem. For the credit of our common humanity, we trust it was not the same crowd that on the 10th cried 'Hosanna', and on the 14th 'Crucify Him'.

9. *Hosanna*. In Hebrew 'Save now' (see Ps. cxviii. 25, 26). They are singing part of the great Hallel, the Passover-song; but they give to Jesus the Messianic title, 'Son of David,' or perhaps it would be safer to say, in view of Mark xi. 9 and Luke xix. 37, that the clause 'to the Son of David' is Matthew's own comment, telling us that the Psalm originally addressed to the Lord, was now directed to His Messiah. The evangelist cites the cry Hosanna, without thinking of its meaning in Hebrew, as a mere cry of greeting, 'Hail,' and follows it with the dative. So it is in The Teaching of the Twelve, x. 6, 'hosannah to the God of David.' From this Dalman concludes precariously that the author of the Gospel was not a Hebraist, and, therefore, not the apostle (*Words of Jesus*, p. 221). But even English and German writers often use words in forgetfulness of their original meaning.

in the name of the Lord ; Hosanna in the high-
 10 est. And when he was come into Jerusalem, all
 11 the city was stirred, saying, Who is this? And
 the multitudes said, This is the prophet, Jesus,
 from Nazareth of Galilee.

12 And Jesus entered into the temple ¹ of God, ^{1 Many ancient authorities omit of God.}
 and cast out all them that sold and bought in
 the temple, and overthrew the tables of the
 money-changers, and the seats of them that sold

Hosanna in the highest. So Mark also, but in Luke, 'in heaven peace and glory in the highest.' The highest means heaven. As Bengel quaintly says, the angels at His birth sang 'peace on earth', the people at His death sing 'peace in heaven'. But we must not press too closely these shouts of the multitude.

Entering, it is thought, by that gate in the Eastern wall, which is now shut, and only to be reopened when Jerusalem's final conqueror comes, Jesus stirs the whole city. The people rush out to see, and to ask who is coming; and the Pilgrims answer. It is Jesus the prophet.

the city was stirred. The verb is the one used of the movement of an earthquake. It marks the shock of doom in His coming. For this impression, cf. the strong words in John xii. 6-19.

12-32. HE CLEANSSES THE TEMPLE. In the Fourth Gospel this cleansing is put at the beginning of the ministry before Jesus went to Galilee (ii. 13-17). The Synoptics place it at the first coming to Jerusalem which they record. The exact time is of less importance than the spiritual significance. It is the fulfilment of the prophetic announcement of Mal. iii. The mind of Jesus was seething with the words of the prophets, as ver. 13 shows. The entry shows His conscious mastery of Temple and cultus.

12. There was a constant market in or near the Temple, in rows of Tabernæ (shops), where the animals for the sacrifices were sold, and change was given for the requisite Temple tribute (Exod. xxx. 13; Lev. i. 14, v. 7, xii. 8; Deut. xiv. 24-6). The zeal of Jesus was kindled by the intrusion of this traffic into the sacred precincts of the Temple itself. It was a symbol to Him of the ambition and greed of the chief priests and elders, who under the plea of Divine service, were seeking their own aggrandizement. And this in spite of the professed reverence for the Temple. 'What is the reverence due to the Temple?' asked the rabbis. And the answer was, 'That none go through the court of it with his staff and shoes and purse, and dust upon his feet, and that

the doves ; and he saith unto them, It is written, 13
 My house shall be called a house of prayer : but
 ye make it a den of robbers. And the blind 14
 and the lame came to him in the temple : and
 he healed them. But when the chief priests and 15
 the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did,
 and the children that were crying in the temple
 and saying, Hosanna to the son of David ; they
 were moved with indignation, and said unto him, 16
 Hearest thou what these are saying ? And Jesus
 saith unto them, Yea : did ye never read, Out of
 the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast per-
 fected praise ? And he left them, and went forth 17
 out of the city to Bethany, and lodged there.

Now in the morning as he returned to the 18

none make it a common thoroughfare, or let any of his spittle fall upon it.'

13. The prophetic words are from Isa. lvi. 7 (LXX) and Jerem. vii. 11. It is noteworthy that the Pharisees did not dispute the cleansing, however indignant it made them ; but took exception to the healing and to the cry of the children ! From Mark xi. 17 it seems that the multitude were deeply impressed by the lofty doctrine which cleansed the Temple.

14. This healing is mentioned only by Matthew. Cf. xiv. 14, xix. 2.

15. *the children.* In Luke xix. 39 the children are the disciples. Jesus certainly called His disciples 'children', and it is more natural to suppose that this praise came from disciples than from children ; but the exquisite answer of Jesus from Ps. viii. 2 allows us to believe that the very children recognized their King.

From the lips of the children, then, Jesus accepts the title of Messiah. They at least will not misunderstand and read into it a worldly meaning.

16. *perfected praise.* This is the Greek of the LXX. Ps. viii. 3. In the Hebrew it is 'established strength'. This indiscriminate use in the New Testament of the Hebrew or the different Greek version, as may be most suitable, is a warning against the crude theory of verbal inspiration.

17. *lodged there,* i. e. bivouacked in the open. The same word in Luke xxi. 37. Hence the hunger in the morning, which would have been avoided in the house.

19 city, he hungered. And seeing ¹a fig tree by ¹Oi.
the way side, he came to it, and found nothing ^{a single}
thereon, but leaves only; and he saith unto it,
Let there be no fruit from thee henceforward for
ever. And immediately the fig tree withered
20 away. And when the disciples saw it, they mar-
velled, saying, How did the fig tree immediately
21 wither away? And Jesus answered and said
unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have
faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do what is
done to the fig tree, but even if ye shall say unto
this mountain, Be thou taken up and cast into the
22 sea, it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever
ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.
23 And when he was come into the temple, the

18. THE BARREN FIG-TREE IS A SYMBOL OF JERUSALEM. He came expecting fruit and found none. The doom of Jerusalem, therefore, was, to be fruitless for ever. Some think that this parable has been inadvertently transformed into an actual occurrence. But it is more likely that the Lord pointed the moral of a striking event which actually occurred. Matthew represents the tree as withering immediately. But in Mark (xi. 21) we see that the withering took place gradually during the day and night. He did not 'curse it', as Peter says. He said, 'Let there be no fruit from thee for ever,' and there was none. He made a tree fruitless, to bring home to His disciples the doom of Jerusalem.

In the fruitful vale of Capernaum the figs bore fruit ten months out of the twelve. The leaves of the fig come out after the fruit. The expectation of fruit, therefore, was natural, though, as the reviser of Mark says, 'the time of figs was not yet' (xi. 13).

Nature is all a parable, and Jesus was always conscious of this co-operation of the natural world with His spiritual purpose.

20. The striking event gives occasion for a reiteration of the vast power of faith and prayer (see xvii. 21). No Eastern hearer would make the mistake of supposing the words about the mountain to be literal. It is a hyperbolic expression to describe 'a mountain of difficulty', an apparent impossibility. The warning is needed for the literal and unimaginative Western mind.

22. The different form of this saying in Mark (xi. 24) brings out more fully the part of believing in the answer to prayer (John xvi. 23).

chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority? And Jesus answered and ²⁴ said unto them, I also will ask you one ¹question, which if ye tell me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism ²⁵ of John, whence was it? from heaven or from men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why then did ye not believe him? But ²⁶ if we shall say, From men; we fear the multitude; for all hold John as a prophet. And they ²⁷ answered Jesus, and said, We know not. He also said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things. But what think ye? ²⁸ A man had two sons; and he came to the first,

¹ Gr.
word.

^{23.} *these things.* Hardly the withering of the fig-tree, but the teaching and healing in the Temple (Mark i. 22-27). There is no explicit reference to the cleansing of the Temple, though that was the chief irritant.

When He asked them about the baptism of John, He hoped that they would acknowledge that prophet, and then He would show how His own authority was connected with John. But when He saw the dishonesty and cowardice which made them silent about John, He declined to defend His claim to minds so feeble and vicious. And this shows the connexion with the succeeding parable. The two sons are the chief priests and the elders on the one hand, and the common people on the other. He shows by the effect of John's preaching on the two classes, how the publicans and harlots did the will of the Father better than the religious leaders; He even (as it seems) compels their assent to this judgement.

^{25.} *from heaven* (i. e. God) *or from men.* Cf. John iii. 7, 27, 31, xix. 11, and Jas. i. 17, iii. 15.

^{28-32.} THE PARABLE OF THE TWO SONS. Only in Matthew. Usually in Matthew God is Master and the men are servants. Here the Master is Father, as in Luke's parables.

This is the first of three parables showing the doom which impends over the Jewish nation (xxi. 28-xxii. 14).

and said, ¹ Son, go work to-day in the vineyard. ¹ Gr. *Child.*
 29 And he answered and said, I will not : but after-
 30 ward he repented himself, and went. And he
 came to the second, and said likewise. And
 he answered and said, I go, sir : and went not.
 31 Whether of the twain did the will of his father ?
 They say, The first. Jesus saith unto them,
 Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and
 the harlots go into the kingdom of God before
 32 you. For John came unto you in the way of
 righteousness, and ye believed him not : but the
 publicans and the harlots believed him : and ye,
 when ye saw it, did not even repent yourselves
 afterward, that ye might believe him.
 33 Hear another parable : There was a man that
 was a householder, which planted a vineyard,
 and set a hedge about it, and digged a winepress

31. Strangely enough some MSS. make the answer 'the last', and imply that the chief priests and elders, perceiving that the parable was spoken against them, ironically declared that the son who said he would go and did not was the better ! But it is more probable that a slight confusion has occurred in the order ; and the admission was made (for was it not a truism ?) that the son who refused in word, and yet did the commandment, did the will of his father.

The publicans (or Roman tax-collectors like Zacchæus, and the harlots (like the woman who was a sinner in Luke vii. 37-50) represented to the Jew of the time the worst and most abandoned of the population. Yet, while these repented at the preaching of John, the chief priests and elders were so little impressed, that to the question as to the source of John's baptism, they could only answer, 'we know not.'

33-46. THEN COMES THE GREAT PARABLE WHICH LAYS BARE THE WHOLE AGE-LONG INIQUITY OF REBELLIOUS ISRAEL, ASSERTS UNEQUIVOCALLY THE DIVINITY OF JESUS, AND DECLARES THE DOOM OF THE NATION WHICH REJECTS ITS KING AND MESSIAS.

33. The vineyard is Israel, as in Isa. v. 1-7, where these details of the vine-culture are given. Six years was the time for a newly-planted vineyard to rest before the grapes were allowed to ripen.

in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into another country. And when 34 the season of the fruits drew near, he sent his ¹ servants to the husbandmen, to receive ² his fruits. And the husbandmen took his ¹ servants, 35 and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other ¹ servants more 36 than the first: and they did unto them in like manner. But afterward he sent unto them his 37 son, saying, They will reverence my son. But 38 the husbandmen, when they saw the son, said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and take his inheritance. And they 39 took him, and cast him forth out of the vineyard, and killed him. When therefore the lord of the 40 vineyard shall come, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will 41 miserably destroy those miserable men, and will let out the vineyard unto other husbandmen,

¹ Gr. *bond-servants*.

² Or, *the fruits of it*

35. The servants are the prophets. Luke does not refer to the killing of the prophets. But 2 Chron. xxiv. 21 mentions the stoning of one, Zechariah.

37. *his son*. Jesus could not by any image make it plainer that the difference between Himself and even the greatest of the prophets is expressed by the difference between a son and a servant. It is a singular blindness which refuses to recognize in this Christ's claim to divinity. In Mark (xii. 6), probably the original of the saying, the claim is still more explicit, and corresponds with John iii. 16.

39. *out of the vineyard*. Golgotha, just outside the city walls. *and killed him*. They wished instead of servants to be lords: the root of all sin is rebellion; the *ego* usurps the place of God.

41. In Matthew this judgement is extracted from the lips of the guilty parties. But in Mark (xii. 9) and Luke (xx. 16), Jesus gives the verdict Himself. The saying *κακούς κακῶς ἀπολέσει* is quite in the spirit of the classic drama. It is well rendered in R.V.

- which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.
- 42 Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures,
 The stone which the builders rejected,
 The same was made the head of the corner :
 This was from the Lord,
 And it is marvellous in our eyes?
- 43 Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.
- 44 ¹ And he that falleth on this stone shall be broken to pieces : but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will
- 45 scatter him as dust. And when the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them. And when they sought to lay hold on him, they feared the multitudes, because they took him for a prophet.
- 22 And Jesus answered and spake again in 2 parables unto them, saying, The kingdom of

¹ Some ancient authorities omit ver. 44.

42. The quotation from Ps. cxviii. 22 3 solemnly connects the rejection of Himself with a prophetic voice out of the Scriptures, and brings home to the chief priests their guilt from the authority which they most respected. This use of Scripture is overwhelming.

43. The threat is only in Matthew. The rejection of Israel is recorded by the most Hebraic of the four evangelists.

44. The stumbling on the stone (Isa. viii. 15). But the stone crushing those on whom it falls is from Dan. ii. 34-5 (cf. Zech. xii. 3).

45. The chapter is finely summed up. He has spoken His word against the chief priests and elders; they have not been able to evade it; but the common people still receive Him gladly, and the plot against Him must be carried out by subtlety, lest the people should be provoked. The guilty son, who said 'I go', and went not, becomes the rebel, the assassin of his rightful lord. That is the course of human depravity.

CH. xxii. JESUS IS IN THE CITY TO BE OFFERED, BUT HE MAKES IT CLEAR THAT HE IS THERE TO JUDGE IT TOO. The doom is after all not His, but the city's. This chapter and the next contain

heaven is likened unto a certain king, which made a marriage feast for his son, and sent forth his ¹ servants to call them that were bidden to the marriage feast: and they would not come.

¹ Gr.
bond-
servants.

His judgement on the Jewish authorities, the Sanhedrists, Scribes and Pharisees, Chief Priests and Sadducees, Herodians, elders, the whole body of interested men, who were blind to His claims, the opponents of His truth. In chap. xxiv the doom of the city itself is pronounced.

The present chapter might be entitled, not the Rejection of Jesus, though that is the apparent theme, but the Rejection of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

From this point of view, the meaning of the Parable of the King's Supper is made clear, and the closing comment of ver. 14 is found to be a key to the whole, 'many'—viz. all Israel—'are called, but few'—viz. simple people who recognized and received Jesus—'are chosen' (cf. John i. 11-13).

1-14. THE PARABLE OF THE KING'S SUPPER. The similar parable in Luke xiv. 15-21 must be allowed to stand by itself. The points of difference are too great to permit the two to interpret each other. Here the whole point is that a King makes the Feast, so that they who refused to come are not only rude, but rebels (ver. 7). It is a Marriage-feast, which probably means that the heir-apparent is by it recognized as the King's colleague. Thus Jesus is making an implicit claim for Himself; He is the King's son, and they who reject Him reject God. Thus the significant episode of the guest without the wedding-garment, which does not seem to bear directly on the main purpose of the parable (and is wanting in Luke), is all-important as a sign of the nature of the Kingdom which Jesus would establish on the ruins of Judaism. This parable is a fellow to that of the labourers in the vineyard (xxi. 33). There God demands, here He only gives. There the punishment falls on evildoers, here it also falls on those who decline the good (ver. 5 and 12). There the governing classes of Jerusalem alone were in view; here all mankind.

2. *a marriage feast.* The word is plural, like 'nuptials', for the feast, according to Eastern custom, lasted seven days.

3. *them that were bidden* by a previous notice. They are now royally summoned, and perhaps escorted to the banquet (see Esther vi. 14). 1 Thess. ii. 12 uses this language of God inviting us to His kingdom. The Rabbis pictured the 'age to come' as a banquet, to which the righteous are invited. These bidden guests are Israel, that chosen people whose whole history had tended to this point, who existed in the world to be the nucleus of the Kingdom of God.

4 Again he sent forth other ¹ servants, saying, Tell ¹ Gr.
 them that are bidden, Behold, I have made ^{bond-}
 ready my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are ^{servants.}
 5 marriage feast. But they made light of it, and
 went their ways, one to his own farm, another
 6 to his merchandise: and the rest laid hold on
 his ¹ servants, and entreated them shamefully,
 7 and killed them. But the king was wroth; and
 he sent his armies, and destroyed those mur-
 8 derers, and burned their city. Then saith he to
 his ¹ servants, The wedding is ready, but they

and they would not come. This was the meaning of the hostility which confronted Jesus in Jerusalem.

4. *other servants.* These stand for the apostolic messengers after Christ's ascension. They are able to issue the invitation with fuller details—'all things are ready', (cf. xx. 23)—and with more pressing eagerness, 'come to the marriage-feast.'

The bulls and the stall-beasts prepared show the greatness of the feast. It is indeed the whole of humanity which is invited to the table of God. This is Christ's conception of His gospel; it is an invitation, to the Jew first, and afterwards to the Gentile, 'to sit at endless feast, enjoying each the other's good.'

This 'divine philosophy is not harsh or crabbed as dull fools suppose,' it is a call to the highest good, which all men in a purblind way are seeking, to that good cheer which men love, but find so disappointing when it ministers only to the bodily appetites.

5. This is Christ's view of the Jewish world in which He was working. They were all too busy with their lands and their business to attend to God or their own souls.

6. The indifference, manifest in most, kindles in some to a bitter hostility; they hate the messengers of love, the servants of the King who call them to the feast.

They who would save men take their lives in their hands.

7. The language is coloured by the fate which overtook Jerusalem in A. D. 70.

his armies. The armies of Titus were God's armies, just as the Assyrian of old was called 'the rod of his anger' (Isa. x. 5). But the doom which fell on Jerusalem in A. D. 70 awaits all mankind who reject the invitation of God.

8. Because the Jews were not worthy, the invitation goes out

that were bidden were not worthy. Go ye there- 9
fore unto the partings of the highways, and as
many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage feast.
And those ¹ servants went out into the highways, 10
and gathered together all as many as they found,
both bad and good : and the wedding was filled
with guests. But when the king came in to be- 11
hold the guests, he saw there a man which had
not on a wedding-garment ; and he saith unto
him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not 12
having a wedding-garment ? And he was speech-

¹ Gr.
bond-
servants.

to the whole world ; 'the highways' of the world, with the mingled good and bad upon them, mean all and sundry, every human soul.

9. *partings of the highways.* If this were the meaning of *διέξοδος*, it would be appropriate to quote Ezek. xxi. 21, where a different Greek phrase occurs in the LXX. But the word is more likely intended to describe the 'through roads which enter a city and go out on the other side'. All the indiscriminate multitude of a capital town is invited. Quickly are the King's tables filled in this way.

10. *guests*, lit. of those reclining at the table as in viii. 11.

11. But now Jesus shows that the universal invitation does not mean that men can come to the feast of God without a genuine fitness. The imagery is taken from Zeph. i. 7, 8: 'Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord God: for the day of the Lord is at hand: for the Lord hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath sanctified his guests. And it shall come to pass in the day of the Lord's sacrifice, that I will punish the princes, and the king's sons, and all such as are clothed with foreign apparel.'

An Eastern magnate gives garments to his guests (Gen. xlv. 22: cf. 2 Kings v. 22; Isa. lxi. 10).

12. This guest thought his own work-a-day clothes good enough, and declined the festal robe. When his unsuitable attire was observed by the royal host, he was dumbfounded. He was ejected into the dark street.

What is the interpretation of the wedding garment? It is spiritual fitness for heaven. But it is clear that the apostles understood it to be the righteousness of God by faith in Christ Jesus. And Paul speaks of 'putting on the Lord Jesus' as a garment. Though all men are invited to the Feast of God, only they who can stand His inspection will remain at the banquet ;

- 13 less. Then the king said to the ¹servants, Bind ¹Or, *ministers*
 him hand and foot, and cast him out into the
 outer darkness ; there shall be the weeping and
 14 gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few
 chosen.
 15 Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel
 16 how they might ensnare him in *his* talk. And they
 send to him their disciples, with the Herodians,

and only they who are regenerated by faith in Jesus can stand His inspection. All this New Testament truth grows naturally out of our Lord's own parable.

13. *the weeping and gnashing of teeth.* See viii. 12, xiii. 42, 50, xxiv. 51, xxv. 30; Luke xiii. 25. A modern traveller in Palestine, Furrer, narrates an experience of hearing 'the howling and teeth-grinding of hungry wolves', which, he thinks, explains the image. But the weeping and despair are the remorse of those who have rejected the invitation of God, or in their pride and self-confidence have elected to appear in their own righteousness instead of in His.

14. The many called (i. e. invited, ver. 3, 8; 1 Thess. ii. 12) and few chosen, which has crept into some MSS. at xx. 16 quite inappropriately, is suitable enough here. All are invited to the Feast of God, first the Jews and then the Gentiles; but many refuse point-blank, and others presume to come on the strength of their own merit; and thus those who finally sit down at His board are few. What sadness in His tone!

15-22. THE DIALECTICAL VICTORY OVER THE PHARISEES AND HERODIANS.

These attempts of the authorities to entangle Jesus in talk, insignificant in themselves, are priceless to us, because they elicited two of His greatest utterances, and led Him to propound a question to them, which is of far-reaching value. The question of the nationalists educed the principle that the kingdom of God completely overrides all political conditions. Whatever may be the national state in which men are called to live, they may be God's subjects and render to Him His due. This great thought, struck out by the subtle question of adversaries, remains a charter of Christian liberty.

16. *Herodians.* The men who saw in the kingship of the house of Herod a certain degree of home-rule and independence for the Jews. They resented the Roman suzerainty. The conviction held in common with the Pharisees united the two groups in this question. The insincerity of their words to Jesus is obvious; this from the men who represented Him as actuated by Satan!

¹ Or,
Teacher

saying, ¹ Master, we know that thou art true, and
teachest the way of God in truth, and carest not
for any one: for thou regardest not the person
of men. Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? ¹⁷
Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?
But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, ¹⁸
Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Shew me the ¹⁹
tribute money. And they brought unto him a
² penny. And he saith unto them, Whose is this ²⁰
image and superscription? They say unto him, ²¹
Cæsar's. Then saith he unto them, Render
therefore unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's;
and unto God the things that are God's. And ²²
when they heard it, they marvelled, and left him,
and went their way.

² See
marginal
note on
ch. xviii.
28.

On that day there came to him Sadducees, ²³
³ which say that there is no resurrection: and

³ Gr.
saying.

Master: rather *Teacher* (so ver. 24).

17. The trap was skilfully laid. Should He say, 'It is lawful,' He is denounced as unpatriotic. Should He say, 'It is not lawful,' He is denounced to Rome as a rebel.

18. They were amazed at the ease with which a lofty nature, that takes refuge in eternal things, evades the false issues of time.

19. The denarius bore the stamp of the emperor. Clearly it belonged to him, and must be paid to him. The reply was irresistible. But the added principle, 'unto God the things that are God's,' suddenly lifts the soul out of the realm of politics into that of religion.

Deut. xvii. 15 certainly forbade the payment of tribute to a foreign king. But that same Deuteronomy foretold the punishment which had now actually fallen on guilty Israel. Caesar's yoke was the predicted penalty, and now Jews must pay tribute as a point of political justice. But the true Kingdom of God interpenetrates and overrides all lordships of men. Give God His due, and all will be right, whether you live in a constitutional country like England, or in an irresponsible despotism like Turkey. It is not the rule of foreigners over the nation, but the rule of all ungodly powers in the inner life of man, that the sovereignty of God aims at removing.

23-33. THE DIALECTICAL VICTORY OVER THE SADDUCEES.

- 24 they asked him, saying, ¹ Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother ² shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.
- 25 Now there were with us seven brethren : and the first married and deceased, and having no seed
- 26 left his wife unto his brother ; in like manner the second also, and the third, unto the ³ seventh.
- 27 And after them all the woman died. In the
- 28 resurrection therefore whose wife shall she be
- 29 of the seven? for they all had her. But Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.
- 30 For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as angels ⁴ in

¹ Or, Teacher
² Gr. shall perform the duty of a husband's brother to his wife.
 Compare Deut. xxv. 5.
³ Gr. seven.
⁴ Many ancient authorities add of God.

The Sadducees denied not only the resurrection but the existence of spirits (see Acts xxiii. 7).

24. Like all unspiritual men these questioners are grotesque and silly, when they attempt to deal with eternal things. The puzzle they propound was answered even by the Talmudists, who said that in the resurrection the wife would belong to the first husband.

The law of levirate marriage is in Deut. xxv. 5 ; the word 'raise up seed unto his brother' is used in Gen. xxxviii. 8. The regulation for preserving a family in the event of a man's early death prevailed among many Semitic tribes.

28. What a crude, materialistic mind it is which would see in this circumstantial difficulty a disproof of resurrection! The Power that can raise the dead, can surely settle incidental difficulties.

29. We cannot cite any passage of Scripture, to ignorance of which Jesus here refers. But the scriptural argument employed in ver. 31 shows them how little they, who deny the survival of the soul after death, can really believe even the Pentateuch. The ignorance of the power of God is still more disastrous. Can men be said to believe in God at all, who do not believe that He is the God of the living, and able to raise the dead?

30. This statement is common sense. Birth, death, marriage, are incidents of the present life. Beings that are immortal are no longer subject to these incidents. In heaven are spirits who were not born and will not die. They who attain to the heavenly state, 'sons of the resurrection' (Luke xx. 36), will be *ἰσάγγελοι*,

heaven. But as touching the resurrection of the ³¹ dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of ³² Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not *the God* of the dead, but of the living. And when the multitudes heard ³³ it, they were astonished at his teaching.

But the Pharisees, when they heard that he ³⁴ had put the Sadducees to silence, gathered themselves together. And one of them, a lawyer, ³⁵ asked him a question, tempting him, ¹ Master, ³⁶ which is the great commandment in the law? And he said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord ³⁷ thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul,

¹ Or,
Teacher

equal to the angels. The spiritual mind can easily see this. But the Sadducees were not spiritual; for them an argument must be brought from the Pentateuch.

31. They are referred to Exod. iii. 6. When God describes Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, does He mean merely that He was their God while they lived—the God who let them live and let them die and pass out of being? That would make Him, not God, but the master of a puppet-show, who plays with His human puppets and then destroys them. Is that the God in whom the Sadducees believe?

By this startling and convincing argument Jesus shows that men who deny the resurrection deny God; for the God that remains to thought, if His creatures perish, is a mere arbitrary creator, and not a Being who enters into moral and spiritual relations with men.

33. No wonder the multitude were astonished. The argument was not only crushing to the questioners; it is convincing for all time.

34-40. THE DIALECTICAL VICTORY OVER A LAWYER.

35. *a lawyer*, i. e. a scribe learned in the Jewish law. In Mark xii. 28-34 the questioner does not 'tempt' Him, but comes as an honest inquirer, who approves the Lord's answer and is pronounced to be not far from the Kingdom of Heaven. But with whatever motive the question was put, the answer is invaluable.

37. This passage from Deut. vi. 5 was, and still is, uttered by every pious Jew twice every day. The second commandment is from Lev. xix. 18. Keeping within the limits of Judaism Jesus shows that the sum of religion is there. The innumerable com-

- 38 and with all thy mind. This is the great and
 39 first commandment. ¹ And a second like *unto it* ¹ Or, *And a second is like unto it, Thou shalt love &c.*
 is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.
 40 On these two commandments hangeth the whole
 law, and the prophets.
 41 Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, saying,
 42 What think ye of the Christ? whose son is he?
 43 They say unto him, *The son* of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in the Spirit call him Lord, saying,

mandments must be unified, reduced to a common principle. For while a law consists of countless details it is a letter which kills. A spirit which gives life to it must be found. This spirit the Rabbis never could find. Jesus found it in the Law which was before their eyes.

40. Religion is not to be found in *deeds*, which are far too varied and manifold to be estimated, but in a certain affection of the soul. That affection is Love; love to God, love to men. The love of God must proceed from all that is within (Ps. ciii. 1), affections, will, and mind; and it must be first, because only as a man is right with God can he be right with men; nor can a man give to any creature what he ought to give to God

This simplification of the Law, that to love one's neighbour is to keep the whole law, plays a great part in St. Paul's exposition of the fulfilment of the Law in Christ (Gal. v. 14).

41-6. CHRIST'S OWN UNANSWERABLE QUESTION.

Jesus has now allowed Himself to be called Messiah (xx. 30, xxi. 15). But He cannot claim the title till men understand it. And how little the Scribes and Pharisees understood it, is shown by this passage. They were all agreed that Messiah (Christ) would be the Son of David. They were also as exegetes accustomed to say that Ps. cx referred to Him. But they had not followed out the implication of their own teaching. David calls Messiah, according to their teaching, 'my Lord.' This involved the idea that the Messiah would be superior to David; not in worldly state—that was scarcely possible—but in intrinsic nature. The paradox of Messianic expectation was resolved by the coming of Jesus; a descendant of David, according to the flesh, is yet the Lord from heaven. No, this reading of their own Messianic lore, was beyond them. They were henceforth silenced.

43. *in the Spirit*, i. e. the Holy Spirit (Mark xii. 36).

The Lord said unto my Lord, 44
 Sit thou on my right hand,
 Till I put thine enemies underneath thy feet?
 If David then calleth him Lord, how is he his 45
 son? And no one was able to answer him a 46
 word, neither durst any man from that day forth
 ask him any more questions.

Then spake Jesus to the multitudes and to his 23
 disciples, saying, The scribes and the Pharisees 2
 sit on Moses' seat : all things therefore whatso- 3

Critics maintain now that Ps. cx was written long after David's time, perhaps in 143 B. C., to celebrate Simon the Maccabee. But this has no bearing on the passage before us. Jesus uses the psalm as the Pharisees understood it. He argues from their interpretation of it. Even if the psalm was not written by David, and if neither the Jews nor Jesus knew what the critics affirm, the argument would lose nothing of its weight. Jesus does not base His claim on the psalm ; He only shows these men that their own Messianic doctrine implicitly supported His claim.

CH. xxiii. THE DENUNCIATIONS OF JESUS.

First Jesus passes judgement on the religious leaders of Jerusalem ; then He turns to them and delivers the sentence. The judgement on them gives occasion to describe afresh what He wishes His disciples to be (ver. 1-12). The sentence to them is contained in Seven Woes, and ends with a tender lament over Jerusalem, which was led astray by their hypocrisies (ver. 13-39).

This great and fiery discourse is represented in Mark and Luke by two verses only (Mark xii. 38-40 ; Luke xx. 45-7), from which a sentence was foisted into the text of Matthew (ver. 14), omitted by the R. V. (see margin). But Luke gives much of the same material at the table of the Pharisee (xi. 37-52). Matthew alone records the commendation of the authority of the Scribes with which the passage opens (ver. 1-3 a).

1-12. The character and temper of the Scribes (and Pharisees, in Matthew only) are contrasted with what Jesus demands in His own disciples. Thus the passage becomes a test for Christian ministers in all time. We must be careful not to limit the rebuke to the Scribes and Pharisees of that day ; rather we must consider whether it applies to ourselves. He is no respecter of persons.

1. *the multitudes and to his disciples.* An inner ring of disciples, an outer ring of the people, and beyond, the Scribes and Pharisees fuming with indignation at the preacher.

2. We do not know in what sense the Pharisees sat in Moses'

ever they bid you, *these* do and observe : but do not ye after their works ; for they say, and do
 4 not. Yea, they bind heavy burdens¹ and grievous
 to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders ;
 but they themselves will not move them with
 5 their finger. But all their works they do for to
 be seen of men : for they make broad their
 phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of *their*
 6 *garments*, and love the chief place at feasts, and
 7 the chief seats in the synagogues, and the salutations in the marketplaces, and to be called of

¹ Many ancient authorities omit and *grievous to be borne*.

seat. But the scribes, as the official guardians and interpreters of the Mosaic Law, deserve respect just as the clergy do to-day. It was customary to stand to read the Law and to sit to expound it (Luke iv. 16, 20).

sit. It is rather 'sate', as if their authority were of the past. Grammarians, however, tell us that it is the gnomic aorist, and means 'are wont to sit'.

3. Christ seems here to admit the idea of teachers, or clergy, who have authority as interpreters of truth, and yet not character to illustrate the truth. But the term of the sentence at ver. 8 implies that, while that anomaly was tolerable under the old law, it could not be tolerated in His economy.

4. They bind together as sheaves heavy back-loads of rules, like men who lay burdens on asses, but will not carry them with their fingers.

5. While they do none of the real works of the Law, they lay immense stress on the external acts which may give a repute for piety.

phylacteries, lit. 'keepers,' boxes in which were kept parchment strips inscribed with texts, such as Exod. xiii. 1-10, 11-16 ; Deut. vi. 4-10, xi. 13-22. The boxes were bound on the forehead or on the left arm near the heart. The bigger the box the more striking the piety. This shows the danger of distinctive dress for ministers and religious persons ; so easily it acquires the motive 'to be seen of men'.

enlarge the borders of their garments. Num. xv. 37-40 : the fringes were originally intended to remind the wearer of the commandments. Now they are used to remind the beholder of the wearer's religion.

6. They covet honour, popularity, and recognition of their authority.

¹ Gr. *the heavenly.*

² Gr. *greater.*

³ Or, *minister*

⁴ Gr. *before.*

⁵ Some authorities insert here, or after ver. 12, ver. 14

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows'

men, Rabbi. But be not ye called Rabbi: for 8 one is your teacher, and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father on the earth: for 9 one is your Father, ¹ which is in heaven. Neither 10 be ye called masters: for one is your master, *even* the Christ. But he that is ² greatest among 11 you shall be your ³ servant. And whosoever 12 shall exalt himself shall be humbled; and whosoever shall humble himself shall be exalted.

But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, 13 hypocrites! because ye shut the kingdom of heaven ⁴ against men: for ye enter not in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering in to enter.⁵

Rabbi, 'my master,' almost exactly the equivalent of Monsignore. It was a title for the scribe, which had but lately come into vogue; but see Dalman, *Words of Jesus*, 332.

8. Jesus forbids His disciples to be called Monsignore or the like. There is but one Teacher in Christendom, Himself. All disciples are brethren, and none may lord it over the rest.

9. Jesus forbids His disciples to be called Father, Padre, or Pope. There is but one Father. Abba, i. e. Father, applied as a name to certain Jews, e. g. Abba Chikiya, c. 50 A. D. But the Targum corrects 'My Father' in 2 Kings ii. 12, v. 13, vi. 21, &c.

10. Jesus forbids them to be called master, or guide; because He is the ever-present and all-sufficient Leader. Rabbi, pater, ductor (Bengel) is an ascending order. It is strange that the Church allows the titles which her Lord forbade.

11. Jesus bids His disciples to be called ministers (i. e. servants), and makes humility the sole clerical attire.

God many a spiritual house has reared, but never one
Where lowliness was not placed first, the corner-stone.

(Trench.)

13-33. THE SEVEN WOES AGAINST UNFAITHFUL MINISTERS.

13. FIRST WOE. They shut the kingdom of heaven in the face of men, by taking their place at the gate and demanding attention to themselves. 'They take away the key of knowledge' (Luke xi. 52), forbidding the laity to think or to inquire. And they never enter in themselves, for their dogma is as dead to them as to the people.

- 15 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is become so, ye make him twofold more a son of ¹hell than yourselves.
- 16 Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the ²temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold
- 17 of the ²temple, he is ³a debtor. Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the ²temple that hath sanctified the gold? And,
- 18 Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gift that is
- 19 upon it, he is ³a debtor. Ye blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth
- 20 the gift? He therefore that sweareth by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon.

houses, even while for a pretence ye make long prayers: therefore ye shall receive greater condemnation.
 See Mark xii. 40; Luke xx. 47.
¹ Gr. Gehenna.
² Or, sanctuary: as in ver. 35.
³ Or, bound by his oath

15. THE SECOND WOE (no parallel in Luke). Utterly incompetent for spiritual functions, they are yet eager to exercise them. Their anxiety to proselytize is wonderful; for their proselytes become more the sons of Gehenna than themselves; we expect 'than before', but the expression 'than yourselves' is as striking as it is startling.

16-22. THE THIRD WOE (this is only in Matthew). They make a Jesuitical casuistry, which allows one sin by damning another. The principle they invented was that the special form of the commandment is more binding than the general, the gold of the temple is more sacred than the temple, the gift than the altar; thus an oath by the temple, or by the altar or by heaven was not binding, while an oath by the gold, or the gift or the God, was. Some think the gold meant the Corban set apart for sacred use (xv. 5). This casuistry is hateful to simple minds, and Christ condemns it. Temple and altar and heaven are the same as gold and gift and God. There is but One. All swearing is forbidden.¹ Simple truth is the sole law in God's world.

¹ Cf. Martial, xi. 94. 7:

Ecce, negas iurasque mihi per templa Tonantis
 Non credo; iura, verpe, per Anchialum.

¹ Or, *sanc-* And he that sweareth by the ¹ temple, sweareth ²¹
tuary: by it, and by him that dwelleth therein. And ²²
 as in ver. 35. he that sweareth by the heaven, sweareth by the
 throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypo- ²³
² Or, crites ! for ye tithe mint and ² anise and cummin,
dill and have left undone the weightier matters of
 the law, judgement, and mercy, and faith: but
 these ye ought to have done, and not to have
 left the other undone. Ye blind guides, which ²⁴
 strain out the gnat, and swallow the camel.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypo- ²⁵
 crites ! for ye cleanse the outside of the cup and
 of the platter, but within they are full from ex-

23. THE FOURTH WOE. They lay stress on ceremonial trifles, but the all-important truths of religion they neglect. The mint, anise (or dill), and cummin are small herbs used for food or medicine. It was a Rabbinical refinement to tithe these at all. Jesus, however, allows the tithing, but denounces the blindness which attends to the trifle and neglects the essential. See Lev. xxvii. 30.

judgement, mercy, and faith. In Luke xi. 42, 'judgement and the love of God.' Possibly mercy and love are to be traced to the same Aramaic word. Jesus has in mind the great saying of Mic. vi. 6-8. Faith is here the equivalent of 'walking humbly with God', or it may be of 'the love of God', in Luke xi. 42; it stands for inward and spiritual religion as contrasted with formalism.

24. They strained out the gnat lest they should swallow in their wine an unclean creature, forbidden in Lev. xi. 10, 23, 41, 42. The camel was also unclean (Lev. xi. 4). The monstrous iniquity of injustice, hardness, and equivocation they greedily gulp down.

25. THE FIFTH WOE. They clean the outside and neglect the inside. The form of expression is determined by the idea of a full cup or a full dish being treated as the whole, the symbol of a man. The outside is the cup or the platter; the inside is the drink or the meat. Ceremonial religion lays the stress on correctness of form, ritual, sacrament, church building. Christ lays all the stress on the heart, the intent, the character. In Luke xi. 41 the cleansing is characteristically identified with gifts of mercy.

26 tortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first the inside of the cup and of the platter, that the outside thereof may become clean also.

27 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear beautiful, but inwardly are full of dead men's bones, and of all unclean-
28 ness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but inwardly ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

29 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and garnish the tombs of the righteous,
30 and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we should not have been partakers with
31 them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye witness to yourselves, that ye are sons of them
32 that slew the prophets. Fill ye up then the

26. In Luke xi. 41 'give alms' instead of 'cleanse'. In Hebrew צי might mean either. This, therefore, is a striking indication of the Aramaic in which Jesus probably spoke. (Dalman, *Words of Jesus*, p. 63.)

27. SIXTH WOE. They are like whited sepulchres, fair without, foul within. Jesus had in view Ps. v. 9, 'their throat is an open sepulchre' (cf. Rom. iii. 13). The tombs were whitewashed every Passover, that men might not contract ceremonial defilement by unwittingly touching them. The men who so scrupulously avoided the contact with tombs are themselves tombs! In Luke xi. 44 they are described as hidden sepulchres (unwhited) on which men walk unconsciously and are defiled.

29-33. THE SEVENTH WOE. They show reverence for dead prophets, but always hate and crucify the living prophet; in the valley of Jehoshaphat are the tombs of the prophets, kept with the utmost reverence. The language which they use shows their lineage; they are the descendants of the prophet-slayers; the obeisance to the tombs implies no change of disposition. They must do after their nature and proceed to kill and crucify the Prophet speaking to them.

measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye of- 33
spring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judge-
ment of ¹ hell? Therefore, behold, I send unto 34
¹ Gr. *Gehenna.* you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: some
of them shall ye kill and crucify; and some of
them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and
persecute from city to city: that upon you may 35
come all the righteous blood shed on the earth,
from the blood of Abel the righteous unto the
blood of Zachariah son of Barachiah, whom ye
slew between the sanctuary and the altar. Verily 36

34. *behold, I send unto you.* Jesus turns from the past to the future, and the denunciation becomes a prophecy. In Luke xi. 49 the words are referred to 'the Wisdom of God', and seem intended to be a quotation from an unknown Scripture. But Jesus thinks of Himself as the Wisdom of God, under the image of Prov. viii. He is the Wisdom that is justified of her children (1 Cor. i. 29). Perhaps He conceives Himself speaking before the beginning of history; or perhaps He is only looking forward from the historical point at which He stood; in which means by 'prophets, wise men, and scribes' His own apostles and evangelists (see Luke xi. 49, prophets and apostles). See on xiii. 52.

35. There is an accumulation of guilt, and a generation which expiates the sins of centuries. So it was in the French Revolution, so it is in the Russian Revolution. The generation which rejected Jesus incurred the piled-up vengeance of a thousand rebellious years.

Abel to Zechariah, covers the history of the Old Testament, which began with Genesis and ended with Chronicles. The difficulty is that Zechariah in 2 Chron. xxiv. 20-1 is not the son of Barachiah. On the other hand, the prophet Zechariah in the Canon is so designated (Zech. i. 1). It is not necessary to complicate the interpretation by bringing in Zechariah son of Bariscæus, who was killed by the Romans in A. D. 67, a generation later (Josephus, *Bell. Iud.* iv. 335); nor does it help, to refer to the tomb of Zechariah with its Ionic pillars in the valley of Jehoshaphat. The evangelist, in writing Zechariah, inadvertently slipped in 'son of Barachiah', or perhaps a later hand slipped it in, for it is wanting in the important uncial \aleph , and the Gospel of the Hebrews reads 'son of Jehoiada'.

I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

38 Behold, your house is left unto you ¹ desolate.

39 For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

¹ Some ancient authorities omit *desolate*.

36. Jesus foresaw very clearly the tragedy of the fall of Jerusalem in A. D. 70.

37-9. THE LAST WORDS OF JESUS IN THE TEMPLE. The name Jerusalem is here in the Hebrew form, as in Luke, but not elsewhere in Matthew. The tenderness of the address is only equalled by the certainty of the doom. This holy city, like the Babylon of Revelation, is chiefly distinguished in God's eyes by the blood of prophets and saints that she had shed.

The homely figure of the hen gathering her chickens under her wing is prepared in the constant usage of the Old Testament. But in Deut. xxxii. 11 the Lord is compared to an eagle. See Ruth ii. 12, 'the Lord, under whose wings thou art come to take refuge'; so Ps. xvii. 8, xxxvi. 7, lxi. 4, lxiii. 7, xci. 4. Compare how the swallow shelters in God (Ps. lxxxiv. 4). See the beautiful image in Isa. xxxi. 5, and finally the noble image of Mal. iv. 2. In Jesus the grandeur of the simile melts into homeliness, as becomes 'the Son of Man'.

38. This desolation of indefinite prolongation shows that Jesus did not think of His second coming as following soon on His departure.

your house, i. e. the city itself. It is still 'desolate', in spite of the 60,000 obscure Jews who inhabit it. They gather at the wall of wailing and lament its desolation continually. They have not yet learnt to say 'Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord'. Will they ever say it, or do the words of ver. 39 mean that they will not see Him henceforth, because they will never be prepared with the words of welcome? Paul believed that the Jews would be ingathered; but the language of Jesus over the city which knew not the day of her visitation is more unrelieved. We know not what the future has in store, but hitherto the denunciation of Jesus seems to hold; and Paul's optimism seems to be the

And Jesus went out from the temple, and ²⁴ was going on his way ; and his disciples came to him to shew him the buildings of the temple.

colouring of his own passionate patriotism and love of his kinsmen according to the flesh.

CH. XXIV. THE APOCALYPTIC DISCOURSE.

The suggestion (of Weizsäcker and others) that a Jewish apocalypse is here introduced and modified in a Christian sense, is incapable of proof ; and as it yields no fruit of the Spirit, it may be disregarded. The undoubted difficulty of the passage, however, must be met, or the mental confusion may destroy the religious teaching. The difficulty is this : the Second Coming is announced as within that generation (ver. 34) ; for the expedient of making *γενεά* mean, not a generation, but the Jewish people, or the human race, is so forced and improbable, and we may add insipid, that it rather suggests doubt than strengthens faith. There are two alternatives for dealing with the difficulty ; either Jesus was mistaken in forecasting His advent as near instead of distant, or the evangelist is mistaken in the arrangement of the *λόγια* of the Lord. The former alternative has been eagerly seized to illustrate what is called the *κένωσις* of the Son of God in entering the world, and to show that during His life Jesus was ignorant of much which concerned Himself. And certainly ver. 36 supports this view. We certainly know that the speedy return of the Lord was expected in the Apostolic age (Acts i. 11, and the earliest epistles of Paul, viz. 1 and 2 Thess.). But the delay in His coming was foreshadowed even by Jesus Himself (ver. 48). And it presents a very grave objection to the foreknowledge of the seer if the 'these things' of ver. 34 includes the parousia of ver. 30. The second alternative, therefore, should be tried, and relied on, by preference. It is more probable that the evangelist made a wrong arrangement of his material than that Jesus declared that He would come again within that generation. We have seen all through the Gospel that Matthew worked on the principle of putting together all the material of one kind. And it is very likely, therefore, that he would put together in these two chapters (xxiv and xxv) all the sayings of our Lord which forecast the future. The comparison with Luke indeed shows that he has done this ; for what is here given as a single discourse is found in fragments distributed over at least three different occasions in Luke xii, xvii, and xxi. Luke distinguishes between the prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem and the prophecy of the end of the world. But in Matthew the two are inextricably intertwined. Luke's distinctness of language in ch. xxi has led to the conclusion that when he wrote the destruction of Jerusalem (A. D. 70) was a fact of history, while Matthew was writing before the event.

The clue, then, for interpretation, is this : Matthew has grouped

2 But he answered and said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

3 And as he sat on the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign of thy ¹ coming, and of ² the end of

¹ Gr. *presence.*
² Or, *the consummation of the age*

together all the references of Jesus to the future, which he found in his collection of sayings, with the result that the events of that generation, culminating in the fall of Jerusalem, are mixed up with the things which were to come after, the return of Jesus and the end of the world. This conflation makes a grand and impressive passage for our instruction and our warning; but it demands a little patience to disentangle the two strands, of which it is composed, and the frank recognition that the evangelist when he wrote fully believed that the Second Coming and the end of all things would take place within that generation.

With this proviso we may study the discourse as it stands.

1, 2. *Jesus went out from the temple.* He never entered it again. As He left it, God departed from it, and left it to its appointed doom.

The disciples might well call attention to its magnificence. The stones were in many instances forty cubits long and the pillars monoliths twenty-five cubits high, says Josephus (*Bell. Jud.* v. 5. 6). It appeared, as one approached from a distance, like a snow mountain topped with golden pinnacles. Complete as the ruin was, the great substructures of the Temple still stand, like a gigantic crypt, light and airy, solid as the rock. But, of course, the building itself disappeared as Jesus foretold.

3. The little party crossed the valley of Jehoshaphat and sat on the Mount of Olives looking back over the city—one of the finest sights in the world even now.

privately. This is a common phrase in Matt. xiv. 13, 23, xvii. 1, 19, xx. 17. The form of the question shows that the disciples, and therefore Matthew, supposed that the destruction of the Temple, the Lord's coming, and the end of the world, were all closely connected in time. The answering discourse reflects the mistake of the question.

what shall be the sign? answered ver. 30.

coming. That is, parousia (in Luke xxiii. 42 ἐρχεσθαι,¹ coming),

¹ A recognized Messianic phrase derived from Mal. iii. 1, Zech. xiv. 5, Dan. vii. 13 (LXX), cf. ὁ ἐρχόμενος, Matt. xi. 3. For Jesus it is *reditus* rather than *adventus*.

the world? And Jesus answered and said unto 4 them, Take heed that no man lead you astray. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am 5 the Christ; and shall lead many astray. And 6 ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for *these things* must needs come to pass; but the end is not yet. For 7 nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines and earthquakes in divers places. But all these 8 things are the beginning of travail. Then shall 9 they deliver you up unto tribulation, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all the nations

a word used four times in this chapter (ver. 27, 37, 39), but not elsewhere in the Gospels. Paul uses it often (1 Thess. ii. 19, &c.); so do James, Peter, and John. It means 'presence' rather than coming.

the end of the world, the phrase which Jesus Himself employed (xiii. 39, 49), the conclusion of the current world epoch (differently expressed in Mark xiii. 4; Luke xxi. 7).

4. The danger of delusion on the subject of prophecy and its interpretation occupies the Lord's attention first (so Mark xiii. 5; Luke xxi. 8). The warning against credulity precedes the call to watchfulness.

5-14. ver. 5-8 almost identical in Mark xiii. 6-9 and Luke xxi. 8-11. The forecast of the false Christs (ver. 24), like Simon the son of Gioras, and John of Giscala, who appeared at the time of the fall of Jerusalem and after, the announcement of wars at hand and at a distance, and all the incidents of earthly calamity, the warning of persecution, already given in the charge to the Twelve (x. 17-22); the assurance that the end is not yet (ver. 6), but shall come when the Gospel has been preached to the whole world, form a clear and connected passage, distinctly tracing the course of future events to a distant end, far beyond the present generation.

5. The expectation of a Messias coming was the first incentive to war with Rome, as Josephus shows (*Bell. Jud.* vi. 54).

9. *deliver . . . up*. The word is suitable in Mark xiii. 9, where only Sanhedrims and Synagogues are in question, but when the more general 'tribulation' is used, and the hatred of all nations succeeds to the Jewish persecution, the word must be widened and deepened in meaning.

- 10 for my name's sake. And then shall many
 stumble, and shall deliver up one another, and
 11 shall hate one another. And many false prophets
 12 shall arise, and shall lead many astray. And
 because iniquity shall be multiplied, the love of
 13 the many shall wax cold. But he that endureth
 14 to the end, the same shall be saved. And ¹ this ¹ Or, *these*
 gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the ^{good}
 whole ² world for a testimony unto all the nations ; ^{tidings}
 and then shall the end come. ² Or, *in-*
^{habited}
^{earth.}
- 15 When therefore ye see the abomination of
 desolation, which was spoken of ³ by Daniel the ³ Or,
 prophet, standing in ⁴ the holy place (let him ^{through}
 16 that readeth understand), then let them that are ⁴ Or, *a*
 17 in Judæa flee unto the mountains : let him that ^{holy place}

10. *stumble*, as foretold in the parable (xiii. 21).

12. This chill of love owing to the wide iniquity will continue to the end (cf. Luke xviii. 8). Luke xxi. 18 adds the irrelevant but exquisitely suggestive promise, 'not a hair from your head shall perish.'

iniquity, lit. lawlessness. Not antinomianism, but that general moral decline, in which even the good lose their fervour.

the love. This great Christian word ἀγάπη occurs only here in the Synoptics (where it 'waxes cold').

14. *in the whole world*. Explained by 'into all the nations' (Mark xiii. 10).

15-28. THE SPECIFIC FORECAST OF THE SIEGE AND FALL OF JERUSALEM UNDER TITUS IN A. D. 70. The accounts in Mark xiii. 14, 23 ; Luke xxi. 20-4 must be compared.

15. *the abomination*. Dan. ix. 27, xi. 31, xii. 11 : the profanation of the temple by Antiochus Epiphanes. This coming profanation was the similar presence of the Roman standards in the holy land.

let him that readeth understand. A parenthetic note made by the evangelist, to call attention to this new application of the words of Daniel.

16. This warning enabled the Christians to escape at the beginning of the siege ; they took refuge in Pella, at the north extremity of Perea (Eusebius, *H. E.* iii. 5. 3).

is on the housetop not go down to take out the things that are in his house : and let him that is 18 in the field not return back to take his cloke. But woe unto them that are with child and to 19 them that give suck in those days ! And pray 20 ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on a sabbath : for then shall be great tribulation, 21 such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever shall be. And 22 except those days had been shortened, no flesh would have been saved : but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. Then if any man 23 shall say unto you, Lo, here is the Christ, or,

17. The haste is such that the people must come down by the outside staircase, and flee ; and the peasants in the field, who to this day leave their outer garments in the house, and work in their tunics, must escape without returning to the house.

19. The compassion of Jesus for the women who cannot leave *their* burdens in the house, but must carry them in their bosoms and flee.

20. *on a sabbath.* Jesus assumes that His followers will have the old reverence for the day. Weizsäcker argues from this that the prophecy is Jewish in origin ; he does not allow for a moment that Christ would sanction the day, as He does here.

21. The horrible account given by Josephus of the siege of Jerusalem fully justifies this strong language of forecast.

22. The language seems to look beyond the siege of Jerusalem. It points to the general principle that a term is set to the calamities of men, on account of the elect, i. e. not so much in answer to their prayers, but because the purpose of history is to produce the chosen souls, and the calamities that befall mankind must always come short of complete destruction.

shortened : sc. by God (Mark xiii. 20).

the elect. Cf. xxii. 14 ; a word used much in the Book of Enoch.

23. The pretensions of Simon son of Gioras, and John of Giscala, show how necessary it was to forewarn the disciples against imposters. The parousia of Jesus was not to be the coming of a human person again. He will not be in a particular place, whether wilderness or secret chamber. And indeed He will not come at the time of the fall of Jerusalem at all. This seems to be the gist of the warning.

- 24 Here ; believe ¹ *it* not. For there shall arise ¹ Or, him
false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew
great signs and wonders ; so as to lead astray, if
25 possible, even the elect. Behold, I have told
26 you beforehand. If therefore they shall say unto
you, Behold, he is in the wilderness ; go not
forth : Behold, he is in the inner chambers ;
27 believe ² *it* not. For as the lightning cometh ² Or, them
forth from the east, and is seen even unto the
west ; so shall be the ³ coming of the Son of man. ³ Gr.
28 Wheresoever the carcase is, there will the ⁴ eagles ⁴ Or,
be gathered together. ⁴ *vultures*
- 29 But immediately, after the tribulation of those
days, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon

27. The coming will be like the great phenomena of nature, e. g. lightning, apocalyptic indeed. The meaning of the following verse is obscure.

28. In Luke xvii. 37 the cryptic saying is attached to what is here placed at ver. 41. The reference therefore does not seem to be to the Roman eagles ; it is rather a proverbial saying (cf. Job xxxix. 30), a brief and pregnant description of the ruin of Jerusalem : and must be connected, not with ver. 27, but with the whole passage ver. 15-27. It is a familiar sight in the East, the dead horse or camel by the track, and the wheeling vultures pouncing on the prey : so will be Jerusalem, dead, devoured by the eagles.

29-31. Regarding ver. 15-28 as a paragraph complete in itself, we may look on this paragraph as also complete in itself, but incorrectly attached to ver. 15-28. It might follow 1-14. 'The tribulation of those days' is not the siege of Jerusalem (though Matthew may have taken it in that sense), but the iniquity and the waning love which precede the end of the world.

29. *immediately*. This can only stand if we do not connect it with verses 15-28. In Luke xxi. 24 the difficulty does not occur, because the 'treading down of Jerusalem until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled' intervenes between the fall of the city and the coming of the Son of Man (ver. 27).

The signs in heaven are those familiar in apocalyptic prophecy (Isa. xiii. 9, xxxiv. 4 ; Joel iii. 15). They are probably to be interpreted symbolically. As we know, the stars cannot literally fall from heaven (Rev. vi. 13 ; Isa. xiv. 12). It is a figure of

shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken : and then shall appear the sign ³⁰ of the Son of man in heaven : and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send ³¹ forth his angels ¹ with ² a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

¹ Many ancient authorities read *with a great trumpet, and they shall gather &c.*
² Or, *a trumpet of great sound*

³ Or, *it*

Now from the fig tree learn her parable : when ³² her branch is now become tender, and putteth forth its leaves, ye know that the summer is nigh ; even so ye also, when ye see all these things, ³³ know ye that ³ he is nigh, *even* at the doors.

speech for a revolutionary change, and the breaking up of the most firmly established order.

30. *the sign of the Son of man*, i. e. the sign consisting in the Son of Man appearing in heaven. Here is the answer to ver. 3.

on the clouds. Dan. vii. 13 (LXX) indicating divine majesty. The mourning is explained in Rev. i. 7.

31. The magnificent triumph of Jesus, and the gathering of His elect, put it beyond question that He is the Divine Being. For the trumpet see 1 Cor. xv. 52 ; 1 Thess. iv. 16. The apostles accepted the image as literal. We cannot interpret it, until the event declares it. But, whatever may be the interpretation in detail, we may cherish in our hearts this great assurance, that, when the Gospel has been preached in the whole world, for a testimony unto the nations, the end will come, and Christ will appear to gather together His own.

32-4. These three verses are connected with verses 15-28, and refer to the fall of Jerusalem, which looms in the near future. As the season of summer shows itself in the burgeoning of the fig-tree, so the apocalyptic event, viz. the destruction of the old Judaism, to make way for Christianity, will be the sure promise of the summer season, the reign of Christ in the affairs of men.

33. *these things* refer to the events of A. D. 70, the war with Rome, the siege and fall of Jerusalem, the burning of the Temple. *he is nigh.* This certainly means the Son of Man, but equally

- 34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all these things be accomplished.
- 35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words ¹ Many authorities, some ancient, omit
- 36 shall not pass away. But of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, ^{neither}
- 37 ¹ neither the Son, but the Father only. And as ^{the Son.}

certainly it does not mean His coming as described in ver. 30, the final advent which was deliberately disconnected from the fall of Jerusalem in ver. 27. The final advent was not to be in A. D. 70, and yet in a sense Christ drew near, came to the doors of the house of human life, in that year. The Temple, God's house, disappeared; the spiritual Temple which superseded it sprang from the ground.

34. In view of this, Jesus could say that the generation then living would not pass away until the great reign of Christ should begin; within thirty-five years, Judaism passed away, and Christianity began its vigorous life. 'The Lord is at hand' from that time forth.

35-51. Here we pass again to the final advent, which has already been referred to in verses 12-14 and 29-31. The real teaching of our Lord becomes plain if ver. 35 follows ver. 31.

The assertion of His infallible word is most unfortunately placed between the statement that all would happen in that generation, and the statement that Jesus did not know the time. But the fault is that of the evangelists (Mark also xiii. 30-2). We cannot doubt that when Jesus was speaking of the fall of Jerusalem He spoke in the language of ver. 34. But when He spoke of the far-off, divine event (of ver. 14), He used the language of ver. 36. He knew it would be, but not when.

36. *of that day and hour knoweth no one.* Zech. xiv. 7 and Psalms of Solomon xvii. 23 say that only God knows the time of the Redemption. The Targum on Eccl. vii. 24 affirms that the mystery of the day when the Anointed King comes is kept secret from men.

For the relation of Father and Son see xi. 27.

It would be a mistake to think that this avowed ignorance of the time of His advent implies any limitation of Christ's divine nature. It only indicates the complete submission of the Son to the Father in the bosom of Godhead. What the Father wished to reveal to Him the Son received, and He knew that He would reveal all things to Him. But when the will of the Father held back any knowledge from Him, He showed His submission, and His filial union with the Father by a cheerful and humble submission.

It is the most perfect illustration we possess of conformity to the will of God. Christ had no will but the Father's; when the

¹ Gr.
presence.

were the days of Noah, so shall be the ¹ coming of the Son of man. For as in those days which ³⁸ were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and they ³⁹ knew not until the flood came, and took them all away ; so shall be the ¹ coming of the Son of man. Then shall two men be in the field ; one ⁴⁰ is taken, and one is left : two women *shall be* ⁴¹ grinding at the mill ; one is taken, and one is left. Watch therefore : for ye know not on what ⁴² day your Lord cometh. ² But know this, that if ⁴³ the master of the house had known in what watch

² Or, *But*
this ye
know

Father willed to withhold from Him any of His designs, His will was to be ignorant.

37-41 appears in Luke xvii. 26, 27, 30, 34, 35, in connexion with the forecast of the coming of the Kingdom of God. He is evidently not speaking of the siege of Jerusalem here, an event which did not come suddenly and unannounced, but of the coming which would be as the lightning (ver. 27).

37. The illustration of Noah shows that the ignorance is wilful carelessness. They might have known. But they went on as usual, though Noah was building the ark in their midst, until the flood broke. The day of the Lord will not come unawares to the faithful few who watch and wait for it, but to the indifferent world it will.

40. These are proverbial sayings (Schott), to describe the sudden dooms of human events. The handmill of the East is generally worked by two women who sit with it between them ; a close intimacy of life and work ; but the swift day of the Lord will divide between man and man, between woman and woman.

42. *Watch.* This word like a solemn bell tolls through all Christ's language about the future (Mark xiii. 33 ; Luke xxi. 36). We are not told to inquire or forecast, to conjecture or construct. But we are to be on the watch. Luke inserts a still more elaborate caution. Note the designation which Jesus gives Himself : Your Lord.

43-51. This is the same discourse that Luke gives in the charge to the Twelve (xii. 39-46), which may indicate how Matthew conflated sayings which bear on the future from different times of the Lord's ministry.

43. *the master of the house*, not necessarily a large owner.

the thief was coming, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be
 44 ¹ broken through. Therefore be ye also ready : ¹ Gr. *digged through.*
 for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man
 45 cometh. Who then is the faithful and wise
² servant, whom his lord hath set over his house- ² Gr. *bond-servant.*
 hold, to give them their food in due season?
 46 Blessed is that ² servant, whom his lord when he
 47 cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto
 you, that he will set him over all that he hath.
 48 But if that evil ² servant shall say in his heart,
 49 My lord tarrieth ; and shall begin to beat his
 fellow-servants, and shall eat and drink with the
 50 drunken ; the lord of that ² servant shall come
 in a day when he expecteth not, and in an hour
 51 when he knoweth not, and shall ³ cut him ³ Or, *severely scourge him*
 asunder, and appoint his portion with the hypo-

Indeed it is only a poor mud house that can be dug through by a thief. We are to think, therefore, not of great prelates and saints, but of ordinary Christians. Every Christian is so to live and work, that if Christ came to-day, there would be no surprise, but only the joyful greeting. We should expect nothing so much any day as we expect Christ's coming every day. That is the secret of a true Christian life.

45. From Luke xii. 41 it is clear that these words apply specially to those who are entrusted with the preaching of the Gospel and the rule of the Church.

47. Each faithful servant can be set over all that God has in the Spiritual Kingdom : for it is not authority exercised, but inner fitness, that constitutes the order of eternity.

48. Here the judgement on the unfaithful minister assumes that there may be a delay in the coming of the Lord. It is obvious how much more suitable the language is to the ordaining of the Twelve than to the apocalypse of Matthew.

51. *shall cut him asunder.* A strong word, in Luke xii. 46, as well as here. There is no reason for toning it down as in the margin of R. V.

his portion, Rev. xx. 6.

crites : there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened ²⁵
¹ Or, *torches* unto ten virgins, which took their ¹ lamps, and

hypocrites. In Luke 'the unfaithful' or 'unbelieving'. The closing words recall viii. 12 in the Sermon on the Mount.

CH. XXV. THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN.

This wonderful group of parables, or pictures—the Ten Virgins, the Talents, the Sheep and the Goats—will account for the prominent place which the Second Advent occupied in the Early Church. These words, which demand Vigilance, Fidelity, and practical Service, enforced by the thought of the returning Lord, not only reverberate through the New Testament, but determined the character of Christianity. Christians are men who 'serve a living and true God, and wait for His Son from heaven' (1 Thess. i. 9, 10). They may be defined as 'they that have loved His appearing' (2 Tim. iv. 8). They are always 'waiting for Him' (Heb. ix. 28). 'Till I come' was impressed on every believer (Luke xix. 13 : cf. 1 Cor. xi. 26). And through this discourse and the echoes of it in the New Testament the attitude has been preserved to this day. Whatever may be our conceptions of His coming, we who believe in Him are like unto them who wait for their Lord. We may speculate what will be the manner of the appearing, whether we shall be of the number who survive when He comes, or shall be overtaken by death, the common Parousia, but we are kept in the attitude of expectation. In some way or other He will come. We therefore must have our lamps ready, with oil for the supply ; we must be employing our talents that we may hear His 'Well done' ; we must minister to the hungry, the naked, the stranger, the prisoner, because, in doing it to them, we do it to Him.

It should be noted how the three pictures confirm our interpretation of ch. xxiv, and show that our Lord did not lead us to expect an immediate return (xxiv. 13, 14, 48, are echoed in xxv. 5, 15). And if the expectation of a speedy return was awakened in the early Church, the apostles had the light of the spirit to correct it. (Acts iii. 21 and 2 Thess. ii. 2). We may surmise that the erroneous expectation arose entirely from confusing the Parousia of the fall of Jerusalem with the final Parousia ; and when the former happened and passed, and the Parousia had not been realized, the Church gradually settled down to the long and patient waiting in which she is still engaged.

It is yet the night, but the Bridegroom will come. The Lord is yet in another country, but He will return. The throne of His glory is not yet set, but He will sit on it, and all nations shall be gathered before Him.

2 went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of
 3 them were foolish, and five were wise. For the
 foolish, when they took their ¹ lamps, took no
 4 oil with them: but the wise took oil in their
 5 vessels with their ¹ lamps. Now while the bride-
 6 groom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. But

1-12. THE TEN VIRGINS. The custom which forms the *mise-en-scène* of the parable is given in Judges xiv. 10, where Samson goes down to claim his bride. The virgins are the bridal train who watch for the bridegroom's arrival on his return to his house with the bride. He would naturally come in the early evening; but He is detained till midnight, and the lamps therefore burn low and need replenishing. The Bridal Feast is illustrated by the story of Samson, except that there only the companions of the bridegroom are mentioned. Here the companions of the bride are brought into prominence. For the purpose of the illustration it is not necessary to mention the bride. The beautiful story is only found in Mark (xiii. 35), and Luke (xii. 35; xiii. 25) germinally. We must be thankful for those *Logia* which Matthew alone has preserved for us. And this chapter, next to the Sermon on the Mount, is the most precious of the *Logia*.

1. *to meet the bridegroom*, 'and the bride,' adds D, and some cursives. But of course the addition is *mal-à-propos*. The bride is in the house, the maidens issue forth on the road to meet and accompany the bridegroom in. The lamp is rather a torch; probably a dish of oil with a wick in it carried on the top of a staff.

2. Wise and foolish, not good and bad, exactly as in the builders (vii. 25-27). They are all Christians, but some are true Christians and others are not. All have lamps, i. e. make the Christian profession, and apparently welcome Christ. All would be ready, if there were no delay. The tarrying tests them.

4. The meaning of the oil is manifest from the frequent occurrence of the image in Scripture. It represents the reality of a living religion produced by the Holy Spirit. This is plain in the symbol of Ex. xxx. 23-25, 30, and Ps. xlv. 7. The interpretation is given in Zech. iv. It symbolizes the Spirit not given by measure (John iii. 34), the Spirit of Christ (Rom. viii. 9), the holy unction (1 John ii. 27).

We must avoid fanciful allegorizing like Chrysostom's, who thought that the lamps signified virginity, but the oil the pity, so often wanting in religious devotees who adopt the celibate life.

5. *slumbered* (i. e. nodded) *and slept*, as was natural and even

¹ Or,
torches

at midnight there is a cry, Behold, the bridegroom! Come ye forth to meet him. Then all 7 those virgins arose, and trimmed their ¹ lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of 8 your oil; for our ¹ lamps are going out. But the 9 wise answered, saying, Peradventure there will not be enough for us and you: go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And 10 while they went away to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage feast: and the door was shut. Afterward come also the other virgins, 11 saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered 12

proper, always provided that their lamps were ready when the cry should come. The detail is not, therefore, meant to show that at His coming He will find all His Church asleep (like the question in Luke xviii. 8), but only that among the members of His Church, who seem alike, a startling cleavage will be revealed.

6. At midnight, six hours later than He was expected! Thus Christ intimated that His Parousia would surprise the world when from the long delay men had almost concluded that it would not be at all. St. Paul remembered this when he said that the Lord would come as a thief in the night (1 Thess. v. 2); it is strange he did not say, 'as a bridegroom.'

8. It is the sorrowful truth that in the grace of inward preparedness each must stand alone; the goodness of another does not avail; 'let each man prove his own work, and then shall he have his glorying in respect of himself alone, and not of his neighbour. For each man shall bear his own burden' (Gal. vi. 4, 5).

9. *buy for yourselves.* The image is from Prov. xxiii. 23. There was no question about the ability to buy; for the oil is without money and without price (Is. lv. 1; Rev. iii. 18). The only drawback was the want of time. It was too late.

10. There is a clang of doom in 'the door was shut'. Christ never shrinks from stating this inevitable fact. If we do not preach it, let us learn it.

11. *Lord, Lord.* The interpretation looks through the veil of the parable. It is no common bridegroom, but the Lord from heaven, who says to them 'I know you not'. In Rev. xix. 8, our eyes are turned to the bride, in 'fine linen, bright and pure'.

and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.
 13 Watch therefore, for ye know not the day nor
 the hour.

14 For *it is* as *when* a man, going into another
 country, called his own ¹servants, and delivered
 15 unto them his goods. And unto one he gave ¹Gr.
 five talents, to another two, to another one; to ^{bond-}
 each according to his several ability; and he went ^{servants.}
 16 on his journey. Straightway he that received the
 five talents went and traded with them, and made
 17 other five talents. In like manner he also that
 18 *received* the two gained other two. But he that
 received the one went away and digged in the

But the truth is the same, 'for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.'

13. Again clangs the great warning bell, as in xxiv. 42.

14-30. THE TALENTS. An oriental potentate puts into authority, not relatives or friends, which would be dangerous, but his slaves. The similar parable of the Pounds in Luke xix. 11 occurs in another connexion; but in each case the men entrusted with the money are 'slaves'. Again the delay of the Parousia is emphasized (ver. 19). Weiss and Wendt think that the parable does not properly belong to the Parousia group. But it is a necessary supplement to the Virgins; there the idea was only that of *waiting*, here it is that of *working*; there attention was directed to the inward spiritual life, here to external activity. Expectant of our Lord, we are not to be slumbering and sleeping, but employing the talents which He has given us to use.

14. *slaves*. Paul delights to adopt the designation (Rom. i. 1; 1 Cor. vii. 22; 2 Cor. x. 7; Gal. i. 10; Eph. vi. 6; Phil. i. 1; Col. iv. 12; Tit. i. 1); so does James (Jas. i. 1), so does Peter (1 Pet. ii. 16; 2 Pet. i. 1), so does Jude (i. 1), so does John (Rev. i. 1, xix. 5, xxii. 3, &c.). It is as honourable to be the slaves of Christ as it is degrading to be the slaves of men, or of our lower selves.

15. The slaves are greatly trusted. The lowest receives £240. As each received according to his ability, he was required only to be faithful. The reward would be a responsibility doubled.

18. The slave with one talent was not dishonest; he is not charged with indolence; he is disaffected. He misjudges the Lord. He is the churl, unworthy of enfranchisement.

¹ Gr.
bond-
servants.

² Gr.
bond-
servant.

earth, and hid his lord's money. Now after a ¹⁹
long time the lord of those ¹servants cometh,
and maketh a reckoning with them. And he ²⁰
that received the five talents came and brought
other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst
unto me five talents: lo, I have gained other
five talents. His lord said unto him, Well done, ²¹
good and faithful ²servant: thou hast been faith-
ful over a few things, I will set thee over many
things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. And ²²
he also that *received* the two talents came and
said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents:
lo, I have gained other two talents. His lord ²³
said unto him, Well done, good and faithful
²servant; thou hast been faithful over a few
things, I will set thee over many things: enter
thou into the joy of thy lord. And he also that ²⁴
had received the one talent came and said, Lord,
I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping
where thou didst not sow, and gathering where

19. *after a long time.* In Luke, he had 'received a kingdom', and the reward is cities to govern, not merely things to manage (xix. 15).

20. The two first slaves have boldness in the day of judgement (1 John iv. 17, ii. 28). It is the holy unction which gives this boldness before Him at His coming (1 John ii. 22). It is not the merit of the works, but the rightness of the heart with God. After all it is only putting out the money to the bankers (v. 27) that is required, the humble readiness to be used, and to let God work in us to will and to do.

21. *the joy of thy lord,* is perhaps the Feast of Gladness: a feast is called a joy in Hebrew (cf. Esther ix. 17; 2 Chron. xxx. 23; Neh. xii. 27; Luke xii. 19). But the joy meant is Christ's, that which He has, and gives (John xv. 11; Heb. xii. 2).

24. This hard thought concerning the Lord is very common. But the action which results from the thought is illogical (v. 27).

- 25 thou didst not scatter: and I was afraid, and
 went away and hid thy talent in the earth: lo,
 26 thou hast thine own. But his lord answered
 and said unto him, 'Thou wicked and slothful
 1 servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed
 27 not, and gather where I did not scatter; thou
 oughtest therefore to have put my money to
 the bankers, and at my coming I should have
 28 received back mine own with interest. Take ye
 away therefore the talent from him, and give it
 29 unto him that hath the ten talents. For unto
 every one that hath shall be given, and he shall
 have abundance: but from him that hath not,
 even that which he hath shall be taken away.
 30 And cast ye out the unprofitable 1 servant into
 the outer darkness: there shall be the weeping
 and gnashing of teeth.
- 31 But when the Son of man shall come in his
 glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he

28. Here is a law illustrated everywhere in experience. The capable and the trustworthy receive what the churlish, sluggish, and incapable misuse. That the law holds in the world beyond, is certainly implied, though it may only be part of the dressing of the parable (Mark iv. 25; Luke xix. 25).

30. This verse seems an echo of xiii. 42, xxii. 13. It favours the idea that 'the joy of the Lord' (ver. 21) is conceived as the banquet-hall.

31-46. THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS. This passage is not a parable, but a definite and clear forecast of the judgement. The separation of the sheep and the goats is only an illustration which appears in ver. 32, 33 and disappears after. In Luke xiii. 25-8 there is a faint suggestion of this part of the chapter, as of the earlier part; but the whole is distinctively Matthew's. But for the first evangelist we should have had little idea of the final judgement. Most of the references in the New Testament to this great event are evidently based upon this Logion of the Lord. See especially Rom. ii. 16; Jas. ii. 13; 2 Thess. i. 7, ii. 1; 1 Cor. i. 8; 2 Cor. v. 10; Rev. xx. 12. It is peculiarly important,

sit on the throne of his glory : and before him 32
 shall be gathered all the nations : and he shall
 separate them one from another, as the shepherd
 1 Gr. *kids*. separateth the sheep from the 1 goats : and he 33
 shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the
 1 goats on the left. Then shall the King say 34
 unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed

therefore, to study closely this important prophecy. When Jesus describes Himself as the Judge of the whole world, whose word decides salvation or perdition (see John xi. 1-5 ; 2 Thess. ii. 8), He leaves no doubt in our minds as to His claim to Divinity. The judge of all the earth must be God.

31. This coming of the Son of Man has been already foretold in xvi. 27, 28. The accompanying angels remind us of Zech. xiv. 5 *καὶ ἔξει Κύριος ὁ Θεός μου, καὶ πάντες οἱ ἄγιοι μετ' αὐτοῦ* (LXX). See also Deut. xxxiii. 2 ; Dan. vii. 9, 10. It is pointed out by Dr. Wright (*Synopsis of the Gospels in Greek*, p. 239) that the sentences are arranged in the form of Hebrew poetry. He, however, inclines to the view that the poetical form is due, not to our Lord, but to the early Church, which speaking in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, versified the Lord's teaching about the judgement, and the verse form was inserted in the Gospel narrative. If this be so, we have here a more primitive *Dies Irae*, as it was sung in the first age of Christianity.

32. *all the nations*. Commentators discuss whether the scene describes the judgement of all mankind, or only that of the disciples of Jesus. Wellhausen thinks that it is only the judgement of disciples ; the orthodox interpreters (and so Wendt) rather incline to make it the judgement of all except the disciples ! But perhaps the solution of the difficulty is to be found in xxiv. 14 ; the standpoint of this prophecy is, that the Gospel has now been preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations, and now all the nations are gathered for judgement.

33. Tristram and Furrer both remark that, while sheep and goats often browse together, at the time of folding they separate into two flocks of their own accord. The segregation of the last judgement, on the principle of like to like, will perhaps be automatic.

34. Jesus calls Himself King ; and this is the more striking when He is under the shadow of His approaching humiliation and death.

inherit. This is very beautiful. They who have a right thereto acquire the theocracy as a possession (cf. 1 Cor. vi. 9, xv. 50 ; Gal. v. 21), just as David received as a possession the throne of an eternal sovereignty (1 Macc. ii. 57).

of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for
 35 you from the foundation of the world : for I was
 an hungred, and ye gave me meat : I was thirsty,
 and ye gave me drink : I was a stranger, and ye
 36 took me in ; naked, and ye clothed me : I was
 sick, and ye visited me : I was in prison, and ye
 37 came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer
 him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred,
 and fed thee? or athirst, and gave thee drink?
 38 And when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee
 39 in? or naked, and clothed thee? And when
 saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto
 40 thee? And the King shall answer and say unto
 them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did
 it unto one of these my brethren, *even* these
 41 least, ye did it unto me. Then shall he say also
 unto them on the left hand, ¹ Depart from me, ye
 cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for
 42 the devil and his angels : for I was an hungred,

¹ Or,
*Depart
 from me
 under a
 curse*

from the foundation of the world : xiii. 35. This is what is meant by the predestination to life ; they are not individually chosen to life, but the thought of God from the beginning looked towards those who by such conduct would inherit such a reward.

35. For 'taking in' cf. Judges xix. 18.

36. The ministry is not always to release ; it is sometimes only to sympathize. For Scriptural illustrations of the conduct which is commended, see Exod. ii. 11 ; 1 Kings xvii. 10-15 ; Jer. xxx. 7-13 ; Acts xvi. 15 ; 2 Tim. i. 16.

visited me. It is the verb which in the nominal form is 'bishop'. Is this the episcopal function in the thought of Jesus—to visit the sick?

39. We can only suppose that Christ regards all men as brethren, and therefore all human service as done to Him. It is thus quite intelligible that these philanthropists did not understand how they were serving Christ.

41. The people who have neglected their fellows are equally amazed to find that they have neglected the King. As the good served others without thought of Christ, these others would, as

and ye gave me no meat : I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink : I was a stranger, and ye took me not in ; naked, and ye clothed me not ; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me. And these shall go away into eternal punishment : but the righteous into eternal life.

sycophants, have done the like, if they had known that so powerful a King was being served. This veiling of the ultimate significance of actions is necessary, that their quality may be revealed.

46. The form of judgement echoes Dan. xii. 2 (LXX). We have seen how Jesus uses the language of punishment familiar to His contemporaries (xiii. 42), and thus the old phraseology passed into Christian teaching (2 Thess. i. 9).

But this is not an original element in the teaching of Christ, and it is a mistake to lay stress on it as if it were. The meaning of punishment is illustrated by the use of the same word *κόλασις* in 1 John iv. 18. The word 'eternal' does not fix the duration of either the punishment or the life. It only means that both punishment and life go on beyond this aeon ('world' as it is usually translated), into the aeons (worlds) unknown.

The life eternal is a status to which men attain. In xviii. 18, it means participation in the theocracy; the eternal punishment consists in missing the theocracy. The elements of originality and revelation, therefore, in this prophecy, are not the judgement, nor the separation of the good from the bad, nor the æonian punishment and life; all these occur in the Old Testament, and are part of the familiar religious apparatus of the time, which Jesus used, as always, in order to be intelligible to the men whom He addressed; but the elements of originality, the truth which Jesus reveals to His disciples in the last days of His life, under the shadow of the cross, lies in the conceptions of the theocracy, the reign and righteousness of God, viz. : (1) that all actions of men to men will be interpreted as actions done to Jesus, and (2) that the judgement will turn upon the goodness or the neglect

26 And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished
 2 all these words, he said unto his disciples, Ye
 know that after two days the passover cometh,
 and the Son of man is delivered up to be cruci-
 3 fied. Then were gathered together the chief
 priests, and the elders of the people, unto the
 court of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas ;
 4 and they took counsel together that they might
 5 take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him. But they
 said, Not during the feast, lest a tumult arise
 among the people.

with which we treat our fellows. It is a pity that this all-important teaching should be obscured by profitless discussions about the eternity of future punishment.

CH. XXVI. 1-56. DESERTED.

This section presents us with the sorrowful spectacle of our Lord, not only persecuted by the religious leaders of His people, but betrayed by one, and deserted by all, of His own chosen disciples.

1-16. In this dark night of betrayal and forsaking there is a solitary ray of light ; it is the loyalty and love of a woman, who stands in extraordinary contrast with the men whom Jesus had loved and taught and trained. Her sweet tribute is grudged by them. But the deed of love holds the future, and becomes eternal as the Gospel itself.

1. *these words*, sc. the parabolic discourse concerning the end of the world.

2. Here Matthew is much more full than the corresponding passage in Mark (xiv. 1) and Luke (Luke xxii. 1, 2). He introduces this final announcement of the approaching death. Jesus Himself, as it were, announces that He is passing from the Prophetic to the Priestly office. And the singular fact is brought out that His voluntary sacrificial offering is accomplished by the unconscious hands of the High Priest and his associates.

3. Caiaphas was, we learn from Josephus (*Antiq.* xviii. 2. 2, 4. 3), high priest for seventeen years.

5. We learn from Josephus also that there would be as many as 2,700,000 people in Jerusalem at the time of Passover. As many of these had heard, and been healed by, Jesus in Galilee, there was great danger that an attack on Him might occasion a serious *émeute*. Since the authorities themselves were under the authority of the Romans, they sought their end by guile.

Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house 6
of Simon the leper, there came unto him a woman 7
having ¹ an alabaster cruse of exceeding precious
¹ Or,
a flask
ointment, and she poured it upon his head, as
he sat at meat. But when the disciples saw it, 8
they had indignation, saying, To what purpose
is this waste? For this *ointment* might have been 9
sold for much, and given to the poor. But Jesus 10
perceiving it said unto them, Why trouble ye the
woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon
me. For ye have the poor always with you; but 11

6-13. This paragraph carries us back four days, if the Fourth Gospel may be taken to supplement and correct the Synoptics. It was, according to John, six days before the Passover (xii. 1); but the previous discourse was two days before the Passover (ver. 2). It is hardly necessary to think of two suppers and two anointings, to evade the discrepancy: but the similar narrative in Luke vii. 36-40 must refer to another occasion.

Was Simon the man who was healed in Matt. viii. 1-4? And did he in his gratitude wish to be known in the circle of disciples as 'the Leper'? Lazarus who had been raised from the dead was also a guest (John xii. 2).

7. The woman was Mary of Bethany, says John (xii. 3). The 'alabaster cruse of ointment' was one of the five precious gifts sent to the Ethiopian king by Cambyses (Herod. iii. 20). The value is roughly estimated by the disciples at nine or ten pounds. According to Mark, she broke the alabaster. In John she pours it only on His feet.

8. John saves the reputation of the Twelve by saying that it was only Judas Iscariot who grudged the gift (xii. 4), and Mark avoids the charge by saying only 'certain persons'. But according to Matthew the whole company of the Twelve was so prosaic, so matter of fact, that they thought it mere sentimentality to waste the ointment on the Lord's body, and felt virtuous in their anxiety for the poor.

11. Jesus judges otherwise. He counts love to Him of more value even than almsgiving. The poor would never cease out of the land (Deut. xv. 11). His followers would have age-long opportunity of ministering to them. But Mary interpreted the best heart of the Church, and relieved the yearning of long centuries by showing Him this costly honour; though it was but an unconscious preparation for burial.

- 12 me ye have not always. For in that she ¹ poured ¹ Gr. *cast.*
 this ointment upon my body, she did it to pre-
 13 pare me for burial. Verily I say unto you, Where-
 soever ² this gospel shall be preached in the ² Or, *these*
 whole world, that also which this woman hath ^{good}
 done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her. ^{tidings}
- 14 Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas
 Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, and said,
 15 What are ye willing to give me, and I will deliver
 him unto you? And they weighed unto him
 16 thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he
 sought opportunity to deliver him *unto them*.
- 17 Now on the first *day* of unleavened bread the
 disciples came to Jesus, saying, Where wilt thou

13. This prophecy is fulfilled. Chrysostom in his day pointed it out by saying that even the people living in the distant British Isles had heard of it. We now in this *ultima Thule* may say that the people in the uttermost parts of the earth are hearing of the deed of love.

14-16. Here the four evangelists are on common ground. Matthew, however, brings out the fact that the traitor is influenced by the love of money. That is the root of all kinds of evil, even of the betrayal of Jesus.

15. Matthew alone specifies the thirty pieces of silver. And as he uses the very unusual verb in the LXX, of Zech. xi. 12—a word which does not mean 'weighed', but only 'placed', and that might mean 'promised'; probably the clause 'they weighed unto him thirty pieces of silver' is a quotation from the prophet rather than a statement of fact. Thirty pieces of silver (about £4 10s.) is the price of a slave in the Law (Ex. xxi. 32); but hardly enough to buy the potter's field. Judas, therefore, may have received more than this paltry sum for his treachery.

17-19. THE BETRAYAL AND THE SUPPER. The fact that the four evangelists are on common ground in this passage makes St. John's omission of the institution of the Eucharist most impressive.

In the choice of the room for the feast, Matthew is much briefer than the others. The Synoptists all take the feast to be the Paschal feast, eaten at sundown on what we should call Nisan, 14th; but as the Jewish day begins at sundown, it would be in Jewish terminology the 15th. St. John deliberately corrects this view

that we make ready for thee to eat the passover ?
 And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and ¹⁸
¹ Or, say unto him, The ¹ Master saith, My time is at
Teacher hand ; I keep the passover at thy house with
 my disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus ¹⁹
 appointed them ; and they made ready the pass-
 over. Now when even was come, he was sitting ²⁰
² Many at meat with the twelve ² disciples ; and as they ²¹
 authorities, some were eating, he said, Verily I say unto you, that
 ancient, omit one of you shall betray me. And they were ²²
disciples. exceeding sorrowful, and began to say unto him
 every one, Is it I, Lord ? And he answered and ²³
 said, He that dipped his hand with me in the
 dish, the same shall betray me. The Son of man ²⁴
 goeth, even as it is written of him : but woe unto
 that man through whom the Son of man is be-

and says that the Supper was on the preceding day, the Preparation (John xix. 14). The sorrowful division of Christendom over the question of the time of keeping Easter arises out of this discrepancy. But the wise will pass it by. For the Passover see Exod. xii. 15-17. The ancient Feast of Judaism, which commemorated the escape from Egyptian bondage, is transformed into the Feast of Christendom, which commemorates the death of Christ as the ransom from sin.

21. In one breath the traitor is denounced, and the beautiful rite which is the pledge of saving grace is instituted.

23. *He that dipped.* The dish is perhaps the vinegar vessel in which the bitter herbs were soaked. Furrer's description of a meal in the East illustrates the point : 'Before us stood two plates, one with strongly-spiced maccaroni, the other with a dish of fine-cut leeks and onions. Spoons there were none. There were four of us who dipped into the same dish.' 'He that dipped' would not, therefore, specify Judas, but would only show that it was one of the three who sat nearest to Him. Hence Judas puts the question with the rest, and receives the direct answer, ver. 25.

24. The woe pronounced on the traitor is not favourable to the view that all will finally be saved. If a man is saved at the long last, whatever he has passed through, it is good for him that he was born.

trayed ! good were it ¹ for that man if he had not
 25 been born. And Judas, which betrayed him,
 answered and said, Is it I, Rabbi? He saith
 26 unto him, Thou hast said. And as they were
 eating, Jesus took ² bread, and blessed, and brake
 it ; and he gave to the disciples, and said, Take,
 27 eat ; this is my body. And he took ³ a cup, and
 gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye
 28 all of it ; for this is my blood of ⁴ the ⁵ covenant,
 which is shed for many unto remission of sins.

¹ Gr. *for him if that man.*

² Or, *a loaf*

³ Some ancient authorities read *the cup.*

⁴ Or, *the testament*

⁵ Many ancient authorities insert *new.*

26. All through His time with the disciples He had taken the bread, and blessed and broken (Luke xxiv. 30-5), sometimes feeding vast multitudes. Now He does it for the last time, and gives to it a permanent significance by making the bread the symbol of His body which was to be broken, and the wine of His blood which was to be shed.

Happy is he who can slip past all the controversies and the perversions and the superstitions, and sit down at the Table again with the Lord, doing it in remembrance of Him.

this is my body. The copula is that of symbolical significance, as when Jesus says 'I am the vine', or 'I am the door'. When we come to the words afresh, reading the narrative with our own eyes, we cannot make any mistake about the meaning. The dull and painful literalism out of which the error has grown belongs to the past. To avoid it, and to save us from it, St. John entirely omitted the words which led to the misunderstanding, and taught the truth in another way, by recording the early discourse on the Bread of Life (vi. 48-58).

27. *gave thanks, i. e. eucharistesas*, from which the Eucharist is derived.

28. *the covenant.* The word is from Exod. xxiv. 8. It is the covenant of pardon between sinful men and a pardoning God. The Latin translation of the Hebrew or Greek word was *testamentum*, which also means a will. As dying men make wills, the covenant of Jesus on the eve of His death was naturally regarded as a last will or testament. But the covenant idea is the central and most important one.

for . . . remission of sins. Neither in Mark nor Luke nor Paul (1 Cor. xi. 23-5). It interprets the blood-shedding of Jesus for us (Mark i. 4 ; Luke i. 77). From the first, believers recognized that the death on the cross was the ground of the pardon of sin to all who believe.

But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth ²⁹ of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

And when they had sung a hymn, they went ³⁰ out unto the mount of Olives.

Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be ³¹ ¹offended in me this night : for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after I am ³² raised up, I will go before you into Galilee. But ³³ Peter answered and said unto him, If all shall be ¹offended in thee, I will never be ¹offended. Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, that ³⁴ this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. Peter saith unto him, Even if I must ³⁵ die with thee, *yet* will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.

¹ Gr.
*caused to
stumble.*

29. In this announcement, slightly varied in Luke xxii. 18, the stress is not on the drinking in the Kingdom of God, a point omitted by Luke, but only on the fact that He will not drink with them again here.

30. *a hymn.* At the Paschal feast the great Hallel is sung (Ps. cxv-cxviii). In Luke and John we gather that the prophecy of Peter's denial came before leaving the room.

31-5. ALL WILL DESERT HIM ; AND ALL DO (ver. 56). PETER IS CONFIDENT THAT HE WILL NOT ; BUT HE DOES (ver. 75).

The prophecy is in Zech. xiii. 7 (LXX). The Lord has in mind the succeeding clause : 'I will turn my hand upon the little ones,' and applies it in the promise : 'I will go before you,' the Shepherd still leading his sheep after He has been smitten (Grotius). It is the promise of the initial organization of the Church ; the scattered sheep will be gathered again, and though they were offended in Him, that stone of stumbling and rock of offence will become to them the rock of refuge and the sure foundation.

34. In all four evangelists the striking saying is recorded. This reference to the cock crowing is characteristic of the manner of Jesus. He says things in a way that no one can forget.

35. *Likewise.* All did not say exactly the same. It was Peter's characteristic to be emphatic and individual.

- 36 Then cometh Jesus with them unto ¹ a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto his disciples, ¹ Gr. *an enclosed piece of ground.*
- 37 Sit ye here, while I go yonder and pray. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and sore
- 38 troubled. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: abide ye
- 39 here, and watch with me. And he went forward a little, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but
- 40 as thou wilt. And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?
- 41 ² Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is ² Or, *Watch ye, and pray that ye enter not*
- 42 weak. Again a second time he went away, and

36-46. THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN. The word agony, in Greek, which has been selected to describe this passage of the Lord's work, is only found once in the New Testament, viz. in some MSS. of Luke xxii. 44. The scene is omitted by John; and yet the idea is suggested in two passages (xii. 27 ff. and xviii. 11).

36. *Gethsemane*, 'oil-garden,' was an olive-grove with an oil-mill, where quiet could be obtained, in the valley or on the hill-side between Jerusalem and Bethany.

37. *sorrowful and sore troubled*. The second word is of uncertain meaning. It is used in Phil. ii. 26. Mark has it, and in place of 'sorrowful', a word descriptive of intense amazement or even terror.

38. He seeks the sympathy of his own (John xii. 27), but they cannot understand. This horror of great darkness is inexplicable to any but Himself. It is the Sinless one, made sin for us, and bearing the sin of the world.

40. His disciples could not watch with Him. They heard the bitter cry and reported it, but at the time they did not understand.

42. *a second time*. If only Luke xxii. 44 were supported by all our MSS. we should know that the prayer increased in intensity, and the drops of blood fell from His brow. But from our text we know that He recognized the impossibility of the cup passing. It should be 'since this cannot pass'.

prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cannot pass away, except I drink it, thy will be done. And ⁴³ he came again and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. And he left them again, and ⁴⁴ went away, and prayed a third time, saying again the same words. Then cometh he to the disciples, ⁴⁵ and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest : behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed unto the hands of sinners. Arise, let us be going : behold, he is at hand ⁴⁶ that betrayeth me.

And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the ⁴⁷ twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people. Now he that betrayed ⁴⁸ him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is he : take him. And straight- ⁴⁹ way he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Rabbi ; and ¹ kissed him. And Jesus said unto him, ⁵⁰

¹ Gr.
kissed
him
much.

45. As they could not keep awake and help Him at the critical moment, the opportunity had gone by for ever. He had trodden the wine-press alone, and He came out victorious, unaided. The traitor supervenes on the dull and lethargic friends who were faithful. The Lord is thrown from the hands of apathy and incomprehension to those of positive malignity and treachery.

47-56. THE TRAITOR AND THE FUGITIVES.

47. *one of the twelve.* The designation introduced here echoes the undying amazement and sorrow of the Church, that one of His own should have betrayed Him. It is inserted in all the Synoptists.

The ' multitude ' is more specifically described by John (xviii. 3) as a band of Roman soldiers, and the temple guards or police sent by the priests. Though it was full moon they brought lanterns. Though Jesus was unarmed they brought arms.

48. Judas had determined to indicate his Master by a kiss, which has become proverbial for heartless hypocrisy.

49. *he . . . kissed him.* A strengthened form of the simple word is used ; ' he kissed Him, as it were, effusively.'

Friend, *do* that for which thou art come. Then they came and laid hands on Jesus, and took
 51 him. And behold, one of them that were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and smote the ¹servant of the high priest, and
 52 struck off his ear. Then saith Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into its place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the
 53 sword. Or thinkest thou that I cannot beseech my Father, and he shall even now send me more
 54 than twelve legions of angels? How then should the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?
 55 In that hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a robber with swords and staves to seize me? I sat daily in the temple
 56 teaching, and ye took me not. But all this is come to pass, that the scriptures of the prophets

¹ Gr. *bond-servant*.

50. In Luke it is 'betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?' but this is far more dignified and wonderful: 'comrade, that for which you have come'—and He breaks off. The R.V. supplies 'do'. It might be 'this, then, is what you have come for'—to give a hypocritical kiss.

51. All four mention the episode of the ear. Luke also says that He healed the wounded man, who, according to John, was Malchus.

52-4. Peculiar to Matthew. We would not willingly lose these words of the Lord in the hour of His sacrifice. He forbids the use of the sword, showing that Luke xxii. 13 ff. was spoken ironically or metaphorically. He does not sanction the violence of war, even in His own defence. If He was mastered by this troop of soldiers and police it was because He followed His Father's will. He could at a word summon twelve panoplied legions of the heavenly hosts to his rescue. But He was here to suffer as the Scriptures said, to be led as a dumb sheep to the slaughter (Isa. liii.).

55. He was indignant that they came to Him with force, and that they imagined He was hiding from them. He had been in their midst, and at any time they could have arrested Him.

56. The scripture in his mind was still Zech. xiii. 7. He was the shepherd whom the Lord would smite, and the sheep would

might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples left him, and fled.

And they that had taken Jesus led him away 57

be scattered, though He would turn His hand to the little ones. This was the hour of the enemy and the power of darkness (Luke xxii. 53).

Then all the disciples left Him and fled. Cowards? Yes, and ill-taught disciples at the best. And to think that these men, only one degree better than the traitor, were presently to be the evangelists of the world's new hope, and the witnesses of their Lord, faithful unto death; this more than anything else reveals the nature of that suffering to which now He went.

CH. xxvi. 57—xxvii. 26. THE TRIAL AND CONDEMNATION
OF THE LORD.

The trial: in it there were five processes, as recorded by the four evangelists, viz. (1) An informal inquiry before the ex-high priest Annas (Hanan), recorded in John, because John was present; (2) the preliminary inquiry (*ἀνάκρισις*) before Caiaphas; (3) the formal proceedings before the Sanhedrim, when day had dawned; (4) the reference to Pilate, to pass the sentence of death, which the Jews under the Roman government had no independent authority to execute; (5) a reference to Herod by the wish of Pilate, mentioned only by Luke.

Matthew only gives us the preliminary inquiry before the dawn, and the scene before Pilate. The narrative presents three significant episodes: (1) Peter's denial; (2) the end of Judas; (3) Barabbas preferred to Jesus. We are more concerned to read the lesson of Matthew than to get a harmonistic account of the trial. We see, then, how our Lord is first condemned by the High Priest for blasphemy, while His chief disciple denied that He knew Him; then His innocence produces the remorse of Judas the traitor; then Pilate, representing the Roman power, is drawn into the condemnation of the Lord, and Jew and Gentile agree to value a robber and a murderer before Him. The trial, in a word, is the plain statement of the Divine origin and mission of Jesus, and of the all but universal repudiation and rejection with which His own received Him. There is no apparent art in the narrative, but every detail seems to bring out the venomous and malignant sin of the world which slew the incarnate Son.

57-75. CAIAPHAS AND PETER.

The high priest's house was probably the 'Booths of Hanan', which had been built by Annas on the Mount of Olives: and most likely Caiaphas, the son-in-law of Annas, lived with Annas there, so that the examination before Annas, and the more formal preliminary inquiry were under the same roof.

to *the house of Caiaphas* the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were gathered together.
 58 But Peter followed him afar off, unto the court of the high priest, and entered in, and sat with
 59 the officers, to see the end. Now the chief priests and the whole council sought false witness against
 60 Jesus, that they might put him to death; and they found it not, though many false witnesses
 61 came. But afterward came two, and said, This man said, I am able to destroy the ¹ temple of
 62 God, and to build it in three days. And the high priest stood up, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness
 63 against thee? But Jesus held his peace. And

¹ Or, *sanctuary*:
 as in
 ch. xxiii.
 35;
 xxvii. 5

57. *the scribes and the elders.* Twenty-three formed a quorum for the Sanhedrim; but for the previous inquiry and formulation of the case a smaller committee would suffice.

58. Peter was just hero enough to run into temptation, but was not yet converted and strengthened enough to resist it.

to see the end. In Mark and John it is said he was 'warming himself'. Matthew omits this, says Wellhausen, as too human. But the real reason why Peter ventured into the dangerous place was that he loved his Lord; he must see the end.

59. *sought false witness.* Mark only says they sought witness, and the witnesses were false. In any case, it was a foregone conclusion, and the judges were the prosecutors. There was no attempt at justice, still less at impartiality.

61. The two witnesses had got hold of something which He had actually said; but how inexactly they had got it is shown by this, that the words in Mark (xiv. 58) differ from the words here (see also xxvii. 40; Mark xv. 29; and John ii. 19). It was a remark which He had made in the earliest days of His ministry. They had nothing later to bring against Him. It is clear also that the authorities well understood the saying as a forecast of His own resurrection, and not as a threat against the Temple; for it was on this saying alone that they relied in demanding a watch for the tomb, ver. 64.

62. But this loose charge could not prove guilt. Jesus, who had spoken freely before Annas (as John shows, xviii. 12-24), was silent before the legal tribunal.

the high priest said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto 64 him, Thou hast said : nevertheless I say unto you, Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest 65 rent his garments, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy : what further need have we of witnesses ? behold, now ye have heard the blasphemy : what think ye ? They answered and said, He is 66

63. The silence forced the High Priest to the unusual course of adjuring the prisoner. From Lev. v. 1 it seems that the adjuration required an answer. Besides, the time had come for Jesus to say simply, once for all, who He was. Is He Messiah, is He Son of God ? In John xix. 7, the charge of blasphemy is based on this.

64. *Thou hast said* is equivalent to the 'I am' of Mark xiv. 61.

nevertheless—the Greek conjunction *πλὴν* ; the adversative seems to be justified by the phrase 'thou hast said' ; Caiaphas has used the words 'thou art Christ, the Son of God', though only in interrogation ; 'I say unto you' something even more : 'nevertheless' is too strong ; better 'thou hast said, only I say, &c.' The same conjunction in Matt. xi. 22, 24. He emphasizes his first statement with a second of deeper significance (Dalman).

Henceforth. In Luke 'from now' (xxii. 69) ; so Matt. xxiii. 39, xxvi. 29. Mark omits. The manifestation of His power begins from the Cross. The two phrases describing His glory are from Ps. cx. 1 and Dan. vii. 13 (LXX).

65. Jesus had just given the High Priest the ground of accusation which he wanted. The trial would have broken down altogether, had not Jesus played into the hands of the enemy. But He was bound to do this. He had come to bear witness of the truth, and now He must avow the Divine origin which was to be the stumblingblock to the Jew.

The rending of the garments expresses indignation ; according to Rabbinical directions all the garments were to be rent, though there were ten. Lev. xxiv. 16 pronounces death on a blasphemer. The anomaly is that the nation which expected Messiah should treat the Messiah as blasphemous for announcing His mission. This was prejudice. The national expectation had gone so far astray that it could not hail any but a pseudo-messias.

67 ¹ worthy of death. Then did they spit in his
 face and buffet him : and some smote him ² with
 68 the palms of their hands, saying, Prophecy
 unto us, thou Christ : who is he that struck
 thee?
 69 Now Peter was sitting without in the court :
 and a maid came unto him, saying, Thou also
 70 wast with Jesus the Galilæan. But he denied
 before them all, saying, I know not what thou
 71 sayest. And when he was gone out into the
 porch, another *maid* saw him, and saith unto
 them that were there, This man also was with
 72 Jesus the Nazarene. And again he denied with
 73 an oath, I know not the man. And after a little
 while they that stood by came and said to Peter,
 Of a truth thou also art *one* of them ; for thy
 74 speech bewrayeth thee. Then began he to curse

¹ Gr.
liable to.
² Or, *with*
rods

67. Luke says that the attendants indulged in these outrages ; Mark divides them between the attendants and the Sanhedrists ; Matthew implies that all were the act of the Sanhedrists themselves. Here were a dozen or so of the grave elders, priests, and doctors of the Law, spitting at Jesus and slapping Him, in an outbreak of devilish passion. And the cry 'prophecy unto us' has an awful irony in it, when the fact is grasped that they were speaking to the eternal Son, and the Judge of all the world, 'Who is it that struck Thee?' He will know ; it is all recorded and remembered.

68. *thou Christ.* Ironical.

69. *Jesus the Galilæan.* Here, but in ver. 71 the Nazarene. It is possible that Nazarene was equivalent to Galilæan. The whole region may have been 'the land of Nesar', cf. Gen-nesar-eth. Jesus the Nazarene is a title which was early adopted (xxi. 11, Acts x. 38). Cf. Julian : 'Nazarene, thou hast conquered.'

73. The speech of Galilee was more guttural, and substituted *t* for *s*. Jesus Himself would speak the Galilæan dialect (Dalman, *Words of Jesus*, p. 81).

74. In Mark xiv. 72, the cock crows twice.

and to swear, I know not the man. And straightway the cock crew. And Peter remembered the ⁷⁵ word which Jesus had said, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

Now when morning was come, all the chief ²⁷ priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death: and they ² bound him, and led him away, and delivered him up to Pilate the governor.

Then Judas, which betrayed him, when he ³ saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned ⁴ in that I betrayed ¹ innocent blood. But they

¹ Many ancient authorities read *righteous*.

75. Only Luke gives the exquisite touch, that Jesus smote the conscience of Peter by looking at him (xxii. 61).

the word which Jesus had said (ver. 34).

wept bitterly. Dr. Wright thinks that the 'bitterly' is only the translation of Mark's ἐπιβαλὼν, the meaning of which is uncertain: translated by the revisers 'when he thought thereon'; it might mean 'fell to weeping'.

CH. XXVII. 1-10. THE REMORSE OF JUDAS.

1. *morning.* The Law required that a death sentence should only be passed by day, and after a second meeting of the Sanhedrim. The Roman government forbade all death sentences without the consent of the Procurator.

2. *governor.* The general word ἡγεμὼν is used here and in Acts for a Roman procurator or proconsul. The procurator lived at Cæsarea, but came to Jerusalem with his troops for the Passover. Pilate is a weak and unprincipled representative of the Roman authority, a typical 'unjust judge'.

3. Only Matthew tells the remorse of Judas, though Luke mentions his suicide in Acts i. 18.

repented. Did he think that Jesus would miraculously escape? Was his intention to furnish the Lord with an opportunity of manifesting His power? The self-deceit of the human heart is limitless.

4. His confession that Jesus was innocent is most valuable. The horror at finding the chief priests and elders callous and

- 5 said, What is that to us? see thou *to it*. And he cast down the pieces of silver into the sanctuary, and departed; and he went away and hanged
- 6 himself. And the chief priests took the pieces of silver, and said, It is not lawful to put them into the ¹ treasury, since it is the price of blood.
- 7 And they took counsel, and bought with them
- 8 the potter's field, to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood,
- 9 unto this day. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken ² by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, And ³ they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was priced, ⁴ whom *certain* of the
- 10 children of Israel did price; and ⁵ they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.

¹ Gr. *corbanas*, that is, *sacred treasury*. Compare Mark vii. 11.

² Or, *through*

³ Or, *I took*

⁴ Or, *whom they prized on the part of the sons of Israel*

⁵ Some ancient authorities read *I gave*.

unprincipled murderers would exasperate his remorse. 'What, have I betrayed my guiltless Lord, for these?'

5. *the sanctuary*. The Holy Place itself. He had got rid of the cursed money. It stung and burnt him. He hanged himself; Luke's description is more detailed in Acts i. 18, and not easy to harmonize with our account here.

6. The scruples of these murderous priests are fine. The treasury, called here *Corban* (see Mark vii, 11 and Josephus, *B. I.* ii. 9. 4).

8. *The field of blood*, because it was bought with the price of blood, or because Judas died there?

9. Matthew in his manner connects the event with a prophetic passage in Zech. xi. 13; which in the LXX reads, 'And I took the thirty pieces of silver and cast them into the house of the Lord, into the smelting furnace.' In the Hebrew, 'And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter (or Syriac 'into the treasury'), the godly price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver and cast them unto the potter, in the house of the Lord.' The low value of the Lord's messenger is the point of similarity between the experience of the ancient prophet and Judas's betrayal of Jesus. We cannot, however, build up an argument on the fulfilment of this ancient prophecy, because we do not know how far the evangelist, on whose sole testimony the passage before us rests, was influenced by the prophetic word in his record of the event. The ascription of the prophecy to Jeremiah is a slip, unless the latter part of the Book of Zechariah

Now Jesus stood before the governor: and ¹¹ the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest. And when he was accused by the ¹² chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. Then saith Pilate unto him, Hearst thou not ¹³ how many things they witness against thee? And he gave him no answer, not even to one ¹⁴ word: insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly. Now at ¹ the feast the governor was ¹⁵ wont to release unto the multitude one prisoner, whom they would. And they had then a notable ¹⁶ prisoner, called Barabbas. When therefore they ¹⁷ were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ? For he ¹⁸ knew that for envy they had delivered him up.

¹ Or,
a feast

is actually Jeremiah's. It is to be noted, Matthew makes 'I took' into 'they took'; in the Greek, *ἔλαβον* might be either. And he introduces 'the children of Israel', which is not in Zechariah, to fix the guilt of Christ's death on the whole nation.

11-26. BARABBAS PREFERRED TO CHRIST. In Josephus (*Antiq.* xx. 9. 1) the high priest was considered to have acted illegally in assembling the Sanhedrim to condemn 'James the Just' without the consent of the Roman authorities. Here the high priests are most anxious to keep within the law, both of the Jews and of the Romans.

12. The silence of Jesus fixed Pilate's attention on the Silent One. He saw that this was no dangerous political leader; though the accusers had changed the 'Christ' (xxvi. 63) into 'King of the Jews' to rouse the alarm of the governor.

15. The custom of releasing a prisoner at the feast is not elsewhere known. But Pilate fatuously thought that this custom afforded him a good opportunity of releasing a prisoner, who was evidently the victim of envy, innocent of any breach of the law.

16. Barabbas in Syra S. is called Jesus Barabbas. The authority is doubtful, but the same name brings home the choice: Jesus Barabbas or Jesus Christ?

18. *which is called Christ*, i. e. surnamed (cf. i. 16, iv. 18, x. 2).

- 19 And while he was sitting on the judgement-seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that righteous man : for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.
- 20 Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas,
- 21 and destroy Jesus. But the governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? And they said,
- 22 Barabbas. Pilate saith unto them, What then shall I do unto Jesus which is called Christ?
- 23 They all say, Let him be crucified. And he said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out exceedingly, saying, Let him be cruci-
- 24 fied. So when Pilate saw that he prevailed nothing, but rather that a tumult was arising, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent ¹ of the blood
- 25 of this righteous man : see ye *to it*. And all the people answered and said, His blood *be* on us,
- 26 and on our children. Then released he unto

¹ Some ancient authorities read *of this blood: see ye &c.*

19. Only Matthew tells the dream of Pilate's wife. We know that Governors took their wives into the provinces since the time of Augustus, because Tacitus records a protest against the practice (Tac., *Ann.* iii. 3, 4). It was an early morning dream; and it affected the superstitious Roman; he makes several feeble efforts to allay the enmity against Jesus. And when in his weakness he yields, he washes his hands in public to disclaim responsibility.

24. This also is only told by Matthew. The handwashing is illustrated by Deut. xxi. 6, 7 and Ps. xxvi. 6. Every one saw his intention. And the multitude, led by their priests, gladly accepted the responsibility. After all, the guilt of Pilate was secondary, as Jesus shows (John xix. 11). The guilt was on the Jews.

25. His blood seems to be on the head of them and of their children to this day.

them Barabbas : but Jesus he scourged and delivered to be crucified.

¹ Gr. *Prætorium*.
See Mark xv. 16.

² Or, *cohort*

³ Some ancient authorities read *clothed*.

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus ²⁷ into the ¹ palace, and gathered unto him the whole ² band. And they ³ stripped him, and put ²⁸ on him a scarlet robe. And they plaited a crown of thorns and put it upon his head, and a reed ²⁹ in his right hand ; and they kneeled down before

²⁶. *scourged*. It was the barbarous custom of the Romans to scourge before crucifying (Josephus, *B. I. v. 11. 1*).

CH. XXVII. 27-56. THE SACRIFICE.

The mysterious self-offering of Jesus is presented by Matthew in four scenes. In the Prætorium, the crown of thorns (ver. 27-31) ; Golgotha (ver. 32-7) ; the railing of passers-by, priests, and thieves (ver. 38-44) ; the voice from the Cross : the Son of God (ver. 45-54). And then we are told how women were the spectators of the scene (ver. 55-6).

It may be impossible to isolate this narrative from those of the other three evangelists. The seven words from the cross (here we have only one), the repentance of the one malefactor, and many other details, form integral parts of the great transaction. But it is well to see it all with Matthew's eyes, and with his only for a while. From the derision of the soldiers to the sympathetic watching of the women, it forms a noble and complete passage.

27-31. THE PRÆTORIUM AND THE CROWN OF THORNS. Matthew omits the description of the scourging, that appalling brutality of Roman criminal procedure, under which the sufferer often fainted and sometimes died. He alone mentions the reed in the Lord's hand as a mock sceptre.

27. The Prætorium, which meant originally the general's tent in the camp, was the official residence of the procurator in Jerusalem. The 'band' would hardly be the cohort, but the maniple, consisting of 200 men.

28. The cloak would be a soldier's *sagum* ; but, as the purple colour is emphasized both here (Mark xv. 17) and in John (xix. 2), it may have been a cast-off general's cloak. They saluted Him as their imperator !

29. The thorns were not meant to wound the head ; but the common brier of the roadside chanced to be thorny. It is the imagination of later art which makes the thorns tear His brow and pour down drops of blood. The soldiers intended mockery, not torture. Philo mentions how the youth of Alexandria hailed the half-witted Karabas as King of the Jews, intending an insult to Herod Agrippa.

him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the
 30 Jews! And they spat upon him, and took the
 31 reed and smote him on the head. And when
 they had mocked him, they took off from him
 the robe, and put on him his garments, and led
 him away to crucify him.

32 And as they came out, they found a man of
 Cyrene, Simon by name: him they ¹ compelled ^{1 Gr. im-}
 to go *with them*, that he might bear his cross. ^{pressed.}

33 And when they were come unto a place called
 Golgotha, that is to say, The place of a skull,

34 they gave him wine to drink mingled with gall:
 and when he had tasted it, he would not drink.

30. In the Gospel of St. Peter, they spit into His eyes, and slap His cheeks.

31. Is it implied that the scornful crown was left on the sacred head?

32-7. GOLGOTHA. The Aramaic ܩܘܠܬܐ, translated into Latin *calvarium*. The spot took the name perhaps from the bare rounded appearance of the rock; and this led General Gordon to seek the site in the hill with scarped face, and two caves like eye-sockets, outside the Damascus Gate. As the caves, however, are more recent, and the resemblance to a skull is somewhat fanciful, there is no reason to discredit the traditional site of Calvary and the tomb, which, though within the walls of the modern city, was outside the walls in the days of Jesus. It was but a short distance, along what is now called the Via Dolorosa, from the Prætorium (the remains of the pavement are now laid bare) to the place of execution; but the soldiers would not touch the cross, and requisitioned a passer-by, an African Jew; his sons were apparently converted to Christ (Mark xv. 21; Rom. xvi. 13). John, however, makes a point of the fact that Jesus carried the cross Himself outside the city gate (xix. 17). Matthew does not emphasize the fact that the crucifixion was without the walls, which is singular, considering the Old Testament analogies (Num. xv. 35; 1 Kings xxi. 23) and the New Testament symbolism (Heb. xiii. 11).

34. It is also surprising that Matthew fails to point out how the wine and gall fulfilled Ps. lxxix. 21, and the parting of the garments (Ps. xxii. 18).

The wine mingled with gall (taken from LXX, Ps. lxxix. 21, though Nestlé suggests a confusion between גַּרְרָה 'gall' and בִּירָה

And when they had crucified him, they parted 35
his garments among them, casting lots : and they 36
sat and watched him there. And they set up 37
over his head his accusation written, THIS IS
JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then are there 38
crucified with him two robbers, one on the right
hand, and one on the left. And they that passed 39
by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying,
¹ Or, *sanc-* Thou that destroyest the ¹ temple, and buildest 40
tuary it in three days, save thyself : if thou art the Son

‘myrrh’) or with myrrh (Mark xv. 23) was offered as a narcotic. It would be very nasty to drink. He refused it.

35. Matthew hurries over the terrible fact of the crucifying in a participle. But this fact fills and makes the Gospel. It is well to trace the death of Jesus through the New Testament : 1 Thess. ii. 15, iv. 14 ; 1 Cor. viii. 11 ; Rom. viii. 34, xiv. 9 ; Rev. i. 18, ii. 8 ; 1 Pet. iv. 1 ; Acts i. 3, iii. 15, xvii. 3. The cross is mentioned 1 Cor. i. 17, 23 ; ii. 2, 8 ; 2 Cor. xiii. 4 ; Gal. ii. 20 ; iii. 1, 13 ; v. 11, vi. 12 ; Phil. ii. 8 ; iii. 18 ; Col. i. 20, ii. 14 ; Eph. ii. 16 ; Heb. xii. 2 ; 1 Pet. ii. 24 ; Acts ii. 36, iv. 10, v. 30, x. 39, xiii. 29, Rev. xi. 8.

The virtue of our Lord's death runs all through the New Testament : 1 Thess. v. 10 ; 1 Cor. i. 30, xv. 3 ; 2 Cor. v. 14, 18 ; Gal. i. 4, ii. 20, iii. 13 ; Rom. iii. 24, iv. 25, v. 10, 19 ; viii. 32, xiv. 15 ; Col. i. 14, ii. 20 ; Eph. i. 7 ; ii. 16, v. 2, 25 ; 1 Tim. i. 15 ; Tit. ii. 14 ; Heb. i. 3, ii. 9, 14 ; ix. 26, x. 12 ; Rev. i. 5 ; v. 9, 12 ; xiii. 8 ; 1 Pet. i. 2, 18 ; ii. 21, iii. 18 ; Acts viii. 32, xx. 28.

37. The accusation was simply ‘The King of the Jews’ (Mark xv. 26) ; the slight additions in the other three gospels serve to remind us how unimportant a verbal exactitude is. It was the only accusation that could be brought against Him, but even this was unfounded. As He explained to Pilate, He only claimed to be king in a spiritual sense, as a witness of truth. His kingship did not interfere with the Roman Government. It is true that He never was king of the Jews. They would not have Him to reign over them ; they will not yet. But in the sense in which He understood kingship, He was and is increasingly King of men.

38-44. THE RAILING. This comes from the passers-by, who represented the world at large ; the Priests, who represent Judaism ; (the soldiers, mentioned by Luke xxiii. 36, who represent Rome) ; and the thieves, who represent fallen humanity. Happily we know from St. Luke that of this last element half turn to Him and believe.

- 41 of God, come down from the cross. In like manner also the chief priests mocking *him*, with
 42 the scribes and elders, said, He saved others ;
 1 himself he cannot save. He is the King of ^{1 Or, can}
 Israel ; let him now come down from the cross, ^{he not}
 43 and we will believe on him. He trusteth on God ; ^{save him-}
 let him deliver him now, if he desireth him : for ^{self?}
 44 he said, I am the Son of God. And the robbers
 also that were crucified with him cast upon him
 the same reproach.
 45 Now from the sixth hour there was darkness
 over all the ^{2 Or,} land until the ninth hour. And ^{earth}

40. This heartless raillery against a fellow creature dying in anguish is almost incredible to the modern world. We do not detect in ourselves even a tendency to cruelty of this savage kind. Why? His cross has changed us. The saying for which He was condemned (xxvi. 61) is in every one's mouth. It was distorted and misrepresented. But the charge, that He made Himself the Son of God, was true enough. How conclusive their argument was to themselves! A Son of God would save Himself! The world was to learn from this very scene that a Son of God seeks to save others; and so far the charge of the chief priests, scribes, and elders is justified. He could not save Himself, consistently with saving the world.

41. The words of these rabbis exactly fulfil Ps. xx. 8, and so witness that Jesus is the suffering Messias.

42. Would they have believed if He had come down from the Cross? Yes, but what would they have believed? Not the Saviour, for He would have declined His task. They would only believe a Saviour, on condition that He ceased to save!

43. The quotation from Ps. xxii. 8 is only given by Matthew, who was struck by the remarkable fulfilment of the Psalm in the action of the priests. Did evangelist or priests remember Wisdom ii. 16, where the wicked deride the righteous man thus: 'He vaunteth that God is his father. Let us see if his words be true, and let us try what shall befall in the ending of his life. For if the righteous man is God's son, He will uphold him, and He will deliver him out of the hand of his adversaries.'

Matthew alone recalls the scene in the trial (xxvi. 63, 64) in which Jesus said that He was the Son of God.

45-54. THE VOICE FROM THE CROSS: THE SON OF GOD DIES.

45. The three Synoptics all state that at noon darkness came

about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is, My God, my God, ¹ why hast thou forsaken me? And some of them that stood there, when 47 they heard it, said, This man calleth Elijah. And straightway one of them ran, and took a 48 sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. And the rest 49

¹ Or, *why didst thou forsake me?*

on. The Gospel of St. Peter adds the quaint remark, that the Jews feared the sun had set, and the Law forbade the sun to set on a slain criminal. So habitual is the triviality of the human mind, regarding punctilios of human law, when Heaven is protesting against the worst of sins.

The same fragment of St. Peter's Gospel rightly interprets 'all the land' as Judæa. It was a local darkness, not caused by eclipse, but by the death of God's only begotten Son. The darkness lasted from noon till the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice.

46. This is the only one of the seven sayings from the cross recorded by Matthew. Jesus uttered Ps. xxii. 1: He had meditated on the whole psalm as foreshadowing His experience. If on the cross He was consciously quoting the psalm of the suffering Messiah, and the first verse was overheard, we are relieved of the difficulty which some have found in the thought that even for a moment Jesus felt forsaken by God. But on the other hand, this difficulty often disappears, and becomes the deepest well of comfort, in the dark hours of the Christian's experience. To know that He, our Lord and Saviour, in the fulfilment of His sacrifice for sin, felt deserted by God, brings hope and comfort to the trembling human soul that is tempted to utter the same cry.

Apparently he spoke in Aramaic. The Gospel of St. Peter translates it: 'My strength, my strength, thou leavest me.' The bystanders were ignorant of Aramaic, and perhaps of Hebrew: they mistook *Eloi* (my God), for the name of Elijah.

48. The drink is a fulfilment of Ps. lxix. 22, 'They gave me gall to eat and gave me vinegar to drink' (LXX). In Luke xxiii. 36, the sour wine is offered to Him in mockery; it was the *posca*, the Roman soldiers' ordinary drink. In John xix. 28, it was offered in response to a cry from the sufferer, 'I thirst.' In such a scene of anguish and excitement details of this kind inevitably become confused.

49. *the rest said.* In Mark xv. 36 this is said by the soldier who proffered the sponge of wine.

said, Let be ; let us see whether Elijah cometh
 50 to save him.¹ And Jesus cried again with a loud
 51 voice, and yielded up his spirit. And behold,
 the veil of the ² temple was rent in twain from
 the top to the bottom ; and the earth did quake ;
 52 and the rocks were rent ; and the tombs were
 opened ; and many bodies of the saints that had
 53 fallen asleep were raised ; and coming forth out
 of the tombs after his resurrection they entered
 54 into the holy city and appeared unto many. Now
 the centurion, and they that were with him
 watching Jesus, when they saw the earthquake,
 and the things that were done, feared exceed-
 ingly, saying, Truly this was ³ the Son of God.

¹ Many ancient authorities add
And another took a spear and pierced his side, and there came out water and blood.
 See John xix. 34.
² Or, *sanctuary*

³ Or, *a son of God*

50. The end in this narrative comes very quickly. The loud voice is such as is not uncommon in the case of a ruptured heart. In John (xix. 30) the cry was articulate : 'It is finished.'

51. The rending of the veil is mentioned by the three Synoptists. Its significance is seen by the writer of Hebrews ix. 8, x. 19. The veil between the main temple and the Holy of Holies was very costly, it reached from the roof to the ground, and was emblazoned with colours which represented earth and air and fire and sea ; the height was 55 cubits, i. e. 80 feet, and the width 16 cubits, i. e. 24 feet.—Josephus, *Bell. Jud.* v. 5. 4.

What follows—'the earth did quake', &c., to the end of ver. 53—is peculiar to Matthew. The earthquake, however, is mentioned in our fragment of St. Peter's Gospel. The rent rocks are shown in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. But whether we are to think of a physical fact or only of a spiritual truth, conveyed in the scriptural way under a physical image, is not certain, nor is it of great moment.

53. The clause 'after his resurrection' confuses the statement. Apparently we are hearing what happened when the veil was rent ; but by this note of time we see it refers to events some days after. We may surmise that in the perturbation of those days there were many of those apparitions of the departed which are a recognized psychical experience to-day. And the record of these vague experiences remains in this verse.

54. In Mark and Luke the saying is that of the centurion alone. In Luke he only says, 'Really this man was just, i. e.

And many women were there beholding from 55
afar, which had followed Jesus from Galilee,
ministering unto him : among whom was Mary 56
Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and
Joses, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

And when even was come, there came a rich 57
man from Arimathæa, named Joseph, who also

innocent.' In any case the testimony of the centurion to His divine sonship would not be of any value; to a pagan of the Græco-Roman world 'Son of God' had but a low connotation.

55-6. THE WOMEN BEHOLDING. It is not fair to men to say that the women were bolder, and remained when the disciples had fled, for in Luke (xxiii. 49) all the disciples and acquaintance are included in the watching group.

The Galilæan women are mentioned in Luke viii. 1-3. The wife of Zebedee was Salome (xx. 20; Mark xv. 40). These Galilæan friends are distinct from the women of Jerusalem who in feminine sympathy followed Him to Golgotha and were addressed by Him (Luke xxiii. 27-32).

Nothing can exceed the unconscious art of this scene. The great tragedy is transacted. But just as Euripides relieves the strain of a terrible situation by a sweet choric song, so the Gospel narrative rests the heart and brain by ending the crucifixion with the spectacle of loving and grateful women, who reflect the death of their Lord in the depths of tearful eyes and of loyal hearts, beholding from afar. And by this calm ending of the passage, which began with the outrages of the judgement hall, the vision is left on the mind, of all humanity, to the latest time, standing and beholding the cross and the Sufferer. Until the world ends, men and women, redeemed and thrilled with gratitude and joy, will stand beholding.

CH. xxvii. 57-xxviii. THE BURIAL AND RESURRECTION.

57-61. THE BURIAL.

57. *when even was come.* It was Friday, 'the preparation,' as Mark (xv. 42) and Luke (xxiii. 64) state, and as Matthew also knows, ver. 62.

a rich man. This designation is put first, in place of Mark's 'councillor of honourable estate', as a translation of that term. But perhaps Matthew was influenced by the prophecy that Christ should be with 'the rich' in His burial (Isa. liii. 9). Luke dwells on Joseph's moral character only, and tell us that as a Sanhedrist he had not agreed with the action of the Sanhedrim.

Arimathæa. Ramathaim Zophim, the birthplace of Samuel (1 Sam. i. 1).

- 58 himself was Jesus' disciple : this man went to Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. Then
 59 Pilate commanded it to be given up. And Joseph took the body, and wrapped it in a clean linen
 60 cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock : and he rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb, and departed.
 61 And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.
 62 Now on the morrow, which is *the day* after the Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees
 63 were gathered together unto Pilate, saying, Sir,

58. *went to Pilate.* Mark (xv. 43, 45) brings out the fact that it required courage to make the request. It was an avowal of deep sympathy with the dead Christ. According to Roman Law the criminal was left exposed until the body decomposed, unless some one requested permission to bury him. It is remarkable that here from the very first the truth appears, that Christ *dead* evokes a passion of loyalty and love which was not possible while He lived among us. It was expedient for Him to go away, in order to bring out the devotion of men like Joseph and Nicodemus (John xix. 39).

60. *his own new tomb,* sc. the one in which he meant to be laid himself. On the site of what is called Gordon's Golgotha, there is a tomb which enables one to realize the situation ; it is a double chamber scooped out of the face of the rock ; in the inner recess is a rock-bed for the body to lie on ; the mouth of the cave is closed by a heavy slab of stone which can only be moved because it slides back in a groove cut for the purpose.

61. The two Maries of ver. 56. Only Matthew says that they *sat* there. They stood gazing at the cross, but they sat down at the tomb, as if not intending to leave their lifeless Master.

62-6. The guarding of the tomb is peculiar to Matthew. But it is mentioned in the Gospel of St. Peter ; Petronius is given as the name of the centurion ; the soldiers put seven seals on the tomb, and reared a booth to keep the watch. Matthew introduces it because he wishes to record the result in xxviii. 4, 11-15.

62. *the day after the Preparation.* It is singular to describe the more important day, the Sabbath, as the day after the preparation for it. Perhaps the odd phrasing shows that the writer had his eye on Mark xv. 42.

we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made 64 sure until the third day, lest haply his disciples come and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: and the last error will be worse than the first. Pilate said 65 unto them, ¹Ye have a guard: go your way, ²make it *as* sure as ye can. So they went, and 66 made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, the guard being with them.

¹ Or, *Take a guard*
² Gr. *make it sure, as ye know.*

Now late on the sabbath day, as it began to 28 dawn toward the first *day* of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. And behold, there was a great earth- 2 quake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone, and

65. *Ye have a guard*, or rather 'have a guard' imperative. Guard is the Latin *custodia*, very natural on the lips of Pilate. But Latinisms abounded all through the Roman empire; cf. *legiones*, ch. xxvi. 53.

xxviii. 1-10. THE RESURRECTION. The harmony of the four narratives is a study which would lead us far afield. Without forgetting the details in the other three, let us receive the distinct impression of the one before us.

1. *late on the sabbath day*, &c. It should be observed that the Greek *σάββατον* is here translated 'sabbath' and 'week' in the same breath. This is hardly possible. We must keep the single rendering 'week'. It should be: 'Late in the week, as it began to dawn on the first day of another week'. Luke's 'very early' and John's 'while it was yet dark' suggest to Dr. Wright that a 'not' has dropped out from Mark xvi. 2: 'when the sun was *not yet risen*.' It would be four o'clock on that first Easter morning. The loving hearts had lost no time. The other evangelists say that they had come to anoint or embalm the body. In Matthew they have come only to see the tomb.

2. The description of the Resurrection in the Gospel of St. Peter is very grandiose. A crowd comes from Jerusalem and asks the soldiers what they had seen. They had seen two men

3 sat upon it. His appearance was as lightning,
 4 and his raiment white as snow: and for fear of
 him the watchers did quake, and became as dead
 5 men. And the angel answered and said unto
 the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye
 6 seek Jesus, which hath been crucified. He is
 not here; for he is risen, even as he said. Come,
 7 see the place ¹ where the Lord lay. And go
 quickly, and tell his disciples, He is risen from
 the dead; and lo, he goeth before you into
 Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told
 8 you. And they departed quickly from the tomb
 with fear and great joy, and ran to bring his
 9 disciples word. And behold, Jesus met them,
 saying, All hail. And they came and took hold
 10 of his feet, and worshipped him. Then saith

¹ Many ancient authorities read *where he lay*.

out of heaven enter the tomb with great shouting. As they told their story, the multitude saw three emerge from the tomb; the heads of the two reached to heaven, but the head of Him whom they led reached above the heaven. This apocryphal embellishment serves to bring out the extraordinary sobriety and simplicity of our evangelic narrative. None of the four evangelists attempts to describe the resurrection itself. Even the descent of the angel and the rolling away of the stone is by the rest described as already past. Matthew describes it as happening.

4. In Mark the women are frightened at the sight of the angel (xvi. 5); here the guards are afraid.

7. The command to meet Him in Galilee is given by Mark as well. Luke (xxiv. 24) alters this into 'how He said to you while He was yet in Galilee'. Matthew's change of 'as He said to you' into 'lo, I have said to you' is not an improvement.

8. *with fear*. At that point Mark's narrative ends abruptly xvi. 8 (for the concluding passage of the Second Gospel is from another hand). The fear is of the kind which is consistent with great joy.

9-10. This appearance, and 'All hail!', of Jesus, are only in Matthew. John's account, however, in xx. 14-15 seems to cover the same fact. The order to the disciples to go into Galilee, where they shall see Him, is only recorded here.

11-15. This report of the guards and the attempt to silence

Jesus unto them, Fear not : go tell my brethren that they depart into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

Now while they were going, behold, some of ¹¹ the guard came into the city, and told unto the chief priests all the things that were come to pass. And when they were assembled with the ¹² elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, saying, Say ye, His ¹³ disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this ¹ come to the governor's ¹⁴ ears, we will persuade him, and rid you of care. So they took the money, and did as they were ¹⁵ taught: and this saying was spread abroad among the Jews, *and continueth* until this day.

¹ Or, *come to a hearing before the governor*

But the eleven disciples went into Galilee, ¹⁶

them is given in the Gospel of St. Peter, with the confession of the soldiers that 'this was the Son of God', and Pilate's declaration of his own innocence of His blood.

^{12.} *large money.* A great bribe would be necessary, for the soldiers were to confess a fault, falling asleep at their post, which incurred a death penalty.

^{13.} The story was a lame one, hardly capable of standing a judicial inquiry. If they slept, how did they know what happened? If the disciples did it, how did they roll the stone back and carry out the body without disturbing the slumber of the sentries?

Every argument which attempted to condemn or discredit Christ and His work was from the first involved in self-contradiction.

^{15.} In Justin Martyr's time (A. D. 170) the story was elaborated. The chief priests dispersed the false intelligence through the world by means of special messengers: a gospel of the non-resurrection; but the Gospel of the Resurrection triumphed.

^{16.} *into Galilee.* Luke does not know of this appearance in Galilee. Perhaps Paul refers to it in the appearing to 500, 1 Cor. xv. 6, but he does not mention the locality of that event. The scattered notices of the resurrection appearances are hard, perhaps impossible, to fit into a single harmonious narrative.

unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed
 17 them. And when they saw him, they worshipped
 18 *him* : but some doubted. And Jesus came to
 them and spake unto them, saying, All authority
 hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth.
 19 Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the
 nations, baptizing them into the name of the
 Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost :
 20 teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I
 commanded you : and lo, I am with you ¹ always,
 even unto ² the end of the world.

¹ Gr. *all the days.*
² Or, *the consummation of the age*

But the student of history will not discredit an event, especially an event of an unusual kind, because the accounts of it are different and divergent. What is raised beyond all doubt is, that the disciples had visions of Jesus after His death, which convinced them that He was risen from the dead.

the mountain. One would fain believe that it was the Mount near the Sea of Galilee where the Sermon was preached—Kurun Hattin, according to tradition.

17. The candid statement, that they doubted, should reassure us. They were not credulous or even disposed to believe. Their Lord had warned them against being deceived, and they were cautious. If they became firmly convinced of the fact, it was after doubt and inquiry. The conviction was valid.

18. He speaks as already in Heaven.

19. Eusebius, writing before the Nicene Council, quotes this commission, without any mention of the baptism or of the Trinity. The Missionary commandment, however, is beyond all question. This is the proper and inevitable conclusion of the Gospel, that all who know it should make it known to those who do not. The missionary duty is surer even than the obligation of baptism in the name of the Trinity.

make disciples. More than merely 'teach' (Acts xiv. 21).

the name of the Father, &c. This baptismal formula is not given in Mark xvi. 16; nor do the notices of baptism in the New Testament sustain the view that the formula comes from the lips of Jesus: e. g. in Acts ii. 38, viii. 16, x. 48, xix. 5, the baptism is in the single name of the Lord Jesus Christ. And so Rom. vi. 3; Gal. iii. 27; Col. ii. 12.

20. The substance of the teaching is not what He was, nor what He did, but His commandments. Possibly if the Church

had made her message the Teaching of Jesus, and left disciples to infer who He was that taught, the world would have been more ready to receive the Gospel.

But notwithstanding all the errors of the message and the messengers, and the long delay in fulfilling the commission, He has been with His own until now, and will be to the end. The thought of the Parousia recedes in the closing sentence of the Gospel; our thoughts are to rest not so much in the expectation of His return, as in the fact that

HE IS HERE!



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