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AS TRACED BY SAINT MARK



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THE SON OF MAN

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BEING

*Eighty Portions for Private Study, Family Reading,
and Instructions in Church*

BY

HERBERT MORTIMER LUCKOCK, D.D.

CANON OF ELY, SOMETIME PRINCIPAL OF ELY THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE,
AND FELLOW OF JESUS COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

THE LATE BISHOP OF ELY

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PREFACE TO THE NEW AND CHEAPER EDITION

I HAVE had numerous requests from my brother Clergy and others to make these readings from S. Mark's Gospel more accessible to the general public; and the Publishers have kindly consented to reprint them in a less expensive form.

It has been found necessary, from the exigency of the circumstances, to omit all the side-notes¹; this is a matter for regret, as they contained many valuable references to authorities, especially in the Talmud and Mishnah, where additional information on the subjects treated of may be found; there was however no alternative, if the size of the book was to be reduced without actually curtailing the portions themselves.

It is a cause for no little thankfulness on my part that a plan which I was encouraged to carry out under the guidance and auspices of the late Bishop of Ely, has been so favourably received; and I look forward to being able at no distant time to continue it by the issue of a course upon similar lines on the Acts of the Holy Apostles.

H. M. L.

S. Luke's Day, 1889.

¹ The original edition, in 2 vols., with the side-notes, may still be had.

INTRODUCTION

THE following addresses were delivered in substance on Wednesdays and Fridays at the Early Matins in S. Catherine's Chapel within Ely Cathedral. Having myself heard many of them with great interest and profit, I advised their publication, because they seemed likely to be useful in the private study of Holy Scripture, and to be especially fitted for family reading in households consisting of thoughtful and educated persons.

But I had a further reason for urging the publication of these addresses, in that they appeared to recognise a need which has been long felt, I believe, by devout members of many congregations—the need of regular instruction in Holy Scripture,—and to supply a good example of the way in which such need might be met by the Parochial Clergy.

There is probably no Branch of the Catholic Church in which more Sermons are preached than in the Anglican Communion; there is perhaps also no Branch of it in which there is less didactic exposition of the sacred text; less explanatory teaching as to the Constitution and Ordinances of the Church. The result is that the majority of ordinary Church people, when called upon to defend their own system, know less about it than the members of any other religious body. The sermons preached to our congregations are almost exclusively hortatory. It may be questioned whether the constant listening to addresses whose sole object is to awaken the conscience and move the affections, does not tend in some degree to defeat

its own object. At any rate this kind of preaching requires, I am persuaded, to be supplemented by careful and regular expository teaching. Something analogous to this is adopted in the conduct of those Parochial Missions which are becoming familiar amongst us. The Mission Sermon is usually followed by the simpler and more direct "Instruction;" and these Instructions have in many places been that part of the Mission which has left the most abiding results. In a similar way it appears to me that the usual Sunday Sermon requires to be varied by addresses of a less rhetorical and more didactic character, which may lead to a better understanding of the Bible and the Prayer-Book.

Where there is a Daily Service it would, I feel assured, be very profitable if upon the Wednesday and Friday the Parish Priest were to read with his people short portions of some book of Holy Scripture with a brief *explanatory* comment.

When, as is the custom in so many Churches, there is only one Week-day Evening Service, such a systematic reading and exposition of a Gospel would, in my opinion, be more useful to the people, and less burdensome to the Parish Priest, than an additional sermon. In those places where there are no Week-day Services (although I am bound to say that, with the Order for Morning and Evening Prayer daily throughout the Year meeting us on the first page of the Prayer-Book, *no* Church ought to be shut up from Sunday to Sunday) it might, I think, be desirable to make the Sunday Morning Sermon an expository Address or Instruction, reserving the Sermon proper for the afternoon or evening service.

The addresses now published may, it is hoped, lead to a more general adoption of this practice of Scripture Exposition in Church.

I heartily commend them to the Clergy of my Diocese for use in their Churches. In some they may be read exactly as they are printed. In others, they may be expanded or modified according to the character of the congregation.

To the younger Clergy especially they will be suggestive of the way in which other books of the New Testament may be treated, with the same profit to themselves and their people, which has, I believe, attended this attempt to read with an intelligent congregation the Gospel of S. Mark.

J. R. ELIENS.

PALACE, ELY,
All Saints' Day, 1884.

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THE Bishop of Ely has explained in the Introduction the main object which I have had in view in publishing these volumes on S. Mark's Gospel. I have long felt that in an age when purely "subjective" and hortatory preaching has become so popular, there is danger of the Church forgetting that she has an authoritative commission to teach as well as to admonish—not only to point out the way of salvation (though of necessity this must always be her highest duty), but also to make the Sacred History intellectually as well as spiritually edifying. In days when works of secular instruction are made so attractive, it seems most desirable not to lose sight of the fact that the Bible is a storehouse for the literary student, as well as a guide to eternal life.

Whenever it has been my privilege to give addresses at the early Cathedral Service on week-days, I have endeavoured, according to my ability, to offer to the congregation instruction rather than exhortation; at the same time I have sought to maintain their religious character by briefly suggesting at the close, in what way the immediate subject may be practically applied, leaving the fuller consideration for subsequent meditation in private.

After systematically going through a portion of S. Mark in this way, the Bishop, who was usually present at these services, desired me to commit the addresses to writing, and prepare them for publication, to further the object which his Introduction shows that he has so closely at heart. I would that the

result of my labours were more worthy of his *imprimatur*, and better calculated to illustrate the principles which he seeks to establish.

For the manifold writings, both ancient and modern, to which I am indebted, I must direct the reader to the marginal references, and the notes which are subjoined to the several "portions." I have, I trust, as a rule acknowledged any obligation that seemed to call for acknowledgment.

The frequent reference to the Talmud and Mishnah will show that many illustrations have been taken from Hebrew Literature. This happily is becoming an attractive source of information to all students of the Gospel History; and we would fain believe that the day is for ever closed when "Jews refused to teach those who were not of their faith," and when, almost worse still, too many Churchmen "desired nothing better than the entire suppression of Jewish learning." In this branch of my studies I, in common with many of this generation at Cambridge, owe a large debt of gratitude for the self-denying labours of a Tutor, the Rev. P. H. Mason, who almost single-handed kept alive the study of Hebrew in the University. For special assistance in preparing this book, I offer my sincere thanks to Dr. Schiller-Szinessy, the Reader in Talmudic and Rabbinic Literature at Cambridge. He has been ready at all times to place his copious stores of Jewish knowledge at my service; I have never applied to him for information without obtaining all that I required. Almost all the passages quoted from Hebrew authorities in the following pages, I have read with him in the originals, and we have verified together every reference. I trust therefore that the Jewish information, as far as it goes, will be accepted with confidence.

Two friends, the Archdeacon of Sudbury, and one of my brother chaplains, the Rev. H. F. St. John of Dinmore, have also kindly undertaken to revise the proof-sheets, and I am indebted to them for many suggested improvements made in the course of their revision.

The troublesome and usually uninteresting task of compiling an Index has been converted into a labour of love in the hands of my eldest daughter. I believe it will be found very fairly exhaustive, and will largely contribute to the convenience of the reader.

No one can realise more strongly than myself how open to criticism these pages are. I have probably aimed at far too much in attempting to adapt them to the threefold purpose stated on the Title-page. I cannot but think that they will be found useful for private study and for family reading; but I dare not feel confident that they will answer the main end for which they have been written, and awaken in the Clergy a desire to cultivate more largely the office of "teaching," which can only be neglected with harm and loss to the Church. If they fail, I shall still be able to look back to many hours of delightful, and, I hope, not unprofitable, study of the Life of Him "in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." I pray that they may meet with acceptance only in proportion as they tend to the best interests of the Church, and the greater glory of God.

H. M. L.

COLLEGE, ELY,
The Feast of All Saints, 1884.

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I

Characteristics of S. Mark's Gospel

S. MARK I. 1

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

THE authority upon which the Gospel Histories are based is a subject of special attraction and interest. This is not because it has been assailed by hostile critics, for by far the majority of Christians are ready to accept the united testimony of the early Fathers and Doctors, and the decrees of the Church assembled in Council. But most men feel that, without surrendering in any degree their deference to antiquity, they have a right to work out for themselves the arguments upon which the several Gospels were admitted into the Canon of Scripture.

Now, touching the veracity of the first and the last, there could never have been any doubt from the moment that their authorship was admitted. S. Matthew and S. John had been eye-witnesses from the beginning to the end, and they were of the number of those to whom a promise was given of supernatural direction and help in recalling forgotten facts. The other two, though written by men who were neither companions of Jesus nor heirs of the same promise, were indirectly influenced to a large extent by those who were so privileged.

S. Luke, without claiming to have witnessed our Lord's life, tells us that he had made it a subject of deep research, and followed with careful attention what the Apostles had told him. Furthermore, he was generally believed to have written

under the guidance of S. Paul,¹ who was placed on a level of authority with the Twelve through visions and revelation.

S. Mark was even more largely influenced, and that, by the very chief of the Apostles. The tie that bound him first to S. Peter was one of spiritual sonship. Converted probably by what he heard in his mother's house from the Apostle's lips, he continued in after times, with certain interruptions of longer or shorter duration, to sit at his feet and receive his teaching upon Sacred History. There is an unbroken testimony from the earliest age to his having filled the office of "interpreter" to S. Peter. The expression, it is true, admits of various shades of meaning, but can hardly imply less than that he was associated with him in literary work, and became the exponent of his mind. This would supply to the Evangelist much that he missed from not being an "eye-witness and minister of the word." This influence may be traced in the following manner. S. Mark himself, except on rare occasions,² could not have been in our Lord's company, and yet many of the scenes described in his Gospel betray the hand of an eye-witness. It will suffice to notice a few examples. There is first the oft-recurring "immediately,"³ or one of its equivalents, bespeaking the presence of the writer. There are unimportant details which would catch at once the eye of a spectator:—The paralytic was "borne by four" men. "They took him even as he was." "He was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on the pillow." "Neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf." They "sit down by companies upon the green grass." "They found the colt tied at the door without, at a place where two ways met." "His raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller on earth can

¹ Besides direct notices in the Fathers of the connection between them, we would refer to a close affinity in their conception of the universality of the message of redemption and forgiveness, and to coincidences such as are found in their accounts of the Institution of the Eucharist.

² John Mark was the son of one Mary, who lived at Jerusalem, and may well therefore have seen Jesus from time to time. If, moreover, S. Mark xiv. 51, 52 is an account of what happened to himself, then he certainly was an eye-witness of one of the closing scenes.

³ εὐθὺς is translated in the Authorised Version by a variety of English words: "forthwith," "presently," "anon," "straightway," "bye and bye," and "immediately." Something is certainly lost by such capricious renderings.

white them." "He commanded that something should be given her to eat." Added to all these are the numerous references to the expression of our Lord's countenance upon divers occasions. Now it will be observed that some of these details belong to scenes where only the chosen Three were present; and that of these S. Peter was the source of the information admits of little doubt when other circumstances are considered. Great prominence is given throughout to his faults and failings, while much that redounds to his credit is carefully suppressed. For instance, S. Mark records our Lord's severe rebuke, "Get thee behind Me, Satan," but passes over the splendid eulogy that preceded: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church." Again, it is surely not accidental that he mentions in the account of the Apostle's denial the two warnings given by the two cock-crowings. It was an aggravation of his guilt that he should have fallen in the face of a double hindrance.

One more testimony to Petrine influence is found in the scene in the courtyard of the High Priest's palace. All the Evangelists speak of S. Peter being with the servants; S. John adds that he warmed himself; but S. Mark and S. Luke¹ preserve a very significant detail, the meaning of which is lost in the English version, "at the fire." It is rather "with his face to the light." The circumstance was well remembered by S. Peter as that which most probably led the bystanders to recognise and detect him.

All this affords convincing proof of what the Fathers have handed down, and satisfies us as to the source of the Evangelist's authority for what he wrote.

Now it is worth while to discover the object which the writer kept mainly in view. In the mystic pages of Ezekiel there is a wonderful vision of "four living creatures,"—a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle. They were interpreted in early

¹ At first sight the fact that this is common to SS. Mark and Luke weakens the argument, but it is worthy of notice that there are incidents peculiar to these two Evangelists, which are most easily explained on the supposition that they were the result of their communication with each other when together, as we find they were, from Colossians iv. 10-14, and Philemon 24. Such a detail as the mention of the blaze of the fire leading to S. Peter's detection, if told to S. Luke by S. Mark, would be sure to impress itself on his memory.

Christian times as typical of the four Gospels,¹ which represent the Humanity, the Royalty, the Priesthood, and the Divinity of Jesus Christ. But there has been considerable diversity in the appropriation of the several emblems—mainly, however, in respect of the first two. S. Augustine had no hesitation in assigning the Lion to S. Matthew and the man to S. Mark; but S. Jerome with a singular want of discernment adopted the reverse. Then Christian Art came in and indorsed the view of the latter. The building of the great Cathedral in the Piazza at Venice,² with which S. Mark's name is indissolubly linked, and the adoption of "the Lion of S. Mark" as its crest by the Venetian Senate, stereotyped the mistake for centuries.

We pass by the manifold marks of Royalty,³ which may be found in the first Gospel, and content ourselves with discovering traces of the Humanity in every part of the second. It is true that S. Mark begins with the confession that Jesus was "the son of God," which won for his father in the faith that glorious eulogy,⁴ but it is followed by numberless incidents and expressions which show how he loved to dwell upon the Human and Personal side of His character. He notices again and again the lights and shadows that passed over His Face:—"He looked round about." "He looked round about upon all things." "He looked upon them with anger." "Then Jesus, beholding him, loved him." (There must have been something in His expression which revealed His yearning.) So, too, he records His human feelings:—"He sighed." "He sighed deeply in His spirit." He was "moved with com-

¹ They were referred to other things also, of which there is a full account in Is. Williams on Study of the Gospels, ch. ii. Some Fathers went so far as to regard them as directly prophetic of the Evangelists; but it is safer to accept them as typical or emblematical. The Lion, as king of beasts, and as belonging to the "royal tribe of Judah" (Rev. v. 5), symbolises Christ's Sovereignty; the ox, as the sacrificial victim, the Atoning Sacrifice made by the Great High Priest; the eagle, as flying in the heavens, the Divine Life.

² Venetian merchants are said to have brought S. Mark's relics from Alexandria in 815 A.D., and his legendary history has been perpetuated in endless pictures, and not infrequently with the emblem of the Lion.

³ The "Regal" character of the first Gospel is illustrated especially by the Genealogy through a line of kings, by the numerous parables of the "kingdom," and by an air of authority assumed throughout by our Lord, not to name a variety of details, for which cf. Is. Williams.

⁴ The words are absent from the Sinaitic MS.

passion." Again, is there no reference to His weariness, in the observation, "They took Him even as He was in the ship"? none to His human tenderness, in the picture of His taking the little children in His arms? It has been observed also that "His condescension to human infirmities, His coming down to meet our weakness," is especially marked in two miracles of healing recorded by S. Mark alone.

While then in S. Matthew we bow the knee with the Eastern kings before Him Who was born "King of the Jews"; while we read the charter of our salvation in the pages of S. Luke; while we soar with S. John on his eagle wings into the very highest heaven, and realise the Pre-existence of the Word, it is to S. Mark more especially that we turn for the life of Him Who was "touched with a feeling of our infirmities," Who, as the Perfect Man, has left us an example that we should follow His steps.

II

The Preaching of the Baptist

S. MARK I. 2-6

2. As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send My messenger before Thy face, which shall prepare Thy way before Thee. 3. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight. 4. John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. 5. And there went out unto him all the land of Judæa, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins. 6. And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey.

WE often speak of a "royal road," or "king's highway," by which we mean one that has been prepared beforehand, from which all obstacles have been removed, to assure a smooth and easy journey for the king or noble whenever he undertakes it.

Such a highway Isaiah seven centuries before had predicted should be made for the King of kings: "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain." Malachi had taken up his parable, and repeated the declaration: "Behold, I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me," and had closed the scroll of ancient prophecy with the words, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet."¹

¹ "The Tishbite" found its way into the LXX. version, and appeared to imply the return of the *personal* Elijah rather than the advent of one who should come in the likeness of his spirit. For the geography of Thisbe, and the correctness of reading in 1 Kings xvii. 1, cf. Smith's Bib. Dict. *in loc.*

From that day onward the Jews have lived and still live in expectation of the prophet's return.¹ They place a splendid chair for him at the rite of Circumcision, and set the door wide open to welcome him. The noblest cup is filled for him on the first two nights of the Passover. When treasures are found which no one claims, they are put aside, and if perplexing difficulties arise, they are left "till Elijah comes," who will restore and settle all things.

Just when this eager hope had reached its highest pitch, He by Whose Providence everything happens at the right and at no other time, caused His servant, John the Baptist, "to be wonderfully born," and to grow up "in the spirit and power of Elias," as the forerunner of His kingdom.

The points of resemblance between the two prophets are very striking. All that we are told of Elijah's early years is summed up in the words, "Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead:" but brief as they are, they are full of suggestion. Gilead was "a rocky region," a land of forests rather than of cities, isolated from the rest of Palestine. It was in such separation and exclusion that he was trained, and taught to stand alone, against the days when he would be called to confront a profligate court, and contend single-handed with the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal.

So with the Baptist; all that is recorded of his life during the thirty years' probation for his office is gathered into a single verse: "The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel." And when he came forth to his work he revived at once the recollections of Elijah.

Like him in his rough exterior—"the long-haired man with a leathern girdle"²—with the same sparseness of diet, the same endurance of hardness and poverty, the same fearless, undaunted courage. And just as the elder prophet had gained his strength in retirement, so John had realised amid the awful stillness of his desert life the greatness and nearness

¹ Edersheim, vol. ii. App. viii., has collected a mass of Rabbinic tradition about the prophet.

² Literally "a lord of hair." In LXX. *ἀνθρωπος δασύς*. "Leathern" is simply "of skin," as always elsewhere.

of God. Though he knew that he "had no friend but God," the consciousness of His friendship was just that without which he would have been impotent for his work; and we can well believe that it made itself felt. Like the after-glow of the Divine Presence on the Lawgiver's face, fresh from communing in the mount, it inspired the people with awe, and held them spell-bound when he spoke.

Now, apart from his resemblance to the expected prophet, what was the secret of his influence? For there is no question that he exercised a marvellous fascination over his countrymen. We may sum it up by the word "reality." In an age of hollowness and hypocrisy never equalled before or since, such a characteristic was bound to startle men and arrest their attention. The Baptist, if any one, practised what he preached. His protest against sin was embodied in his example. Take a single illustration from his habit and dress. He came to denounce luxury and soft clothing and sumptuous fare, and he was a living example of the austerity which he called for. And how many preachers have been prompted to imitate him! SS. Martin and Dominic, and Anselm and Boromeo, and a host of others, have themselves worn the same externals of severity, as the surest way of recommending the self-denial they sought to inculcate. And though such asceticism is deprecated in the nineteenth century, history bears abundant witness to its power in the past. It was from a hard life in the desert that SS. Gregory Nazianzen and Basil came forth to preach with such success; and Simon Stylites was by no means a solitary instance to show how men of active lives and varied occupations, how even kings, burdened with imperial cares, were eager to seek counsel and direction from a lonely and austere ascetic.

So when the Baptist came, men were drawn irresistibly to his feet.¹ "There went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judæa, and all the region round about Jordan." It was a mixed multitude of almost every class. The other

¹ "The idea of the wilderness was sacred to the Jews." "From it," say the Rabbis, "came the Law, the Tabernacle, the Sanhedrim, the Priesthood, and the office of the Levites. Even the kingship, and indeed every good gift which God granted to Israel, came from the desert." Quoted by Geikie, i. 392; also by Sepp. ii. 41.

Evangelists help us to realise its heterogeneous character. There were Pharisees,¹ whose scrupulous routine of external observance had woven around them a web of self-satisfied pride; and Sadducees, whose reaction from superstition had landed them in a cold and heartless infidelity. Among these there would be followers of Shammai, cleaving to tradition and rigidly orthodox; sympathisers also with his opponent Hillel, just emerging from that slavery to the letter which had taken the very life out of their religion.² There were soldiers, too, who, through the lawless rapacity of their generals, had learned to think only of loot and plunder; and the hated publicans,³ with their overreaching and fraudulent exactions, the byword for all that was lowest and most contemptible—all were there, and for all he had the same message, "Repent." The Rabbis have a wonderful comment on the import of that message. "If," they say, "Israel would repent, they would be redeemed."

His voice was like an earthquake, "the wrath to come," "the uplifted axe," and it sent a shudder, as well it might, through the whole land. It was the echo of what Daniel had heard: "I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven: he cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches."

God knows whether history is repeating itself, and the national vices of another country are preparing a similar judgment to that from which S. John would have saved Jerusalem. There are terrible revelations of a spreading unbelief—active and determined unbelief—and they are such as to make every

¹ S. Luke vii. 30 implies that they did not submit to the Rite of Baptism.

² The above distinction is not always so marked, and instances are quoted from *Edujoth* (of the Mishnah) to show that sometimes Hillel was more severe than Shammai. They were the last of the five "Couples" who filled up the interval between the death of Simon the Just, the last of the Great Synagogue, and the Advent of our Lord.

³ In the Greek the title is *τελώνης*, a contractor for the revenue, a term equally applicable to the equestrian capitalists at Rome, who made the contract in the first instance, as to the native tax-gatherers, to whom they sublet them. The term "publican" arose from paying the sum *in publicum*, i. e. the Treasury at Rome, which was done by the Roman knights, not by the provincial collectors. The retention of the term, therefore, in the Revised Translation is unfortunate, apart from the modern acceptance of it.

thoughtful Englishman fall upon his knees and pray God for a second Baptist to startle us to repentance.

“Life is real, life is earnest.” That was the burden alike of the preacher’s precept and example ; and just in proportion as individuals acknowledge the obligation to make it such, will the world be ready to welcome the returning Lord with the cry, “Lo, this is our God ; we have waited for Him, and He will save us : this is the Lord ; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.”

III

The Baptism of Jesus

S. MARK I. 7-11

7. And preached, saying, There cometh One mightier than I after me, the latchet of Whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. 8. I indeed have baptized you with water: but He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.

9. And it came to pass in those days, *that* Jesus came from Nazar-

eth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. 10. And straight-way coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him: 11. and there came a voice from heaven, *saying*, Thou art My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.

It was a time of eager expectation, and the news that a prophet had appeared wrought the people's hopes to the highest pitch; and when John stood by the banks of the Jordan, and with a voice of power and persuasion called upon them to wash and be clean, "there went out unto him all the land of Judæa."

But he would not have his mission misunderstood; his was only a symbolical¹ washing of water; it was to be followed, if their repentance were true, by a baptism of fire and the Holy Spirit, which should purge the conscience and make them new creatures. His work was preparatory. Great as he might seem to them, he was as far inferior to his Successor as a slave is below his master; he was not even fit to carry His shoes or untie their latchet.²

¹ Just as in the Mosaic Dispensation it was enjoined that no one might appear in the Presence of God till he had washed in the Laver at the door of the Tabernacle, so the open Advent of God among men must be preceded by a mighty cleansing from the defilement of sin.

² It was the part of the slave to attend upon his master at the bath, and to

The words had scarcely passed his lips when the Greater than he appeared; ay, He was in their midst all the time, and neither he¹ nor they knew it. "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan to John, to be baptized of him."² The Baptist was staggered by the bare thought that He, Whose forerunner he was—for Whom he had just declared his unworthiness to perform the most menial office—should seek at his hands the baptism of repentance—the baptism of sinners. No wonder that "he forbad Him," and exclaimed, "I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?"

Now it is not possible for us to understand the whole mystery of this act, but we may reverently consider some of the motives which prompted the amazing condescension.

First, then, it may have been to consecrate water for the remission of sins. Just as the brooding of the Spirit of God upon the face of the waters at the first creation reduced order out of chaos, and prepared that element for all the purifications of the first Dispensation; so when the moral re-creation of the world was inaugurated the operation of the same Blessed Agent, descending upon our Lord in the river Jordan, sanctified water to the mystical washing away of sin.

Again, it may have been that He designed thereby to be made one with His brethren, or to taste for their sakes at the outset of His ministry that curse of sin which he felt in all its intolerable burden at the close, before he cried, "My God, My God, why didst Thou forsake Me?"

We know that He had no sins to confess, no stains of a guilty conscience to wash away, for "He was holy, harmless, and undefiled;" but that He might be "touched with a feeling of our infirmities," He mixed with a crowd of sin-laden

perform these menial duties. The connection is well expressed in the oft-misinterpreted passage, Ps. lx., "Moab is my wash-pot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe." Moab and Edom are both to be reduced to a menial condition. He will wash his feet in the one and toss his shoes to the other.

¹ It is a question how far the Baptist knew Jesus personally before the Baptism. The chief texts bearing upon the subject are S. Matt. iii. 14 and S. John i. 31-33. Cf. Mill on Pantheistic Principles, ii. 1-5.

² The traditional sites of the Baptism are about two hours' walk from Jericho. The Greek and Latin Churches have fixed upon separate sites, separated from each other two or three miles. Pilgrims flock thither to bathe from all parts. Cf. Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, 615.

souls, and, as though He were Himself a sinner, sought a sinner's cleansing in the baptism of repentance.

Another motive He has expressly revealed. When the Baptist shrank back from an act that at first must have seemed nothing short of a profanation, his hesitation was overcome by the request, "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."

"I come," He seems to say, "to set an example of perfect obedience, and whatsoever the Father has laid upon Me of duty and requirement that will I do." "Thus it becometh us." He does not say, "Thus it is necessary," for that would have implied that He needed cleansing. All that was incumbent upon Him was a perfect acquiescence in His Father's Will. It is true the Law had provided no Baptism of repentance, but if, as He knew, the Baptism of John was "of heaven," He was as much bound to accept this, as were Moses or Aaron any of those Levitical ordinances which God had expressly enjoined.

And yet once more, underlying this resolution of obedience was the consciousness of a deep humiliation. His whole life from Bethlehem to Golgotha was one unbroken course of self-abasement; but it reached its lowest depth in His Baptism. To have every word misinterpreted, every act, even of mercy and compassion, misconstrued; to be accused of working through the very agency which He came to tread under foot,—all this must have been most galling to hear; but to be told that by His Own confession He was a sinner, one with publicans and harlots, and that by His Own act and deed He admitted His guilt, and sought to have it removed,—such self-abasement is more than man can either measure or conceive.

And in this consummate act He did indeed "fulfil all righteousness," for humiliation is the very keynote of the religion which He came to enforce and illustrate.

It was the conviction of this that led S. Augustine to appeal so earnestly to his friend to submit to the discipline of Christ and fortify himself by the self-same exercise. "Demos-thenes," he said, "when asked what was the first rule of oratory, replied, 'Pronunciation,' and when asked for the second rule, replied, 'Pronunciation,' and being asked again

for the third, still answered, 'Pronunciation.' So if you should put question after question to ascertain the precepts of Christianity, I should tell you that I cared for nothing but self-abasement, though I might possibly be obliged to mention other things."

Now, if we need encouragement, we may find it in the fact that the submission of our Lord was immediately followed by a signal manifestation of Divine favour.¹ Straightway coming up out of the water, "He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased."

He saw, and the Baptist saw, but not the bystanders. It was doubtless, as with S. Stephen, who "saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God," while to the unpurged eyes of the wicked persecutors no such vision was vouchsafed, for spiritual things are discerned only by spiritual men.

Now it will be well for us to remember that our great Example was most highly exalted just when His humiliation was deepest; that it was when He had made Himself one with the sons of men that He was declared to be the Son—the beloved Son—of God. It is a pledge that the lowly submissive spirit will be greatly sanctified, and that there is no surer way to win the approval of God than by yielding our wills to the authority of those set over us by the Lord, and striving to carry out the rules of the Church in the spirit of Him Who accepted at once what His Father had appointed. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble."

¹ There was an old tradition that, in addition to the attesting signs mentioned in Holy Scripture, "a fire was kindled over Jordan." Cf. Justin Martyr, Dial. c. Tryph. 88; Epiphanius, Hær. xxx. 13.

IV

Our Lord's Temptation

S. MARK I. 12, 13

12. And immediately the Spirit driveth Him into the wilderness. 13. And He was there in the wilderness

forty days, tempted of Satan ; and was with the wild beasts ; and the angels ministered unto Him.

THERE is a special attraction for us in the story of our Lord's Temptation, and it lies in this : it is the one page which He must have written, as it were, by His Own hand ; a personal revelation of what no human eye but His Own could possibly have witnessed.

His miracles and sermons had been seen or heard by many, and the memory of them was cherished and handed down from mouth to mouth ; but that strange conflict with the Evil One—that triple wrestling with His ghostly enemy—it was witnessed by no earthly spectator. Alone He had trodden the winepress of temptation ; alone He had vanquished His foe, and He alone could repeat to the Apostle or Evangelist its wonderful history. And we feel quite sure that of all the marvels they were called upon to record, nothing could have filled them with such amazement as this revelation from His Own lips.

Now it would be no little satisfaction if we could identify the scene, but it is surrounded with uncertainty. It may have been the wilderness of Jericho, the Quarantania of later days, that region of barren limestone rock with its endless fissures and caverns, where hermits have often fled from the world, where year after year pious pilgrims encamped for penance

and prayer, because they believed that a vivid realisation of their Saviour's victory would make resistance easier and deliverance more certain.¹ Or it may have been that He was carried by the Spirit into the more distant desert of Arabia, to the scene of Elijah's preternatural fast of forty days, where Moses also had tarried in the mount for a like period, and "did neither eat bread nor drink water;" and this would complete the analogy. The Three who appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration had each inaugurated a vast Dispensation; each had been prepared for the work by the same miraculous fast, and in the same silent and secluded spot.

But wherever the desert lay, what was it that Jesus Christ was subjected to? S. Mark is very brief in his description, but it is most suggestive.

"He was with the wild beasts." Is this only one of those graphic touches which this vivid writer so often gives us? Was it a forcible way of describing a total absence of human sympathy? No doubt it served this purpose, but this was not all. When we recognise the correspondence between this and Adam's temptation, our thoughts fly at once to Paradise, and we remember that he too was with the wild beasts, and that God had given him dominion over them, and that during the brief duration of his innocence he must have exercised it unfeared and unfearing. And we fancy we can see in this short but pregnant sentence a hint that He Who came to inaugurate an era of restoration, and bring back the times of man's innocence, was not unmindful of the lower creatures and their subjection to vanity. It was a promise of what should one day come to pass when broken harmonies should be restored, and the prediction of Eliphaz receive its fulfilment, and man "should be in league with the stones of the field, and the beasts of the field should be at peace with him."

It matters little that we can point to no evidence of its accomplishment as yet, because with the Lord "a thousand years are but as one day, and one day as a thousand years." There is no question that the hope was created, and that it laid hold upon the mind of the early Christians, in support of

¹ Thomson testifies that Copts and Abyssinians occasionally visit the place now for the same purpose.

which we have the testimony of the Catacombs,¹ where our Lord is so frequently represented in the character of Orpheus attracting wild animals of divers kinds by the sound of his lyre. The same was perpetuated by later legends, which made the surpassing goodness of S. Francis throw a spell of mysterious influence, not only over his fellow-creatures, but over birds of the air and beasts of the field.

Of the Temptation itself S. Mark speaks with even more than his usual brevity. We are obliged to look for the details to S. Matthew and S. Luke. From them we find that Jesus was tried at every point. Three forms of temptation only are spoken of, but they are intended to embrace all that man is liable to. They were the same that were presented to Adam—"the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life."

"Command that these stones be made bread." The appetite craves for food: give rein to the indulgence of your lower nature; if you cannot satisfy it in one way, have recourse to another; you may not always be able to choose your mode of subsistence, but you must obtain it somehow.

"Cast Thyself down" from the pinnacle.² Make an ostentatious display of your power and win the admiration of men.

"All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me." Seek wealth and power; you know not what influence they will give you in the world; have no scruples, therefore, about the means—think only of the end.

Or we may look at them in another light, as persuasive of mistrust, presumption, and avarice.

Of mistrust: God has forgotten you—take care of yourself, for is not self-preservation a duty incumbent upon every one?

Of presumption: If you are a Christian you will be safe,

¹ Cf. Catacombs of Rome, by the author of *The Buried Cities of Campania*, 145; Stanley's *Eastern Church*, Lect. vi.; and the Author's observations in *After Death*, 83, 84.

² This may have been either on the *στοὰ βασιλική*, from which the descent into the valley was most precipitous. It would have been a most appropriate spot if the Temptation was simply to test His supernatural power; but if it had for its object a public display of it, then it was more probably an apex of the building overlooking one of the Courts of the Israelites, about 200 feet high.

do what you will and go where you may;¹ it was in view of this that a guardian angel was appointed to keep you from falling.

Of avarice: If you have set your heart especially upon some one thing, be prepared to make a sacrifice to obtain it; the principle of compensation runs through life.

Such are the forms under which the Tempter tries the mettle of the Christian character of what sort it is; and if he be met in the same spirit and with the same weapons as he was in the wilderness, the test will be satisfied.

S. Mark closes his account with the notice that "angels ministered unto Him." We find elsewhere that their ministration only began when the Tempter left Him. They gave Him no support whilst He was passing through it, as in the Agony, but stood aloof as spectators of the struggle, waiting to see what Humanity was capable of, and only stepped in at the close to honour Him for His victory and enhance His satisfaction. Men share this blessed experience when they feel that inward sense of joy and peace which crowns every success in the conflict of life.

An objection has been raised that as an example the Temptation of our Lord is a failure; that it can be no real help to us, because by reason of His sinlessness successful resistance on His part was a foregone conclusion. The whole subject is full of mystery. Holy Scripture teaches, directly² and indirectly,³ that He was incapable of sin, and also that He was tempted. They appear irreconcilable statements, but, like the doctrines of Freewill and Predestination, they will be

¹ This will recall a familiar story. A Christian woman, trusting to be preserved by her principles, ventured into a place of a questionable character and came back "possessed." When the exorcist asked the evil spirit how he dared to enter into a Christian, his answer was, "Why not, when I found her upon my own ground?"

² Heb. iv. 15.

³ 1st, The union of the Divine and Human involved impeccability, *e.g.* the Beatific Vision consequent upon such union is inconsistent with a capacity for sin. 2d, The Atonement necessitated the perfection of His Nature. The typical victim was free from all defects, either natural or accidental. The Antitype the same, Heb. vii. 26. Heb. ii. 17 must be read in connection with what follows. "In all things" is modified by the object to be attained, *viz.* the reconciliation of sinners, which can only be effected by a perfect Being. It seems impossible, therefore, that the *posse non peccare* can satisfy the requirements of the case, but *non posse peccare* alone.

fully harmonised when we see no longer "through a glass darkly." We can, however, obtain a glimpse at the reality of the Temptation. For instance, He was hungry ;¹ He had a human desire and craving for food, which nature prompted Him to gratify. Now it would have been easy for Him to turn the stones into bread to satisfy His hunger, as He satisfied the famished crowds in the wilderness ; but to do that under the circumstances at the bidding of the Tempter would be to act against the Will of God, which was the law of His life.

Thus on one side there was a strong desire, albeit in no way a sinful one ; on the other there were facilities for its gratification. It was a real temptation, and His victory lay in making the lower will bend to the higher. Possibly His example would have been more forcible and helpful, had He been capable of sin and triumphed over the tendency, but such a nature would have impaired the efficacy of the Atonement. The lesser would have been gained, the greater lost.

¹ I owe this pertinent illustration to that very thoughtful and helpful book, Hutchings' *The Mystery of the Temptation*.

The Call of the Apostles

S. MARK I. 14-20

14. Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, 15. and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

16. Now as He walked by the sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. 17. And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after Me,

and I will make you to become fishers of men. 18. And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed Him. 19. And when He had gone a little farther thence, He saw James the *son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also *were* in the ship mending *their* nets. 20. And straightway He called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after Him.

THOUGH it is manifest that the individual character of the Evangelist impressed itself upon all that he wrote, it is no less certain that he was supernaturally influenced to write what was best fitted to complete the fulness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Now it was foretold in the Old Testament that "the Coming One" would in His Own person represent the threefold office of prophet, priest, and king, and thereby, as gathering into one all who were consecrated by the anointing oil, prove an indefeasible right to the title of the Messiah, or Anointed. It could hardly then have been undesigned that while S. Matthew has kept mainly in view the Regal, and S. Luke the Priestly side of our Lord's character,¹ S. Mark should have opened the account of His ministry as a Preacher, which then at least was another name for Prophet.

"After that John was put in prison, Jesus came into

¹ Cf. p. 4.

Galilee preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God." He had begun His mission in Judæa; but we can easily understand that He would be anxious to remove to another scene. First, in all probability, He would be influenced by prudential reasons. Jerusalem was steeped in bigotry; the priests and rulers must have been roused against Him, and were waiting an opportunity to compass His overthrow, as they did that of His forerunner; for the cleansing of the Temple¹ showed them what they had to fear if He were suffered to proceed unchecked.

Again, to have made Samaria the scene of His ministry, except so far as the exigences of travel should take Him there, was to alienate His countrymen.

Peræa also was out of the question. It was not only too secluded and thinly-peopled, but Herod Antipas was living at Machærus² at the time. Had Jesus set foot in the neighbourhood, and lifted up His voice, it could only have been to brand him in the eyes of his subjects as an adulterer and a murderer, and the consequences would have been fatal.

It was of vital importance that any serious check to His enterprise at the outset should be avoided. We may see traces of the same circumspect prudence in the fact that He seems never to have ventured to enter Tiberias,³ where also Herod resided, and that He evaded him so successfully, that, notwithstanding the Tetrarch's great desire to see Him, they met for the first time only at the close.

Excluded thus from Judæa, Samaria, and Peræa, He naturally found Himself in Galilee. No preacher or reformer could have wished for a better opening. "It was to Roman Palestine what the manufacturing districts are to England." It was the focus of the energy and industry of the whole country. Its lake, which was the centre of the northern trade and fisheries, from its contrast to the deserted shores of the Dead Sea, has been aptly called "the Sea of Life."

¹ This cleansing had taken place at the opening of His ministry. For the distinctions between it and the last, cf. *infra*, chap. lii.

² Machærus was an almost impregnable fortress built on the south-eastern frontier of Peræa by Alexander Jannæus, and strengthened by Herod the Great to overawe the Arab tribes. It was the favourite residence of Antipas.

³ Tiberias was built by Antipas, and made the capital of Galilee instead of Sepphoris. Agrippa II. changed back again to the old town.

So it was that He came and preached to the eager, excitable Galileans, and the burden of His message was "the gospel of the kingdom of God." A kingdom implied not only a king, but subordinate officers, and He proceeded at once to the selection.

Now the apparent abruptness of the Call of the Apostles has led to misconceptions of what really took place. They arise chiefly from the difficulty in discovering the true historic sequence of the earlier events. How many persons think that our Lord, as He passed by, seeing one here and another there, one in his boat, another at his custom-office, spake the words, "Follow Me," and it was done: without delay and without reserve they gave themselves up from that moment body and soul to His service. He might, of course, have fascinated them by such a sudden spell had He chosen, but it was not in accord with His usual mode of dealing with men; and a little attentive study will show that some at least reached the Apostleship only by degrees and preparatory stages of careful training.

There was first the admission to His personal acquaintance and friendship; then followed the abandonment of their secular occupation for closer attendance upon His ministry; and lastly the solemn ordination of those whom He finally selected, and their investiture with supernatural powers.

S. Mark passes over in silence the first stage; indeed none but S. John, who was one of the first to be attracted to our Lord, notice it; and it is no matter of surprise that it should have been so. Knowing, as we do, how sacred first meetings come to be considered, when followed by momentous histories, we can easily understand how he should have cherished, even to old age, the recollection of what seemed to others an unimportant event, because it had coloured his whole life.

The first invitation to follow Him was only to occasional companionship, but He began at once to train them for something more; they witnessed the miracle at Cana of Galilee; they were with Him at the first Passover, and they saw the marvellous exhibition of His power in the cleansing of the Temple.

Then take the second stage, which S. Mark brings before us in this passage. They had returned to their occupation: "As He walked by the sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and

Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea, for they were fishers ;” but what they had witnessed had sunk down into their hearts. No doubt they often talked of it as they tossed upon the waves, and had fully prepared themselves for a further surrender, and so when He said, “Come ye after Me, and I will make you to become fishers of men,” “straightway they forsook their nets, and followed Him ;” and we read no more of their fishing,¹ at least till after His death, when, thinking their discipleship was over, they went back to their old calling.

The second summons, then, led to an unbroken attendance upon our Lord, but time must yet elapse before their Ordination. They must hear in secret what they had to preach openly ; He must whisper in their ears the truths which they should proclaim upon the housetops.

And they had much to unlearn as well. They had a catholic message to deliver, and all narrow-minded Jewish ideas must be eradicated, and their hearts enlarged by the witness of a sympathy wide as the world itself.

And they must see as well as hear—see the perfect life, that for which God had become Incarnate ; they must study every feature and lineament before they could be able to proclaim Jesus, and be His witnesses to an unbelieving world.

Into all this they were more or less initiated during this second stage. The company of followers and disciples grew considerably, and the final selection was made, as we shall find in the third chapter, from a wider circle.

Now the Call of the Apostles suggests two considerations which have an important bearing upon our estimate of the Christian Ministry.

The first is, that God should have condescended to associate with Himself human agents in carrying on a Divine work.

The second, that He should have deliberately selected for the purpose such feeble helpers as ignorant peasants and poor fishermen.

He has manifestly by the counsel of His Will determined that a duly called and ordained Ministry should be an essen-

¹ The case mentioned in S. Matt. xvii. 27, where S. Peter was sent to fish with a view to finding a coin, was clearly exceptional.

tial part of His Church on earth. If ever there was a time when we might have expected Him to dispense with human agency, it was surely when He was Himself present among men in visible form; but out of an amazing loving-kindness He preferred to give to men the honour and delight of being helpers with Him in the dispensation of grace; and of all that have since lived and believed He still says, "I drew them with cords of a man, and with bands of love."

Yet further, it is no less a law of His kingdom that He should work the grandest results by the simplest means; and so He chooses "the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty," and He gives us the treasure of His grace and Sacraments "in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."

VI

The Synagogue at Capernaum

S. MARK I. 21-28

21. And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath day He entered into the synagogue, and taught. 22. And they were astonished at His doctrine : for He taught them as *One* that had authority, and not as the scribes. 23. And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit ; and he cried out, 24. saying, Let *us* alone ; what have we to do with Thee, *Thou* Jesus of Nazareth? art Thou come to destroy us? I know Thee Who Thou art, the Holy One of God. 25. And

Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. 26. And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice he came out of him. 27. And they were all amazed, insomuch that *they* questioned among themselves, saying, What *thing* is this? what new doctrine *is* this? for with authority commandeth He even the unclean spirits, and they do obey Him. 28. And immediately His fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee.

THE synagogue carries us back for its origin to the land of the Exile. Cut off from the sacrificial worship of the Temple, devout Jews gathered together for prayer and hearing of the Law, and "little sanctuaries" were built for their meetings ; and after the Return from Captivity, though the statelier ritual of the Temple was restored, synagogues in towns and villages became an integral part of the ecclesiastical system. They claim our interest, not only from their association with our Lord's preaching and miracles, but as well from the fact that it was from "the eighteen prayers"¹ which were read therein

¹ Wetstein on S. Matt. vi. refers the contents of the Lord's Prayer to private prayers used by the Jews ; but this is an opinion peculiar to himself. All the petitions have been identified by Freeman in spirit, if not in words, with some in the *Shemonêh Esrêh*, except "as we forgive them," etc., which, he says, being strictly Christian, has no parallel. For this reason Jesus commented upon this, "For if ye forgive not,"

daily except on the Sabbath, that Jesus drew the chief materials for that which the Christian Church has consecrated for daily use as "the Lord's Prayer."

Now, of all the synagogues in Palestine, perhaps that at Capernaum is fullest of historic reference. Its erection at the sole expense of a large-hearted Roman soldier had earned for him the affection of the inhabitants, for when his servant was sick, they pleaded with Jesus on the ground that the petitioner was worthy of special consideration, because "he loved the people and built us the synagogue."¹ The discovery and identification of its ruins in later years have awakened no little attention, and have set at rest a long-standing dispute as to the site of Capernaum.² At Tell Hûm, on the Lake, remains of a synagogue of unusual size and beauty have been excavated, the style of which belongs to the Herodian period of architecture. It appears to have been a common custom to carve over the entrance of these buildings an emblem, which, as far as we know, with a single exception, was "the seven-branched candlestick," indicating that they were designed mainly for illumination or teaching. The exceptional instance is at Tell Hûm. The lintel of the chief doorway has a carving in the centre, of "the pot of manna,"³ which is encircled with the

etc. It was a new feature. This view, however, has been combated in the *Journal of Philology*, in an article by Dr. Schiller-Szinessy, on "The Sources of Christian Prayers." The words "as we forgive them" are practically found in the Talmud. "To whom does God forgive iniquity? To him who overlooks a trespass"—*i.e.* If you forgive a little sin against yourself God will forgive you a great one.—Talm. Bab. Rosh Hasshanah 17 a.

¹ In Greek the article is expressed.

² The two sites about which the dispute has been are Khân Minyeh and Tell Hûm, distant from each other about three miles. Accounts of the reasons for choosing one or the other are to be found in Ritter, ii. 273-278. In addition to the argument drawn from the coincidence given above, Tell Hûm, "High hill," explains "Thou Capernaum, which art exalted," etc. It must surely have had a physical elevation to have suggested such a mode of describing its moral advantages.

³ This has been photographed in a series issued by the Society for the Exploration of Palestine. Such an uncommon emblem would attract our Lord's attention, and lead to the spiritual application of the manna, when the subject was broached. Much of His teaching was based upon objects immediately present. On this supposition a reason is found for His speaking by anticipation of the Holy Eucharist, which was not instituted till a year after; the combination of the Vine and the Manna, so suggestive to Him Who knew the end from the beginning, led Him to dwell upon that which they fore-

vine and clusters of grapes. And it is this which enables us to identify "His Own city," as well as the building where He delivered one of His most important discourses. At the same time it helps to establish the catholic interpretation of His teaching on the occasion as anticipatory of the Holy Eucharist. "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead." "I am the Living Bread Which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." "These things said He in the synagogue, as He taught in Capernaum."

It was in this building that our Lord spent the morning of His first Sabbath-day in Galilee, and He taught with such novel power that the people were filled with amazement. They had been used to the teaching of the Scribes, with their interminable details and puerilities, and their slavery to traditional interpretation. There was no freedom of thought or speech, no departure even by a hair's-breadth from the decisions of the doctors—nothing but the dry bones of Rabbinical exposition, and we are not surprised that when Christ came and spoke with "thoughts that breathed and words that burned," and drew His illustrations from the sights and sounds in which they lived and moved, the very freshness delighted them, and they exclaimed at the novelty and independence of His teaching.

While Jesus was speaking, there was one in the congregation—a man of an unclean spirit—who was stirred beyond the rest by the things that he heard, and he filled the air with his wild cries and raving. It is the first mentioned of the many cases of "demoniacal possession" which fill the pages of the Gospels, but find scarcely a place in later histories.¹

Attempts have been made to explain away such a strange phenomenon. It has been supposed that our Lord spoke only in accommodation to a general but mistaken belief of the times, when He attributed some of the worst diseases to a shadowed, though circumstances forbade His giving the full explanation. This would be clear only when the Feast was instituted, and the thoughts of the disciples would revert to what He had said in the synagogue.

¹ It is mentioned in Just. Mart., Dial. c. Tryph. and Tertullian's Apology, and notices of exorcism are not infrequent; but the evil is less and less noticed, and dies out altogether at an early period. For a full discussion, cf. Delitzsch, *Biblical Psychology*, 358-360, Eng. Tr. For further information on Demoniacal Possession, cf. *infra*, chap. xxii.

direct occupation of the bodies of the afflicted by evil spirits. It is quite true that "possession" and physical infirmities were often found in the same person, and naturally so, if we accept that teaching of Scripture which makes Satan the author of bodily as well as spiritual evil, of which we have illustrations in Job's blains and boils, or S. Paul's thorn in the flesh,¹ or the poor woman with the spirit of infirmity; but no disease by itself, either of body or mind, however aggravated its form, can possibly satisfy the language of Scripture, and explain the double personality which is so patent in almost every recorded case. Look at the present instance. See how at one time the man, at another the evil spirit, rules his actions. He is described as "unclean;" like the rest he had found his dwelling in the tombs; an overpowering influence had driven him away from the haunts of men, but now he comes back, struggling to assert the authority which he had lost, and in one of his better moments he had crept into the synagogue, hoping to find some peace and deliverance from his persecutor in the house of God. Had the evil power within him been undivided, it was the last place to which he would have suffered him to resort. How many have testified to the relief they have found in the services of the Church, and there alone, from temptations of the Evil One! If it was under such an impulse as this that the demoniac entered the synagogue at Capernaum, he found even more than he hoped for—no mere temporary reprieve, but permanent security from the power of his tormentor.

The foul spirit recognised the Presence of Him Who had come for the express purpose of treading Satan under His feet, and reasserting his overmastering influence upon the will of the possessed, he made him the mouthpiece of his terrible forebodings, "Ah! ² art Thou come to destroy us?" but in the midst of his fear, albeit with an expression of contempt, "Thou Jesus the Nazarene," he pays Him the homage which the Jew by himself would have refused, "I know Thee Who Thou art, the Holy One of God."

¹ For a full discussion, cf. Lightfoot, Galatians, pp. 169-175, in which he clearly establishes the belief that it was a bodily not spiritual infirmity.

² ξα is probably an interjection. It is omitted altogether in the majority of MSS.

That our Lord at once delivered the poor man from this terrible possession was a natural consequence of the interruption. It was the suffering with which He felt the keenest sympathy, and for which He brought the quickest relief.

S. Mark alone of the Evangelists has preserved the rebuke, "Hold thy peace." It is full of stern severity, as well for the pretended homage, as for the accompanying contempt. From such a quarter He will brook neither the one nor the other. Had it been some poor sinful man, who in his ignorance had heaped reproachful titles on His head, He would have met them with the gentlest remonstrance; or if such an one had recognised His Divine mission in the midst of prevailing unbelief, He would have hailed the confession with gladness; but from the evil spirits, with all their determined antagonism and malignity, He would receive nothing.

And herein what a contrast there is between His conduct and ours! When we have an object in view, and it is a matter of importance, there is often far too little scruple about the means of attaining it. Any assistance is enlisted, perhaps cordially welcomed. If a Christian is enforcing the beauty of our Lord's life, he may press into his service the confession of one hostile to the Faith. It may be that he is able to quote from it some favourable testimony, and he seems to experience satisfaction at receiving it from such an unexpected quarter. But the principle is condemned by our Lord's rebuke in the synagogue at Capernaum, "Hold thy peace." Better to trust to its own inherent goodness than be impatient to support a righteous cause by questionable means. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal," and if only they are kept free from worldliness, they will be powerful to the pulling down of all strongholds of the enemy, and for the defence and security of right and justice.

VII

S. Peter's Wife's Mother

S. MARK I. 29-35

29. And forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. 30. But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever, and anon they tell Him of her. 31. And He came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up; and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them. 32. And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto Him all that were

diseased, and them that were possessed with devils. 33. And all the city was gathered together at the door. 34. And He healed many *that were* sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils; and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew Him.

35. And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, He went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.

VERY little has been preserved to us touching the home-life of the Apostles. A tradition in the Armenian Church speaks of all being married except S. Thomas and the two sons of Zebedee; but whether true or not, it is unsupported by any general evidence.

In this uncertainty, such a passage as that before us at once excites our interest. At all events, the chief of the Twelve was a married man. The name of his wife has come down to us as Concordia and Perpetua; and a very touching incident in connection with her martyrdom has been narrated by two early writers of considerable importance. It is said that the Apostle, on seeing her led out to execution, rejoiced in the mighty privilege of which she was deemed worthy, and cheered her by words of endearment and consolation to meet her death with unflinching courage.

It was the mother of this holy woman who had fallen sick

of a fever,¹ which S. Luke, with his accurate knowledge of disease, characterised as of no ordinary type of severity. Her friends and relations waylaid our Lord as He was leaving the synagogue service on the Sabbath morning, and summoned Him to her bedside.

His very first act marked the tenderness of His nature. We know well what courage it seems to give us in our weakness to feel the touch of a strong hand ; it was doubtless for this purpose that He did not speak merely, but Himself lifted her up in the bed—"and immediately the fever left her." But though this may have been His first object, it could hardly have been the only one. He Who has taught us by deeds as well as words—from Whose mode² of working miracles we can learn almost as much as from what fell from His lips—He touched her, as He touched the leper and the daughter of Jairus, and a host of others who came to Him, in anticipation of the sacramental ordinances He had always in view. It was a way of showing the life-giving virtue which comes from contact with the Body of the Incarnate God, an anticipation of His promise, "Whoso eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life."

"The fever left her, and she ministered unto them." It marks the completeness of the cure ; there was none of that weakness which is usually so trying when the fever subsides ; there was no period of convalescence for the gradual recovery of strength, but she felt herself at once in perfect health.

Now it was quite natural that the fame of two such miracles as this and the cure of the demoniac should spread rapidly. The congregation when they broke up would carry far and wide the news of what they had seen in the synagogue ; and now the friends, whose anxiety for the fever-stricken patient had been so great, could ill conceal the joyful intelligence of the second restoration.

¹ S. Luke calls it a "great" fever. This is supposed, from the use of the term in contemporary writers, to indicate a recognised type of fever, such as scarlet or typhus with us. We learn from travellers that a very malignant form of the disease is still prevalent in the marshy plains near Capernaum. Cf. Tristram, *Land of Israel*, 448 ; Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, 356.

² S. Augustine has expressed this very beautifully in Tract xxiv. on S. John : "Interrogemus ipsa miracula, quid nobis loquantur de Christo ; habent enim, si intelligantur, linguam suam. Nam quia ipse Christus Verbum est, etiam factum Verbi verbum nobis est."

But it was the Sabbath-day, and by the interpretation of the Law which the Scribes had taught, it was forbidden to attend to any but acute diseases; chronic cases could wait; and so we read that it was not till sunset, when, according to Jewish reckoning, the day ended, that the people generally availed themselves of His power to heal. "At even, when the sun did set, they brought unto Him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils."

It is far more likely that this, and not any desire to avoid the heat of the day, was the cause of the delay. Had they really believed what they had heard, they would never have stayed from fear of temporary inconvenience or a possible aggravation of disease. They would have felt that it was far better to insure the recovery, though it might be preceded by a brief increase of pain, than to risk His departure. But the fear of breaking the Sabbath had a very strong hold upon them, and so they let the weary hours pass before they turned into the streets and made their way to the house where He was staying. We can hardly imagine the crowd: "all the city was gathered together at the door." The whole suffering population, halt, lame, and blind, the sick and sore with every kind of infirmity, the bereft of reason and the possessed of demons, all were there, and for all there was the same gracious and ready help: "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Here, as in the synagogue, the evil spirits were foremost to recognise Him, but He rebuked their utterance and suffered them not to speak. It was not by the witness of enemies, not by the confession of those who cried out in fear and anger, that He was "the Holy One of God," that He would win His way in the world, but by the willing testimony of men who were convinced by what they saw, and cried out of the depths of their conviction, "Truly this was the Son of God. It was thus that His kingdom should be established in the hearts of men.

Now it had been foretold ages and ages before, that the Messiah should bear our griefs and carry our sorrows, that He should be sent "to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised." And this day they must have felt that this scripture was fulfilled in their ears. If their

thoughts went to Nazareth and the carpenter's shop, and the doubts and misgivings which so often rose up for men's bewilderment had had any place in the minds of those who saw what was done in Capernaum, they must have completely vanished, and this question must have put every other aside, "When Christ cometh, can He do greater miracles than this Man doeth?"

There are many passages in our Lord's life which we should wish to paint if we could give anything like an adequate representation of the scene; but perhaps there is none which would be more likely to win acceptance, or which would give a truer idea of His real character than this.

In the streets of Capernaum and before Simon's door there is gathered all the sorrow, the suffering, the misery of the world; and in the midst of it moves One in form like themselves—"the Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief"—and yet as He passes by "virtue goes out of Him and heals them all." Never was He more truly "the Christ" than He must have seemed then. But the work of healing was over, and the night closed in. The day had been one that must have tried our Lord's human strength to its furthest limits; but we are amazed to read that the hours of well-earned sleep were curtailed, and that He rose "a great while before day," and went into a solitary place to pray. Temptations awaited Him on the morrow: there would be crosses and disappointments, failures and provocations, and they must be prepared for. Perhaps in nothing have we more need to follow His example than in this.

What a rebuke it is to the worldly maxim, "A busy life is hardly compatible with a life of devotion"! We cannot tell what may befall us any single day we live; but all experience teaches that a life alike of business and enjoyment must bring entanglements and dangers: in the one of overreaching our neighbours, in the other of forgetting God. No man can presume to say that he can meet them in confidence and safety whose spirit is not fortified by prayer and communion with God.

"Of mine own self I can do nothing, but I can do all things through Christ Which strengtheneth me."

VIII

The Leper Cleansed

S. MARK I. 36-45

36. And Simon and they that were with Him followed after Him. 37. And when they had found Him, they said unto Him, All *men* seek for Thee. 38. And He said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also : for therefore came I-forth. 39. And He preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils.

40. And there came a leper to Him, beseeching Him, and kneeling down to Him, and saying unto Him, If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean. 41. And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth *His* hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I

will ; be thou clean. 42. And as soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed. 43. And He straitly charged him, and forthwith sent him away ; 44. and saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any *man* : but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them. 45. But He went out, and began to publish *it* much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places : and they came to Him from every quarter.

THERE were pains and penalties attaching to the leper such as were unknown in the case of other sufferers. Leprosy, for instance, entailed separation from society. "He shall dwell alone ; without the camp shall his habitation be." "He shall cry, Unclean, unclean," to warn the passer-by of his approach. By a merciful concession he was allowed to enter a synagogue, but a vacant space was drawn around him, and it was enjoined that he should be the first to enter and the last to leave.

The same primal law of isolation seems to have been enforced in spirit wherever the disease has been perpetuated. In the East the Lepers' Quarters revive the memory of the Mosaic restrictions, and they are found not only in Jerusalem,

where we are so familiar with them, but in many of the smaller towns.¹ And when during the Crusades the disease was imported into this country, lazar-houses² were built away from the frequented districts, and the inmates were only suffered to go abroad at certain seasons, and conditionally upon their giving timely notice of their presence.

Yet further, the Jewish leper was regarded as a living emblem of death. He has been called "a walking sepulchre." He was commanded "to bare his head," and "to cover his lip," just as one did who had come into contact with a corpse. The special rites for his purification were precisely identical with those appointed for such as had been defiled by the touch of death.

And as in the previous case, England here also accepted, in spirit at least, the legislation of the Jews. During the Middle Ages any one who suffered from this plague was treated as civilly dead; his marriage tie was dissolved; he was clothed in a shroud, his funeral obsequies were performed, and even Masses were said for the repose of his soul.

Now there was one feature in which leprosy had no parallel: no medicine could arrest or even mitigate the disease. It was regarded as a direct punishment inflicted by God, and, as such, incurable, save through the intervention of Him Who had sent it. This conception of it was inherent in the Jewish mind. It explains the question of the king of Israel, when he exclaimed on the receipt of the letter asking him to cure Naaman of this disease, "Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy?" It was the same conviction, too, that drew forth Naaman's confession, when he realised his cure, "Now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel." It is worthy of notice, for it lends a deep significance both to the action and the words of the leper who came to our Lord, kneeling down to Him, and saying, "If thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." We can hardly suppose that a full knowledge of the Godhead of Jesus was vouchsafed to that poor outcast; but that sign of homage, and such a confession

¹ *e.g.* Damascus, Nablus, Ramleh.

² The largest of these is said to have been at Burton-Lazars, near Melton-Mowbray. It is supposed that there were about a hundred in England. The disease seems to have died out in the country during the sixteenth century. There is an interesting treatise on Leprosy in the Speaker's Comm. on Lev. xiii.

of belief in His power to heal, evidence the presence of a faith far beyond that of his fellows, and it received a reward in an instantaneous response.

Now the method of healing adopted by our Lord is full of instruction. S. Mark says that He "was moved with compassion." It is unnoticed elsewhere, but it fitly finds a place in the records of one who loves to notice every trait of the Humanity of the Saviour.¹

Then we read, He "put forth His hand, and touched him." Save for the priests alone, to touch the unclean was to become a partaker of his uncleanness. Jesus therefore by this act claimed the prerogative of the priesthood at the same time that He foreshadowed the Redemption in which He "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses."

The touch was followed by His word. "It is a sign of your faith," He seems to say, "that you use the expression 'If Thou wilt,' not 'If Thou canst;' I do will; and My hand is ever obedient to My will; be thou cleansed therefore by this touch." He spake, and it was done: for "immediately the leprosy departed from him."

Two directions followed the cure, one of expediency, the other of obligation; and they were given with a sternness that marked their importance and the peril of neglecting them. Our translation fails² to express by "He straitly charged him" the force of the original; but one of the old versions rendered it more aptly, "He threatened him." In the first instance he was to say nothing about this cure to any one. Jesus often gave similar injunctions to those whom He had healed, in order to avoid publicity; but, when considered in its immediate connection with the command to go and show himself to the priests, its explanation here is probably to be found in a tender regard for the man rather than in any thought of Himself. The priests were very jealous of their office, and any the least invasion of it would be resented. If any information of the cure should reach their ears before they had pronounced upon his cleanness, nothing was more likely than that they would refuse altogether to grant him the certificate of absolu-

¹ Cf. pp. 4, 5.

² ἐμβριμᾶσθαι implies a muttering, an emotion accompanied by noise. Lat. *fremo*. It is hardly translatable. Perhaps "sternly charged" is best.

tion. It was another proof of our Lord's loving-kindness and consideration, thus to provide that he should enjoy with all possible speed the privileges of restoration.

And what was the object of the second command, "Go thy way, shew thyself to the priest"?

Leprosy, it must be remembered, inasmuch as it was the direst physical disease, and the culmination of misery, has always been regarded as a fitting type of sin. And it may have been that He Who "came not to destroy, but to fulfil," looked on to the Ordinance of the Christian Priesthood, in which there would be by His appointment functions similar in kind, only higher in degree. Just as the leper was bidden to go again and again to the Jewish priest before he received his discharge, so in like manner it is provided that the sinner under the New Dispensation may seek the help and guidance of the Ministry of Christ's Church in ridding himself of the leprosy of sin.

And it is to be carefully noted how scrupulously the Church has preserved the analogy between the parts of God and the priest in the Mosaic Order with that of Christ and the Christian Priesthood in the present.

God, and God alone, was the source of the leper's cure. He, and none but He, could take away the disease, but, in accordance with His ordaining, human agents were employed to seal the restoration. Even so in the cleansing from the defilement of sin, it is Christ's appointment that the message of forgiveness should be conveyed to the penitent by human lips. And if men are qualified to receive it, He in Whose Name and by Whose authority the words are pronounced will ratify and seal the pardon, according to that commission which He gave to His first Ministry, under circumstances of unparalleled solemnity, when He breathed upon them to symbolise the delegation of His Own inherent power, and said, "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them: and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."¹

¹ It is often said that the power given to the Apostles was merely to preach, which would result in forgiveness or hardening: but that power had been intrusted to them before. This was probably even more than the "power of the keys," or "the binding and loosing," and for this reason was accompanied by the deeply significant act of breathing upon them. Absolution underlay the two former, but this was an authority for its direct exercise in and by itself. The three commissions imply teaching, legislating, and absolving.

IX

The Paralytic Cured

S. MARK II. 1-12

1. And again He entered into Capernaum after *some* days ; and it was noised that He was in the house. 2. And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive *them*, no, not so much as about the door : and He preached the word unto them. 3. And they come unto Him, bringing one sick of the palsy, *which was* borne of four. 4. And when they could not come nigh unto Him for the press, they uncovered the roof where He was : and when they had broken *it* up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay. 5. When Jesus saw their faith, He said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. 6. But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their

hearts, 7. Why doth this *Man* thus speak blasphemies ? who can forgive sins but God only ? 8. And immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, He said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts ? 9. Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, *Thy* sins be forgiven thee ; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk ? 10. But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (He saith to the sick of the palsy,) 11. I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house. 12. And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before *them* all ; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw *it* on this fashion.

A DIFFICULTY will be removed if we realise the construction on which the more substantial houses in an Eastern town are not infrequently built. The ground-plan is that of a quadrangle. We enter at a door or gateway in the centre, and pass into a court which is open to the sky. Usually there is a verandah or colonnade on one or more sides of it : sometimes of one story only, more frequently of two. When the latter is the case, its covering rises almost as high as the housetop itself. This is generally flat, and is used as a

common place of resort ; in some streets there is a continued thoroughfare by it from end to end, with flights of steps at convenient places for public use.

On this occasion a group of persons—S. Mark, with his love of picturesque detail, gives the number as four—hearing that Jesus was speaking to the people in Simon's house, attempted to bring to Him a poor sufferer who had been struck with paralysis. But when they came near, they saw to their disappointment that the courtyard was thronged, and the very doorway choked with an eager crowd. They were not, however, easily baffled. They noticed the upturned faces of the multitude, and seeing the direction in which they were all looking, they gathered that Jesus was in the upper story of the verandah speaking to the people from the vantage-ground it gave Him. They made their way at once to the housetop by one of the public staircases, and soon found themselves only a few feet above the spot where Jesus was standing. The roof of the verandah¹ was torn open, and the litter² on which their helpless patient lay was lowered through the opening and placed at His feet. And their end was gained. Nothing ever attracted the compassionate Saviour so surely as the sight of suffering. No matter what He was doing, that had the first claim on His attention. Again and again He allowed Himself to be interrupted, and broke off His speaking, without a sign of impatience, to heal the sick.

But there is something which strikes us with surprise in the words that He spoke—so unlike His usual utterances on similar occasions. “Thy sins be forgiven thee.” It reminds us of the inseparable connection between sin and suffering: “by sin came death,” and with death all its evil forerunners of pain and sorrow, sickness and disease. It would seem that the man was conscience-stricken. We are not told it in so

¹ There are fewer difficulties presented by this interpretation than by the others ; but Trench, *Miracles*, 199, adopts the common theory. Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, 359, supposes that the roof was that over the *lewan*, composed of a layer of stiff mortar or clay upon some thickly-matted thorns. He imagines the house to have been only of one story. Edersheim, i. 502, confirms the writer in the view maintained above.

² The word is originally Latin, *grabatum*. S. Mark, writing primarily for Roman readers, uses many Latin words—*e.g.* σπεκουλάτωρ, ξεστὸν, κεντυρίων, κῆνσος, κ.τ.λ.

many words, but what if that stroke of paralysis was the result of past excesses? What if the loss of vital energy in his limbs had been produced by a course of enfeebling indulgence? We can see his terror in the presence of the Great Searcher of men's hearts, dreading disclosure, and yet longing to be healed. It is thus that in fear and trembling he may have poured out his soul in confession of his guilt. S. Matthew hints at least at something of the kind, for he puts into our Lord's mouth such words of fatherly love and encouragement as a confession of this kind would naturally evoke, "Son, be of good cheer,"¹ and then, "Thy sins be forgiven thee."

And what followed? At once all the animosities of the Scribes and Pharisees were aroused. "Was not the forgiveness of sins one of the inalienable prerogatives of the Godhead? It is nothing less than blasphemy in Him to claim it." Such were their unspoken thoughts; but He Whose Divine claims they denied, established them in the very midst of their denial. For did He not read the secrets of their heart, and hear their unuttered murmurings, which none but God could do?

"I know your thoughts," He seems to say; "you accuse Me of pretending to extraordinary powers without any evidence that My claims are well founded. The veriest impostor, you say, may do that. No man has any right to speak so, unless he is prepared to verify his words by signs following. Who can possibly say whether the absolution you pronounce is ratified in heaven or not?"

And out of condescension to their secret murmurings Jesus attests His powers. He works a miracle which the eyes of all can see, in proof that He possesses that which they denied to Him, because it carried with it no evident confirmation. "That ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (He saith to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, and take up thy bed."

He spake, and at once the man arose in presence of them all, and that "which before had been the sign of his sickness, became now the sign of his cure."

Now what may we learn from the different characters of

¹ "Child, take courage," is a more literal rendering, and expresses more than the Authorised Version the above idea.

those with whom this miracle brings us into contact—the Jewish rulers and the sick man's friends?

The Scribes could hardly as yet have witnessed much of Christ's wonder-working, for they came chiefly from Jerusalem,¹ and that was not the scene of many miracles.² The fame of His doings had doubtless reached them; otherwise they would not have travelled so far as Capernaum to see and hear what He did, but it was not for such as they to be convinced by mere hearsay. Were they not the recognised guardians of the religion of the nation, the teachers who sat in Moses' seat? They were in duty bound, then, to be jealous of all rival claims, and not to suffer their office to be invaded by unauthorised intruders. Any assumption of supernatural power, with no visible proof that the claimant possessed it, was sure to provoke disparaging sneers, and they did hardly more than what we should probably have done under similar circumstances. But this only applies to their conduct in the beginning. When once He had furnished them with the credentials of His mission, with the incontestable signs which they demanded, there was no longer any excuse for their incredulity.

But turning from the Scribes to the poor man's friends, we read that "when Jesus saw their faith, He said to the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee."

We have already hinted at the probable confession of the sick man himself, and though this would have been sufficient to excite the compassion of Jesus, we have no right to ignore what the Holy Spirit has recorded, viz., that it was the sight of their³ faith which drew from His lips the words of forgiveness. It is a fact full of mystery, but full also of consolation, that not a few of the gifts of healing and restoration—on the centurion's servant—on Jairus' child—on the blind man at Bethsaida—on the Syro-Phœnician's daughter—were obtained through the faith and prayers, not so much of the sick and afflicted themselves, as of their relations and friends. Surely this dependence of man upon his fellow-creatures was

¹ We learn from S. Luke v. 17 that some were present also from Galilee.

² The only recorded miracles in Jerusalem before this are the Cleansing of the Temple (if it may be called a miracle), and that at the Pool of Bethesda.

³ Though the narrative speaks of "their" faith only, the perfect concurrence of the paralytic cannot be doubted.

intended to foreshadow the great mystery of Redemption through Another's Blood. It may well have been placed on record by the Holy Spirit to teach us that whenever we try to bring others to the feet of Jesus to be healed of their soul's sickness—be they friends or enemies—whenever we offer up “the prayer of faith,” which we are assured “shall save the sick,” we are associating ourselves in deeds of mercy and acts of intercession with the Great High Priest of the world—the One Mediator between God and man—the Man Christ Jesus, our Lord.

The Call of Levi

S. MARK II. 13-17

13. And He went forth again by the sea side ; and all the multitude resorted unto Him, and He taught them. 14. And as He passed by, He saw Levi the *son* of Alphæus sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow Me. And he arose and followed Him. 15. And it came to pass, that as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and His disciples : for there

were many, and they followed Him. 16. And when the scribes and Pharisees saw Him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto His disciples, How *is it* that He eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners? 17. When Jesus heard *it*, He saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of *the* physician, but they that are sick : I came not to call *the* righteous, but sinners to repentance.

It was not an uncommon thing to assume a new name upon adopting a fresh calling. Simon was named Peter, Saul became Paul. In like manner, Levi, rejoicing in the change from a life of shame to one of glory and honour, signalled the step and the power by which it had been brought about, by calling himself Matthew, "the gift of God."¹ Comparing together the Synoptist Evangelists, we find that the first describes the call of Matthew, the second and third of Levi, under precisely similar circumstances, and there can scarcely be a question of their identity. S. Chrysostom² so little doubted it that he used the variety of designation to illustrate

¹ The full name is Mattathias ; Theodore, Doritheus, Theodotus, Adeodatus, and Nathanael, are all equivalents in different languages. A few of the Fathers refused to identify Levi and Matthew, but it is impossible to believe that two publicans could have been called at the same time and place, and that one should have become so famous and the other be no more heard of.

² This illustration is taken from Abraham's Festival Lectures, No. xxxv.

an important principle, viz., that men should be as severe as they like towards themselves, but should draw a veil over the shame of others, and conceal their offences if followed by repentance. S. Mark and S. Luke, not wishing to blazon abroad the fact that the Apostle and Evangelist had belonged to the hated class of publicans, give him his old name, by which he had ceased to be known at the time when they wrote; but S. Matthew, thinking only of the goodness of God, and regarding himself as "a miracle of mercy," is careful to recall the fact, that he who is now the honoured Apostle was once the despised tax-gatherer.

In all the Roman Provinces, no doubt, it was considered a hardship to be compelled to pay taxes to the Imperial Treasury; but to the Jews it was inconceivably galling, because it entailed a surrender of their most cherished prerogative. To be called upon, again, to acknowledge their alien subjection at the bidding of their own countrymen,¹ was to make the cup of bitterness a thousandfold more bitter. As God's chosen people they refused at heart to admit anything but a Theocracy. The arm of Rome was too strong to be resisted by open rebellion, but they made no pretence of disguising their hatred of her authority. Her official publican was "the Pariah of Palestine." Nothing was too bad for him. He was an outcast from society; his offering was regarded as defiled and excluded from the Korban;² his evidence was inadmissible in a court of justice; and contracts entered into with him were not binding on the conscience. "Let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican" gathered up in a recognised proverb the idea that all communication with such an one must cease.

Notwithstanding all this, Christ chose a publican to be an Apostle and to wait on His Ministry. He found him at Capernaum, in his toll-booth on the shore of the lake, where it was his duty to take toll for the fisheries, and assess the value

¹ It was obviously advantageous generally to employ natives of the province, as better acquainted with the people and their occupations. We may witness a faint image of the relationship of a Jew to the publican in that of an Irish tenant to an Irish agent employed by an English landlord to evict him.

² This term was used of the offering, S. Mark vii. 11, and of the place where it was received, S. Matt. xxvii. 6.

of merchandise passing through the port. Thus he belonged to a class of publicans especially hated,¹ because extortion was more easily practised in custom-house dues than in the poll-tax, which was fixed. It finds expression in the Talmudic saying, "Woe to the ship which sails without having paid its dues."

Now it is quite possible that the real turning-point in Levi's career was the cure of the paralytic. If he had witnessed that, his heart would be touched by the great stress laid upon the forgiveness of his sins. It would awaken him to a realisation of that, which the common belief, that repentance was impossible to men of his calling, had made him forget; and he may then and there have resolved to break with the past on the first opportunity. The Evangelists, at any rate, have linked the two events most closely together, and followed up our Lord's public declaration of forgiveness with an even more forcible illustration, in His choice of "a publican and sinner" to be numbered with His disciples. "As He passed by, He saw Levi the son of Alphæus sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow Me. And he arose and followed Him." Porphyry and Julian assailed the truth of the narrative, on the ground that it was irrational to suppose that a man would quit a lucrative calling so suddenly at the bidding of a passer-by. But they made no allowance for the fame of Jesus, none for the magnetic influence of Him "Who spake as never man spake." It is very probable, too, that the lake-side had been the scene of His teaching often before,² and that Levi's attention had been aroused by His burning words, as well as by the miracle which exhibited His pardoning mercy. And so the instant the right hand was held out, he eagerly grasped it, and left all behind.

His first act was a manifestation of gratitude. His brother Evangelists record, what with singular modesty he veiled in his own account, that the "great feast" that followed was given by him. It marks the depth of his sincerity, that he lost no time in making an effort for the deliverance of his fellow-sinners. He

¹ Edersheim, i. 515-518, gives many particulars of the office, and says that Levi must have belonged to the Moches or *douanier* class, whose office was connected entirely with rates on merchandise. The ordinary publican was called Gabbai.

² The original of verse 13 expresses this by the imperfect tense, ἤρχετο, used to go, and ἐδίδασκεν, was wont to teach.

invited as guests those who had shared his shame, in the hope that they might become partakers of his joy. It was doubtless a rude shock to Pharisaic prejudice that Jesus should accept the discipleship of a publican ; but it must have raised a storm of reproach and anger that He should sit down to meat with a whole company of them, and that, too, on one of the fast-days of the week.¹ It gave rise at once to a twofold question, the first touching the principle of associating with sinners, the second on the propriety of observing the fasts. The former alone belongs to this portion of the narrative. "How is it that He eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?"

Our Lord was ready with an answer. It was a recognised maxim in their oral law, and it had its echo in heathen² writers in abundance, "The physician's sphere of work lies among the sick." Translated into the spiritual life, it says that the mission of the Redeemer is not to the righteous, but to sinners—ay, to the very publicans from whom they had turned away. There is surely a severe rebuke to His gainsayers underlying the words. "You," He seems to say, "are the recognised guardians of the people, but 'the diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost.' I on the contrary, 'am the Good Shepherd,' and care for My sheep. I have come to seek and to save that which was lost, and I rejoice more over this poor publican who confesses his sins, than over the ninety and nine who think themselves safe within the fold. 'I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.'"³

¹ Cf. p. 48.

² Stier mentions Antisthenes, Diogenes, Pausanias, and Ovid.

³ "To repentance" is absent from the best MSS.

The Principle of Fasting

S. MARK II. 18-22

18. And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast: and they come and say unto Him, Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but Thy disciples fast not? 19. And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber fast, while the Bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the Bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. 20. But the days will come, when the Bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days. 21. No man also seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment: else the new piece that filled it up taketh away *from* the old, and the rent is made worse. 22. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles: else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles.

It is almost certain that the feast given by Levi and attended by our Lord was on one of the two weekly fast-days. The word used by S. Mark implies not so much that the Pharisees "used to fast," as that they "were fasting" at the time; and it was the disregard of the observance which prompted the question why the disciples of Jesus acted differently from others in this respect. Now there can be no doubt that He would not have made light of any ordinance of legal obligation. Fasting was almost unnoticed in the Law. On one day, and one only, were the people directed "to afflict the soul." That was the "Day of Atonement." It was a national Fast, binding upon all who had reached the age of thirteen; and no Jew who was contented to follow the Mosaic Code need trouble himself with any other. During the Captivity, however, four more Annual Fasts were added to commemorate national disasters,¹

¹ In the fourth month, both for the breaking of the Two Tables of Moses,

especially connected with the destructions of Jerusalem and the Temple. From time to time also public humiliations and private fasts were observed amidst dearth and famine, and in preparation for important works.

In the New Testament we learn from the Pharisee's confession that the Jews "more righteous than the rest" kept two days in the week as fasts; they were the second and fifth, in remembrance of the ascent of Moses into the Mount to receive the Two Tables of Stone, and his descent, after the anger of the Lord had been appeased.

But when we read in S. Matthew's Gospel of frequent fastings—"the Pharisees fast oft"—it is probable that it was something more even than these; and later Jewish writings testify to repetition on the most trivial pretexts, such as for a good omen, for a dream, for the interpretation of a dream; and this gave birth to the proverb, "A fast is as fit for a dream as fire is for tow." They record also many cases of Rabbis who obtained a reputation by the number of their self-imposed fasts.

When the Baptist came, he felt that it was a time to make ready a people by strict discipline and self-denial, not as a meritorious act or matter of boasting, such as the Pharisees taught, but as a fitting preparation for the Advent of the Messiah.

"There is a time to every purpose under heaven: a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance." The former was the season in which the Baptist's lot had been cast; the latter, that which Christ came to inaugurate. Such was the broad distinction which our Lord drew when appealed to for a vindication of His conduct. He illustrated the principle by the use of a figure that was singularly appropriate to His hearers. They had heard their own master say that "the friend of the Bridegroom, which standeth and heareth Him, rejoiceth greatly because of the Bridegroom's voice."

The friends of the bridegroom, or "the children of the bridechamber," as they are elsewhere called, were especially

and also for the capture of Jerusalem in Zedekiah's reign. In the fifth, for the burning of the Temple of Nebuchadnezzar. In the seventh, for the death of Gedaliah. In the tenth, for the commencement of the blockade.

appointed to make preparation for the advent of the bride, to bear the bridal-canopy for her reception, and to arrange generally for the wedding-feast. All their thoughts were of joy and happiness. For seven days there were prolonged festivities; fatlings were killed, costly dresses were worn, torchlight processions were held, and there was every possible demonstration of gladness; indeed, such was the festive character of the marriage-week, that exemption was granted to the bride even from certain obligations of the great Fast of "the Day of Atonement," if it fell within that period.¹

"The present," our Lord seems to say to those who questioned Him, "is such a time as that. What more incongruous than for My friends to seek to mar their enjoyment by introducing an air of sadness into such a scene? The time will come when the Bridegroom will be taken away;² but do not anticipate the separation; it will be here all too soon. The darkness of Calvary will spread a gloom over the disciples' hearts: then there will be an end to rejoicing: 'then shall they fast in those days.'"

Two more illustrations followed: one touching the outward conduct, the other the inner spirit; and both were suggested by the Wedding Feast. "No man seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment." Christianity is too strong and vigorous for an outworn system. Attempt to piece it on the old, and its very weight and strength will tear still more the failing threads, and "a worse rent will be made."

Again, "no man putteth new wine into old bottles." The New Religion is too free, too elastic, too expansive, to be infused into the old forms and modes of life. It will be like the fermenting must, which cracks and bursts the withered wine-skins, so that both are ruined.

We must not however conclude from this, that Christ forbade, or even discouraged, the principle of fasting. It was the Jewish surroundings which He condemned. Rabbinic Pharisaism had wholly misconceived its true object; it had taught men to believe that such mortification was a means of

¹ She shared with a king the privilege of washing the face at such a time; the idea being that before all things she must be 'pleasing to her husband. After they had been married some time he would know that she was not unclean, but at first she must run no risk of such a thing being supposed.

² This is the first intimation of His approaching death.

averting God's anger, and of atoning for sins. To the Pharisees it was no instrument for the subjection of the lower to the higher nature, no ingredient in the cup of penitence, no sign of deep humiliation for offence against God, but a meritorious act, entitling him who practised it to Divine acceptance. As such it gained no encouragement, no recognition, in the teaching of our Blessed Lord.

Neither did He approve their mode of fasting. The spirit of the Gospel is not the spirit of the Law. The one is love, the other is fear. The Jew sat in sackcloth and ashes; the Christian anoints his head and washes his face.

We have only to turn to the Sermon on the Mount to understand the real position of fasting. Its true value was fully recognised when our Lord united it in a threefold cord with the Christian graces of prayer and almsgiving, and pointed thereby to man's triple duty to God, his neighbour, and himself. In enjoining the obligation of fasting, He knew that if it be true that no one can enjoy liberty till he has learned self-restraint, it is absolutely necessary for the full realisation of Christian freedom that a man should be able to hold his lower appetites in complete subjection.

But fasting in its highest sense reaches far beyond the abstinence from bodily food; the rule is absolute, "If any man will be My disciple, let him deny himself." S. Bernard shows well what it is which makes the Christian "ascetic." "If," he says, "the appetite alone have sinned, let that alone fast; but if other members, let them also fast. The eye from . . . looking with pleasure at any glass which reflects self; the ear from praise of self, from slanders, gossip, controversy; the tongue from detraction, murmuring, and fault-finding; the hand from needless work, which hinders prayer; but more than all, the soul from vice and self-will. Thus only shall we avoid provoking God to reject our offerings; thus only realise what is promised: 'Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure.'"

XII

The Disciples in the Corn-fields

S. MARK II. 23-28

23. And it came to pass, that He went through the corn fields on the sabbath day; and His disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn. 24. And the Pharisees said unto Him, Behold, why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful? 25. And He said unto them, Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungred, he, and they that

were with him? 26. How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the shewbread, which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him? 27. And He said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, *and* not man for the sabbath: 28. therefore the Son of Man is Lord also of the sabbath.

THERE are reasons for supposing that it was after the synagogue service on the first Sabbath in the month of May that our Lord went out to walk in the fields, where the harvest was ripening in the Plain of Gennesareth.¹ Perhaps He wished for quiet; but the Pharisees, whose hostility He had aroused, watched which way He went, and followed behind, determined to lose no opportunity of fastening upon Him a charge, to lay before the Sanhedrim. It is not unlikely that their hope on this occasion was, that He might be tempted to exceed the legitimate two thousand cubits, in disregard of the restriction for a Sabbath-day's journey.

¹ The synagogue service was held at nine o'clock. The Pharisees would hardly have gone out after Him into the fields before that hour, but nothing is more natural than that they should have followed Him when the congregation separated. The Authorised Version renders it "the second Sabbath after the first," which is meaningless. A variety of explanations have been offered, viz., that given above (Wetstein); the first Sabbath after the second Paschal Day (Ederheim) appears most probable. It was certainly between Passover and Pentecost. Barley harvest was in the latter half of April, wheat in the first half of May.

Disappointed, however, in not finding anything against the Master, they attacked His disciples. They were hungry, and plucked some ears of corn by the wayside, and ate them. There was no offence in that: it was no act of theft on their part, for the Law made allowances for such a case: "When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbour, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hand."

But though it was no infraction of the Written Law, there was "the hedge" of the Law, the fence which the Rabbis had built up to guard its minutest observance. This they could turn and twist at their will; and they had no difficulty in bringing the disciples' conduct into court for a breach of it. To pluck the ears of corn was equivalent to reaping; to rub them in their hands was the same as threshing; and to reap and thresh was to engage in prohibited labour on the Sabbath. If then they could make good the charge, and enforce the extreme penalty, like the man who gathered sticks on that holy day, the transgressors might be stoned for the breach. It shows the eagerness with which they were watched, that the instant they began to do it the Pharisees broke in with their remonstrances: "Behold! why do they on the Sabbath-day that which is not lawful?"

It was the boast of the stricter Jews that they would endure any privation rather than violate that holy day. More than one great defeat and massacre in Jewish history¹ might have been averted if they had not refused on these grounds to draw the sword in defence of their lives.

Jesus at once threw the shield of His protection over His followers. Scorning the petty quibbles with which He was so familiar, He declined to argue as to what constituted labour, and plunged into the general question of Sabbath observance, laying down the principle that no ceremonial ordinance may override man's good.

With one of those master-strokes which He so often made, He recalled to their minds an illustration from the history of their greatest hero. It is quite possible that it was suggested

¹ Josephus, *Antiq.* xiv. 4. 2, 3, describes how the Romans under Pompey mercifully respected the Jewish law, and refused to attack till the following day.—Milman, *Hist.* ii. 2. The Jews however did not always observe the rule.—Wars, ii. 19. 2.

by the Lesson which they had just heard in the synagogues; if so, we can imagine with what force it must have struck them.

David, in his flight from Saul's court, halted at the priestly station of Nob on the sides of Mount Olivet. It was the spot where the Tabernacle had found a temporary home during the period of its wanderings before it rested on Mount Zion. Ahimelech or Abiathar (the two names are commonly supposed to represent father and son, but it is possible that they were both borne by one and the same person¹) gave him some of the loaves from the Golden Table to satisfy his hunger. It was the most sacred of all food: for while that which was offered in sacrifice might be sold in the shambles, the mystic "Bread of the Face"² was eaten by the priests alone, and within the Holy Place. And yet they, the guardians of every religious observance, had not hesitated to divert its use in the exigency of circumstances, and David, the great national saint, had made no scruple of accepting it.

Were the Pharisees prepared to accuse him of sacrilege for so doing? If they were, our Lord might have retorted that they were at issue with the teaching of the old masters of Israel. Had not they said, "It was lawful even to eat that which was sanctified, when another loaf was not within reach, and one was bitten with hunger;" and again, "There is nothing which may hinder taking care of life but idolatry, adultery, and murder"?

But we find from S. Matthew, that He drew a second argument from the Temple ordinances. "What," He seems to say, "were the multiplied sacrifices, and incense-burnings, and washings, but so many breaches of the letter of the Law? Had they not given birth to the proverb, 'There is no Sabbatical rest observed in the sanctuary'? and yet no one ever thought of blaming the priests."

¹ Surely, as there is nothing impossible in the supposition, it is better to accept it than accuse the authors of Chronicles and Samuel of mistake. The absence of the definite article from the best MSS. forbids the translation "in the time of Abiathar (afterwards familiarly known as) the high priest," as, *e.g.* "in the house of Simon the leper"—not a leper at the time. Grammatically, as it stands, it can only be "when Abiathar was high priest."

² *i.e.* Bread laid out in the Presence of God. Our Shewbread is taken from Luther's translation "Schaubrod." The table of pure gold is depicted on the Arch of Titus. The Bread was only eaten by those priests who were ceremonially clean.

And just as under the first illustration there lay the thought that He was David's Son, and that what was lawful for the father, could not be unlawful for the Son, so by the assertion that there was in that place "One greater than the Temple," He reminded them "that the Body of the Son of Man was the truest temple of God, and the disciples who ministered to Him were entitled to at least the same privilege as the priests in the Temple at Jerusalem."

But the real solution of the question lay in the declaration that the day was instituted for the happiness and wellbeing of man, and consequently He in Whom humanity was personified, held control over its observance; "the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath: therefore the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath."

The question has been revived in our own generation: "In what spirit is that day which has superseded the Sabbath to be kept, especially by the working classes?" This no less than the other "was made for man." Now man, it must be remembered, is a complex creature. He has a tripartite nature, consisting of body, soul, and spirit; and it is necessary to provide for him as such, not ignoring either his physical or his social or his religious needs. All must be kept in view. It is a manifest duty to furnish the masses with the means of bodily recreation, and to draw them from their squalid homes into the pure air which will invigorate the frame.

It is no less a duty to elevate their tastes, to offer them, as far as possible, variety of scene, and that relief from the monotony of labour which the rich man finds in his club or library; but all must be subordinated to the paramount duty of worship. That is due from every creature to the Great Creator. It is that moreover in which he may find his highest enjoyment. No scheme, therefore, which ignores this claim, can possibly carry out the principle laid down by our Lord when He said, "The Sabbath was made for man."

XIII

The Withered Hand

S. MARK III. 1-6

1. And He entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand. 2. And they watched Him, whether He would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse Him. 3. And He saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth. 4. And He saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace. 5. And when He had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, He saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other. 6. And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him.

FOR the third time our Lord is confronted by the Pharisees on the question of Sabbath observance. A week has elapsed since He defended the action of His disciples from their objections to plucking the ears of corn; and now they are waiting for an opportunity to renew the charge of breaking the Law. It was either in the synagogue at Capernaum, from which they had followed Him the previous Sabbath, or possibly it may have been in the neighbouring Sepphoris,¹ which Herod had lately made his capital, and where one of the five Sanhedrims held its sittings, that He saw a man whose hand had been withered, and had lost its power. It is interesting to find from S. Jerome, who quotes from some apocryphal additions to S. Matthew's Gospel, that he was by trade "a stone-mason, who had depended for his livelihood on manual

¹ If here, the meeting of Pharisees and Herodians would be more easily accounted for.

labour, and that he pleaded for the cure to avoid the disgrace of begging his bread."

If this tradition be a true one (and there is no reason to doubt it), then we can understand that the circumstance of his poverty would tend to aggravate the bitterness of the Pharisees. They could not bear that Jesus should bestow favour upon the labouring class, because they held the poor in the lowest contempt, and regarded ignorance as an unpardonable offence. "The rabble, that know not the law, are accursed." His partiality to them was consequently a great blow to Pharisaic pride; and we are not surprised that the common people rejoiced in the change of treatment that they received, and flocked to His feet, and "heard Him gladly."

Now, no sooner did the Pharisees become aware of the poor man's presence in the synagogue, than they were filled with satisfaction. They felt sure from what had taken place before, that Jesus would be prompted to heal him, and would break the Sabbath in doing so. They determined, therefore, simply to bide their time, and, like beasts of prey, to pounce upon Him directly He should fall into their toils. They had attacked the man who had carried his bed, then the disciples in the field, but now they have Christ Himself almost within their grasp.

They had heard wonderful things of Him, but they little knew that He could read their thoughts, that their inmost heart was laid bare and open before His all-searching eye, and their excitement must have become intense when He uttered the command, "Stand forth." It was a compassionate effort on His part to change their hearts by the sight of the man's helpless infirmity, and to prick their callous consciences. But there was no sign of relenting, no turn in the current of their malignant intentions, and so the question was directly put, "Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath-days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill?" The man was not in danger of his life, and he would have survived undoubtedly had no cure been wrought. But that question implied, that not to give health and strength, not to restore the vital power when the restoration lies within your reach, is equivalent to taking it away. To leave a good deed undone is hardly less sinful than doing a bad one. Such was no doubt the direct force of the question

which our Lord put ; but it is extremely probable that beneath the broad principle thus laid down He covered an allusion to the designs of the Pharisees upon His Own life. And if their hearts had not been hardened against every influence, those words would have carried to their conscience such an alternative as this : "Which, think you, is in reality the better thing,—to restore life and energy to this withered limb, or to destroy Me, as I know full well you are so eager to do?" But He received no answer. The sight of the poor maimed cripple imploring mercy, and the Saviour's question, to which there was but one reply, both alike failed to make any impression. "They held their peace." Then He "looked round with anger and grief." The notice of this incident is due to S. Mark alone, who is always so careful to make mention of "the passing lights and shadows which swept over the countenance of the Lord."¹ In the original language it is something more than grief ; it is the grief of sympathy ; and it creates a difficulty at first sight—there seems something so contradictory in the combination of anger and sorrow and sympathy. But it is only in sinful fallen man that they appear incompatible. There was no malice in the anger of Christ. He was angry with the sin, but grieved for the sinner. His indignation was roused, not by any offence that had been given to Himself, or by any personal injury ; and His sympathy was exhibited by an act of kindness naturally calculated to win them to repentance. With a look, then, of sorrowful, sympathetic anger, He bade the helpless cripple stretch forth his hand, and at once the heart sent its streams of blood into every vein and artery of the palsied limb. "It was restored whole as the other."

It can hardly have been by accident that our Lord should have healed him without any actual work, any visible effort on His part. We know with what infinite variety He effected His purposes. At one time He made clay and anointed the eyes of the blind, or touched with His hands the tongue of the dumb or the ears of the deaf ; at another He merely spake and it was done. It was surely of set purpose that He adopted the latter course in the case before us. It threw an additional obstacle in the way of the Pharisees. It was not words, but deeds that were forbidden in the Law on the

¹ Cf. Characteristics of S. Mark, pp. 4, 5.

Sabbath-day ; and when He said, "Stretch forth thy hand," the strictest Sabbatarian could lay no hold upon Him. There was no actionable breach, no violation even of the letter of the Law. What, then, were the baffled Pharisees to do? Exposure of sin is usually followed by one of two alternatives, —repentance, or more determined perseverance in the evil way. It creates no surprise to find that the Pharisees accepted the latter of the two. S. Luke expresses the bitterness of their disappointment when he says that they were filled with madness, and S. Mark leaves no doubt of the aggravation of their malicious designing in the record that "they went forth and straightway took counsel with the Herodians¹ against Him, how they might destroy Him." The coalition is so remarkable that it calls for consideration. No two classes could be found more widely separated either in political or in religious views.

In politics the Pharisees resolutely denied the right of any foreign power to exercise dominion over the heritage of God. Nothing but a Theocracy could be tolerated by a Jew. Prudence restrained them from revolution, but they lost no opportunity of protesting vigorously against the payment of taxes to the Imperial Treasury.

The Herodians were of Idumæan descent, but from long connection with Rome had become Roman in feeling and political sentiment, and exercising their authority only as vassals, they were careful to uphold the claims of the Sovereign.

In religion again there was an equally marked antagonism between the two parties.

The Separatists were the unflinching champions of the national faith, as they received it, and they upheld the Ritual

¹ The Herodians are referred to only in S. Matt. xxii. 16, S. Mark iii. 6, xii. 13, and S. Luke xx. 20, and it is very difficult to describe their exact position. Dr. Westcott, in Smith's *Bibl. Dict.*, suggests that they were brought into union with the Pharisees as supporters of a dynasty which saved the Jews from direct heathen rule ; and with the Sadducees, as holding a faith which was as it were a compromise between the belief of God's chosen people and that of heathen civilisation. I have looked for the motives of coalition simply in the desire to obtain one's end even through the assistance of one's natural enemies. It is very difficult to think the Pharisees could have felt any sympathy with the Herodians, when the Herods persistently appointed non-Palestinians to the High Priesthood. Some of the Herodians, moreover, held that the Messianic predictions were fulfilled in the Herodian dynasty, which was a view wholly antagonistic to Pharisaic belief.

and Ceremonial Law with the most rigid formalism. The Herodians, on the other hand, as far as they professed any religion at all, were Sadducees, altogether sceptical of a future life, and caring for little beyond a rationalistic morality.

The proud Jewish patriot and the half-heathen Herodian courtier—the scrupulous Religionist and the indifferent Secularist—such were the widely-conflicting spirits that were made friends together in this unrighteous cause.

It proves almost more conclusively than any other testimony the low estate into which all parties in Jewish society had sunk, that the principles which Christ preached found no response in the tenets of any of them; for sooner or later, here or elsewhere, all alike took counsel together and became confederate against Him.

The Ordination of the Twelve

S. MARK III. 7-19

7. But Jesus withdrew Himself with His disciples to the sea : and a great multitude from Galilee followed Him, and from Judæa, 8. and from Jerusalem, and from Idumæa, and *from* beyond Jordan ; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things He did, came unto Him. 9. And He spake to His disciples, that a small ship should wait on Him because of the multitude, lest they should throng Him. 10. For He had healed many ; insomuch that they pressed upon Him for to touch Him, as many as had plagues. 11. And unclean spirits, when they saw Him, fell down before Him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God. 12. And He straitly charged them that they should not make

Him known. 13. And He goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto *Him* whom He would : and they came unto Him. 14. And He ordained twelve, that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach, 15. and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils : 16. and Simon He surnamed Peter ; 17. and James the *son* of Zebedee, and John the brother of James ; and He surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder : 18. and Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the *son* of Alphæus, and Thaddæus, and Simon the Canaanite, 19. and Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed Him.

And they went into an house.

THIS is the third stage in the preparation of the disciples for the Apostolate. A certain number had been admitted at the beginning to terms of intimacy and friendship with Jesus. Then they had left their secular calling for a time to attend upon Him ; now the final step must be taken, and a selection made of such as would give themselves wholly to the work, and go no more back to the world.

It was a crisis in His ministry ; and, as the pattern Man, He prepared Himself for it by prayer. S. Mark

only tells us of His ascent into the mountain—the Kurun Hattin,¹ from which He preached His first sermon—but S. Luke, who is careful to note the marks of His Priestly work, adds that it was to spend the night in intercession and communing with the Father.

It is in imitation of her Lord that the Church, from the ordination of S. Matthias to the present time, has proceeded to “the laying on of hands” only after prayer and fasting and the invocation of the Holy Ghost.

The twelve Apostles are divided by the Evangelists into three groups. In the first are SS. Peter and James and John and Andrew. They formed two pairs of brothers, sons of Jonah and Zabdai; and not only were their homes in the same town, but the families were united by partnership in trade.

Three of the four are linked together by a golden chain as the favoured company, “the chosen out of the chosen,” to whom was granted the companionship of their Master in the most solemn events of His life—on the Mount of Transfiguration and in the Garden of Gethsemane. Andrew had been the first to follow Christ, the first to believe the Baptist’s cry, “Behold the Lamb of God;” and he was so loyal to the Master, that almost all that we read of him in his individual actions, is concerned with bringing others to His feet; and yet, notwithstanding all this, there was something—we know not what—that excluded him from the inner circle.

The second group is composed of SS. Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas. Of the first but little is recorded. “He was a sincere but timid seeker after truth,” and as such our Lord appealed to him when He spoke of “anything hard to be done or believed,” hoping thereby to inspire him with strength and confidence. Bartholomew, whose full title was, in all probability, Nathanael² Bar Tolmai, stands out as a

¹ The Latin Church has adopted the tradition that it was on a plateau of the “Horns of Hattin,” not far from the Khan Minyeh, on the western shore of the lake.

² The grounds upon which the identification of Nathanael with Bartholomew rest are these: S. John places Nathanael in the earliest group of Jesus’ followers, and names him with certain Apostles after the Resurrection, but he makes no mention of Bartholomew. The Synoptists, on the other hand, place Bartholomew in the List of Apostles, but take no note of Nathanael. Again, S. John states that Nathanael was brought to Jesus by Philip, and in the Synoptists Philip and Bartholomew are always associated together. It

marked man in that early history ; in an age of duplicity rarely equalled, he maintained, even before the shadow of Christ fell upon him, a character of such childlike simplicity that he was hailed by One Who can read the hearts of men, as "an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." S. Matthew, the Levi¹ of the first Gospel, was the lowest in the social scale, in a company where probably none were men of birth or position.

S. Thomas, also called Didymus, the Twin, was the most despondent, the slowest to believe, the last of the Twelve to be convinced, but true and honest to the core. When once his doubts was cleared away, and the pathway of duty was open, nothing could exceed the intensity of his devotion.

The third group contains the rest.

S. James, by a mistaken interpretation dating even from S. Jerome, has been generally known as "the Less;"² but in reality he was designated by the Evangelists, "the little," and that, not from any inferiority of position or ability, but simply because, like Zacchæus, he was small of stature.

Next to him in the usual order is the Apostle "of the triple name."³ He was called by his parents Judas, but probably after that had become a name of evil omen, he received other distinguishing titles, and is described in the narrative as the brother of James, or as Lebbæus, the warm-hearted and lion-like man, or by S. Mark as Thaddæus, from a certain feminine tenderness, which controlled and tempered the force and strength of his natural character.

The third was S. Simon, the Kananite ; not of the land of Canaan, but, as the Syriac word implies, "the Zealot." It marks his connection with a band of Galileans, who held their lives in their hand for the defence of the Mosaic Ritual and

is hard to believe that the follower most highly spoken of at the beginning by Jesus should have been excluded from the Apostleship. S. Augustine, however, disputed the identity, and conjectured a reason for the rejection of Nathanael.

¹ S. Matthew gives an account of the call of a "man named Matthew ;" SS. Mark and Luke of Levi, under precisely similar circumstances. Matthew, like Theodore, Adeodatus, Dorotheus, implying "the gift of God," probably was the name he assumed after his call.

² Cf. the discussion on "the Brethren" in xvi., pp. 70 ff.

³ Lebbæus, from the Hebrew *leb*, the heart ; according to others, from *labi*, a lion. Thaddæus, from *thad*, the female breast.

“the Covenant of their fathers.” In the last days of Jerusalem they degenerated into a desperate faction, and wrought endless mischief, rapine, and bloodshed, during the final struggle with the Roman army. In the zeal and enthusiasm which led Simon to cast in his lot with such a cause, our Lord discerned a qualification which, if once diverted into a proper channel, would prove of the greatest value in the spread of Christianity.

The list closes with one of the tribe of Judah—strange to say, the only member of it in the number of the Twelve. He was born at the little village of Kerioth, and called by a fearful paradox, Judah, “the praise of the Lord.” He bears on his forehead the ineffaceable brand, and is the only one of whom it has ever been said, “Good were it for that man if he had never been born.”

Such, briefly told, were the men who were associated with the Founder of the Faith for the regeneration of the world. The first general thought suggested by this consideration is of the manifold variety, both of character and of calling, represented in the Twelve. Where in the whole world could we find dispositions more diverse than in S. Peter and S. John,—the one ardent and impulsive, the very embodiment of energy and vehemence; the other quiet and contemplative, fitted for nothing so well as the life of a recluse?

What callings again could be more incongruous than those which S. Simon and S. Matthew had respectively chosen? The fiery patriot could brook no allegiance to an earthly ruler, but would do and dare anything to resist the Roman claim to impose taxation upon the people of God. But his fellow-Apostle had degraded himself, of his own free will, to exact from his own flesh and blood the obnoxious tribute. And yet such was the comprehensive work which lay before the Ministry of the Church, that a sphere was found in it for the “tax-gatherer,” no less than the “tax-hater,”—for the Jew who had sold his birthright, as well as for the irreconcilable nationalist. Jew and Greek, bond and free, rich and poor, men of every type and people, were destined to be embraced in the Catholic Church; and Jesus Christ foreshadowed the future when He welded together the most discordant elements in that first society of the Twelve Apostles.

Another thought of scarcely less importance arises out of

the social position from which He made His choice. The Jewish Rabbis estimated the weight of their influence by the rank or wealth or learning of the pupils who sat at their feet. The first Teacher of Christianity aimed, on the contrary, at attracting the poorest of men. It may be urged that He had no alternative; that men in the position of Joseph and Nicodemus were so reluctant to accept the call, that had He waited for their adherence, the Apostolic Roll would never have been filled up in His lifetime. But His choice of the poor and despised, the ignorant and unlearned, was based upon a principle which governed the whole of His life on earth; which selected for His birthplace the manger of a wayside khan, for His home a humble cottage, and for His early occupation the trade of an artisan, among a people intellectually of the lowest type in Palestine. It was in perfect consistency with all that had gone before, that He should associate with Himself for the work of the Ministry men of the humblest rank, who probably knew little more than their letters, and, judged by a human standard, were worthless for that unto which they were called.

And it was the same throughout, till at His departure out of the world He made the Sacraments, by which His Presence¹ was to be continued, the exact counterparts of the simplicity and plainness of His life in the flesh. One period of history will suffice to demonstrate the wisdom of His choice. For the first three centuries the progress of Christianity was a gradual triumph of the lowly over the great, till, by the irresistible might of its weakness, it shook the world and compelled "the master of legions" to cast his crown at the foot of the Cross.

And so the Apostle's boast was realised: "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are: that no flesh should glory in His Presence."

¹ This expression may be justified in regard to Baptism, by the belief that in both Sacraments we have "an extension of the Incarnation."

Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost

S. MARK III. 20-30

20. And *the* multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. 21. And when His friends heard *of it*, they went out to lay hold on Him: for they said, He is beside Himself. 22. And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth He out devils. 23. And He called them unto *Him*, and said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan? 24. And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25. And if a house be divided against itself, that

house cannot stand. 26. And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end. 27. No man can enter into a strong *man's* house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house. 28. Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: 29. but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation. 30. Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.

THE popularity of our Blessed Lord was rapidly on the increase. The crowds were becoming so eager to see and hear, so desirous for the relief of their wants and infirmities, that they left Him no time to Himself, not even "so much as to eat bread."

Hitherto His progress had been impeded only by enemies, but now a new element of opposition springs up. "His friends," including no doubt His kinsfolk and "brethren," who had as yet the most inadequate conception of His Mission, tried to interpose. They looked upon His indifference to bodily necessities as a mark of fanaticism, and feared that if it were left unchecked the consequences might be fatal. It is evident, however, from what follows later that their interference was wholly disregarded. But before their objections had been

silenced, He was confronted by a deputation of ecclesiastics from the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem. They had no doubt been carefully prepared with the arguments they were to use, and the line of action to pursue. It would be quite useless to deny His power over evil spirits, because hardly a day passed without some exhibition of it being witnessed. His influence with the people must be secretly undermined, and so they adopted the course of going about amongst them, and by covert insinuation or open assertion leading them to believe that He was in league with Beelzebub.

Who this exactly was is wrapped in some obscurity. Originally perhaps a Phœnician god, he has been variously regarded as the lord of flies, the lord of the dwelling, or the prince of idolatry, as some hold in accordance with Talmudic interpretation.¹ But, whatever may have been the real significance of the appellation, its usage in Holy Scripture is associated exclusively with demoniacal possession. It is quite possible that it is due to this circumstance, that, when that strange phenomenon passed away the use of the title was wholly discontinued.

It does not appear that the Scribes accused our Lord to His face of employing such agency, but He read their thoughts, perhaps heard their whispered innuendos, and, calling them up before Him, began at once to rebut the charge. We cannot fail to be struck by the total absence of personal anger, or pride, or indignation, such as one would naturally expect under such gross misrepresentation. The strength of His position inspired Him with the utmost calm and confidence; and He told them that their suggestion was refuted by the commonest observation. No kingdom, no society, no house nor family, could possibly hold together if its members were disunited. "That goes almost without saying." If then they carried their thoughts on for a moment from the earthly to the spiritual, from the kingdom of men to the dominion of the Evil Spirit, they would see the inconsistency of their allegation. That kingdom, like every

¹ Beelzebub. The LXX. and Josephus both connect him with flies, *Βάαλ μύτιαν*; perhaps from the Hebrew *zebel*, dung, the dung-fly; others from *zebul*, a habitation, make him *οικοδεσπότης*, S. Matt. x. 25. Others again, from a secondary Hebrew sense of *zebel*, an idol, interpret the name as the "prince of false gods or idols," from which the transition to *ἄρχων τῶν δαιμονίων*, "the chief of the devils," is very natural. S. Luke xi. 15.

other, was governed by a prince ; he had subordinate officers under him to carry out his orders, and see that his rule was obeyed. It was quite inconceivable that he could be found co-operating with any other power for their overthrow. Such an element of disunion must end in dissolution, for a more self-destructive process could not be conceived, than that a man should take up arms and turn them against himself. "If Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end."

He then proceeds to show that their admission that the devils had been cast out by Him was proof positive that He had bound their prince ; for unless the strong man had been restrained, he would never have suffered himself to have his goods and spoils taken away from him.

But, although Jesus was able to reason with His opponents in this calm unimpassioned argument, He did not let them go till He had pierced them through with a terrible denunciation and warning against the inevitable consequence of persistence in their present course.

Men rebuked Him again and again for His birth and parentage, "Is not this the carpenter, the Son of Mary?" and there was something to be urged in excuse for their ignorant wonder ; but to charge Him with casting out devils by Satanic agency, with doing by the power of evil what He had wrought by the Spirit of God, admitted of no palliation. It was a crime of such gravity, betraying a condition of mind so persistently, so hopelessly wicked, that the man who committed it stood guilty of an eternal sin.¹ The door of mercy was closed against him, and neither on this side of the grave, nor in the unclothed state, was it possible that he should ever hear the words of pardon and peace. Three thoughts, all calculated to inspire us with comfort, arise out of a careful consideration of this tremendous utterance.

Firstly, if our Lord chose to magnify the heinousness of this particular sin by designating it "eternal," or as we find in the parallel passage from S. Matthew's Gospel, by assuring His hearers that it should "not be forgiven, neither in this world, neither in the world to come," it follows of necessity that there

¹ It can hardly be doubted that the reading *κρίσεως* was substituted for the more difficult *ἀμαρτήματος* of the best MSS.

is at least the possibility of forgiveness for some sins after death. It is difficult to believe that He would have run the risk of using an expression so likely to mislead, and so certain to be laid hold of by those who held erroneous doctrine on the subject, and to be employed in a manner destructive of the truth. It would seem, however, from a consideration of primitive testimony, that it was held to apply only to the pardon of sins of infirmity, and the effacement of sinful stains.¹

Secondly, He did not directly say that the people whom He was addressing had committed the unpardonable sin. They were doubtless on the edge of that awful condition, and if they suffered the malignity of their heart to lead them to a persistent repetition of the charge, after its folly had been exposed, nothing might save them from the abyss of destruction. If His words implied what has been too hastily assumed, it detracts from that readiness to forgive, that free and open offer of pardon for every returning sinner, which we love to associate with the Saviour's mission.

And, thirdly, we realise the necessity of carefully avoiding any confusion between sin and blasphemy. Men have fallen into a thoughtless way of characterising that which Jesus denounced in such terrible terms as "sin" against the Holy Ghost. All blasphemy is sin, but all sin is not blasphemy; and it is quite clear that He intended to draw the distinction in this passage. "All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith they shall blaspheme: but he that shall blaspheme" (not he that shall sin) "against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin" (R. V.).

The importance of the distinction lies in this: Our bodies are by Baptism made "temples of the Holy Ghost," and every sin against the body, every act of impurity, and every unhalloved thought, is an offence against Him that dwelleth therein.

Again, the works of the Spirit are "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance;" and by every act of consent to those qualities which are antagonistic to these we do despite to Him Who worketh in us.

It has been through confounding such like transgressions with that blasphemy against which the Pharisees were warned,

¹ Cf. the Author's *After Death*, 71-73 and 117-126.

that men have yielded to despair, and made shipwreck of their safety. But we nowhere find that any one of these is regarded as such a deadly sin that it should close every avenue of the offender's soul against the return of grace.

Indeed, it may be doubted whether there is now any such absolutely unpardonable offence possible.¹ It is only too obvious that there is an obstinate persistence in sinful living, which practically deprives a man of power to repent ; but this is a very different thing from saying that there is a definite transgression, such as our Lord was speaking of, which at once and for ever excludes the transgressor from the possibility of pardon. Experience shows that we may fall so low by wilfully resisting grace and despising the offer of forgiveness, that there is nothing left but "a fearful looking for of judgment." We may reach a condition in which, as S. John implies, it will be useless to pray for us. But since an all-sufficient Atonement has been made, we would fain believe that whosoever will, whatever the nature of his sin, may find "a place of repentance," if he seek it "carefully with tears."

¹ Cf. S. Aug. Serm. lxxi. ; Waterland, Serm. xxviii. ; Pusey, Serm. Sin against the Holy Ghost, for the opposite view.

The Lord's Brethren

S. MARK III. 31-35

31. There came then *His* brethren and His mother, and, standing without, sent unto Him, calling Him. 32. And the multitude sat about Him, and they said unto Him, Behold, Thy mother and Thy brethren without seek for Thee. 33. And He answered them, saying, Who is My mother, or My brethren? 34. And He looked round about on them which sat about Him, and said, Behold My mother and My brethren. 35. For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is My brother, and My sister, and mother.

It has been much debated what the exact relationship of the so-called "brethren" of our Lord really was. Their names have been preserved as James and Joses, Judah and Simon. Mainly in consequence of the identity of three of them with those of three Apostles, the idea sprang up (though not till the fourth century), and obtained wide currency in the West, that certain of them were of the number of "the Twelve," and that all were sons of Mary the wife of Alphæus, not brethren at all, but cousins of our Lord.

Two objections may be raised to such a theory. Even if Alphæus and Cleophas were one and the same,¹ it is far from certain that Mary his wife was sister to Mary the Blessed Virgin. We lay no stress upon the difficulty suggested by two daughters bearing the same name; for though the Church has commemorated the Mother of Jesus as Mary, the real name which she received from her parents was Mariam, the Hebrew

¹ It is very difficult to realise that the two names are but different forms of one and the same.

Miriam. The Greek of the Evangelists uniformly recognises the distinction, and separates the spelling of her name from that of all the "Maries."

We maintain, however, that the doubtful interpretation of a single verse is too slender a thread to support a theory involving so much. S. John, in his description of the Crucifixion, says, "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene." It has been commonly assumed that he speaks here only of three persons; and Christian Art has stereotyped this interpretation by the familiar representation of "the three Maries," with none other near save the beloved disciple. We think it far more probable that the Evangelist had before his eyes four women—viz., the Blessed Virgin, her sister, who is unnamed, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.

If we accept another tradition, which makes the Virgin's sister Salome S. John's mother, we can easily understand that a natural reserve on his part would account for the suppression of her name.

Two things contribute to the conclusion that four persons are designated in the text. Firstly, the common practice of the Evangelists of arranging people in pairs. Secondly, and far more definitely, some direct testimony from the Syriac and other¹ Versions of the Gospels. In this the conjunction "and" is inserted between the Virgin's sister and Mary the wife of Cleophas, manifestly separating them as distinct persons. The fact that one of these translations was made as early as the second century² adds no little weight to its authority upon disputed points. In the light of this interpretation, and in the absence of any other testimony, the relationship of the wife of Alphæus to the mother of our Lord falls to the ground.

Again, to make our Lord's brethren members of the Apostolic company, is to put them in a position from which the plain teaching of Scripture history seems to exclude them.

In the case before us they are found protesting against the course which He thought it right to take. S. John expressly

¹ Viz., the Persian and Æthiopic.

² This is according to the Peshito. The Jerusalem Syriac, though not interpolating "and," places a full stop after His mother's sister, "suggesting by punctuation the same interpretation."

states that they did not believe in Him, and S. Luke treated them as a body of men separate from the Apostles when he wrote, "These all," meaning the Eleven after the Ascension, "continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the Mother of Jesus, and with His brethren."

The declaration of S. John was made during the last year of our Lord's ministry, which increases the great improbability of such a state of feeling having been held compatible with the Apostolic office. Their unbelief, it is true, passed away, but not till after the Resurrection, and was perhaps mainly due to a direct manifestation of Himself to S. James, the chief of their number.

The whole theory therefore completely breaks down when subjected to a careful examination, and we must look elsewhere for the true relationship.

Two explanations, both of which preserve the natural meaning of the expression "brethren," remain for consideration. The one, which however runs counter to the unbroken tradition of the perpetual virginity¹ of the Mother of Jesus, holds them to have been uterine brethren borne to Joseph after our Blessed Lord.

The title of "first-born son" given to Jesus seems at first sight to suggest the idea of others born subsequently; but it would convey no such suggestion to the Jewish mind. It was the recognised designation of the first child, whether others followed or not; it was a title of honour bespeaking special prerogatives and consecration to God.

It would have been surely a most unnatural thing for our Lord on the cross to commit His Mother to the care and pro-

¹ S. Matthew, by the expression "knew her not till she brought forth a son," seems to contradict this; but, as Bishop Lightfoot has pointed out, all that the Evangelist intended was "to show that Jesus was not begotten in the course of nature; and thus, while it denies any previous intercourse with her husband, it neither asserts nor implies any subsequent intercourse."—App. ii. to Galat. p. 257. Epiphanius writes: "As the lioness is said to exhaust her fertility in the production of a single offspring (Herodot. iii. 108), so she who bore the Lion of Judah could not in the nature of things become a mother a second time."—Qu. by Lightfoot, p. 270. Archdeacon Farrar is almost alone among modern scholars in upholding the Helvidian view, *i.e.* that they were the Virgin's children; but the exhaustive treatise of Bishop Lightfoot has decided the case in favour of the Epiphanian view, *i.e.* that they were sons of S. Joseph by a former wife,

tection of S. John, if she had had sons and daughters of her own at the time. It would have been next to impossible to have ignored the closest of family ties. It is no sufficient answer to say that He was justified in doing so, from the knowledge that His brethren did not believe in Him. He Who saw the end from the beginning knew well what a change the Resurrection would bring about, and that in a very short time one at least of the four would be foremost in every Christian work.¹ It is far more likely, therefore, that they were what we should call "half-brethren," children of S. Joseph by a former wife. This is in accord with the traditional belief² that he was much older than the Blessed Virgin, and accounts also for the air of seniority which they assume over Jesus, endeavouring to restrain Him in the circumstances we are now considering, and giving Him their counsel somewhat dictatorially on another occasion.

Furthermore, the theory has all the prestige which attaches to the earliest belief, and it was unquestionably most prevalent in Palestine,³ the land where the truth concerning His kinship was presumably most likely to be preserved.

Now the question with which Jesus met the information of the multitude, "Who is My mother or My brethren?" suggests a disregard for natural ties of human relationship. But this is fully contradicted by other passages in His life. We have only to recall the scene at the grave of Lazarus, where He exhibited such marks of affection that the bystanders exclaimed, "Behold how He loved him!" or still more strikingly that upon the cross, where, amidst all the agony that He was enduring, His whole soul went out in love for her who had borne Him. He would not leave her widowed and childless to the cold world, but committed her in all the tender solicitude of a most loving heart to one whom He Himself had trained, during three years of unchecked affection, in all the mysteries of

¹ S. James, the Lord's brother, became Bishop of Jerusalem.

² Christian Art has perpetuated the belief by always representing S. Joseph as an old man. Epiphanius says that he was eighty years old when he espoused the Blessed Virgin.

³ Epiphanius, the great supporter of this view in the controversy with S. Jerome and Helvidius, was a native of Palestine. It is said that S. Jerome abandoned the theory of cousinhood, and adopted this after his residence at Bethlehem, where he would hear the true tradition.

the fullest human love, to fill His vacant place and be to His Mother a second son.

All this is amply sufficient to prove that His human heart was not indifferent to family ties or the claims of friendship.

But there is another side to the picture, which represents in equally vivid colours the principle that the calls of natural affections, strong though they be, are not the strongest, and that they are necessarily postponed when brought into conflict with the higher duties of the spiritual life.

It appears first in His answer to the sorrowful reproach of His Mother, "Son, why hast Thou thus dealt with us?" There is no regretful apology, nothing but the question of surprise, "How is it that ye sought Me? wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?"

It reappears in His remonstrance at the marriage feast, when she seemed to forget His mission, and almost commanded Him what to do: "Woman, what have I to do with thee?"

Again, what could be seemingly harsher than His reply to the Scribe who asked permission to show the last token of respect to his father: "Let the dead bury their dead"? But Jesus recognised the critical position, and the peril of the least hesitancy for a half-hearted follower, and, even at the risk of appearing unnatural, ignored the claims of filial affection.

And we hear another echo in the narrative now before us. His brethren, who ill understood His work, having persuaded His Mother, perhaps against her will, to join in their action, attempted to divert Him from His purpose. But no human tie could hinder Him here. There is, nevertheless, a touch of tenderness in the way in which He meets them, showing how the higher claim for obedience to God must override the lower, and trying to make them one with Himself, members of the family and household of God: "For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is My brother, and My sister, and mother."

XVII

The Parable of the Sower

S. MARK IV. 1-12

1. And He began again to teach by the sea side : and there was gathered unto Him a great multitude, so that He entered into a ship, and sat in the sea ; and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land. 2. And He taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in His doctrine, 3. Hearken ; Behold, there went out a sower to sow : 4. and it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up. 5. And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth ; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth : 6. but when the sun was up, it was scorched ; and because it had no root, it withered away. 7. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and

choked it, and it yielded no fruit. 8. And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased ; and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred. 9. And He said unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

10. And when He was alone, they that were about Him with the twelve asked of Him the parable. 11. And He said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God : but unto them that are without, all *these* things are done in parables : 12. that seeing they may see, and not perceive ; and hearing they may hear, and not understand ; lest at any time they should be converted, and *their* sins should be forgiven them.

THERE are two circumstances which lend a peculiar interest to this parable. It was the first spoken by our Lord, and the scene may be identified almost beyond a question.

There is always some special charm and attraction in the earliest productions of great and distinguished people. The first sermon of a preacher like S. Chrysostom, or the first drawing of an artist like Raphael, would be eagerly examined, if they could anywhere be found. They would exhibit, no doubt, some sign and earnest of coming greatness ; but in

power and skill they would fall immeasurably below the standard of excellence reached in later years. How different in this respect is the first parable of Him "Who spake as never man spake"! It bears no trace of inferiority, but comes forth perfect as the latest that fell from His lips.

Again, it affords us no little pleasure to be able to determine the exact locality where it was delivered. He was teaching on the shores of the lake, not far from Capernaum, and the crowd gathered so thickly about Him that, in order to obtain a position of advantage for preaching, He entered a boat, rowed out a few strokes from the land, and then turned round to address them. Now, travellers in Palestine have often found the imagery of the Parables repeated in what they have themselves seen passing before their eyes. The vineyard with its fence and wine-press and tower—the shepherd with the sheep following, not going before—the man who fell among thieves,—all are illustrated almost to the letter in the present day.

But when the parable of the Sower was spoken, our Lord was by the sea-side, and there we should have expected that His similes would have been drawn from storms and ships and nets, hardly from fields and agriculture. We know what life and freshness He was wont to impart to His teaching by basing it upon the sights and objects immediately present. It is exemplified here, where it was least expected, in a very striking manner. A well-known Eastern traveller has described his feelings on visiting the neighbourhood. As he was wondering what there could possibly be to suggest such imagery, his attention was arrested by a slight recess in the hillside, which disclosed at once "every feature of the great parable. There was the undulating corn-field descending to the water's edge. There was the trodden pathway running through the midst of it, with no fence or hedge to prevent the seed from falling here and there on either side of it or upon it: itself hard with the constant tramp of horse and mule and human feet. There was the 'good' rich soil, which distinguishes the whole of that neighbourhood from the bare hills elsewhere, descending towards the lake, and which, where there is no interruption, produces one vast mass of corn. There was the rocky ground of the hillside protruding here and there through the corn-fields, as elsewhere through the

grassy slopes. There were the large bushes of thorn—the ‘Nebk,’ that kind of which tradition says the Crown of Thorns¹ was woven,—springing up in the very midst of the waving wheat.” It is indeed a strange coincidence that in a land where such vast changes have taken place during eighteen centuries—more perhaps than in any other country in the world—the scene of our Lord’s first parable, from the reproduction of the exact features, should be capable of almost certain identification.

Two expressions arrest our notice at once, as they were manifestly designed to arrest that of the assembled multitude: “Hearken; Behold!” The parable begins with “Hearken;” it closes with “Take heed what ye hear.” He was about to adopt a mode of teaching unfamiliar to their ears: it needed an undivided attention. “Behold!” Did He actually point to a husbandman, as he came forth at the moment from his homestead on the hillside and began to sow? If we could be sure that the sequence of events has brought us to the autumnal seed-time, we could hardly doubt it, but the chronological order here is most difficult to determine.

And then as they listened with a newly-awakened interest, He clothed the sad experience of the farmer in a parabolic form, and told them how much of the seed that was sown brought no return—three parts lost, one only saved. We can scarcely conceive how its moral could have escaped even the meanest understanding; but the disciples were astonished that He should speak to the crowds in any but the transparent language to which they were used. They were not even sure that they rightly understood Him themselves. “Why speakest Thou unto them in parables?” they asked. The method of teaching was common among the Jews. Parables abound in the Talmud. Hillel and Shammai and Rabbi Meir² have left many examples; but as the Rabbis held the poor and ignorant in contempt, and cared only to find the rich and

¹ In all probability the name of “Spina Christi” was given to this from the idea that, having very sharp points, it was most likely to have been chosen for the crown. The object, however, of crowning Him appears to have been mockery rather than cruelty, so that they would choose one with leaves more nearly resembling those of the imperial wreaths, and a stem more pliable than that of the Nebk.

² Hillel and Shammai were the chief teachers before our Lord, R. Meir immediately after. It was said of the last that a third of his teaching was by parables.

intelligent¹ classes sitting at their feet, it is probable that the surprise of the disciples was occasioned by His adopting, with the multitude at large, a style hitherto appropriated to narrower circles. There is an illustration of this distinction in one of the Apocryphal Books, where, in contrasting the learned with artisans and labourers, the writer says of the latter, "they shall not be found where parables are spoken."²

Our Lord gave a reason to His disciples when they were alone. Because their minds were receptive of truth, and, as compared with that of the general public, capable of appreciating the deep mysteries of the Gospel,³ He sets them aside. But He had now been teaching for a considerable time, and with such plainness of speech that there was no excuse if men in general could not understand the nature of His message. It was, so to speak, a crisis in their lives; He had reached a point where He must test results. He could not always go on casting pearls before swine, so henceforward a new line must be adopted. It was of the nature of a parable both to conceal and to unveil. To men whose minds were enlightened it was a revelation of spiritual truths, but hearts that were waxed gross, and ears dull of hearing, it only hardened into greater insensibility. Thinking only of the latter, He takes up the language of Isaiah, who had been sent to the Jews with a penal message from the Almighty, when the decree had gone forth that their sin must work out its punishment, because the day of grace was past. But that He adopted the interpretation of the Septuagint⁴ version in pre-

¹ Cf. p. 56.

² I am indebted for this reference to a note in Professor Plumptre's Commentary on S. Matthew.

³ Only by comparison. They had much to learn as yet; and the gradual and patient guidance of them into the truths of revelation is a subject well worthy of notice.

⁴ In the Hebrew it is in the imperative mood—a command to the prophet, "Make the heart of this people fat," etc. In the LXX. the people are supposed to do it themselves. Sadler in his notes on the passage in S. Matthew has shown how a full consideration of the passage in Isaiah mitigates the apparent harshness of God's command. The whole note is worthy of consideration. The LXX. has lost the significance of a common and very forcible Hebrew idiom in the rendering, "that seeing they may see and not perceive." It is rather, "that they may *fully* see," see without anything to hide, but not perceive what it meant—that the sense of sight may be quickened but the understanding made dull.

ference to the harsher form assumed in the Hebrew—"Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed,"—is the most convincing proof that He did not intend, what the words taken by themselves would appear to convey, and that His purpose was only penal and retributive.

He had learned by experience the hopelessness of His task, and foreseeing the failure of this fresh attempt, "half in sadness, half in irony" perhaps, He spoke as though He aimed¹ at producing the expected result. It was too true that those who saw His miracles without perceiving their symbolism, and heard His words only to miss their spiritual import, were by those very sights and sounds left in a worse condition than before; but the fact that His whole mission was a prolonged appeal to men to receive His words that they might have life, is the clearest evidence that He could never at any time have designed that His preaching should aggravate their impenitence and hardness of heart.

¹ The *ἵνα* of S. Mark should be read in connection with the *ὅτι* of S. Matthew, and in the light of our Lord's acceptance of the more merciful rendering of the LXX.

XVIII

The Parable of the Sower explained

S. MARK IV. 13-25

13. And He said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables? 14. The sower soweth the word. 15. And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts. 16. And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; 17. and have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time; afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended. 18. And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, 19. and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it

becometh unfruitful. 20. And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive *it*, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred.

21. And He said unto them, Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? *and* not to be set on a candlestick? 22. For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was any thing kept secret, but that it should come abroad. 23. If any *man* have ears to hear, let him hear. 24. And He said unto them, Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given. 25. For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even *that* which he hath.

THE disciples must have grasped, at least in part, the hidden meaning of the parable. Otherwise our Lord could hardly have spoken of them, as knowing the mysteries of the kingdom; for no spiritual teaching could be made simpler than that. They needed however to have their hazy and fragmentary ideas cleared of all doubtfulness and expressed with coherence; and this He did for them, filling up what was lacking, correcting mistaken conceptions, and leaving a model of exposition for all time.

Now when He framed the parable, He classified the hearers of the Word according to His Own experience as a Preacher; basing His classification not so much upon generalities as upon well-remembered illustrations. It would not be difficult to exemplify this by specimens¹ drawn from the records of His dealings with men; but it will suffice now to give point to His descriptions, by recalling the divers effects produced by His claims to the Messiahship.

There were men hardened by Jewish prejudice, and seared with worldliness, who looked only for material advancement by the establishment of a new kingdom, and yet flocked to hear His words, meek and lowly as He was. They might possibly have been impressed, had not the Pharisaic enemies of the Cross, the emissaries of Satan, stepped in with their specious arguments, and caught away the seed before ever it found any lodgment in their hearts.

Then there were others of an emotional temperament,² who were carried away in the excitement aroused by His sudden popularity, who, when they witnessed the wonderful works that He did, would have taken Him by force, and made Him a king, and yet, staggered by the first check their enthusiasm received, within twenty-four hours "went away backward, and walked no more with Him."

Again, there was a third class, more limited, no doubt, who saw in Him the Beauty they desired, and recognised His "goodness,"—men too whom He loved in return for all that was best in their lives, but who failed at last because their heart was not whole. Underneath all this there was "a root of bitterness,"—love of riches, or pleasure, or even distracting cares of home,—and though for a time they showed no vitality, not springing up simultaneously with the crop of new desires, yet by the rapidity and rankness of their growth, they just spoiled the life when it was on the eve of bearing fruit.³

¹ Bruce, in his *Parabolic Teaching of Christ*, adopting a different mode of illustration, has found examples of each kind of hearer in S. Luke xii. 11, 13, ix. 57, and 61, 62, and in the case of Barnabas.

² The comparison is only rightly appreciated by noticing that it is not "stony ground," so much as rocks covered with a thin layer of soil. The heat of the sun acting upon the rock excites hasty growth, and is followed by premature withering.

³ The meaning is better expressed in S. Luke, οὐ τελεσφοροῦσιν, "they bring no fruit to perfection."

The last class was composed of those whose hearts the Baptist had prepared, and the Lord had opened, who were "waiting for the consolation of Israel,"—men like SS. Andrew and John and Nathanael, or women like the devout band who "ministered to Him of their substance," and in varying degrees of productiveness bore fruit in their lives.

This is but a single application of the parable, adapted to a special time, but the language is so pregnant and comprehensive that those who have rejected or received His Word from whatever motive, throughout all history can see their image reflected in some portion of its fourfold division.

The exposition was followed up by three proverbial¹ sayings, suggested no doubt by its teaching, and all calculated to enforce the importance of communicating to others what we have received ourselves.

The object of material light is that it may be diffused. Conceal it by a covering, and the very object of its existence is frustrated. Even so the spiritual illumination enjoyed by the disciples would fail in its purpose, if it were either extinguished or concealed.

It can hardly be illustrated better than by the familiar story of the Calais lighthouse-keeper, who, when boasting of the brilliancy of his lamp, was asked what would happen if it were suffered to go out, or if the reflectors became dim. "Impossible," he answered, "for yonder, where nothing can be seen by us, there are ships sailing to every harbour of the sea; if to-night I failed in my duty some one might be shipwrecked. No! I like to think that the eyes of the whole world are fixed upon my light." This man understood well what our Lord had taught the disciples when He said that they were to be like Safed,² the city set upon an hill which could not be hid, and to remember that, inasmuch as they were the light of the world, they must shine before men.

After this He justifies the parabolic form of teaching, which often served to veil the truth, on the ground that immediate

¹ The principle involved was of such vital importance that the proverbial sayings were repeated on more than one occasion, cf. S. Matt. v. 14, 15, 16, x. 26; S. Luke xii. 2.

² Maundrell, Jowett, and others have so identified Safed. It rises to the height of nearly 3000 feet, and would certainly be conspicuous from Kurun Hattin, the traditional scene of the Sermon on the Mount.

revelation is not always desirable. Many things are concealed, both in nature and by art, though the concealment is by no means designed to be permanent. What striking illustrations of the principle are furnished in Geology! Look at the almost measureless beds of coal, hidden for ages in the bowels of the earth, but designed by Providence to be revealed when necessity should arise. The precise time for the unveiling it is not always easy to decide, because man's knowledge is finite, but we rest assured that it will coincide with the need for its use. It is a principle worth bearing in mind when human efforts fail; for it is encouraging to know that such a result may be due simply to the fact that we have tried unconsciously to anticipate the fore-appointed time.

He reverts, in conclusion, to the principle of the first proverb, by quoting another of an analogous kind. Man learns by teaching, and the more use he makes of what he acquires, the more he will be enriched. But let him refuse to acknowledge the obligation to measure out what he has himself received—to trade, that is, with the Talents or Pounds intrusted to him for profit,—and they will be taken from him and given to others. All history, whether of individuals or communities, is an unbroken witness to the fact, that no good gift, either of wealth, or influence, or spiritual wisdom, is bestowed for the sole use of the immediate recipient.

“We lose what on ourselves we spend,
We have as treasure without end
Whatever, Lord, to Thee we lend :”

and we lend to God what we give to our fellow-creatures.

XIX

The Gradual Growth of the Seed

S. MARK IV. 26-29

26. And He said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground, 27. and should sleep and rise, night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. 28. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. 29. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.

IN this parable, of almost unique beauty, which S. Mark alone has recorded, our Lord teaches that there is an analogy to be drawn between the operations of Nature and Grace. He speaks of the latter under the figure of a kingdom. Now "the kingdom of God" is an expression used in Holy Scripture in a threefold sense.

It is that empire which shall be established at the end of the world, when "all things shall be subdued unto Him, . . . that God may be all in all."

Again, it is the Divinely-constituted society of the Church, in which His sovereign powers of admission and exclusion, of government and guidance, were delegated to a human Ministry, when its Founder said, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations;" and again, "As My Father hath sent Me, so send I you: . . . whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."

Yet once more, it is the reign of grace in the individual heart, whose presence is so productive of good, that, like the "treasure hid in the field," or the "one pearl of great price," no sacrifice can be too much to pay for its acquisition.

Our Lord makes no reference here to the first of the above meanings, but in regard to the other two, shows how the spiritual and natural kingdoms are governed and controlled by similar laws.

Now, in every comparison of the higher with the lower—the heavenly and spiritual with the earthly and natural—while there are many points of close similitude, there will of necessity be some also of manifest divergence. The present parable furnishes an apt illustration when it says that the sower of the seed knows nothing of the mysterious laws of growth and development, and implies that the farmer, having sown his barley or wheat, goes about his ordinary avocations with little thought of that, over which he knows that he has no control. But of Him Who plants the seed of Divine grace in the individual heart, or forms the embryo of what is destined to become a visible body of Christians, none can say that He is careless of its condition or is baffled in understanding the progressive stages of its formation.

Upon the main point, however, which the parable was intended to enforce, there is an exact parallel. The normal growth is not fitful or capricious, but in accordance with well-ordered laws of slow and gradual progression.

Now look at the kingdom of God in its twofold aspect in the light of this statement. Take first the history of the Church in its collective community. The world was prepared for it by the Incarnation and Redemption. When Christ gave His life for mankind, and broke down the middle wall of partition which sin had built up between man and God, humanly speaking, there would be a rapid diffusion of spiritual knowledge, and no appreciable interval “between the two events of Christ’s dying for the world and the world falling prostrate” at His feet. But He taught men by this parable not to cherish any such expectation; the seed must first lie dormant for a time, then the springing blade would follow in the uprising of small communities struggling through the soil of oppression and persecution; then, when the Empire should be converted, the blade would sprout into the ear, and the Churches grow and Sees be multiplied; and now we still wait, after eighteen centuries of alternation of hope and despair, of success and adversity, of the waxing and waning of missionary

enterprise,—we still wait for the full corn and the time of harvest, when “the valleys shall stand so thick with corn that they shall laugh and sing;” and when “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.”

Look again at individual souls. The seed of the spiritual life is sown in Holy Baptism, when “by the washing of water and renewing of the Holy Ghost” the baptized person is translated from the kingdom of wrath into the kingdom of grace, and receives from God the requisite powers for continuance therein. The effects of the gift, however, may be invisible for a time, necessarily so if the rite has been received in an unconscious state; it may lie dormant for years, but if the influences are favourable, if the education is carefully tended, if childhood and youth are duly sheltered from the blighting winds of early temptations, and the chilling frosts of unbelief, then it may be expected to grow up from one stage of holiness to another. It may not be always (as neither is it in the field of nature) with uniform progress, but on the whole it develops by the selfsame laws of growth which normally govern the growing corn, from the first burst of germinating life to the ripened grain of full sanctification.

The language of the parable, where it speaks of the spontaneous growth of the corn in the soil, needs careful interpretation in its relation to the Divine life. It is true that it is the Spirit of God Which is the great vivifying Agent in the soul of man, just as in nature, it is from its disposition in the earth that germination is produced; but it is not meant that nothing can hinder or foster the growth. In both cases the soil may be prepared, the weeds and noxious herbs uprooted, the sunlight more freely admitted by the removal of overshadowing trees, and the field may be fenced round for protection from the incursion of destructive influences; but the farmer and the preacher must unite in the confession that when they have done all, in their respective spheres, that lies within their reach, when Paul has planted, and Apollos watered, it is none but God Who can give the increase.

Now the general teaching of the parable¹ suggests a con-

¹ In this very pregnant parable we have been obliged to pass over much that is well worthy of consideration. The reader may consult with advantage Bruce, *Parabolic Teaching*, ch. v.

sideration of two important doctrinal questions, viz. the relationship of Sanctification¹ to Conversion, and the mode of reconciling the absence of any sign of spiritual life, with the truth of Regeneration.

Jacob may have been changed in a single night; he may have realised, under the influence of one preternatural vision, such an overpowering sense of God's Providence that the current of his life was immediately turned. Or again, in a somewhat similar manner, Saul the persecutor experienced "a wonderful conversion" through that sudden arrest on the road to Damascus; and other saints, in all ages of Christian history—here one and there another—have shared the same experience, differing only in the degree of its force and influence. How then is the doctrine of Christ's language here affected by such cases? There is no rule without its exceptions. These sudden conversions are as it were miracles of mercy. They resemble the instantaneous multiplication of the loaves in the desert: they are as when the divers stages of production are concentrated by Divine interposition into a single act, for a special object or a rare emergency. But to hint even, that the heart of man must be thus changed, and that the "where" and the "when" of the change should be definable and certain, is a direct contradiction to the analogy which Christ drew. It is God's law—albeit a law admitting of infinite variation at the hands of Him Who made it—that the soul of man should be sanctified ordinarily, not by sudden crises or abnormal seasons, but by such a slow and gradual development as is witnessed every day in the fields around us.

Again, if no sign of the Holy Spirit's influence manifests

¹ It is very necessary to distinguish carefully theological terms. Regeneration, *παλιγγενεσία* (Tit. iii. 5), is an initial act, in which we are "begotten again," *ἀναγεγεννημένοι* (1 S. Pet. i. 3), a new relationship of spiritual Paternity being established between us and God. It is a completed act. We can never be "regenerated" again. Holy Scripture never calls upon those who have fallen away from Baptismal grace to "be born again."

Sanctification, *ἀγιασμός*, is a progressive work by which fallen man is made "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." It begins coincidentally with Regeneration. The distinction is well marked in the Collect for Christmas Day, "Grant that we being regenerate . . . may daily be renewed by Thy Holy Spirit."

Conversion, *ἐπιστροφή*, is a change from a false religion to the true, or a return, after falling away from grace given, on the part of a convinced penitent. This may therefore take place before or after Baptism.

itself during the lapse of years in the life of the baptized, what conclusion must be drawn? Dare any one assert that the gift of Regeneration was either not imparted in Holy Baptism, or has since been taken away? Is it not truer that it is only dormant, not quenched or crushed, but waiting to be quickened in God's good time, just as we read of grains of wheat laid up with mummies, which, after ages of unproductive existence, have actually germinated and grown to maturity when the circumstances of the situation changed?

What God requires is the patience of the farmer, who "sleeps, and rises night and day" in the full assurance that "though it tarry it will surely come." If ever then we are discouraged by any apparent failure, either in our own heart or in the hearts of others, let us take courage from what we may see for ourselves in the analogies of Nature, always remembering what closer observation teaches, that "the higher the thing which grows in the scale of being, the slower its growth."

The Parable of the Mustard-Seed

S. MARK IV. 30-34

30. And He said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it? 31. *It is* like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth: 32. but when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great

branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it. 33. And with many such parables spake He the word unto them, as they were able to hear *it*. 34. But without a parable spake He not unto them: and *when they were* alone, He expounded all *things* to His disciples.

THE interpretation of Holy Scripture has often suffered from an undue anxiety to press details, especially in connection with its parabolic teaching. Difficulties of this kind have been created by certain circumstances of the parable before us. The mustard plant, it is urged, does not fully meet the requirements of the language. There are other seeds that are smaller: it does not shoot out large branches, nor become "a great tree:" at best it is little more than a garden shrub.

The difficulties were thought to have been solved when a learned botanist¹ discovered a tree in Palestine which, in everything but name, seemed to fulfil the demands of the parable. Its name is *Salvadora Persica*; it grows to a considerable height, puts forth leafy branches, and possesses many properties of the mustard plant.

¹ Dr. Royle adopted a suggestion previously made by two travellers, Irby and Mangles (Travels in Egypt, ch. vii.) It is called in Arabic *khardal*, which is the common name for mustard. Dr. R. made a mistake in assuming that it grew by the Sea of Galilee. Cf. Bible Educator, i. 119; Smith's Dict. ii. 446; Tristram, Nat. Hist. of the Bible, 472.

Now, while we hail with satisfaction any scientific discovery for the elucidation of obscure passages of the Bible, care must be taken not to depart from the plain teaching because a novel interpretation pleases the fancy, and to see that in clearing away existing obstacles, new ones are not created.

For instance, the *Salvadora* has since been found to grow only in southern climes, abounding in Abyssinia, the desert of Sinai, and other hot regions; and it is a great question whether it could have grown in Palestine, anywhere else than on the almost tropical shores of the Dead Sea. Whereas it is obvious that the force of the similitude would have been lost upon our Lord's hearers, unless He had spoken of something that was familiar to them.

Now, though it may be perfectly true that mustard as a wild plant attains no greater magnitude than a common shrub, yet when sown in "a garden," and properly cultivated, it becomes considerably larger. One of the old Rabbis narrates how he was wont to climb into a mustard-tree in his field as men climb into a fig-tree; and a trustworthy traveller of this generation testifies that in the rich plain of Akkar he had seen it "as tall as the horse and his rider." This is sufficient to show that, at all events, the mustard plant develops, till there is the utmost disproportion between the bulk to which it attains and the germ from which it sprung.

No doubt other figures might have been chosen in abundance more suggestive of the great after-development of the kingdom of Christ—such forest-trees, for instance, as the oak of Bashan or cedar of Lebanon, but the acorn and cone were both far less adapted to represent the littleness of its initial state. The mustard was probably the smallest seed from which so large a shrub or tree was known to grow. If, then, such Oriental colouring is allowed for, as is reasonably admitted in other parts of Holy Scripture, no occasion remains for departing from the ordinary interpretation.

Now it is clear that our Lord had no doubt that His comparison would be understood. "As small as a grain of mustard-seed" was a recognised proverb¹ for "the superla-

¹ Archbishop Trench quotes a passage from the Qur'an (Sur. 31):—"Oh my son, verily every matter, whether bad or good, though it be of the weight of a grain of mustard-seed, and be hidden in a rock, or in the heavens, or in the earth, God will bring the same to light."

tively little ;” and as such it is used by Him on two other occasions for the encouragement of the Apostles. If they had “faith as a grain of mustard-seed” He promised them that they should remove mountains, or bid the sycamore-tree be uprooted and planted in the sea, and they should be instantly obeyed.

It is not without a purpose that the contrast between the first beginning of His kingdom and its expected future should have been put before the Apostles in such a striking form. The parables which had preceded it must have had a most depressing effect upon their minds. They showed that of the seed sown in the hearts of men, three parts would be lost to one saved ; and that the field carefully planted with the best of seeds too often mocked all the husbandman’s hopes of a goodly crop by a simultaneous growth of noxious weeds. Well then might the parable of the mustard-seed be spoken to encourage them in their despondency !

Its fulfilment is so patent that it requires but the briefest notice. It may be well, however, to draw an illustration from a single stage in its development. Contrast the condition of the Church on what is called her birthday, with the same after the first three centuries of her existence. Place yourself in imagination in the Upper Chamber at Jerusalem before the Apostles entered upon their labours. There are but eleven—men of the humblest rank of life, with few of the qualifications which the judgment of the world requires for such an enterprise. Then overleap the centuries of chequered history that followed, and take your place in the Council Chamber at Nicæa.¹ It is but a portion of the family by which the whole earth was overspread, but it presents a marvellous contrast to its first gathering. The eleven have grown into upwards of three hundred ;² and the miserable handful of followers upon whom the Apostles could count at the first, has increased till

¹ Perhaps the contrast would have seemed greater if we had selected the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D., the greatest both in numbers and dignity, when 636 Bishops were present instead of 318 ; but we selected the earlier as the first great historical event of universal interest, marking the first important epoch.

² The numbers have been variously stated—by Eusebius as 250, by Athanasius 300, by Socrates, Sozomen, and others, 318. The last is far most probable, especially owing to the mystical meanings that were attached to it in early times.

the fruit thereof "shakes like Libanus," and is "green in the city like grass upon the earth."

It will suffice for the contrast, but it must not be forgotten that although representatives were present from almost every part of the Eastern Empire, there were but few¹ from the Western, owing mainly perhaps to the exigencies of travel. There were Bishops² from the great centres of population, as Alexandria, or Carthage, or Jerusalem; Bishops, too, from the remote deserts far up the Nile, as the Coptic hermits; delegates from the Churches of the extreme North and the farthest East, and from the isles of the sea. It fills one with amazement to find every country almost of the East, familiar and unfamiliar, represented in the Assembly. The growth of the Apostolic Church has indeed, despite all the opposition that the world could array against her, fulfilled to the very letter the conditions of the comparison, "The little one has become a thousand,"—the smallest of seeds has developed into a goodly tree.

Now, though it is quite true that the object of the parable was simply to predict the future increase of the Kingdom, other analogies, to be found by further comparison, however foreign to the main purpose, are not to be ignored. There is surely a side-lesson to be learned from the natural properties of the mustard-seed, from its internal heat and pungency, and from "the fact that it must be bruised ere it yield its best virtues." Its inherent stimulating force finds its parallel in the quickening vitality and vigour that comes from the indwelling of the lifegiving power of the Holy Spirit; and the necessity of crushing it, is no inapt figure of the principle which has been embodied in the familiar proverb, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church."

Yet once more, if in addition to its strength and its powers

¹ The Western Bishops numbered barely ten. Their Sees were, besides those mentioned below, French, Spanish, Sicilian, Calabrian, Milanese, and Pannonian.

² The Bishop of Alexandria was then styled "the Pope." This was Alexander, but his See was better represented by his deacon, Athanasius. From the Coptic Church there were Potanmon of Heracleopolis and Paphnutius of the Upper Thebaid. From the North, Theophilus the Goth; from the far East, John the Persian; from the islands, Spiridion of Cyprus. Cf. Stanley's Eastern Church, Lecture iii.

of expansion, it was possessed, as is believed, also of medicinal properties, it is impossible to ignore its resemblance to the tree of life in the heavenly city—so true an emblem of the Church,—“which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yields her fruit every month,” and whose “leaves were for the healing of the nations.”

The Stilling of the Storm

S. MARK IV. 35-41

35. And the same day, when the even was come, He saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side. 36. And when they had sent away the multitude, they took Him *even* as He was in the ship. And there were also with Him other little ships. 37. And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. 38. And He was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow; and they awake

Him, and say unto Him, Master, carest Thou not that we perish? 39. And He arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. 40. And He said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how *is it that* ye have no faith? 41. And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What *manner of* man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?

THE eastern side of the Sea of Galilee has been characterised as a "natural refuge from the active life of the western shores." It was for this reason that our Lord so often retired there for rest, and to commune with His Father in the solitude of the mountain range by which it is bounded. If the sequence of events be taken according to this Gospel, it was after a day spent in teaching the people through a succession of parables, that at eventide Jesus expressed to the disciples His desire to pass over to the other side. His wish was law, and it would seem there were special reasons on this occasion for avoiding the least delay. The boat, which was always drawn up on the shore where He was, was immediately launched, and, without any preparation, they embarked. It almost indicates that He was physically exhausted¹ with His day's work, and they

¹ There is evidence of this in the fact that He fell asleep in the boat. The expression "just as He was" is akin to that in S. John iv. 6, "sat thus on

wished without loss of time to get on to the lake, that He might be refreshed by its breezes. At all events, "they took Him even as He was in the ship."

"And there arose a great storm of wind." Travellers say that the Sea of Galilee is peculiarly liable to sudden squalls caused by the physical features of the district. It is not unlike some of the lakes of Switzerland, on which sailing is admittedly dangerous from a more or less similar cause. The sea lies in a deep depression, as much as 600 feet or more, below the level of the surrounding country. It is girt in almost entirely by a range of hills, rising in places to a considerable height, and crowned by vast plateaus of tableland. The hillsides are worn by watercourses into deep gorges, which act like funnels, through which the wind pours down from the higher latitudes on to the surface of the lake. The temperature on the edge of the water is almost tropical, while that above is many degrees lower, and this variation aggravates not a little the violence of the storms.

The disciples on this occasion were overtaken by one of these, and in imminent danger of being wrecked. It was a storm of more than ordinary severity, for the disciples, who were fishermen, and had had their home on those very waters, and must have been often exposed to tempestuous weather, were in real fear. The waves were fast filling the boat, and it would certainly sink if matters did not immediately mend.

Their only hope lay in the miraculous intervention of their Lord, Who, with His head upon the boatswain's cushion, was sleeping, wholly undisturbed by the tumult around. They had as yet seen but one instance in which He had exercised His power over the material elements; but the miracle at Cana of Galilee had shown that even the waters were obedient unto His word, and though, as was probable, only a few¹ of the disciples had witnessed it, the fact must have become known to all; and if they thought of it at the time, despair would be relieved by hope, when they awoke Him to a sense the well," *οὕτως*, "as He was," apparently expressed by the preceding words, "being wearied with His journey."

¹ This took place most probably before any of the disciples had been formally called to the Apostleship. The five who were mentioned in the first chapter of S. John would naturally be with them.

of their danger. "Master, carest Thou not that we perish?" It is almost certain that they were the words of S. Peter. The rest may have joined, but they are in such exact accord with that impatient and impulsive spirit, which so often betrayed him into unbecoming words and acts, that we can have little doubt that the remonstrance was his in the first instance.

The recollection of that hasty speech clung to him in after years; and while the other Evangelists only record an expression of earnest entreaty, "Lord, save us; we perish," or "Master, Master, we perish," S. Peter was careful to make known to S. Mark one which he felt reflected discredit upon himself.

But though there is in their cry an evidence of imperfect confidence, and even of hasty impatience, knowing how little way He had been able to advance them as yet in their spiritual training, Jesus showed nothing but tenderness towards them. "He rebuked the wind." Seeing the wild fury with which it was lashing the waves into commotion, as though it were some monster whose roar must be silenced, He cries to it to "be silent and be gagged," for such in the original is the force of the expression, "Peace, be still."¹

Nature in her wildest uproar recognised the voice of Him Who was her rightful Lord, and obeyed His command. "And there was a great calm." It was no ordinary abatement, for commonly, when the wind ceases, and for long after, there is a great swell upon the waves: when they are no more agitated by external force, they require time to recover their ordinary condition; but here they were themselves at rest as though nothing had disturbed them. It puts out of question all possibility of explaining the miracle by natural causes.

Then,² having relieved His disciples from their impending peril, His first thought was to turn it to account in helping

¹ *σῶπα, πεφίμωσο.* The latter word is used properly for "muzzling" a beast—I Cor. ix. 9; 1 Tim. v. 18. Our Lord applies it also to the unclean spirit in the synagogue at Capernaum (S. Mark i. 25). Possibly there is an allusion to "the Prince of the power of the air" having aroused the storm.

² SS. Mark and Luke both place the rebuking of the wind before His complaint of the disciples' want of faith; S. Matthew inverts the order. The difference may have arisen from the former resting upon a general report, the latter upon actual eye-witness of the scene.

and preparing them for the greater dangers and difficulties that lay in their future. Nothing could exceed the gentleness with which He reproved their impatient distrust. "Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?" It was a simple call upon them to remember what they had learned, what proofs He had given of His power and His willingness to help and deliver. And great fear came upon them—not the fear which had made them tremble for their safety, but an overmastering sense of awe. What they had just witnessed was not altogether a new revelation, but it had torn away another bandage from their eyes, and their apprehension of Him Who was thus "gradually making Himself felt in all His fulness," became proportionately stronger, and they asked one another, in amazed surprise at their convictions, "What manner of man is this," or, more literally, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?" The "then" is by no means without its significance, for it points back to what they had witnessed, and points on to the conclusion that must be drawn from it. The truth which was unfolding before them is clear and patent to us, that it was He of Whom the Psalmist had written, "Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and He bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still;" or again, "O Lord God of hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto Thee? Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, Thou stillest them."

The symbolical application of this miracle has been made almost more frequently than that of any other, whether that Galilean boat be compared to the Ark of Christ's Church, or to the individual soul sustained in its voyage through "the waves of this troublesome world" by the indwelling Presence of the Captain of our salvation and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Under a very familiar figure in early times,¹ the Church is depicted as a ship supported in the sea by a great fish, whilst a dove is sitting upon the top of the mast. The fish was regarded as emblematic of Christ, because the Greek word formed an acrostic, containing the initial letters of "Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour." The dove perched upon the mast, represented the Holy Spirit, Who,

¹ For an account of the anagram, cf. the author's *After Death*, 88.

as at the first creation, broods over the waters, and by His gentle influence brings order out of confusion.

One of the great Latin Fathers¹ has applied the several parts of the miracle to the history of the individual soul somewhat as follows: "We are sailing through life as through a sea, and the wind rises, and storms of tempest spring up. How is this, save because Jesus is sleeping in thee? If He were not asleep in thee, thou wouldst be calm and at rest. But why is He sleeping? Because thy faith is asleep. And what shalt thou do to be delivered? Arouse Him. 'Master, we perish.' Then He will awaken: thy faith will revive: and though the tempests roar and beat into thy ship, yet, strong in thy recovered faith, thou wilt defy the elements: the danger will pass away, and thou wilt reach in safety the haven where thou wouldst be."

¹ I owe this quotation to Trench on Miracles, 157.

The Demoniacs of Gadara

S. MARK V. 1-10

1. And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes. 2. And when He was come out of the ship, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, 3. who had *his* dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains: 4. because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any *man* tame him. 5. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying,

and cutting himself with stones. 6. But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped Him, 7. and cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with Thee, Jesus, *Thou* Son of the Most High God? I adjure Thee by God, that Thou torment me not. 8. For He said unto him, Come out of the man, *thou* unclean spirit. 9. And He asked him, What *is* thy name? And he answered, saying, My name *is* Legion: for we are many. 10. And he besought Him much that He would not send them away out of the country.

THE night was closing in, when our Lord landed on the eastern shore of the lake. He had embarked with the disciples in the afternoon, when the sun began to decline at "the first¹ eventide," but the journey across, usually occupying two or three hours, had been much prolonged by the storm which they encountered: and it must have been late when they came to land. It adds considerably to the weird character of the scene to realise this. The solitude of the coast, the bleak barren rocks, scarred and fissured with gloomy caverns, the wild shrieks of "the possessed," were sufficient of themselves to

¹ The first evening was when the sun began to set, about three P.M.; the second when it actually went down, about six P.M. The Paschal lamb was slain "between the evenings."

inspire one with a sense of awe, but it would be greatly intensified by the gathering darkness, and all the more as the light of the moon shone out upon the landscape.

It lends a peculiar interest to the story that, after years of dispute, the locality has been incontestably identified by the discovery of the ruins of the town of Khersa,¹ exactly opposite to Capernaum, and close to the shore. Two of the most accurate writers on the Holy Land have described "the steep bluff and perpendicular declivity" which overhangs the lake at this spot, and satisfies most closely the requirements of the miracle.

As our Lord stepped out of the boat He was met immediately by a demoniac² coming out of the tombs with which the mountain abounded, and of which so many traces still remain.

It would appear that it was a most aggravated case of "possession," and as such was doubtless selected by three Evangelists for especial notice.

S. Mark, as usual, is very vivid in his description, but something is added to it by the other two. From a combination of all we gather the following results.

He wore no clothes; he filled the air with his ravings; he was driven by a suicidal mania to cut himself with stones; he was the terror of the neighbourhood; every effort to bind him had failed, for he was endowed with prodigious strength, and burst his chains; he made his dwelling-place in the tombs, and he was possessed by a legion of evil spirits.³ It is impossible to conceive of a worthier claimant for the Divine compassion.

¹ This is probably the modern equivalent of the ancient Gergesa, which Origen says was the scene of the miracle. Gadara, the modern Umkeis, is distant one mile and a half from the lake, and separated from it by a river, which sets it aside as impossible.

² S. Luke agrees with S. Mark in mentioning one demoniac. S. Matthew speaks of two. It is possible that one was much better known than the other, and the fame of his cure would be spread abroad and stress laid upon it.—S. Aug. de Consens. Evang. ii. 24. S. Matthew, having been an eye-witness, remembered the fact that he was accompanied by a second. There is no contradiction, "qui plura dicit pauciora complectitur; qui pauciora dicit, plura non negat."

³ The case of "possession" has been rendered especially difficult from the modern way of speaking of "the possessed of devils," unfortunately perpetuated in the Revised Version. There is only one "devil." He is spoken of many times in the New Testament, but never in the plural. The demons by whom men were "possessed" were evil spirits, his emissaries or "angels."

Edersheim, in an appendix on this subject, sums up thus: "Greater contrast could scarcely be conceived than between what we read in the New

No sooner did he see Jesus in the distance than he recognised Him, the spirit that possessed him at once acknowledging the dreaded Presence of Him Who came to trample upon the powers of evil. And he did homage to Him, and addressed Him by a title of exceeding dignity, used only once elsewhere, in the prediction of His birth by the angel.

It is said that the title "Most High God" was the one commonly adopted in the formula of exorcism, and possibly the demoniac was prompted to use it, as that with which he was most familiar, from its frequent invocation over himself. With an earnest adjuration he begged that he might not be tormented. This he did, seeing that Jesus was about to cast him out, not, as the Authorised Version renders it, "for He said to him"—but "for He was on the point of saying to him,"—"Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit." Had the word of authority once been uttered, it would have been too late to interpose, for when Jesus spake, it was done.

Then followed the question of his name, and that mysterious answer—"Legion,¹ for we are many." The man had seen, perhaps, the resistless might of the Imperial forces of Rome as they swept down all opposition, and it seemed to him the fittest symbol of the power which had taken him captive; or it may be from the double consciousness, which is so marked through-

Testament and the views and practices mentioned in Rabbinic writings." It is often said that our Lord adopted the Jewish way of speaking, and treated mental and physical diseases as though they were demoniacal possessions, and the modern usage of the term "lunatic" is quoted as a parallel. But there is the widest difference between them. Cf. Trench, *Miracles*, 153. "Possession," it is true, was often accompanied by disease or infirmity, but often also distinguished from them.—S. Mark i. 33, xvii. 17, 18; S. Luke vi. 17, 18. The demons speak with more than human knowledge.—S. Mark i. 24; S. Matt viii. 29. There is, moreover, a double consciousness in the possessed which is inexplicable save by an objective possession. Is it possible that our Lord could have so far yielded to popular prejudice as to embrace it in His commission to the Apostles (S. Matt. x. 8), and to make it a matter of thanksgiving to God when they reported their success? Cf. Edersheim, i. 480. Archdeacon Farrar's theory that "any mental aberration, sudden sickness, melancholy tendencies," and the like, were regarded as due to the direct influence of "demons" (*Life of Christ*, i. 236), can hardly be accepted, if the above writer has correctly interpreted the opinions of his nation. He concludes that there is no midway between rejecting the accounts of dispossession as purely mythical, or believing that there was a demonised state different from disease or madness.

¹ Possibly it signified also that the evil spirits were banded together under officers in regular organisations, like the forces of an army.

out, that it was the spirit within him that answered, and that he hoped by such an exaggerated estimate of his force, to overawe and terrify his Adversary.

“And he besought Him that He would not send them away out of the country.” S. Luke has preserved a more definite expression, which is full of suggestiveness—“that He would not command them to go out into the deep.” It was not the Galilean lake which lay before them, but “the abyss,” “the bottomless pit,” as S. John calls it, into which the devil and his angels will be consigned¹ when their present liberty “to go to and fro on the earth” is taken away, and the final sentence passed upon them.

The sequel must remain for future consideration. We notice now some thoughts arising out of the narrative as far as it has proceeded.

The first touches the mode of treatment which the demoniac received at the hands of his fellow-creatures. Here is a man afflicted with the most terrible evil one can possibly imagine, abandoned to his cruel fate, with nothing done, no step taken in any direction, to mitigate his condition, but everything almost purposely contrived to aggravate its misery. He is driven from the haunts of men into a bleak barren region, to seek shelter from wind and rain and cold, in caverns where the dead lie buried; he is chained from time to time to the rocks, but only with the supernatural strength that belongs to frenzy and madness, to regain his freedom. Forsaken by every human being, he roams about by night and by day, not only to the terror of others, but cutting and maiming himself among the rocks and stones.

We have but to dwell upon such a picture of inhuman neglect as this, and then contrast it with the treatment such a deplorable case would have received in our own generation; and in realising this, we may well be thankful for the change which Christianity has effected alike in the estimate and the alleviation of suffering.

But not only do we note the neglect of the demoniac; we go further, and say that it was a case which of all others

¹ Milton helped very largely to propagate the erroneous belief that the devil and the evil spirits are already in hell, in the place of torments. Cf. *Paradise Lost*, ii. 115-120; iii. 200-210.

deserved the greatest sympathy and consideration. He was not, as far as we are able to judge, one who had brought that terrible evil upon himself. A distinguished writer says, "We should find ourselves altogether upon a wrong track did we conceive of the demoniacs as the worst of men, and their possession as the plague and penalty of a wickedness in which they had greatly exceeded others. Rather we must esteem the demoniac as the unhappiest, but not of necessity one of the guiltiest of our race." There is indeed the widest gulf between the condition of the traitor Judas whom Satan entered when he committed an act of unparalleled baseness, and that of the demoniac boy at the foot of the Transfiguration Mount, who had not only been afflicted with epilepsy from childhood, but, according to Christ's own words, was possessed by "an unclean spirit."

But the question has often been asked, If demoniacal possession was something distinct from disease, mental or corporal, how are we to explain the fact that it is no longer existent? We do not stay to dispute the supposition that the phenomenon has disappeared, further than to observe that in the East, especially in India, the advent of the Gospel is said to be not infrequently signalled by manifestations of Satanic agency not far removed in character from that under consideration.

It has, however, been proved that epidemics, both moral and physical, have appeared "at certain epochs, specially fitted for their generation, have gradually declined, and totally disappeared in others less congenial to them." Now the days of the Messiah were pre-eminently exceptional. To the powers of evil it was a most momentous crisis, and it was to be expected that they would be strained to the utmost to counteract opposing influences from which they had so much to fear.

Demoniacal possession was, so to speak, their death-struggle, the last convulsive spasm of an expiring force in the conflict with Him Who came into the world for the avowed purpose of planting His heel upon their prince's neck, and treading the powers of evil under His feet.

The Herd of Swine destroyed

S. MARK V. 11-20

11. Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding. 12. And all the devils besought Him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them. 13. And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine : and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand,) and were choked in the sea. 14. And they that fed the swine fled, and told *it* in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done. 15. And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind ; and they were afraid. 16. And they that saw *it* told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the devil, and *also* concerning the swine. 17. And they began to pray Him to depart out of their coasts. 18. And when He was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed Him that he might be with Him. 19. Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy *friends*, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee. 20. And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him : and all *men* did marvel.

It creates a feeling of surprise that there should be so large a herd of swine feeding in a country where to keep such animals was strictly prohibited by the Jewish Law. On the supposition that the owners were Jews, a motive has been sought for their destruction in its penal character. Nothing could be more natural than that our Lord should manifest His displeasure, if occasion offered, at such an overt act of disobedience. But it is doubtful whether the facts of the case justify the interpretation. History tells us how, after the conquest of Palestine, large numbers of Romans settled in that neighbourhood ; and in addition to this, it was the region of

Decapolis, of the ten cities which had remained in the heathen's¹ hands after the return of the Jews from captivity.

It will be well, therefore, to account for the destruction on other grounds; but we revert first to the circumstances which led to it. During their conversation with our Lord the devils besought Him that He would send them into the swine. It is difficult to decide whether such a desire may be taken as indicative of their natural propensity to all that was unclean, or as a proof of their craft and subtlety.

"Unclean" spirits would seize instinctively upon the bodies of those who, by excessive sensuality and indulgence of the flesh, had laid themselves open to their inroads.² They seem, moreover, to have found a congenial dwelling-place in the tombs of the dead, which to the ancients were types of all impurity. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness." It may have been the same natural impulse that prompted them, when about to be driven out of the bodies of men, to seek for a lodgment in the lowest and most unclean of the brutes:—"Send us into the swine."

Or again, it may have been nothing but a deep designing plot to revenge themselves upon their destroyer. If only they could be the means of annihilating their herds, the owners would inevitably rise up against Him, at Whose bidding the destruction had been caused. They would not tolerate His Presence, but would drive Him out of their coasts. And so we know it came to pass.

But whatever their motive in making the request, it was instantly granted. No sooner was the permission given than a wild panic seized the herd, and they rushed "madly down the almost perpendicular declivity—those behind tumbling over and thrusting forward those before; and as there was neither time nor space to recover on the narrow shelf between

¹ Lightfoot says: "You may not improperly guess that these hogs belonged not to the Jews, but to the heathen dwelling among the Gadarene Jews; for such a mixture was very usual in the cities and countries of the land of Israel."

² This seems to contradict what was said above; but all that was intended there was that there were cases where "possession" was not necessarily the result of a sinful life.

the base and the lake, they were crowded headlong into the water and perished.”¹

The swineherds fled in terror and dismay to the town hard by, and told to their masters all that had happened; and the whole population was stirred by the tidings, and went out to meet Jesus.

The account closes with two requests, which stand in striking contrast to each other. The one was granted; the other denied. When the owners of the swine came to Jesus, they saw the poor demoniac, whom they had known and feared, no longer naked and wild and raving, but “clothed, and in his right mind;” but, instead of falling at His feet Who had wrought that incredible change, and seeking for themselves some gifts of grace, they could think only of their miserable herds, and fill their minds with superstitious fear, lest some worse loss should befall them. They saw in the Saviour of men’s souls “no beauty that they should desire Him,” and begged Him to “depart out of their coasts.” It was in accordance with a mysterious and perplexing principle, often illustrated in Scripture History, by which men estranged from God come offering a petition which is not refused, that the prayer of the Gerasenes was at once complied with. The request was granted, but how fatal the gift! “He gave them their own desire: they were not disappointed of their lust.”

And this was the second request. “When He was come unto the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed Him that he might be with Him”—but that was refused!

Where could he have been better, than where he craved to be? Where in the whole wide world could he find greater safety from a relapse into the power from which he had been rescued, than in the companionship of his Deliverer? But He sent him away. The Gerasenes may drive the Master from their shores, but the servant must remain, because God would not leave Himself without a witness. It was possible

¹ Milman and some others have imagined that the swine were driven down the precipice by the demoniacs in a paroxysm of frenzy. This is inconsistent with the narrative, which lends our Lord’s sanction to what they did. Paulus supposes that they began fighting among themselves, and in the confusion fell over the cliff.

that the man, whom they knew, might win acceptance where the Stranger was feared, and so He left him behind, that as he had been a signal illustration in the neighbourhood of the working of sin and evil, he might henceforward be seen as a living monument of the transforming power of grace and mercy. Thou "when thou art converted strengthen thy brethren."

Now, setting aside the interpretation which regards the destruction of the swine as a penalty inflicted on Jews for the transgression of the Law, men's minds have been exercised to find any satisfactory justification for an apparently unnecessary waste of life and property. In considering the question we can only appeal to one other miracle bearing any analogy to it; for often as Jesus exercised His almighty power to give life, He exercised it only twice to take it away. In neither case was it human life. It was that of the lowest of the creatures in the animal, and of the fig-tree in the vegetable, world. It is almost incredible that with all the provocation that He received, in all the perilous circumstances in which He was placed, He should never have revenged Himself, as men are so eager to do, or have taken away another's life to save His Own.

It should fill us with the highest conception of His super-human meekness; and our wondering admiration should be increased by the realisation of the fact that, almost immediately after His departure, one of the very first miracles wrought by the power which He had delegated to the Apostles was for the destruction of two human beings. The deaths of Ananias and Sapphira were no doubt a most salutary warning to the infant Church, of the imperative obligation of perfect truth and candour; but, looking at our Lord's acts, we are sure that what seemed inevitable to S. Peter would somehow have been avoided by Him, if only because He came expressly to save life, and not to destroy it.

We shall, however, find ample justification for the two solitary exceptions which the history of His miracles has left on record. The withering of the fig-tree was a parable in act, designed to impress the Jews when words had completely failed; and the destruction of the swine resulted in the salvation of the man. Now, if it be in accordance with Divine

Providence that so many animals should be slaughtered daily to sustain men's bodies, we need feel no surprise that so great a sacrifice should be made to save an immortal soul. And when we realise what the "possession" had been, we can appreciate the difficulty the poor demoniac must have experienced in apprehending the possibility of deliverance. Not till he saw the evil spirits by which he had been tortured transferred to others—to the bodies of other creatures—not till he saw them working upon others the very effects from which he had suffered, could he be convinced of his salvation.

Surely, then, "those who know the worth of a human soul—of a life restored to itself, to its fellow-men, and to God—will hesitate before they presume to say that this destruction of the swine was too dear a price to pay for its restoration."

The Raising of Jairus' Daughter

S. MARK V. 21-24, 35-43

21. And when Jesus was passed over again by ship unto the other side, much people gathered unto Him : and He was nigh unto the sea. 22. And behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name ; and when he saw Him, he fell at His feet, 23. and besought Him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death : *I pray Thee*, come and lay *Thy* hands on her, that she may be healed ; and she shall live. 24. And *Jesus* went with him ; and much people followed Him, and thronged Him. . . . 35. While He yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's *house certain* which said, Thy daughter is dead : why troublest thou the Master any further? 36. As soon as Jesus heard the word *that was* spoken, He saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe. 37. And He suffered no man to follow Him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of

James. 38. And He cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth *the* tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly. 39. And when He was come in, He saith unto them, Why make ye *this* ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth. 40. And they laughed Him to scorn. But when He had put *them* all out, He taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with Him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying. 41. And He took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, TALITHA CUMI ; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise. 42. And straightway the damsel arose, and walked ; for she was *of the age* of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment. 43. And He charged them straitly that no man should know it ; and commanded that something should be given her to eat.

S. JOHN closes his Gospel with a declaration that if all the things which Jesus did "should be written every one, . . . even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." Among the unrecorded miracles, we can hardly doubt, there were many instances of restoration to life. The Evangelists were guided by the Holy Spirit to hand down the

history of only three, and a careful consideration of these has suggested that they were selected of set purpose to represent Christ's power over death in all its stages. The little daughter of the ruler of the synagogue¹ had only just passed away, and was lying on her death-bed. When the widow's son at Nain was raised from the bier, he had been dead twenty-four hours or less—for that was the longest time allowed to elapse before the funeral² in the East. Lazarus, again, had been buried out of sight for a considerable period, and the process of decomposition had set in.

It is possible, moreover, that there was a further object in the choice, viz., to show forth "a progressive development of the Almighty power," the raising of Lazarus being, so to speak, a more difficult work than that of the widow's son, and this again than that of Jairus' daughter.

Now, while the two other miracles find a place each in one Gospel only, this last is narrated in no less than three. There must therefore be some circumstances connected with it deserving more than common attention.

An apparent discrepancy in the several reports of the father's words has been a stumbling-block to critical minds; but when rightly interpreted, it will be found confirmatory of the truth, the variety of expression carrying with it an air of naturalness that is quite convincing. He had left his child to all human appearance at the point of death; life was ebbing so fast that when he found Jesus he realised the worst, and, throwing himself at His feet, spoke of her as "dead;" but as he talked with Him, a flash of hope seemed to have crossed his soul that she may have revived; and there is a corresponding change in his language,—he had left her "at the point of death." Those who know anything of the bed-side watching by the sick and dying will readily understand this alternation of hope and fear, and find no difficulty in the fact that the

¹ Jairus was the president of the elders of the synagogue, by whom all its affairs were managed. Lightfoot, quoting from the Talmud, says that he gave orders who should read the Prophets, who should recite the Phylacteries, and who should pass before the Ark. The subordinate officers were the "Delegate," who read the prayers; the Chazzan, or deacon; and the Batlanim, whose exact office is much disputed.

² Burial must take place before the expiration of the day on which one died. For all the particulars connected with an Oriental funeral, cf. Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, 99-106.

distracted father should express himself at one moment in one way, at the next in another.

Jesus yielded to his entreaty, and went with him; and we can well imagine that no time would be lost, and the least delay anxiously avoided. But suddenly Christ deliberately stopped; something unusual had occurred, and it was necessary that it should be cleared up before they went any further. He had felt a hand upon Him; it was no common touch, no mere jostling of the crowd, but a touch that had drawn healing virtue from His Person, and that eager hurrying multitude was bidden to halt, till the one who had done this thing should be discovered. We can almost see the agonised expression which must have clouded the poor father's face. He did not dare to remonstrate, but every moment was precious, and minutes must have seemed like hours. Was it unkind, then, of Jesus to delay at such a time? There were some, no doubt, who thought so. Even S. Peter answered impatiently; but we are sure that one Who was all tenderness could never be really cruel, or do otherwise than feel the keenest sympathy with that intense anxiety. Indeed, so far from that stoppage being a sign of indifference, it was actually designed—fore-ordained for the father's good. Christ knew, what Jairus did not know, viz., that the child was already dead. He knew also that there was far too little of that faith in his heart which was indispensable for the exercise of miraculous power. There was none of the "venture" which our Lord loved, of the undoubting conviction that He was able to do all that was asked of Him, no simple appeal to "speak the word only" which marked implicit trust;¹ and in His tender compassion He took these means to strengthen his faith by a demonstration of power.

The message which was brought to him from home at that moment was calculated to have the very opposite effect. Perhaps Jairus' friends had discouraged his journey; they may have heard as yet of no one being raised from the dead; and it would be useless to send for One to heal her sickness, when she would certainly be dead before the Physician could

¹ Nothing short of our Lord's presence would satisfy him. He must come and take some outward means for her restoration—"Come and lay Thy hand upon her."

arrive. And they lost no time in hurrying after him, as soon as their fears were fulfilled, and brought the tidings, "Thy daughter is dead," and urged him at once to return: "Why troublest¹ thou the Master any further?"

Now see how wonderfully all had been ordered. Had those messengers arrived ever so little sooner, Jairus might have lost all heart, and abandoned his petition, and his little child would never have been restored to him again. But their arrival exactly coincided with His miraculous cure of the woman with the issue of blood; and as He had just given proof of His power, so again He interposes with further encouragement at the critical juncture: "Be not afraid, only believe."

And what He meant by His words was simply this: "Thou hast seen a poor sufferer healed of her infirmity by the touch of faith; cherish the same undoubting confidence in My power, and thou shalt see greater things than this."

That act of healing and that word of assurance swept away all lingering doubt, and he went on his way rejoicing. But when they reached the house, they were confronted by every sign and token of death. It was filled with hired mourners, persons whose duty it was to make death appear as sad as possible, a thing to vex the mind with the most painful associations.

We can conceive no greater contrast than that between the wild shrieks and wailings of the mercenaries, and the calm consolatory utterance of Jesus: "The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth."² He did not mean that life had not fled, because there could be no doubt on that point, but that death was not what most men thought. "In the eyes of God we are not dead, we only sleep. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, and when He is near, death is but a sleep." "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go that I may awake him out of sleep."

And when Jesus had rebuked the tumult, He entered the

¹ "Troublest."—The original word is almost untranslatable. It means to flay, excoriate; hence to vex, annoy.

² Some writers have assumed from this that she was only in a trance, and that no miracle was performed; but our Lord uses the same language of Lazarus; and in Jewish phraseology death is most commonly spoken of as sleep; cf. Lightfoot *in loco*.

chamber where she lay, and, taking her hand, said, "Talitha cumi,"¹ and she obeyed the word of omnipotence, and arose and walked. No wonder S. Mark should have recorded the exceeding astonishment with which the miracle was witnessed; for in all probability it was one of the earliest occasions upon which He had shown Himself triumphant over death.

His last command was that "something should be given her to eat." In its literal application it speaks of the tenderest forethought, but when spiritually interpreted it involves a principle too often lost sight of, in the restoration of those that are morally dead. To awaken the sinner to a sense of his guilt, and to draw him up out of the degradation in which he has been sunk, is only the first step, albeit a most important one; but the restored life needs proper sustenance; and unless fresh help and un failing food be provided, "the last state of that man is worse than the first."

If the history of many of those Missions which are such a characteristic of this generation were to be written, there would be tale after tale of reclaimed sinners relapsing into sin, simply because efforts were relaxed when the excitement had passed; because conversion was regarded as the end, rather than the first step only, in the ever-progressing advance of a Godward life.

The Church's true mission is to follow in her Master's steps, and, reading the inner meaning of His acts and words, first to take the sleeping soul by the hand and bid it "arise," and then after the awakening to strengthen it with the life-giving food of Him Who said, "Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

¹ S. Mark alone gives the very words used by our Lord, as on other occasions. Talitha is a term of tenderness and endearment. S. Peter must have remembered this when he said, "Tabitha, arise" (Acts ix. 40).

The Woman with an Issue of Blood

S. MARK V. 25-34

25. And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years, 26. and had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, 27. when she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched His garment. 28. For she said, If I may touch but His clothes, I shall be whole. 29. And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in *her* body that she was healed of *that* plague. 30. And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that

virtue had gone out of Him, turned Him about in the press, and said, Who touched My clothes? 31. And His disciples said unto Him, Thou seest the multitude thronging Thee, and sayest Thou, Who touched Me? 32. And He looked round about to see her that had done this thing. 33. But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before Him, and told Him all the truth. 34. And He said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.

THERE is a well-known series of pictures in Christian Art known as "The Stations" on the Way of the Cross. In one of these our Blessed Lord lies prostrate on the ground, and a woman is wiping the great drops of sweat from His face with her veil. That act of tender sympathy was regarded by the early Church as so Christlike a thing that she clothed the episode in a beautiful and romantic form, maintaining that the impression of His face was left upon the veil;¹ and the sister of mercy who ministered to Him in His distress has

¹ It is an interesting study to discover the *deæ* underlying the mediæval legends:—*e.g.* in the betrothal of S. Catharine to the Infant Jesus is represented the union of the pure and holy Christian soul with the one absorbing object of its love; in the leafy covering into which S. Etheldreda's staff budded to protect her from the heat, the shelter which her great foundation at Ely offered to many generations. For that of Veronica cf. Eucharistic Poems by A. Gurney.

come down to posterity by the name of Veronica, or "The True Likeness."

According to one of the Apocryphal Gospels,¹ which is known for its preservation of some probable traditions, she was the woman for whom Jesus had wrought this miraculous cure. If the identity may be assumed, it was not merely an act of womanly tenderness and compassion, but a grateful return for remembered loving-kindness.

Further, as corroborative of the truth of this miracle of healing, the Father of Ecclesiastical History testifies, three centuries after its occurrence, that he had seen at Cæsarea Philippi, which was said to have been her native town, a monument erected in commemoration of the event. "At the gates of her house, on an elevated stone, stands a brazen image of a woman on her bended knee, with her hands stretched out before her like one entreating. Opposite to this there is another, of a man, erect, of the same material, decently clad in a mantle, and stretching out his hand to the woman." This monument Eusebius associates with the case before us by a superstitious belief, which he says prevailed in the neighbourhood—viz., that there was a mysterious plant growing at the base, which year by year, as soon as it reached as high as the hem of the brazen garment, became a kind of antidote to all manner of sickness and disease. .

The circumstances of the cure are very familiar. Our Lord was on His way to the bedside of a dying child, followed by a crowd of people, all expectant and eager to see for themselves an exhibition of His healing power. Their curiosity had been excited by the rumours of His "mighty deeds" in Capernaum, nigh where they were.

Jesus was probably clad as the Jewish Rabbi invariably was.² On His head He would wear the Oriental turban, on His feet sandals or shoes, according to the season of the year; His inner or under dress was the close-fitting tunic, reaching

¹ The date of the Apocryphal Gospels is uncertain, but some belong to the second and third centuries.

² Our Lord is usually represented without any head-dress. Edersheim has shown in an interesting chapter upon Jewish Dress that it was held as disrespectful to go with a bare head. The under garment was called Chithuna, and is represented in the Greek *χιτών*. There was another upper garment besides the Tallith, called Goltha. Both had fringes,

almost to the ground, and gathered in with a girdle: it was "without seam, woven from the top throughout," while over this was thrown "the Tallith," with the hems or fringes for which such careful directions were given in the Law, and to which such deep significance was attached: "Thou shalt make thee fringes upon the four quarters of thy vesture," . . . "that ye may remember, and do all My commandments, and be holy unto your God."

It was, no doubt, from the almost superstitious reverence that had grown up for this part of the dress, that the woman was impelled to grasp it, in the hope of being cured. For few would deny that there was a strong element of superstition in her faith. Our Lord, however, judged her according to the standard of her times, and saw underlying her conduct at least the principle of that which He ever regarded as a claim upon His recognition. And so her touch was immediately responded to. But He would not let her depart till her faith had been lifted on to a higher level, and she was thoroughly convinced how great things she was capable of effecting by it. Hence the conversation that followed. "And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that virtue had gone out of Him, turned Him about in the press, and said, Who touched My clothes?" The question brought no answer, but it provoked a remonstrance from the disciples. We find from S. Luke that S. Peter was their mouthpiece. It creates a little surprise that we should be indebted to another Evangelist for the knowledge of this, because that Apostle was so careful in reminding S. Mark of much that told to his own disparagement. But it was no idle question, as they supposed. There were many around Him who had need to be healed, sick, no doubt, with countless infirmities, and they had touched Him again and again as they pressed upon Him, but they were not cured as she was. And Christ would tell them why it was. They had not touched in faith.

The poor woman had not dared to come forward, knowing that her disease made her unclean. She was afraid that, if

Zizith, but which Jesus wore is doubtful. The four articles—the turban, the girdle, the sandals or shoes, and the Tallith—would be divided severally to the four soldiers, while the fifth, the Chithuna, was raffled for by all. Cf. *Life and Times*, i. 621-6.

she threw herself in His way, some of the bystanders to whom she was known would cry out "Unclean," and her shame would be exposed in the presence of the multitude. So it was that she pushed as closely as she could, and then grasped the fringe of His robe, and felt at once that the issue of her blood was stanchèd. And when Jesus called for her "that had done this thing," she hesitated for a moment; she heard the remonstrance of S. Peter, and hoped, perhaps, that nothing more would be said; but as the Saviour insisted, and looked round, it may be He caught her anxious look, for "she came, and fell down before Him, and told Him all the truth."

And what followed? We lose some of the force of the language in the English translation: "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee *whole*; go in peace, and be *whole* of thy plague." They are different words¹ in the original, and the first is greater than the last,—"Thy faith hath saved thee"—saved thee not only from bodily infirmity, but from the soul's sickness: go in peace, and carry away deliverance from the lower, as a pledge and witness of that which is higher.

The story teaches the rightful place of faith in the work of salvation. That none can be saved without faith is so plainly set forth in Holy Scripture that "he may run that readeth it;" but at the same time it is taught with equal emphasis, though it may be more through acts than words, that it is the touch of Christ which effects the cure, whether His hands are laid upon us, or ours are stretched forth to lay hold upon Him. This poor sufferer had faith before she touched; she believed, however imperfect her appreciation of the reality, that Jesus was possessed of the means of healing, and that, though every other remedy had failed, He could still bring relief. But it was not till she laid hold of something external to herself, till she brought herself into actual contact with Him, that her end was gained.

It is the same in the Christian life now. We have faith in the efficacy of the Incarnation for the purification from all sin, and the Sacraments are given for the application of its virtue to each individual. They are the means by which we may

¹ *σέσωκε*, the same expression as in verse 28—saved or delivered—often used in deliverance from bodily ailments, with a further sense underlying it. *ὅλης*, whole, healthy, sound.

follow up the internal conviction by the external act ; by which the faith which satisfies us of the all-sufficiency of Christ, may make us partakers of the Divine Nature, and quicken us by the life-giving power of His Body and Blood. Herein faith and works, the inner and the outward, are so combined, that they not only cannot be severed, but that the result, so happily produced by the combination, may in accordance with Scripture phraseology be ascribed to the one or the other.

God the Holy Ghost tells us by the inspired Evangelist that the drying up of the fountain of blood was the immediate consequence of her touch. God the Son, on the other hand, gives her the assurance of His Own lips that it was her faith that made her whole.

The Carpenter at Nazareth

S. MARK VI. 1-6

1. And He went out from thence, and came into His own country; and His disciples follow Him. 2. And when the sabbath day was come, He began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing *Him* were astonished, saying, From whence hath this *Man* these things? and what wisdom *is this* which is given unto Him, that even such mighty works are wrought by His hands? 3. Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of

Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at Him. 4. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house. 5. And He could there do no mighty work, save that He laid *His* hands upon a few sick *folk*, and healed *them*. 6. And He marvelled because of their unbelief. And He went round about the villages, teaching.

JESUS turned from Capernaum to visit once more the scenes where His early years had been spent. Nazareth was a very different place from that busy town on the lake which was astir with all the activity of a thriving trade. It was one of the most obscure of Galilean villages; like its neighbours, Nain and Endor, the abode of oil-pressers and husbandmen. It once must have had a Jewish name, but it found no place of record either in the Bible or the Talmud.

After the reception which our Lord had met with some nine months before, we are surprised that He should have revisited it, but His human love of home quickened forgiveness; and though the Nazarenes had been filled with wrath by His first sermon in their synagogue, and attempted His life, ample time had elapsed for different feelings to spring up. At all events it was worth while to give them another

opportunity; and so He found Himself once more in the old home, lodging no doubt under the same roof with His mother and brethren¹ and sisters.

On the Sabbath-day He joined the crowd of village-worshippers, and made His way to the synagogue, where for nearly twenty years He had been a constant attendant. Everything must have been perfectly familiar to Him: the emblem² over the entrance, the holy Lamp, the Ark with the Sacred Rolls, the reader's desk, or preacher's chair. What memories they revived of bygone years,—years of eager expectation when He must have longed for His work to begin! And now it was far advanced, far at least according to its destined measurement. What His thoughts were, none can tell, but we may be sure that when the Ruler asked Him to read the appointed Lessons,³ and address the congregation, His heart must have kindled with even more than wonted desire to tell the glad tidings that He had to bring.

It was the custom on the Sabbath-day for an interpreter⁴ to stand by the reader and translate for the people the Hebrew they had forgotten during their exile in Babylon.⁵ But none such was needed that day. The language of the Old Testament and the vernacular Aramaic would be alike familiar to our Lord:⁶ and so the Haphtarah would be read, and the explanation be given by the same lips. But the Preacher was again to be disappointed. It was almost a repetition of what

¹ For their actual relationship cf. pp. 70-74.

² The common emblem, judging from the remains which have been found, was the Seven-branched Candlestick, which was singularly appropriate for a place where instruction or illumination was one of the primary objects. For a variation from the above at Tell Hûm cf. p. 26.

³ For Lessons the Law was divided into fifty-four Parashahs, a word signifying sections, "separated off." Cf. Pharisee, "separatist." The Prophets were divided into Haphtarahs, from a verb "to dismiss," because the congregation usually separated shortly after this part of the service. Cf. Acts xiii. 14, 15. After the Return from Captivity it was usual to read the Law only in the synagogues. This was stopped by Antiochus Epiphanes, but after the revolt of the Maccabees Simon restored it, and added the Prophets. Cf. S. Luke iv. 17.

⁴ He was called Methurgeman.

⁵ After the Return the dialect they used in Palestine was that known as Aramaic. At the same time the Quadrate form of Hebrew letters was introduced, and the Scriptures were rewritten in this character by Ezra.

⁶ The Old Testament Hebrew was only studied by Rabbis. We may be quite sure that our Lord would read the Scriptures in the original language, and not be satisfied with a version.

had happened before. True, there was no outburst of violence, but they were filled with incredulity and amazement. There was no surrender of their old prejudices, no throwing of themselves at His feet in the simplicity of faith, no open confession or outpouring of regret that they could ever have doubted the truth of what they heard. Their hearts were hardened against conviction; and so they tried to divert their thoughts from the substance of His preaching by recalling the circumstances of His youth, when He had lived and moved among them, a common man like themselves.

They spoke to each other of His cottage home, His father, and His kinsfolk; and the recollection of the carpenter's shop in which He had worked took such possession of their minds, that they had no power to understand the logic of facts and the tremendous change they had brought about.

It is one of the few places where the veil is removed from His early life. He was brought up to the trade of a village carpenter. He worked with Joseph in building and repairing boats for the lake, in making furniture for the synagogue, in cutting down poles for tents, and, according to an early testimony, in shaping ploughs and yokes for oxen. When at home, His bench would be placed, as is the custom now, in the public way; when abroad, He would find His occupation in such hamlets as Nain or Cana, or perhaps on the beach at Bethsaida and Capernaum. Such sparing notice by inspired historians teaches us to give no credence to the Apocryphal legends¹ of the wonders that He wrought both in play and at work. Had there been in His life at Nazareth even the least exhibition of superhuman capacities, it would have been on every one's lips, in a village where everything was known and talked of; and instead of being amazed at His wisdom, when in later years He taught in their synagogue, the people would at once have regarded it as the fulfilment of His early promise.

No; the brief question, "Is not this the carpenter?" leaves no doubt upon the mind that no "mighty works" had been done by His hands before His ministry began. None can doubt that there were abundant proofs even then that He was

¹ The Gospel of the Infancy and others introduce Him as working wonders from His earliest years, *e.g.* to relieve Joseph, and correct his mistakes in carpentering.

no common Person : a perfect Boy, a perfect Youth, a perfect Man, perfect at each stage as He passed through it, but with no unveiling of that which was His from the beginning.

He in "Whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," Who was "the brightness of His Father's glory, and the express image of His Person," lived in such obscurity that His neighbours only remembered Him as an undistinguished member of Joseph's household.

It is quite possible that His fellow-villagers did not intend the contempt such a question conveys to our ears. Perhaps they wished only to be sure of His identity. The Jews, we know, did not consider it mean to work at a trade. It was the duty of every one, from the priest to the peasant, to learn some craft, and S. Paul was not ashamed to labour with his hands for his daily bread.

But whatever their motive, the fact remains : they rejected His message, and evoked from His lips the oft-repeated complaint, "A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house." It is only a nobler dress for the commonest proverb, than which none is truer, "Familiarity breeds contempt." He had come to bring them an abundant blessing, but His hand was stayed. S. Matthew tells us that "He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief." S. Mark, as though bent on every occasion upon expressing His tender sympathy with suffering, points out that an exception was only made, to heal some that were sick.

Now from this short notice of our Lord's earthly occupation during His preparation for His mission, we may gather some fresh proof that "His ways are not our ways." It was a poor beginning, as man measures, for the greatest work, to spend so many years at a carpenter's bench. For though there may have been nothing dishonourable in learning a trade, we can conceive of no weaker credentials for One Who claimed to regenerate the world, than that He had sat at no Rabbi's feet in the schools of wisdom and knowledge, but had spent thirty years in the meanest cottage among an ignorant and unlettered population. And history tells how often His followers were reproached with His origin. When Julian in his persecution was waging war successfully against the Faith, it is said that

one of his officers asked a Christian with scorn and contempt what his Master, the carpenter's Son, was doing then. "Making a coffin," was the meek reply of the injured saint. And soon the news was brought that the apostate Emperor was dead. Celsus, also another great adversary of the Christians, had insolently upbraided them for being followers of One Who had worked as a labouring man.

To those who read the lesson of those early years aright, a working life wears a far different aspect. Henceforward it is surrounded by a halo of dignity and honour; and it is no insignificant consequence that He should have made it impossible for ever that any man should be ashamed to work.

XXVII

The Mission of the Twelve

S. MARK VI. 7-13

7. And He called unto *Him* the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits; 8. and commanded them that they should take nothing for *their* journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in *their* purse: 9. but *be* shod with sandals; and not put on two coats. 10. And He said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from

that place. 11. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrhah in the day of judgment, than for that city. 12. And they went out, and preached that men should repent. 13. And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many *that were* sick, and healed *them*.

FOR the first time the Twelve fulfil their office as Apostles. They leave their Master's side, and are sent forth as missionaries to hasten His Kingdom. S. Mark notifies the change by appropriating to them in this place the new title of Apostleship.

The mission upon which they were sent was to the Jews, "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." The second Evangelist says nothing of the large mission to the Gentiles, but it fitly finds a place of record in the Gospel of one whose watchword was the Universality of Christ's Kingdom.¹

That Jesus yearned from the beginning for the emancipation of the world none can doubt, but He Who did all things

¹ S. Luke is emphatically "the Historian of the Universal Gospel." Probably he was prompted to take this view mainly by S. Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles. The number 70 was regarded as the symbol of the nations of the world, taken from Deut. xxxii. 8. At the Feast of Tabernacles 70 oxen were offered in sacrifice for the Gentiles. Cf. Talm. Bab. Sukkah, 55, 6.

“according to the counsel of His will” would not anticipate the orderly sequence of events: “to the Jew first and also to the Gentiles.” To have disregarded that, would have excited most bitterly the jealousy of His countrymen, as well as committed the Apostles to a work for which they were by no means prepared. The first qualification for a message of glad tidings to an alien people was the eradication of national antipathies, and nothing but a continued witness of the broadest sympathy could effect such a result. The hatred of the “Sons of Thunder” for the Samaritans survived wellnigh three years’ companionship with the Saviour of the world, and there is no reason for supposing that they were more prejudiced than the rest.

“He began to send them forth by two and two.” It would have been well for the Church in all ages if the principle laid down at the outset could have been generally maintained. There is perhaps no sphere in which companionship is more desirable. To be called upon to witness sin and misery in their worst forms, to see the disease spreading and eating the life out of a people, and to find oneself powerless to check it through distrust and unbelief, brings with it a depression of spirits unknown in its intensity in any other field of labour. If, as so often happens, the labourer has none to take counsel with, none to cheer and sympathise with him, it becomes almost unbearable.

Christ knew all this, and sent them forth, not singly, but “two and two,” that they might hold sweet converse together, and strengthen and correct one another wherever strength and correction were needed. And when we study their several characteristics, we see how careful He was in pairing them together. The fiery impetuous Peter is coupled with the meditative Andrew; James, so small of stature, with the lion-like Jude; the fanatical Zealot with the cold calculating Traitor, that the enthusiasm of the one might quicken the other’s reserved and despairing spirit.

The same principle is being happily revived in the present generation of missionary enterprise, and Colleges of priests are being planted by the Universities in Central Africa and Northern India for mutual help and encouragement in a most difficult work.

Our Lord's next care was to make the mission in a sense self-supporting. "The workman was worthy of his meat;" and if they went forth in simple dependence upon their Master, He would put it into men's hearts to supply their wants. They were to lay aside everything that would impede their progress in the way of baggage, every provision for the luxuries and conveniences of travel, and their "bread should be given them, and their waters be sure," and therewith they must be content.

It is true that the East is proverbial for hospitality, and that it was a favourable country in which to try the experiment. To this day the Arab opens his door to the traveller, and if you meet him abroad he is ready to share with you his only piece of bread, or the last drop that is left in his wine-skin. We can hardly expect, therefore, the same measure of support to be extended to missions at large; but there cannot be a question that people for the most part value religion in proportion to what it costs them. The intense love which we are told heathen converts entertain for their churches arises not infrequently from the fact that they have built them at their own expense, and often, too, with their own hands.

No doubt His first purpose was to make them realise that they were going forth not in their own but in His strength; but we may not forget that a further reason has been suggested for the command to leave behind their shoes and purse.¹

These things were always laid aside before entering the Temple. It was a symbolical provision that in the service of God there should mingle no thought of the affairs of the world. Even so it may be there was reflected back from that old command the idea that the mission on which they were being sent was one which demanded the total surrender of all their energy and will for Christ's cause.

Yet further, before their departure our Lord quickened their sense of responsibility by reminding them of the terrible consequences awaiting any who should reject the message with which they were burdened. Sodom and Gomorrha had

¹ Edersheim refers to the Rabbinic injunction, "not to enter the Temple-precincts with staff, shoes (mark, not sandals), and a money-girdle." It told the worshippers that they were to "be wholly absorbed in their service."—*Life and Times*, i. 643.

perished in one of the most signal of God's punishments, but no messenger had been sent direct from Him to warn them of the consequences of their awful sin. They, on the other hand, were going with credentials such as no ambassador had ever borne, and the guilt of impenitence would be proportioned to the force with which the truth was revealed. If those to whom they went turned a deaf ear to their words, then let them know that they had forfeited their birthright; they were no longer God's people, but outcast heathen; and the very dust of their land must be shaken in displeasure from the Apostles' feet, to symbolise that they were left to their own uncleanness.

"And they went out, and preached that men should repent. And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick." S. Mark alone mentions the outward sign that accompanied the healing. The use of oil in medical treatment was widely prevalent, but, apart from its application by the good Samaritan, it is only mentioned twice elsewhere in Holy Scripture. Isaiah clearly has it in his mind when, speaking of the wounds from which Judah suffered, he says, "they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment," or more correctly, "oil."

"Is any sick among you?" writes S. James. "Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the Name of the Lord." It was an outward act accompanying the exercise of unusual power,¹ whether it was the prayer of the faithful rulers of the Church, or the preternatural gifts of healing with which the Apostles were intrusted. The purpose that it served was the same as the anointing of the eyes of the blind by the Lord's hand: it was for the quickening of the patient's faith, without which no cure could be wrought.

Now the combination of the twofold work of preaching repentance and healing the sick, first formed in this temporary

¹ Anointing the sick with oil is not spoken of from New Testament times till the beginning of the fourth century. It is noticed in an Epistle of Innocent I. to Decentius in 416 A.D. It is also referred to in the *Orationes ad visitandum Infirmorum* of the Gregorian Sacramentary, A.D. 590, after which it is often recognised both in the Eastern and Western Churches. In the first Prayer-Book of Edward VI. it was provided that the sick man might be anointed "if he desired it." In the Primitive Church its object was the recovery of the sick through supernatural agency; now it is only administered in the Roman Church when recovery is considered impossible. Cf. Catech. Trident. ii. vi. 14.

mission, has continued throughout the history of the Church. Care for the body and thought for the soul may never be separated without harm and loss in ministerial usefulness. It was the testimony of one of the bravest missionaries¹ that he owed no small measure of his success to the fact that he was possessed of the knowledge of medicine, which enabled him to work many bodily cures, and win confidence for the reception of his message.

It is the pride and glory of the English Church that her priests are the truest friends of the sick and needy; and though it is promised that "they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars," our Lord has taught us that when we shall be called to give in the account of our stewardship, the inquiry will mainly turn on what deeds of mercy and compassion we have shown. It will be to those who have fed the hungry, and clothed the naked, and visited the sick, that He will give the invitation, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you;" for "inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."

¹ Dr. Livingstone in Central Africa. His case may be used to illustrate the principle, though his doctrine was not that of the Church.

XXVIII

Herodias and her Daughter

S. MARK VI. 14-29

14. And king Herod heard *of Him*; (for His Name was spread abroad :) and he said, That John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him. 15. Others said, That it is Elias. And others said, That it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets. 16. But when Herod heard *thereof*, he said, It is John, whom I beheaded: he is risen from the dead. 17. For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife: for he had married her. 18. For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife. 19. Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him, and would have killed him; but she could not: 20. for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly. 21. And when a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birthday made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief *estates* of Galilee; 22. and when the daughter

of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give *it* thee. 23. And he sware unto her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give *it* thee, unto the half of my kingdom. 24. And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist. 25. And she came in straightway with haste unto the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou give me by and by in a charger the head of John the Baptist. 26. And the king was exceeding sorry; *yet* for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat with *him*, he would not reject her. 27. And immediately the king sent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought: and he went and beheaded him in the prison, 28. and brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel: and the damsel gave it to her mother. 29. And when his disciples heard *of it*, they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb.

HEROD ANTIPAS was only "king" by courtesy. His father had originally intended to bequeath his whole kingdom to him, but he altered his will on his deathbed, and, dividing it into four portions, left one only to him, two to his brother

Archelaus, and the remainder to his half-brother Philip.¹ His right designation, therefore, was that which he more usually receives of "tetrarch." Herod the Great had been engaged in a long and troublesome war with a powerful border tribe, ruled over by an Arabian prince or Emir called Aretas. When at last it was brought to a close, it was an article in the conditions of peace that the princess of the Damascenes should marry one of his sons. Antipas was selected for the unhappy union. Being based upon political convenience, with no pretence of real affection, it was destined to be broken when the strain came. Another of his half-brothers, Philip, who had been disinherited from any share in the kingdom, had been married in his father's lifetime to his niece, Herodias, daughter of the eldest brother whom Herod the Great had cruelly put to death. This, too, was a most ill-assorted marriage, for her husband was more than double her age, and there was no pretence even of love and affection between them. She was of a passionate and imperious nature, and chafed at Philip's ignoble descent, for his mother was a Boëthusian, while her own was a Maccabean princess; but what galled her even more bitterly was her exclusion from all the magnificence and pomp of the regal courts. So it was, that when the tetrarch Antipas was visiting her husband at Rome, where he lived in a private capacity, she intrigued with him to repudiate his Arabian wife and establish herself in her place.

He yielded to her infamous design, and, in violation of every principle of law and morality, took her to his palace at Tiberias to succeed his rightful but dishonoured queen, who had fled to her own people, through fear of being poisoned by her wicked rival.

It was an ill-fated step for Antipas; for crime led on to crime, lust to murder, and both brought a terrible retribution, in war and depredation, exile and ruin.

The profligacy which was such a marked feature of the Roman Empire at this period had doubtless infected the

¹ Herod the Great had several wives, viz., Mariamne, a granddaughter of Hyrcanus, by whom he had Aristobulus, the father of Agrippa: Mariamne, a daughter of Simon, by whom he had Herod Philip, the husband of Herodias: Malthace, a Samaritan woman, the mother of Antipas and Archelaus: and Cleopatra, the mother of Philip, the tetrarch of Trachonitis, etc. He had several other wives besides, but they are unconnected with Sacred History.

Province of Syria, but the feelings of the people were shocked by such an act of unblushing immorality in high places. And John the Baptist was but their mouthpiece when he raised his voice against the adulterous union: "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife."

Herodias was not a woman to tolerate such reproof, and it was not long before she succeeded in silencing his voice: she dreaded the possibility of Herod's being stung by remorse under the vehemence of his remonstrance, and putting her away.

Antipas also was in fear lest the people might be stirred by his eloquence to rise in rebellion, and so John was cast into prison. The distant fortress of Machærus was chosen for his incarceration, mainly to remove him as far as possible from the machinations of the queen, for Herod well knew her revengeful spirit, and shrank from the additional odium of the murder of a man whom the people loved, and of whose fearless integrity he himself was not insensible. Indeed, such was the fascination of the Baptist's character, that his words, with all the bitterness of their sting, with all the pangs of conscience they must have stirred, did nevertheless give him pleasure to hear, for we are told "He was much perplexed,"¹ or, if the ordinary reading be correct, with a strange inconsistency in which his better nature triumphed for a time, "he did many things" under his influence, and "heard him gladly." But at last the opportunity came for which the deep-designing adulteress was always watching. The king's divorce of his Arabian wife led to the proclamation of war. The desperate father, whose warlike spirit had made the great Herod quail—"the old desert lion, whose claws had been more than once felt in Sebaste and Sepphoris"—took up arms to avenge his outraged child, and the forces of the Tetrarch were being massed on the frontier. Before they crossed, Herod, taking the occasion of his birthday, entertained the chief captains and civil authorities to a great banquet in the castle of Machærus. Considering the object of the war, we can well imagine that the jealousy of the guilty queen would be excited to the highest pitch by the presence of the officers of the army. To ingratiate herself and make her cause more popular with those who had undertaken to defend it, she persuaded her daughter,

¹ ἠπόρει, for ἐπόρει, is found in the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS.

the beautiful Salome, to submit to an act of no little condescension for their gratification. She placed herself in the degraded position of the professional dancing-girls, whose office it was by immodest arts to please the tastes of a licentious court.

The design succeeded almost beyond her expectations. The royal host, flushed with wine, and gratified alike by the condescension and the shameless exhibition which pandered to his impure passion, offered her, with true Oriental exaggeration, even the half of his kingdom as her reward. Salome was in league with her mother, and knew that there was a prize she coveted far more than the greatest of earthly possessions: it was the riddance from the stern uncompromising censor of her sinful life. The supreme moment had arrived, and, after the briefest consultation with the author of the plot, the damsel asked for the Baptist's head to be brought to her without delay. The petition was granted; but, though the king felt some genuine sorrow that he had been betrayed into an unconditional promise, he had not the moral courage to see that no oath could be binding which involved the commission of a dreadful crime. One of his bodyguard was despatched to the prisoner's cell, and the work of execution was soon completed. It reveals with an unmistakable clearness the revengeful nature of the real murderess, when tradition tells how, when the bleeding head was brought into the banquet-hall, she tore out the prophet's tongue in vindictive rage, just as the Roman lady¹ had pierced that of the dead Orator, under whose denunciations she had smarted so bitterly. And so the tragedy ended; but its consequences lived on to haunt and vex the lives of those who perpetrated it; and they soon showed themselves.

The fame of Jesus was now at its height, and the interest of Antipas was awakened. All kinds of reports were spread abroad concerning His Person and Character. Many said that it was Elijah, whose reappearance every pious Jew was anxiously awaiting: and the raising of the widow's son at Nain shortly before this must have recalled the miracle at Sarepta and quickened the imagination.

¹ Fulvia, the wife of Mark Antony, in revenge for the Philippics, in which Cicero had attacked her husband, maltreated the Orator's body, and pierced his tongue through and through with a bodkin.

Others thought it was one of the old prophets, most probably Jeremiah, come back to restore to them the Ark and the Urim and Thummim, which he had hidden ages before on the mountain where Moses died; and it has been suggested, not without reason, that the sadness of the Face that was never seen to laugh, helped to revive the memory of "the prophet of lamentation and tears and woe."

But there was yet a third belief that prevailed, for "it was said of some, that John was risen from the dead," and it is almost needless to say that it was this that laid hold of Herod's mind. No matter that he was by profession a Sadducee, with no faith in the Resurrection, his creed was forgotten in the superstitious dread which the memory of his crime fostered. The shade of the murdered prophet haunted him wherever he went; it followed him even beyond the seas; and the fear it engendered became "a byword and a proverb in Roman society," and furnished material for the biting satire of a heathen poet;¹ and was held up in the schools of the Stoics to illustrate the miseries of a guilty conscience.

A prolonged agony like this was a fitting penalty for such a heinous crime, but it did not exhaust the measure of Divine vengeance. Salome was accidentally beheaded,² and has supplied to moralists a signal example of exact correspondence between crime and its retribution.

Herodias, the evil genius of the king's life, shared his punishment, as she had shared his sin; for when he was banished from his kingdom,³ she followed his fallen fortunes to Gaul, and there, dethroned and dishonoured, the guilty pair wandered about till an ignoble death closed a career of almost unequalled guilt.

¹ Dean Plumptre has suggested that in the lines,

"But when the feast of Herod's birthday comes,

Thou mov'st thy lips, yet speak'st not in fear,
Thou keep'st the Sabbath of the circumcised,
And then there rise dark spectres of the dead,"

there is a direct allusion to this incident. Persius would have been a boy at the time of the Baptist's murder; for he died in the prime of life, A. D. 62. The circumstance may well have fixed itself in his mind.

² She is said to have fallen through the ice, the sharp edge of which nearly severed her head from the body.

³ He was banished by Caligula to Lugdunum, from which place he went to Vienne.

The Feeding of the Five Thousand

S. MARK VI. 30-44

30. And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told Him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. 31. And He said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. 32. And they departed into a desert place by ship privately. 33. And the people saw them departing, and many knew Him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto Him. 34. And Jesus, when He came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and He began to teach them many things. 35. And when the day was now far spent, His disciples came unto Him, and said, *This* is a desert place, and now the time *is* far passed: 36. send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and *into* the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat. 37. He answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto Him, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat? 38. He saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see. And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes. 39. And He commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass. 40. And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties. 41. And when He had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, He looked up to heaven, and blessed, and brake the loaves, and gave *them* to His disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided He among *them* all. 42. And they did all eat, and were filled. 43. And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments, and of the fishes. 44. And they that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men.

S. MARK calls our attention to the motive¹ for our Lord's retreat from Galilee. It was the need of rest for the Apostles

¹ There were other motives which suggested His leaving Galilee. S. Matt. xiv. 13 specifies the report of the Baptist's death. Common prudence would lead Him to avoid unnecessary danger—S. Matt. x. 23.

after the fatigues of their mission. And what a very natural scene it is to which he introduces us! An expedition had gone out, and had been very successful, and those who had taken part in it were eager to narrate their experiences to Him Who had sent them forth. We can almost see Him seated in their midst as they pour into His ears the stirring tale. He knew it all even before they began, for His eye had never been off them, and His spirit never absent from their side, but He listened with patience as they told the wonders of their travel, of deaf ears unstopped, and blind eyes restored to sight, and fevers subdued by a single touch, and demoniacs dispossessed. No sooner was the story told than we fancy we can hear them in all the enthusiasm of success asking to be sent out again. But what was the answer? "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while." It must have sounded cold and chilling, but He knew that exhausted nature must needs be repaired. "Man goeth forth to his labour until the evening"—but only so far. Night follows day, and rest succeeds to toil. So it was that our Lord counselled a temporary withdrawal from active work. The spot that He selected was one of the mountains on the further side of the lake, and they entered into the boat and rowed across. They could hardly have enjoyed their seclusion more than an hour or two before their place of retreat was discovered, and He had no alternative but to come forth and preach to the crowds whom from the mountain range He saw gathering together. Many people, it is said, having observed the direction of the boat, "went afoot thither," crossing the Jordan where it flows into the lake, and going in search of Him in the "desert place," which lay on the north-eastern shore. Many more were pilgrims who had turned aside from the great road by which travellers went from Cæsarea Philippi and the northern district to Jerusalem. It was customary for the inhabitants of neighbouring villages to join together, both for security and for company, and to travel in one long caravan up to the Annual Feasts.¹ One such was then impending. It is very

¹ "The Songs of Degrees," viz., Psalms cxx. to cxxxiv., were probably sung by the company on the "goings-up" to the Feasts. Ps. cxxi. was appropriate to their last halt within sight of Jerusalem; Ps. cxxii. to their entrance within the gates of the city.

significant that all the Evangelists call special attention to the number of men, for it is well known that, except with certain limitations, the attendance of women was not required at the Feasts.

Jesus was moved with compassion at the sight, and began at once to teach them, and heal their sicknesses ; and as they hung spell-bound on His lips, and listened with rapt attention, the day wore on, and the disciples became anxious and fearful of what might happen if such a great mass of people should be overtaken by nightfall far from shelter or human habitation. S. John gives us to understand that the difficulty of feeding the multitudes had been broached by our Lord Himself, and that He had consulted Philip on the possible sources of supply. Philip, making a rough calculation of the numbers, intimated that to purchase the requisite food would take above two hundred pence, a larger sum perhaps than they had at the time in the common purse. Our Lord, knowing what He would do, returned to His teaching ; but the question which had been started exercised the minds of the Apostles, and as they were quite unable to devise any means for meeting the necessity, and it was now growing very late, they came to Him in a body, and asked Him to dismiss the people that they might go and provide for themselves. To their astonishment He declined, and said, "Give ye them to eat." They asked at once, perhaps in irony, whether He intended that they should carry out Philip's suggestion, but He replied by asking what amount of food they actually had. The answer, especially as recorded by S. John, showed the utter insufficiency of the store. There was a little boy—the fishers' lad, no doubt, whom they had brought from the boat to carry their food—with five loaves, and those none of the best, for they were made of barley, and two small fishes,—not such as would satisfy hunger, but serving only to give relish¹ and a savoury taste to their common bread.

But "man's extremity is God's opportunity." No sooner did Christ see that the Apostles were satisfied that no ordinary

¹ These were a kind of sardine. They were caught in large quantities in the lake, dried and salted, and eaten with bread by the common people. The peculiar word used by S. John—*ὀψάριον*—indicates local knowledge. Cf. Westcott on the Fourth Gospel, and Edersheim, *Life and Times*, i. 681, 682.

means could avail, than He prepared for an exhibition of miraculous power. Let them make the men sit down on the grass. It was fresh and green at the time, for the spring rainfall was only just over; and the crowd was at once divided and broken up into manageable portions—that there might be no confusion, that none might be passed over or pushed aside—and arranged into “ranks, by hundreds and by fifties.” The peculiar word which is translated “ranks,”¹ indicates that the people were seated in “separate detachments,” with sufficient space left to move freely between them; but it is right to mention that, according to another etymology, it signifies a “bed of herbs or flowers,” and its usage would then illustrate S. Mark’s picturesqueness, the bright Eastern costumes of the compact masses upon the brilliant green having suggested to an eye-witness a close resemblance to a bright and well-ordered garden.

However this may be, when all was arranged He took the loaves and fishes into His hands, and, according to the Jewish ordinance, as the Head of the house in which He presided, “gave thanks,” no doubt in the familiar form of “Grace:” “Blessed art Thou, Jehovah our God, King of the world, Who bringest forth bread from the earth.” It was followed by a marvellous increase. The method or process of the multiplication is not revealed; whether it took place in Christ’s hands, or in the hands of the disciples, it is impossible to say. S. Chrysostom accepts the latter supposition, and it would certainly seem the most convenient, and perhaps the most significant also. The result, however, was that all were filled. An almost startling announcement followed: “Gather up the fragments.” It must have sounded strange, indeed, coming from the lips of One Who could multiply things as He would; but He designed to teach His disciples that no creative power should ever supersede careful thrift, that the most prodigal bounty is fitly accompanied by the nicest economy. Obedient to His word the disciples unstrapped the little baskets² which

¹ *πρασια*—*areolatim*—is usually derived from *πράσον*, a leek or onion. Most commentators (Farrar, Geikie, etc.) have assumed that it was a “flower”-bed, and have seen in it an apt figure for the gay scene. But there is no trace of *πράσον* being used of a flower. Possibly it is a foreign word with the same root as “Pharisee,” indicating “separation.”

² The “cophinus” was a sort of wicker wallet in which a Jew carried

all Jews were wont to carry when travelling from home, and filled them with the fragments; and behold "there was more of what remained over than of the original stock." It may have been intended to leave no doubt that a distinct creative act had been performed: that the multitudes had been satisfied, not by any sudden cessation of the cravings of hunger, but by an exercise of preternatural power on the part of Him by Whom "all things were made," and without Whom "was not anything made that was made."

Now it cannot have been accidental that all four Evangelists should have recorded this miracle, and with so much more fulness of detail than is usually met with. There is no apparent reason for such prominence in its primary teaching. S. Hilary says the whole circumstance is a series of types. One or two will suffice for our present consideration. In all¹ the accounts it has been carefully recorded, with only a slight variety of expression, that after blessing and breaking the bread the Divine Master gave it to the disciples, and "the disciples distributed it to them that were set down."

Those multitudes, collected "out of all cities," foreshadowed the numbers of people who should be gathered into the Catholic Church "out of every nation under heaven." The appearance of our Blessed Lord standing in their midst, and miraculously providing from His Own hand for their bodily wants, signified the place which He intended to occupy as the Head of the Church, able and willing to supply out of the inexhaustible fulness of His bounty whatsoever men of every clime, and age, and degree, should need for the support of their spiritual life.

The twelve disciples receiving the bread which He had blessed, and distributing it to the people, after they were set down and arranged in convenient groups, were but the first in the line of a duly-appointed and unbroken Ministry, from whom, through all the ages of the Church's history, the separate "clean" food on a journey. It was such an indispensable article that in Juvenal's time the Jews were ridiculed for possessing nothing but this and a wisp of hay to serve as a pillow.—Juvenal, Sat. iii. 14.

¹ In S. John vi. 11 the direct mention of this is omitted in the best MSS., but it may be inferred from the general sense, as well as from the *δέδωκε*, here substituted for *ἔδωκε* of the other Evangelists.

communities of the One Body were destined to receive the Immortal Food.

And if we may draw a still further analogy, or press that more closely which has already been drawn, we should note the fact that Christ is carefully pointed out as the One Source from Which the supply was taken, though it is not revealed whether the real increase was made in His Own, or in the hands of the Apostles; and yet further, that the bread was given only after the multitude had been taught at His mouth. It is the clearest evidence that the Church must look to Him, and Him alone, as her "stay and support," the Teacher and Feeder of her people. He will feed her in soul and spirit with His doctrine, and sacramentally with His Own most precious Body and Blood; and though we may grasp the teaching, as the multitudes doubtless were able to do in a measure, we must expect the manner of the continued gift of His Sacramental Body to be shrouded in mystery, in the same way as the method by which the loaves were multiplied was hidden from their eyes.

XXX

Walking upon the Sea

S. MARK VI. 45-52

45. And straightway He constrained His disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida, while He sent away the people. 46. And when He had sent them away, He departed into a mountain to pray. 47. And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and He alone on the land. 48. And He saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night He cometh unto them, walking upon the

sea, and would have passed by them. 49. But when they saw Him walking upon the sea, they supposed *it* had been a spirit, and cried out: 50. for they all saw Him, and were troubled. And immediately He talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: It is I; be not afraid. 51. And He went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered. 52. For they considered not *the miracle* of the loaves: for their heart was hardened.

THE miraculous multiplication of the loaves had produced such an effect upon the multitudes that they believed the long-expected Messiah had come, and were eager "to take Him by force and make Him a king." The crown which they would have offered Him contrasted greatly with that which He knew that He must wear; and though He had vanquished once and for all every temptation to mere earthly greatness, the very presentation of the offer drove Him to seek fresh strength to resist in prayer and communion with the Father.

The north-eastern shore of the lake was especially suited for retirement. It is the exact counterpart of the north-western; and together, it has been well observed, they reflect "that union of energy and rest, of active labour and deep

devotion, which is the essence of Christianity, as it was in the life of Him in Whom that union was first taught and shown."

He was then in the neighbourhood of Bethsaida-Julias,¹ on the further side, but before He could obtain the undisturbed solitude which He sought it was necessary to dismiss both the multitudes and His disciples. We may well suppose that those whose enthusiasm had just been so largely kindled would be unwilling to depart, but we are not told of any resistance on their part. With the disciples, however, it was different, for it is said that He "constrained" them to get into the boat: it implies that pressure was necessary to overcome their reluctance. Every consideration must have suggested the propriety of their remaining. He was surrounded by strangers; the country was bleak and desolate; the night was fast closing in; and to do as He bade them was to leave Him without any means of transport across the lake. But His word was law; and after remonstrating they did as He commanded them. Could they have foreseen what awaited them they would have been filled with dismay. He Who sees the end from the beginning foresaw it; but He foresaw also the deliverance, and so bade them go. Their destiny was the other Bethsaida, close to Capernaum, distant some forty² or fifty furlongs—from five to six English miles.

After their departure Jesus ascended the mountain, and continued a long time in prayer. It was a stormy night, but there was a Paschal moon, and as the clouds broke, and the light fell upon the lake, He saw the disciples in distress from contrary winds. Eight or nine hours had passed, and they had accomplished little more than half their voyage. It required all their efforts to keep their boat from being driven back by the hurricane, and dashed to pieces on the rugged shore; but "about the fourth watch," as S. Mark says, adopting the Roman division of the night, if, as is commonly³

¹ Bethsaida-Julias was a village rebuilt and adorned by Philip the Tetrarch, and dignified with the title of a town, called Julias, in honour of the Emperor's daughter. The Tetrarch was buried there.

² Josephus says the lake was forty furlongs wide, *i.e.* five miles.—Wars, iii. 10. 7: For a further description cf. p. 94.

³ The Jews, it is said, originally divided the night into three watches, but after the establishment of Roman supremacy the number was increased to four, which are all named in S. Mark xiii. 35 in the Authorised Version—even, midnight, cock-crowing, and morning. When S. Peter was put in

supposed, it differed from the Jewish, Jesus went to them walking upon the sea. Their faith had been sorely tried; their memories would go back to that other storm on the self-same lake, which He had hushed at the mere bidding of His word: but now for hours He had left them in peril and danger. Was it a superstitious fear that some mischance had befallen Him, and that death had robbed them for ever of His Presence, that when His Form appeared upon the waters they thought it was a spectre, a ghost from the other world? Was it again to try their faith still further that He "would have passed by them"? But when He heard their cry of terror, He restored their confidence by the reassuring intelligence, "It is I; be not afraid." And no sooner had He entered into the boat than the storm was hushed, and there was a great calm.

S. Mark makes no mention of an incident so full of interest and instruction that it has furnished material both for Christian artists and preachers in every age. The impulsive rush to meet Jesus in the enthusiasm of a new-born conviction, the firm and confident step while all goes well, the sinking and falling away when any cloud of doubt or fear hides from the eyes the sustaining Presence, all have found repeated illustration in the spiritual experience of Christ's disciples, from the time when Peter sprang from the boat and "walked upon the waters," and "began to sink."

The reason for the omission in this Gospel is not far to find. Though the memory of the Apostle's feelings when the water yielded beneath his weight, and of the loss of confidence that took his eyes off Jesus, were well worthy of record for future generations of wavering Christians, he must have thought that the first bold venture of faith, which led him to do what man had never done before, would far outweigh in the estimation of men his after misgivings, and bring him more honour than shame. And so it was that, in accordance with the Mishnah, in which he was intrusted to four quaternions of soldiers, one, that is, for each watch. But in Talm. Bab. Berachoth, 3 b., we find reason to doubt the triple division. It contains a discussion between the chief Editor of the Mishnah and the somewhat older Rabbi Nathan. The former says there were four watches; the latter three, referring to Judges vii. 13, which speaks of the "middle watch." But he is answered by a comparison of Psalm cxix. 62 with cxix. 148, where the expression "night watches" implies two at least after midnight, and therefore also two before.

with his invariable rule, he asked S. Mark to pass it by in silence.

After what they had so lately seen of His creative power in feeding the multitudes, we might have expected that such an exhibition of omnipotence would have filled them with awe rather than with wonder and perplexity. But their hearts were slow to grasp the inner meaning of the mighty works which He did, and it never even occurred to them that it was quite natural for One Who could create the loaves and fishes at His will, to control the winds and waves.

It helps us to understand the object for which they were suffered, almost forced, to encounter the terrible perils of that stormy voyage. It was part of the training by which their Lord patiently led them onwards from weak beginnings, compelled to subject them again and again to the same disciplinary experience, only at each repetition drawing them on to the perception of something higher.

This progressive feature in their training appears, perhaps, nowhere more patent than in the special circumstances of the two storms from which He delivered them. At first sight the points of resemblance seem so numerous and so close that it is not easy to see why both should have been recorded. Closer consideration reveals such important and significant differences that the double narrative becomes full of instruction.

In the first storm it was during daylight; they were near to land; "there were other little ships" crossing the lake at the same time; the danger was of the shortest duration; and Jesus was with them in the boat—asleep, it is true, but still His Presence must have given them some sense of security.

In the second, they had to battle with the hurricane through the hours of night; they were "in the midst of the sea;" they were alone upon the waves; the agony of suspense and peril was prolonged for many hours; and, above all, their Guide and Protector was far away.

In the first miracle Jesus taught them to walk by sight; in the second, to walk by faith.

All was designed in the latter case to lead them to trust Him, though invisible to the bodily eye, and though He tarried, to wait for Him. It was a preparation for the coming

severance, and an assurance that though He would leave them, though He should ascend up far from human sight, He would still remember them in their necessities, and "deliver them out of their distress."

And through the Twelve He would teach the world, that for all who put their trust in Him, when the waters of adversity are high, and the storm of temptation is fierce, even though no mortal eye may see Him, He still, as of old, "treadeth upon the waves of the sea," and "walketh upon the wings of the wind." He still repeats the comforting assurance, "Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid:" for "though the waves of the sea are mighty, and rage horribly, yet the Lord Who dwelleth on high is mightier."

Tradition of the Elders

S. MARK VI. 53-56; VII. 1-8

53. And when they had passed over, they came into the land of Gennesaret, and drew to the shore. 54. And when they were come out of the ship, straightway they knew Him, 55. and ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard He was. 56. And whithersoever He entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought Him that they might touch if it were but the border of His garment: and as many as touched Him were made whole.

VII. 1. Then came together unto Him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem. 2. And when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen, hands, they found fault. 3. For the Pharisees,

and all the Jews, except they wash *their* hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. 4. And *when they come* from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, *as* the washing of cups, and pots, brassen vessels, and of tables. 5. Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, Why walk not Thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands? 6. He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth Me with *their* lips, but their heart is far from Me. 7. Howbeit in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. 8. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, *as* the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.

AFTER our Lord had stilled the storm upon the lake He passed over to the other side. The exact point at which He landed is not named, but it was somewhere on the edge of the plain of Gennesaret. This was a small tract of country about three miles broad, running inland a little less than twice that distance, but in beauty and fertility it was unsurpassed, and for historic associations it has been designated "the most sacred region of the lake, if not of the world."

Its claim to such an honourable title arose mainly out of the fact that it included Capernaum within its boundaries, the city which was "exalted unto heaven" by the many mighty works which were wrought in it.

It was no sooner known that the Great Healer had come back to their shores than the people of the district hastened to bring their sick to be cured. Wherever He went, alike in town and village, the same sight met Him: the village greens and market-places, and the roads in the less frequented localities, were studded in every direction with the pallets of the sick and diseased, and as He passed among them, some, who had been told what befell the woman with the issue of blood, implored permission to touch "but the border of His garment," and all, "as many as touched Him,¹ were made whole."

It was in the midst of His work of healing in the land of Gennesaret, or shortly after it, that Jesus was called upon to engage in a far less congenial occupation. The chief rulers at Jerusalem had become alarmed at the influence He appeared to be gaining, and, being dissatisfied with the accounts, which must have reached them, of the complete failure of the Pharisees of Sepphoris² and the Galilean Scribes, to convict Him of breaking the Law, determined to send a deputation of more competent disputants.³

There are indications that they agreed beforehand that the charge to be made against Him should be for a breach of "the tradition of the elders," the gravity of which they had wholly miscalculated. Tradition had gained such a firm hold upon the Jewish mind, and was so constantly mixed up with the life of the nation at this time, that a short history of its nature and origin is almost necessary for a due appreciation of much that is written in the Gospels touching the customs and practice of the Jews.

It was an after-growth of the Captivity, originating not improbably with the Great Synagogue, out of which the

¹ It is impossible to decide whether the text (Him) or the marginal reading (it) of the Authorised Version be right, because the pronoun is of both genders.

² Cf. pp. 52, 53.

³ According to Westcott and Hort, "which came from Jerusalem, and *had seen*,"—they had previously noticed it. "Cum vidissent," Jerome. Cf. Speaker's Com. *in loc.*

Sanhedrim¹ was developed. The reverence and care for Holy Scripture, revived by Ezra, and fostered by later Scribes, led to the creation of a school of interpreters, whose comments were handed down from generation to generation, and treated with so much honour that the highest authority was sought for their origin. Some Rabbi, bolder than his predecessors, put forward the theory that God had given to Moses not only the Ten Commandments, but also at the same time a full explanation, even in the minutest detail, of all their applications. This Oral Law, he said, had been revealed by Moses to Aaron and his sons, and the memory of it was cherished and handed on without any loss or diminution in the progress of transmission. As soon as such a view of its origin had gained acceptance with the people, its authority became equally binding upon the conscience with that of the Written Law, and the estimation in which it was held even higher.

In lapse of time it received its interpretation at the hands of the Rabbis, and the disquisitions, illustrations, and additions grew into a great body of doctrine; and after the Jewish motto, "Commit nothing to writing," had been forgotten, these were all combined in a vast collection, under the title of Gemara, or Talmud.² The publication in writing of the Mishnah itself, as the Oral Law was called, had preceded it by two hundred years. It was issued authoritatively by Rabbi Judah, the Holy, at the close of the second century of the Christian era.

There were two familiar sayings among the later Jews, which enable us to understand how widely traditionalism must have conflicted with the teaching of our Blessed Lord. "The words of the elders," they said, "are of more weight than the

¹ This is only one of many views, but we think the most probable. The Mishnah refers its origin to the seventy elders associated with Moses, but this was only a temporary institution.

² "Talmud" means doctrine or teaching; "Mishnah," repetition; "Gemara," perfection or completion. The Mishnah is divided into six Sedarim, or "Orders," on these subjects: 1. Seeds, preceded by Benedictions, etc., *i.e.* "the religio-agrarian laws," for tithes, first-fruits, etc. 2. Festival-times; on Sabbath observance, etc. 3. Women, marriage, divorce, etc. 4. Damages, civil and criminal law, together with the well-known "Sayings of the Fathers." 5. Holy things, on sacrifices, etc. 6. Purifications, on what is clean and unclean. These are all subdivided into Treatises. For a full and interesting account of the whole question, cf. Artt. MIDRASH and MISHNAH, in the Encyclopædia Britannica, by Dr. Schiller-Szinessy.

words of the prophets ;” and, even more startling than this, “The Mosaic Law is as water, the Mishnah as wine, and the Gemara as hippocras.” Hippocras was a richly-spiced drink, most highly esteemed.

Now one of the six books into which the Mishnah is divided deals entirely with “Purifications.”

It was in a matter relating to this subject that the deputation from the Sanhedrim made a direct attack upon our Lord. Some of them had been present on an occasion when certain of the disciples had eaten bread without the preliminary purification enjoined in the Mishnah. To incur such a defilement was to forfeit all claim to be regarded as a respectable Jew. Indeed it was in their eyes nothing less than an unpardonable offence. It was even said that on one occasion Rabbi Akiba being imprisoned, and allowed only sufficient water to quench his thirst, preferred to die of starvation rather than eat his bread with unwashed hands.

One reason why they were so scrupulous about this washing was a strange belief that an evil spirit¹ settled upon their hands directly they were defiled, and could only be removed by ablutions.

The directions for the ceremonial were elaborately laid down. S. Mark refers to them in the words, “The Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not.” The translation “oft,” founded upon the rendering of the Vulgate, has no other authority, and is obviously untenable as being contrary to fact. They washed only twice, at the outside, before meals.² Once with “the first waters,” when the hands were lifted up to let the ablutions run down to the wrist ; once with “the second waters,” reversing the position, so as to let them run off at the ends of the fingers. The allusion in the passage before us is probably to the former of these, and the right translation of the disputed word should be “by the wrist.” For the paraphrastic rendering “diligently,” from the idea that the word means “fist,” and that rubbing “the fist” of one hand

¹ *Shibta*, from a Hebrew root “to sit,” was one of the demons “which sits upon men’s hands in the night, and if any one touch his food with unwashed hands, that spirit sits upon that food, and there is danger from it.”

² There used to be another washing after meals before grace with “the last waters,” but this obviously was not alluded to here.

in the hollow of the other indicates force and vigour, the evidence is wholly insufficient, the Mishnah containing no such direction.

Now, one special source of defilement here mentioned was the market-place. No Jew could pass through an Oriental bazaar without coming in contact either with a heathen or some one ceremonially unclean. The crowd was so great that the most careful precaution might fail to secure him from accidental pollution, and the invariable custom was to wash upon returning home. The word employed for this purification is more literally "baptize themselves;" but as immersion was impossible under the circumstances, and yet further, as the Mishnah nowhere enjoins it, the passage supplies ample justification for our mode of baptizing; it shows that the conditions of that sacred rite are satisfied by affusion.¹ The Jews guarded still further against defilement through drinking-cups, domestic utensils, and household furniture.

With such religious scruples, it was only to be expected that they would be offended at the apparent carelessness of Jesus and His disciples. They asked Him how it was that they too did not "walk" in the tradition of the elders, and they used the expression advisedly, for "the walking," the Halachah,² was the title they gave to the Oral Law which regulated the duties of daily life.

He went back for His answer, as so often, to the declarations of the Old Testament. Some centuries before this, Isaiah had denounced the formalism and hypocrisy of his contemporaries, and the Holy Spirit had so ordered his words that they should describe even more fully a later generation in which the self-same faults would be more largely developed.

It cannot be too carefully noticed that no condemnation is passed upon these rites of purification in themselves. Had the Pharisees recognised their symbolism and deep moral significance: had Jesus been certain that when they washed their hands they thought of or prayed for purity of heart and

¹ It is quite true that primarily "dipping" was usually adopted—S. Paul's figure, "buried with him by baptism" implies this,—but the above passage shows that to baptize is merely to pour water on or affuse. Cf. also S. Luke xi. 38.

² Cf. Artt. in the Ency. Brit., *ut supra*.

life, He would have been the last Person to rebuke them, however much they multiplied external forms and ceremonies. These are useful as stepping-stones to higher things; but the moment they begin to satisfy in themselves they become snares, and lead to superstition.

Further Traditionalism

S. MARK VII. 9-23

9. And He said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. 10. For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death. 11. But ye say, If a man shall say to *his* father or mother, *It is* Corban, that is to say, a gift, *by* whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; *he shall be free*. 12. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; 13. making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.

14. And when He had called all the people unto *Him*, He said unto them, Harken unto Me every one of you, and understand: 15. There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they

that defile the man. 16. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. 17. And when He was entered into *the* house from the people, His disciples asked Him concerning the parable. 18. And He saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, *it* cannot defile him; 19. because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats? 20. And He said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. 21. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, 22. thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: 23. all these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

It is in perfect accord with S. Mark's custom that he should notice the mood or temper in which Jesus rebuked the champions of a dead formalism. "Full well ye reject the commandment of God." It bespeaks the sarcasm and righteous indignation which He felt and must have expressed, not only by the tone of His voice, but, we may well believe, with a look of withering scorn. He had illustrated their abuse of ceremonial observance by their slavery to the letter,

and neglect of the spirit; and then, advancing a step higher, He showed what a pernicious effect traditionalism had in perverting the first principles of morality.

The Law of God, as delivered to Moses in the Mount, had placed the obligation of children "to honour their parents" in the forefront of man's duty to his neighbour. Its observance was of such momentous consequence that it was made "the first commandment with promise," and the penalty of death was affixed to the breach of it.

Now when God imposed this duty He was only setting His seal to man's natural instincts. The relationship of their offspring to parents is of the very closest kind, and carries with it duties and responsibilities which unassisted Nature is quick to recognise. It is strange that it should have been reserved for God's chosen people not only to pervert this law of natural ethics, but also to violate a commandment especially enjoined upon themselves. The breach arose out of their traditional regulations with regard to vows, since embodied in an elaborate "Tract" of the Mishnah. From those which involved personal obligation,¹ our Lord selected an example to illustrate the open conflict between their admitted principles and the plain teaching of the Mosaic Code.

The elders allowed a man to alienate any part or the whole of his property from himself by dedication to God or the Temple service. The common formula by which this was done was this, "It is Korban,"² and the word implied that it was a gift or offering presented to the Lord.

Now cases might not be infrequent where parents, from a variety of causes, became dependent upon their children for support; but if the latter, from any feelings of anger or annoyance, desired to withhold their assistance, they had only to repeat the familiar "Korban" over the special object of parental need; and even in extreme cases, where they wished to be entirely quit of filial obligation once for all, they said

¹ There were two kinds,—vows of consecration and vows of obligation. The former, when a man devoted anything for the Temple for sacrifice—wine, etc.; the latter, when he vowed to abstain from something which was lawful in itself.

² Korban, derived from a Hebrew word, "to offer to God," "bring to the altar." Konam was perhaps derived from the Latin *census*; but some consider that the Rabbis used it as a distorted form of Korban.

that everything which might have been used for their parent's benefit was "Korban." It was this which our Lord selected for special animadversion. The immorality of such conduct was greatly intensified by a practice which could hardly have been originally intended, but which had been winked at, if not openly allowed, in later times. It suffered a man to delay the actual dedication, so that even after the words of alienation had been spoken, he might still continue to enjoy the so-called "Korban," though the rival claims of the parent were held to be set aside as soon as ever the formula was pronounced. We can well understand, then, how our Lord should rebuke those who could tolerate such flagrant injustice, and declare that such casuistry had struck a nail through the sacred bond, and "made the word of God of none effect."¹

Unable any longer to endure the thought of their sophistries, He turned abruptly from the Pharisaic disputants. A crowd of people had gathered in the neighbourhood, drawn together no doubt by the importance which a deputation from the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem would lend to the discussion, as well as by their natural curiosity. The Pharisees had been openly denounced, and the multitudes must know it, that their confidence in such teachers might be shaken and destroyed. Jesus waited till every one had come within reach of His voice, and then, with a caution both at the beginning and at the end, upon the importance of hearing and laying to heart what He said, condemned Pharisaic externalism by the sweeping assertion that nothing from without can defile a man. It was the flattest contradiction to their system that could possibly be given, and we can almost see them gnashing their teeth against Him as He turned away with that parting curse upon their creed. The die had been cast, and henceforward there could be not even the semblance of a truce between the adherents of the Old and the followers of the New.

It seems strange that when He entered into the house, the disciples should have asked him the meaning of His words. They saw that there was something deeper than what lay on the surface, for they spoke of His speech as a parable. It

¹ The rendering of the Authorised Version loses the force of the words as found in the best MSS. They are well rendered in the Revised Version: "If a man shall say . . . ye no longer suffer him . . . making void . . ."

seemed to Him next to impossible that they could have failed to comprehend its spiritual significance; that with all their opportunities of discerning His mind, they should have made so little progress that a simple parable like that required explanation. Nevertheless, with that patience and gentleness which characterised His education of them for their future office, after a momentary expression of surprise, He unfolded the true sense of the figure which He had used. There could be no greater mistake than to suppose that a man was defiled by what he ate. The Law had for a special purpose¹ drawn a distinction between clean and unclean meat, and this affected a man ceremonially, but no food could impart actual defilement. Henceforward, too, He gave them to understand that even ceremonial impurity would be done away. For S. Mark tells us that He made the statement, "Whatsoever thing from without entereth into a man, cannot defile him," . . . "purging² all meats,"—that is, pronouncing them clean. It may not have conveyed this meaning to His hearers, but if we accept the true reading of the passage, we have the witness of the Spirit that He so intended it. It was an anticipation of the verdict pronounced to S. Peter after the vision of the "great sheet:" "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common."

Turning, then, from the ceremonial to the moral, He showed that the only defilement to be feared was that which came from within,—from the heart, which is the very cradle of the affections and lusts. A long catalogue of sins follows,—sins, many of which are commonly called sins of the flesh, but which He Who is able to trace everything to its source assigned to the depravity of the heart and will. At the head of the list He placed the "evil disputings," so fresh in His memory from His encounter with the Pharisees; then adulteries and fornications, the outcome of a corrupt imagination; murders, which proceed from anger; thefts and covetousness, from secret promptings to overreach others and gain more than one

¹ The reason assigned in Lev. xx. 24-26 is to separate the Jews from other nations as God's peculiar people. "It was to be something in their daily life to remind them of the Covenant which distinguished them from the nations of the world." Cf. Speaker's Com. on Lev. n. xi. 2.

² The reading of the best MSS. is *καθαρίζων*, and is an observation made by the Evangelist, "referring to the intention of the Speaker,"—He spoke thus, cleansing all meats.

has a right to ; knaveries and fraud ; lasciviousness or reckless insolence, which outrages the decencies of life ; the malicious glance and slanderous tongue ; the proud and haughty bearing which bespeaks the self-centred man ; and last in the list, the comprehensive sin of foolishness, which embraces every senseless wicked act. And "all these evil things," the Discerner of the heart and thoughts of man assured His disciples, "come from within, and defile the man."

The Syrophenician Woman

S. MARK VII. 24-30

24. And from thence He arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know *it*: but He could not be hid. 25. For a *certain* woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of Him, and came and fell at His feet: 26. the woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought Him that He would cast forth the devil out of her daughter. 27. But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled; for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast *it* unto the dogs. 28. And she answered and said unto Him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs. 29. And He said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter. 30. And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.

THIS incident seems to point to a somewhat new departure in our Lord's mission. His ruling maxim had been, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." It had not prevented Him from bestowing favour upon such of the heathen as had come in His way. He could hardly have failed to heal some that were sick among the inhabitants of Decapolis; and one instance is left on record of blessings bestowed upon a Roman centurion. He was perfectly familiar with the prophecies which foretold that the Gentiles should profit by His coming, that He would be "a Light to lighten the Gentiles," as well as "the glory of His people Israel;" but for manifold reasons He felt that His personal ministry must be circumscribed, and confined within strictly Jewish limits.

Now, for the first—for the only—time, He appears to have passed into heathen territory. It has been maintained,

however, that He merely approached the confines without overstepping the boundary line. It may be that "Tyre and Sidon" were not only cities, but districts, and that the "coasts" or "borders of Tyre and Sidon" meant nothing more than "the marches" which separated Phenicia from Galilee; but the statement of a later verse, that He went "through Sidon," leads to the more natural conclusion that He did actually set foot upon heathen land.

It is worthy of note, nevertheless, that it was not with the intention of preaching or performing any ministerial work, but mainly in search of privacy and seclusion. He needed rest after His prolonged labours, and He may have felt it prudent also to place Himself, in a time of some special excitement, beyond the reach of Herod's machinations. No sooner had He crossed the frontier than He sought shelter in a house. To avoid any unnecessary offence to those who accompanied Him, we may conclude that it was that of a Jew; for, though strictly a heathen country, the population had been a mixed one for many centuries.

The fame of His doings had penetrated those parts, for the scene of His chief miracles was not much above thirty miles distant; and though He expressed His desire to be left undisturbed, "He could not be hid." He was almost immediately discovered by a poor woman, who was in great distress through a terrible affliction which had befallen her child. Her nationality is emphasised by the Evangelists with a variety of expression. She is characterised vaguely as "a Greek," not in the limited sense with which we are most familiar, but as a generic term for non-Jewish people, very much as the Turks and Asiatics adopt the designation of "Frank" for any European. Her personal name has come down through tradition as *Justa*, and that of her daughter as *Bernice*. She is called by S. Matthew "a woman of Canaan"—an inhabitant of the region into which those who escaped extermination had been shut up; and the title may have been selected to enhance the loving-kindness of the Lord, not without reference to her inheritance of the ancient malediction, "Cursed be Canaan." She is also called here a Syrophenician by descent, probably to distinguish her from those Libyo-Phenicians¹ in the

¹ It is supposed by some that the above distinction was not known, and

northern coasts of Africa, whom the fame of Carthage had made so widely known.

She was, no doubt, in religion a heathen, but was possessed by principles which, when called into active exercise by the Great Teacher, served her in better stead than the orthodox creed did not a few of its professors.

She had heard of the fame of Jesus, probably from those "about Tyre and Sidon" who had joined the crowds at Capernaum a year before; perhaps they had even told her how the evil spirit had been cast out of the demoniac in the synagogue, and in the fulness of hope and faith she had believed all that she heard; and now that the great Wonder-worker was actually come within reach, she hurried into His Presence, and, despite every hindrance, threw herself at His feet in supplication for mercy. He must have been surprised by the title with which she addressed Him, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David," for it was that which bespoke the Jewish Messiah, the Saviour of the world. But He met her petition by an instantaneous rebuff: "Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs." It would have checked the eagerness of most suppliants, but hers was no common faith, and her determination to find relief was only equalled by the soreness of her need. Though there was much that she could not have expected, and for which she was unprepared, in the language that He used, it was not altogether harsh, and she caught at whatever seemed to mitigate it. It is quite possible also that there was something either in the expression of His face or the tone of His voice, which lessened the discouragement.

She had often heard her people characterised as "dogs." It was a title by which "the Jews, whose first care it was to hate, to mock, and to curse all besides themselves, disgraced the Gentiles." The noble nature of the dog finds no recognition in the history of the Old or New Testaments.¹ Among Jews, dogs were regarded as wild, savage, undomesticated that the true rendering is a Phœnician Syrian, as in some copies, *Σύρα Φοινισσα*. In the LXX. Canaan is translated *Φοινίκη*.

¹ The only mention of a dog as a domestic animal among Jews is in Tobit, where Tobias goes forth on a journey to Media, and "the young man's dog with them."—Tob. v. 16.

animals, which prowled about cities as the scavengers of the streets, with no masters and no homes.

But Jesus, by the use of a diminutive not to be expressed in English,¹ softened not a little the harshness of the comparison, implying that the dogs to which He likened them were not excluded from the house. And the woman, with the instincts of a Gentile, with whom the dog was not only a favourite, but an almost necessary companion, having its place at the domestic hearth, turned it at once into an argument in her favour, and replied, "Yes, Lord"—or if we admit the truer reading—'I accept the position, "for the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs."' What she meant to convey must have been something like this: 'I do not deny that the Jews are the first object of Your care and ministration. They are the true children; and I am far from asking that they should ever be superseded in their rightful prerogative; but the very fact that You should speak of their being first fed seems to imply that our turn will come after them, and Your mitigation of the harsh unfeeling byword, which the Jews adopt, encourages me to persevere in my petition. Let the full board, then—the plentiful bread of grace,—be reserved for the Jewish children; but only let me be as the dog under the table, to partake of the crumbs of mercy and comfort that fall from it.'

Such a pleading as that was irresistible: her prayer was answered, and for that saying, and the greatness of the faith of which it was the expression, her daughter was delivered from her dreadful affliction.

The story places before us a pattern of meekness and perseverance rarely equalled. How many, even with privileges of teaching and education to which she was a stranger, would have taken offence at the apparent insult of such a reception as she met with! But with all the forbearance of the meek and quiet spirit, which disarms opposition, she discerned a smile beneath His frown, and won her petition. How many, again, if not offended and full of resentment, would have turned away discouraged! To have hoped, as she had done, against hope, and then to have heard that there was One Who could give her relief, and to have flung herself at His feet in

¹ The common term of contempt was *κύνες*. Jesus said *κυνάρια*, *catelli*, little dogs, pet dogs.

the agony of supplication, and to be so received! Could we have been surprised if despair had taken possession of her, and she had hurried from His Presence? But faith triumphed over all disappointment, and "her daughter was made whole from that very hour." Whether it was given to her to understand it, we cannot tell; but the seeming harshness of her Saviour's conduct was but a new revelation of His unfailing love. The same love which, when faith was weak, prompted Him to go forth to meet it, led Him to hold Himself back when faith was strong, that it might be yet further purified and made perfect through trial.

The Deaf Man with Stammering Tongue

S. MARK VII. 31-37

31. And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, He came unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis. 32. And they bring unto Him one *that was* deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech Him to put *His* hand upon him. 33. And He took him aside from the multitude, and put His fingers into his ears, and He spit, and touched his tongue; 34. and looking up to heaven, He sighed,

and saith unto him, EPHPHATHA, that is, Be opened. 35. And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain. 36. And He charged them that they should tell no man: but the more He charged them, *so* much the more a great deal they published *it*; 37. and were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: He maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

AFTER leaving the borders of Tyre, where He had cured the Syrophenician's daughter, our Lord proceeded to go "through Sidon,"¹ but whether He actually visited the ancient Phenician capital, or only set foot on Sidonian territory, we have no means of deciding. If the latter, He would turn southwards after making a slight circuit, and take the great Roman road direct to Cæsarea Philippi. But if the former, He must have crossed some of the numerous passes of the mountain ranges of Libanus and Hermon into the neighbourhood of Damascus. This would take Him through some of the grandest highland scenery of Palestine; and when we recall His love of Nature, so often manifested in His teaching, it affords a strong presumption that He would not be insensible to such a consideration in the selection of His route.

We are told, moreover, that He came through "the midst

¹ This is the correct text according to the oldest MSS. and versions. Cf. p. 157.

of the coasts of Decapolis," which favours the supposition, for Damascus¹ was one of the chief of those ten allied free cities so designated by the Romans. Though situated within the tetrarchies of Philip and Antipas, they were independent of any authority but that of their provincial governor; and their populations, except so far as enterprising Jews might be tempted there for purposes of trade, were entirely heathen. On the Return from the Captivity the old possessors had been unable to re-conquer them; and the ruins of ancient monuments, among which are temples to numerous Greek divinities, testify to their Pagan worship and customs. It is important to notice this, because it involves our Lord in a larger intercourse with the heathen than is commonly supposed, and makes it by no means improbable that the group of miracles here recorded were wrought upon them, and not upon Jews.

At some stage of His journey through these parts they brought to Him "one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech." He had not been deaf and dumb from his birth, but had lost the sense of hearing from some unrecorded cause, perhaps a fever or an accident, and this deprivation was followed in time, as usually happens, by a difficulty and indistinctness in speaking.²

What our Lord's motive was in taking him apart from the crowd is by no means obvious.³ With our Saviour "a moral dealing was the ultimate end of a physical cure," and this was kept in view in the mode of working it. Possibly, then, it was a symbolical action indicating the necessity of his being separated from his own people, and brought out of heathenism. More probably it was designed to concentrate his attention upon our Lord's Own Person, and quicken his faith to be healed. For the same reason, perhaps, He made use of those manual acts of thrusting His fingers into his ears, and

¹ There is some difference in the ancient enumerations of the cities. Pliny names Scythopolis, Hippos, Gadara, Pella, Philadelphia, Gerasa, Dion, Conatha, Damascus, and Raphana (H. N. v. 18). He gives the extent of the territory at about one hundred miles long, by sixty broad.

² *μογιᾶλος* is used in the LXX. for dumb, but etymologically implies merely "difficulty of speech."

³ This is the first occasion on which He adopted this course. The only other recorded instance is in the kindred miracle that followed shortly after. Cf. viii. 23.

touching his tongue with the spittle,¹ because He could employ no words to strengthen his confidence. He prepared the man, so to speak, by a foretaste of what was to follow through His intervention; as an old writer has expressed it, "by forcing His fingers into the ears, and moistening the tongue, He testified that it was He by Whose hand the closed passages could be pierced, and the tongue that clave to the roof of the mouth recover its motive power."

Then followed an upward look to heaven, as well to convince him that it was more than human aid that he was about to receive, as to express His union with the Father. A moment more and He heaved a sigh and uttered a groan of sympathy for the sorrow that is in the world, and the word of authority—a single word—Ephphatha,² broke from His lips. He spake, and it was done.

If we could be quite sure that the man was a Gentile—a native of those Greek-speaking cities—the word would help to the settlement of an open question, whether our Lord usually spoke in the ordinary vernacular of the Jews, or adopted the Greek of the more educated classes. If both languages had been in familiar use by Him, the circumstances of the case would at once have suggested the adoption of Greek rather than Aramaic. It is of little consequence that He could not in either case have been heard by the man himself; the narrative clearly indicates that his friends had drawn near, and were within sound of the Speaker's voice.

But, in whatever language, it was a word of power. "The channels of hearing"³ were unstopped, and, if we accept the reading of the oldest manuscript,⁴ "immediately the string of his tongue was loosed." It is a significant change in the order of words, affording additional proof that it was not a case of congenital deafness. He needed only the restoration of the

¹ There was a belief at the time in the medicinal virtue of saliva. "It is from this action of our Saviour that the Roman Catholics formed their custom of touching with spittle the ears and nostrils of the person to be baptized." Cf. Morison, S. Mark, *in loc.*

² This is the Aramaic form of the Ethpaël imperative. It has been thought that the stress laid on the few Aramaic expressions, such as this, "Talitha cumi," and "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani," is an inference that He usually spoke Greek, but it is hardly a legitimate one.

³ ἀκοαί, instead of ὠτὰ, implies the sense rather than the actual organs of hearing.

⁴ The Sinaitic MS.

sense of hearing, to recover the faculty of articulate speech, and "he spake plain."

The oft-repeated charge was once more given—once more to be disregarded—"that they should tell no man." It seems strange that after what He had done, the mere knowledge of His wishes did not insure obedience; but the instinctive and irrepressible desire, following upon the reception of any great blessing, to speak of it to others was too strong for them. It is quite possible that they misunderstood His motives, and set it down to a modest shrinking from the praise and popularity which in their eyes was so well earned; and this misconception gave them an additional impulse to do what their natural inclinations prompted, so "the more He charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it."

S. Matthew testifies that it was not the only miracle of the kind, but that multitudes of "lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others," were healed, so that the amazement of the people knew no bounds; and he concludes with an expression which goes far to confirm the belief that those upon whom the miraculous cures were wrought belonged to the heathen population. "They glorified," he says, "the God of Israel." It would have been wholly inappropriate if applied to Jews.

S. Mark records the exclamations in which their admiration expressed itself, and they carry us back to the utterances of the prophet ages before, and are an unconscious witness to their fulfilment, and to Christ's claim to the Messiahship: "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped: then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing."

The Feeding of the Four Thousand

S. MARK VIII. 1-9

1. In those days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called His disciples unto *Him*, and saith unto them, 2. I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with Me three days, and have nothing to eat : 3. and if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way : for divers of them came from far. 4. And His disciples answered Him, From whence can a man satisfy these *men* with bread here in the wilderness? 5. And He asked them, How many loaves have

ye? And they said, Seven. 6. And He commanded the people to sit down on the ground : and He took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to His disciples to set before *them* ; and they did set *them* before the people. 7. And they had a few small fishes : and He blessed, and commanded to set them also before *them*. 8. So they did eat, and were filled : and they took up of the broken *meat* that was left seven baskets. 9. And they that had eaten were about four thousand : and He sent them away.

S. AUGUSTINE expressed satisfaction that the providential record of this miracle by Evangelists, who recorded the kindred miraculous feeding of the five thousand, had preserved it from the attacks of hostile critics. But what kept them off in an earlier age has been found to interpose no barrier in these later times, when the credibility of the Gospel narrative is so fiercely assailed.

This account has been spoken of as “a loose tradition,” or “an ill-remembered reproduction” of the former, but the only ground for the supposition is the surprise of the Apostles, “Whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness?” If, it is said, they had seen a similar multitude supernaturally fed, they would have expected a repetition of

the same creative act for a corresponding necessity. It is a plausible objection, but admits, as will be seen, of satisfactory explanation. Leaving this for the moment, we turn to a consideration of numerous facts which are wholly inconsistent with the suggested theory. Almost all the details of the two narratives are different. The mode of distribution through the agency of the Apostles¹ is the only point in which they exactly agree. Some uncertainty, it is true, hangs round the scene of this miracle, but the most that can be said is, that it was at least in the same neighbourhood as the first. There is no question that that was in a desert adjoining Bethsaida-Julias, on the north-eastern side of the lake. It may be inferred that this was wrought on the same coast, for it is said that Jesus had reached the further shore through the midst of Decapolis, and that after the multitudes had been dismissed, He took ship and crossed over to Magdala² on the Galilean side. There is, however, no evidence to enable us to fix the exact locality.

In all other points and characteristic features there is distinct divergence.

In the earlier miracle the people were Jews, chiefly from the Jewish towns of Capernaum, Tiberias, and Bethsaida, on the western side of the lake, pilgrims preparing to go up to the approaching Passover. In the later they were Gentiles. All the history which immediately precedes is occupied with our Lord's ministry among the semi-heathen population of Decapolis; and an expression of S. Matthew, in describing the effect produced upon them by His miracles, where he says that "they glorified the God of Israel," admits of no other explanation than that they were not Israelites themselves. This, added to their wonder at the sight of His miracles, which would have been unaccountable in the Galileans after a ministry of two years amongst them, leaves little doubt of their non-Jewish nationality.

The time also differed. When the five thousand were fed

¹ Cf. p. 138.

² Magdala. The best MSS. give Magadan as the name of the place. Possibly it bore both names. The modern El-Mejdil is clearly the representative of the former. The Dalmanutha of S. Mark is not mentioned elsewhere; but it must have been either a town or district on the south-western side of the lake.

the Passover was nigh at hand, as S. John says, and it is borne out by the undesigned coincidence that the remaining Evangelists all call attention to the abundance of grass,¹ which springs up in Palestine at this time of the year.

Whereas, in describing what took place at the second miracle, there is no such allusion. It is merely said that they sat "on the ground." From the sequence of events several weeks must have elapsed, and, as usually happens in that country, the verdure had dried up and withered, and called for no observation.

There is, moreover, a marked difference preserved throughout all the narratives in the kind of baskets used for gathering up the fragments in the two cases.

In the first, each one of the Twelve unstrapped the wicker wallet which, in accordance with custom, he would take with him on his travels, and filled it with the broken pieces; and this accounts for the number of the baskets corresponding with that of the Apostles. In the second a much larger basket² was used, for on one occasion it served to hold S. Paul when he was let down through a window in the walls of Damascus. It is a noteworthy coincidence that the more capacious basket is found in connection with a prolonged sojourn in a heathen district, when a larger store of "clean" provisions would be required than could be carried in the ordinary *cophinus* or wallet.³

Again, the multitudes in the first miracle were more, and the loaves and fishes fewer in number than in the second; and herein may be found a further and decisive argument against the supposed invention of the latter account. A forger would have reversed the statistics, and made the numbers greater and the provisions smaller in the second case; for nothing could be gained by inventing such a narrative if it did not

¹ "The latter rain" fell during the greater part of the month of March, and was followed by a great outburst of spring verdure, which would be most noticeable about the time of the Passover.

² *σπυρίς*, Lat. *sporta*, was a large provision-basket, much used for meals, hence the phrase *δείπνον ἀπὸ σπυρίδος*. It was perhaps more of the nature of a hamper.

³ The miracle of the five thousand took place during a short absence only from Galilean territory. The "cophinus" would contain ample provision for this, but His travels through the towns of Decapolis had occupied a considerable time.

tend, so to speak, to magnify the wonder-working power of our Lord.

Lastly, there is a striking difference in the results. When the Jewish crowds witnessed that great creative act they were filled with enthusiasm and excitement. The expected Messiah had shown Himself in their midst, and they broke out with the cry, "This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world;" and then they were so carried away with the conviction, that nothing would satisfy them till they had tried "to take Him by force and make Him a king."

The heathen multitude, on the other hand, less excitable, because they had no such expectations, dispersed without any demonstration, when their wants were satisfied and they realised that Jesus was about to depart.

A full consideration, therefore, of the circumstances of the second miracle furnishes ample proof of the authenticity of the record—none whatever that it is of spurious origin.

The question of the Apostles, which has supplied the assailants of its credibility with their chief argument, admits of a double solution, either of which will satisfy the requirements of the case. If the multitudes were Gentiles, the Apostles might well have hesitated before concluding that their Master would work such a miracle for them, as He had done for the Jews. There was no lesson harder for them to learn, than that all¹ alike were eligible for His bounty.

Or again, we may find the explanation in their slowness to believe. It is only another illustration of the proverbial forgetfulness of past mercies. Had not God cleft the rock in the wilderness to satisfy the thirst of the wanderers? Had He not given them quails from heaven? And was it not true that when the fountain dried up, and the pangs of hunger returned, they forgot the past, and in their ingratitude murmured against Him?

It has been well said, "It is only the man of full-formed faith, of a faith which as yet the Apostles did not possess, who argues from the past to the future, and truly derives confidence from God's former dealings of faithfulness and love."

The spiritual teaching to be derived from the history differs

¹ Cf. the case of the Syrophenician woman. "Send her away," they cried. S. Matt. xv. 23.

in no way from that which the kindred record supplied, but we may gather an additional fragment of instruction from the words, "So they did eat, and were filled." It is a significant expression in the original, "They were fed to satisfaction." That such a result followed, was the consequence of their being fed by Him alone Who "satisfies the empty soul, and filleth the hungry soul with gladness." There is need to be reminded of this in an age when men are pointed to other sources of satisfaction—to education, to culture, and to refinement, and bidden to find their highest enjoyment in these and suchlike pursuits. If they bear no reference to Him towards Whom all that is noblest and best in Nature and Art is designed to lead us, they will turn out to be but "broken cisterns that hold no water."

There is only one answer to the inquiry, "From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread?" and it is contained in the words, "He that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst."

The Demand for a Sign

S. MARK VIII. 10-21

10. And straightway He entered into a ship with His disciples, and came into the parts of Dalmanutha.

11. And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with Him, seeking of Him a sign from heaven, tempting Him. 12. And He sighed deeply in His spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a sign? verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation.

13. And He left them, and entering into the ship again departed to the other side.

14. Now *the disciples* had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf.

15. And He charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and *of* the leaven of

Herod. 16. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, *It is* because we have no bread. 17. And when Jesus knew *it*, He saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye

have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened? 18. Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember?

19. When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto Him, Twelve.

20. And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven. 21. And He said unto them, How *is it that* ye do not understand?

OUR Lord had been travelling, if not actually in heathen territory, at least where He had been brought into contact with heathens. The eagerness with which He had been welcomed in the coasts of Tyre and Sidon and of Decapolis, was in striking contrast to the reception that awaited Him on His return to Galilee. No sooner had He landed on the western shore of the lake, in Dalmanutha, which was probably the southern part not far from Magdala, than the Pharisees "came forth" to meet Him. Whether it merely means that they came from the neighbouring cities, such as Tiberias, where

they dwelt, or whether it points to a place of waiting, where, it may be, they had watched the progress of His well-known boat approaching, they lost no time in entering into a controversy as soon as He arrived.

S. Mark, "for whom the beginnings of things had a charm," says that they "began to question with Him, seeking of Him a sign from heaven, tempting Him." The last words leave it quite clear what their object was: they wished to put Him to the test, to incite Him to make an attempt in which they hoped He might fail.

They intimated that they were not satisfied with what they had seen. The miracles of healing might be nothing more than the result of superior medical skill; the dispossession of evil spirits, they had told Him before, they believed to have been effected by Beelzebub. If He wished to establish His Messianic claims above all doubt and suspicion, it behoved Him to give them a sign direct from heaven, where neither man nor devil could possibly be the moving cause. They would be quite satisfied if He would rain manna from above, or stay the sun in its course, or awake the thunder in a clear sky; any of these would put the question on quite another footing, and they would be the first to believe in Him. But He knew their hypocrisy, and that beneath all their pretended anxiety to be convinced, there lay a dogged determination to shut their eyes to every sign, and close their hearts against Him.

He might have reminded them in so many words that they had the very evidence they asked for; but it may be, having in His mind the preternatural star which had presided over His Birth, and the scene when the very heavens had opened to attest His mission at His Baptism, He told them in irony that all their boasted skill in watching the everchanging sky, and pretending to be able to forecast sunshine and rain,¹ fair weather and foul, only aggravated their guilt in refusing to discern the signs of the times. No sign, He solemnly assured them, such as they asked should be given, not at least till it would be too late, for when "the sun should be darkened"

¹ The Jews paid great attention to the forecast of weather. They watched the smoke, *e.g.*, at the Feast of Tabernacles. If it turned northward, they expected much rain the following year; if southward, little. Cf. Talm. Bab. Yoma, 21 b.

in open day, they would have rejected Him for ever. No wonder that "He sighed deeply in His spirit."¹ It may have been in His human shrinking from that fearful hour, when He should hang upon the cross amid supernatural darkness; it must have been as well, out of the depths of an untold pity for hearts that He longed in vain to save. And so, knowing the utter uselessness of complying with their request, as far as they were concerned, and having no temptation to make an ostentatious display of miraculous power for His Own aggrandisement, He quitted their shores, no more to return to do any work amongst them.²

From Dalmanutha He embarked, and the boat was turned in the direction of the north-east coast. During the voyage nothing was spoken; at least there is no record of any conversation, and the thought of what had occurred may well have filled the heart of Jesus with sadness and gloom. But as soon as they landed, the disciples were troubled by the discovery that, in the hurry and confusion of their sudden departure, they had forgotten to supply themselves with necessary provisions; and while they were discussing what was best to be done, Jesus broke His silence by bidding them "beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the leaven of Herod." His mind was full of His late interview, in which they had exhibited such a complete misapprehension of His mission, and dreading the possibility of its spreading to His disciples, He uttered the warning with a more than usual caution.³ Their reply proved that though they did not misapprehend Him, as the Pharisees had done, they were yet slow of understanding, and with little perception of spiritual truths. The mention of leaven suggested at once the conclusion that He had overheard their discussion, and they associated it with their need of bread.⁴ "He tells us," they seem to say, "that if we buy bread from a Pharisee

¹ Cf. p. 36, n. 2.

² He did not return to carry on His work. In ch. ix. 30 we find Him there, but only as it were in private; "He would not that any one should know" of His visit.

³ The combination of "Take heed, beware," is very expressive.

⁴ There were frequent disputes about the use of leaven, whether *e.g.* heathen leaven, or Cuthæan, were permissible; and Lightfoot says, "The disciples thought that Christ cautioned them concerning the leaven of the Pharisees; but withal they suspected some silent reproof for not bringing bread along with them."

or a Sadducee, the bread would defile us, as it would if we bought it from a Samaritan." And at once He exposed their mistake by recalling the miracles which He had worked in their presence for the supply of food by supernatural power. How could they be perplexed by such a difficulty as this? Then, after eliciting from them the fact that they had forgotten nothing of the external circumstances—the numbers of the people and of the loaves, and the basketsful of fragments that remained over, and even the kind of baskets¹ which had been used on each occasion—He asked in sorrow of heart, how it was that they had failed so completely to understand the meaning of His acts? If they had learned nothing more from them, they ought at least to have gathered this, that in His Presence there need be no anxious care about bread. S. Mark says no more, but S. Matthew tells us that their understandings were opened, and that they discovered that by "the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees," He spoke of their doctrine.

¹ Cf. pp. 137 n. 2, 167 n. 3.

XXXVII

The Blind Man at Bethsaida

S. MARK VIII. 22-26

22. And He cometh to Bethsaida ; and they bring a blind man unto Him, and besought Him to touch him. 23. And He took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town ; and when He had spit on his eyes, and put *His* hands upon him, He asked him if he saw ought. 24. And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking. 25. After that He put *His* hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up : and he was restored, and saw every man clearly. 26. And He sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell *it* to any in the town.

THIS miracle corresponds closely in many particulars to that of the restoration of "one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech," and in parts the description is clothed in the very same language. Both are introduced to the reader in the same way : the scene is laid in the same district :¹ the subjects of the cures are of the same nationality :² and the mode of healing adopted is almost peculiar to these alone.³ One distinguishing feature explains the motive that must have weighed with the Evangelist in preserving the record of both in such close proximity to each other. The point of difference is that in the earlier, as in all other miraculous restorations, the cure was immediate, in the later it was gradual and progressive.

¹ All that is certain is that both were in the eastern territory. It has been commonly assumed that the former miracle was wrought close to the Sea of Galilee ; but it is an assumption, and has been here treated as such. Cf. pp. 161, 162.

² Cf. p. 163.

³ The only other recorded instance is that of the blind man restored by having his eyes anointed and washing in the Pool of Siloam—S. John ix. 1-8.

Of the deaf man it is said, "They bring unto Him one that was deaf, . . . and they beseech Him to put His hands upon him;" of the blind, "They bring a blind man unto Him, and besought¹ Him to touch him." There is no change of tense in the original, but the parallel is exact.

In both cases it is the friends who intercede. It illustrates a truth that is full of comfort, that Christ was not infrequently influenced as much by the faith of others, as by that of the sick and afflicted themselves. Indeed, it has been said that "the Gospel history almost throughout is a system of relief through the medium of others."

The scene is the eastern side of the lake at Bethsaida-Julias.² There is no intimation that Jesus had crossed over to the western shore, but every reason to believe that He had closed His ministry there at the conclusion of His encounter with the delegates from the Sanhedrim. His final direction to the restored man not to go into the town, but to return home, when added to other considerations, points to some city of Decapolis as his native place, and consequently to his heathen origin. He was led apart like the other, not, as has been suggested, that when restored his eyes might rest upon the beauties of Nature in the country, rather than on the works of man in the town, but that, in privacy and undisturbed intercourse with the Great Physician, his wants might be made fully known, and his faith quickened into a more receptive state.

It is one of the most touching pictures in the Bible,—Christ, "the Light of the world," hand in hand with a man that was blind. Well indeed may it have created surprise that no Christian artist should ever have seized upon the subject, so suggestive alike of exquisite treatment and spiritual teaching! We often wonder how deeply the spectators were touched by what they saw, and whether that "vision of beauty" ever faded from their memory, or remained as a joy for ever.

¹ It is the present tense in both, used, as so often by S. Mark, to make the description more vivid.

² Some have supposed that it was the Galilean Bethsaida, probably from a mistaken idea that Dalmanutha, from which our Lord had just crossed over, was on the eastern shore. On this supposition it has been concluded that He was forbidden to enter the town because of the sins of the inhabitants. "Woe unto thee, Bethsaida!"

No sooner had Jesus and the blind man withdrawn from the crowd than He anointed his eyes, and laid His hands upon them, and then inquired of him if sight had returned. The man had not been born blind, so was able to recognise objects; but his vision was as yet imperfect, and in the mist and through the film, the forms of men were magnified and distorted. They looked like trees, but they could not be, for they moved about.¹ Again his eyes were touched by the Divine hand, and immediately he saw clearly,² for every object stood out in plain and well-defined outline.

In the light of the previous miracle, it calls for no further consideration, save in that one particular which separates it from every other. The mode of cure is a parable in act; its teaching is in exact harmony with that enforced by the gradual growth of the corn, "first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear." It is worthy of notice that both have been preserved in this Gospel alone. In opening the eyes of the spiritually blind God is not fettered; "there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God that worketh all in all." The life of the soul, then, may be developed at once by a sudden crisis, for "with God all things are possible;" but the normal process is according to the analogy of the natural kingdom, or as the restoration of sight to the man at Bethsaida, by gradual and progressive efforts.

If it should be thought that because in the majority of His miracles the effect was immediate, and the cure complete, therefore the same law of proportion should be expected in the restoration of spiritual sicknesses, it must not be forgotten that the direct teaching by parable has infinitely greater weight than the indirect through act and deed. It is true that there is much to be learned from our Lord's mode of working, as, for instance, in this very miracle the means employed pre-figured the human ministries of the Church, and we accept it at once, because it is corroborated by what He taught openly

¹ According to the best MSS. his exact exclamation was, "I discern men, for as trees I see them walking." Probably it expresses a broken utterance, and might be understood thus: "I notice some men—that is, indistinct like trees—but they cannot be trees, for they are walking about."

² *καὶ διέβλεψεν* is now accepted instead of *καὶ ἐποίησεν αὐτὸν ἀναβλέψαι*, and the meaning is, he saw "the men," which were before indistinct, quite clearly, and "all things" plainly that he looked at afterwards.

and without reserve. He nowhere¹ said, either in sermon or parable, that the sanctification of the heart was a sudden thing, and therefore we refuse to interpret His instantaneous cures as furnishing an illustration for the manner in which this moral and spiritual change is to be sought or obtained.

On the other hand, we have no hesitation in accepting the mode of healing in this particular miracle as a model for the development of the inner life of the soul, because it is in perfect harmony with what He taught in the parables that dealt directly with the subject. It will be an encouragement, in an age of religious revival and excitement, to quiet Christians who are striving by the Holy Spirit and the appointed means of grace to increase in wisdom and stature, not by abnormal growth, but with steady advance from grace to grace till the end is reached.

¹ The nearest approach is where the Father brings forth the best robe, and a ring and shoes, for the Prodigal Son on his return (S. Luke xv. 22); but as these were ornaments not of the slave, but of the free, it more probably symbolises "his rehabilitation in Baptismal privileges," which do not carry with them complete sanctification. Cf. Collect for Christmas Day.

S. Peter's great Confession

S. MARK VIII. 27-33

27. And Jesus went out, and His disciples, into the towns of Cæsarea Philippi : and by the way He asked His disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am? 28. And they answered, John the Baptist : but some *say*, Elias ; and others, One of the prophets. 29. And He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto Him, Thou art the Christ. 30. And He charged them that they should tell no man of Him. 31. And He began to teach them, that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and *of* the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. 32. And He spake *that* saying openly. And Peter took Him, and began to rebuke Him. 33. But when He had turned about and looked on His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind Me, Satan : for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.

FROM Bethsaida-Julias our Lord, at one of the greatest crises in His ministry, retired from His favourite haunts by the Sea of Galilee, and went northwards through the "coasts" and villages of Cæsarea Philippi. Whether He had visited this place before is not certain, but the interest belonging to the physical features of the country, as well as to its historic associations, was such that He would naturally desire to see it. The situation of the town is unique, and combines elements of grandeur and beauty in the mighty overhanging Hermon and the rich luxuriant plain watered with the springs of the Jordan. If its identification with Laish or Dan be abandoned, its ancient history is wholly Pagan. Under the name of Panium it obtained notoriety for its sanctuary of the god Pan. In Herodian times it was enlarged by the Tetrarch

Philip,¹ and its name changed to commemorate both himself and the Emperor. But its old heathen appellation was soon revived. Paneas became the seat of a Christian bishopric, and the ruins of the place are found in the site of the modern Banias.

It was a turning-point in our Lord's history, and He felt the necessity of undisturbed intercourse with His disciples. He was anxious for an opportunity of talking over with them the progress of events, and ascertaining from their lips the general impression which His works and teaching had made upon the people at large. Two years at least had passed—two-thirds of the appointed time—amply sufficient to enable them to form a decided judgment upon His claims. At first He inquired about the opinions current among those who had in no sense joined His society. What do "the men" say? What do "the multitudes" say about Me? The disciples had often, no doubt, heard the subject freely canvassed, and they gathered up the floating ideas of His Person into three main convictions.

One party, influenced perhaps by the superstitious Antipas and the Herodians, imagined that He was the murdered Baptist risen from the dead; another recognised in His wonder-working power the long-expected Elijah; while a third, impressed by His anxious and sorrowful look, which had deepened so much during the last weeks, as well as from a hope that the lost treasures of the Temple were about to be restored, thought that He was Jeremiah, or "one of the prophets." Such was the popular judgment. It was perhaps neither more nor less than He looked for. It showed that He had got hold of the people; that they were satisfied that He was some "Great One," and that there was considerable diversity in the character of His work, for He had revived the memory of not one merely, but of several of their greatest; but no real progress had been made towards a general acceptance of His true Mission as the Messiah. The Jews had become so wholly engrossed in the idea that their future

¹ Herod the Great built a temple in honour of Augustus; Philip called it Cæsarea, and added his own name, both for his own honour and to distinguish it from Cæsarea, Turris Stratonis, the well-known sea-port of Palestine. Cf. Joseph. Antiq. xv. 10. 3.

Deliverer must restore their political independence, that they had no eye for One Who seemed careless of their national hopes and prejudices, and bent only upon the restoration of spiritual privileges. Even the Baptist had need to be reminded that there were other characteristics of the Messiah than the power of deliverance from the hands of an enemy.

Fully convinced of the fact that, as far as the public at large was concerned, there was no recognition of His Messiahship, He turned to His near companions, with satisfaction, no doubt, but not without anxiety, for "many of His disciples had gone away backwards," and the shock may have been felt by the Twelve; and He asked with an earnest emphasis, "But *you*¹—who do you say that I am?" It was a critical moment. There was some excuse for the people. They had only seen Him at intervals; they had witnessed one miracle here, and another there; but the inner circle of disciples had been with Him from the beginning. Had that prolonged training been only labour lost? There was no hesitation in the answer. With characteristic impetuosity, as the mouth-piece of all, confident that none would contradict him, S. Peter broke out into the great confession, "Thou art the Christ."² It was a noble witness to the truth, and it called forth a blessing upon him who bore it, though with a praiseworthy modesty it is suppressed in the Gospel which was so peculiarly his own.

If we notice here the memorable words by which our Lord followed up His blessing—words round which so much ecclesiastical controversy has gathered, it is not to reopen the unhappy strife, but simply to exemplify once more the custom which He so largely adopted, and which gave to His teaching a freshness unknown to the Rabbis, viz., of seizing His illustrations from the sights by which He was surrounded.

It was, it is almost certain, as He looked upon the gigantic rock crowned with the castle of Subeibeh,³ unassailable from

¹ The position of the pronoun is very emphatic in the Greek: *ὑμεῖς δὲ τίνα με λέγετε εἶναι*;

² The Anointed. He received this title as embracing in His Own Person the three offices of Prophet, Priest, and King, to which men were admitted by unction. Cf. 1 Kings xix. 16; Exod. xl. 15; 1 Sam. x. 1.

³ It rises to the height of 1500 feet, and is guarded on all sides by inaccessible gorges. It has been described as "the largest of its kind in the

its strength and position, that He saw no inapt figure of the solid foundation upon which His spiritual kingdom was to rest, and turning to the "Rock-man," whom He Himself had named, He said, "Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

That splendid eulogy was soon to be followed by a severe rebuke ; for the hopes which his confession had kindled, that at least the Apostles realised His Mission, were immediately dashed by the clearest evidence that their chief had wholly misunderstood that the Messiah must be "despised and rejected of men, a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."

The anticipation of the Cross, which was always present in His mind, had found expression from time to time, but only in enigmatical predictions. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up." "He that taketh not his cross and followeth after Me is not worthy of Me." But they were passed by without notice. Jewish ideas at that time hardly admitted of a suffering Messiah ; indeed so wholly had the prophecies of His humiliation dropped out of sight, that it has been said that no Rabbi of our Lord's generation had ventured to teach that He must suffer.¹

The time had arrived when the truth must be revealed "openly," without reserve or disguise, and so "He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things," and be publicly rejected by the great council of the nation, and put to death. He did not fail to add that which should have brought them consolation, that though death must be endured He could not be holden of it, but would rise again after three days. But this part of the announcement was wholly lost upon the bewildered Apostle. His ambitious views, and his intense personal love for his Master, made him rebel against

East, and equal in extent even to the pride of European castles at Heidelberg."—Stanley, *Sin. and Palest.* 397. The origin of the name Subeibeh, given to it in the Crusades, is doubtful.

¹ Geikie, in a note on *Die Leiden des Messias*, by August Wünsche, has maintained that the extracts from Rabbinic writings, supposed to contradict this theory, are all indecisive. Cf. chap. xvi. *n.* g.

the bare possibility of suffering and death, and taking Him aside he remonstrated with Him, and protested that it must not be. "God forbid! it must not, it shall not happen unto Thee." It was a temptation to Jesus to turn aside from His predestined path. It was an echo of the voice which He had heard in the wilderness at the outset of His Mission, bidding Him exercise His power for His Own deliverance, and it called for a rebuke not a whit less severe.

"Stand not in the way before Me; thou art a stone of stumbling and rock of offence, 'Get thee behind Me, Satan,'¹ for your mind is set on earthly things, you cannot grasp the counsel of the Most High. It is through suffering that I must reign; My Crown can only be won when I have borne the Cross." It sounds harsh to our ears that our Lord should repeat to a misguided but well-intentioned disciple language which He had used to the subtle and malignant Tempter. But he had been blessed in the highest terms for His confession, though our Lord allowed that it could only have been made under the inspiration of God; even so is he most severely rebuked now, though the temptation was recognised by Christ as the suggestion of the Evil One. It was an outspoken reproof calculated to awake him to a consciousness of what he was doing, and by whose influence he was being led; and if we could read the story of his after-life, it would doubtless testify to his gratitude for the revelation which it made to him of the true nature of the Messiah's Kingdom.

¹ It is quite true that "Satan" is used in the Old Testament merely for an "adversary," as, *e.g.*, "Let Satan stand at his right hand," but it is almost impossible to soften the language, which is precisely identical with that used to the Tempter, because S. Peter's suggestion was in spirit an exact echo of his.

Bearing the Cross

S. MARK VIII. 34-38

34. And when He had called the people unto *Him* with His disciples also, He said unto them, Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 35. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose His life for My sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. 36. For what shall it profit a man,

if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? 37. or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? 38. Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.

THE connection of Christ's glory with His abasement, which was brought out so strikingly when the confession of His Godhead was followed by the prediction of His Passion, has been very beautifully illustrated in the picture of a great Christian artist.¹ The scene is the Carpenter's shop at Nazareth; the toil of the day is over, the door is open towards the west, when the wearied Son of Man stretches out His arms for a momentary relief. The sun is just setting, and throws His shadow upon the wall—the shadow of a cross. At that instant His Blessed Mother, who is kneeling at a casket containing the gifts of the Wise Men, takes in her hand the crown which they had presented to Him as King, and which she fondly hoped to see Him wear; she lifts up her eyes, and they light upon the dark shadow cast upon the wall.

Now there can hardly be a doubt that in her heart the future of her Son was thus overclouded. It had been so

¹ Holman Hunt.

clearly predicted to her when she took the Babe into the Temple, that the anticipation of the predestined sword must have pierced her soul again and again. But probably the disciples were troubled by no such forebodings till the unreserved declaration of what awaited Him in Jerusalem gave a rude shock to their hopes. The severe rebuke to S. Peter for doubting the certainty of His prediction must have satisfied them that there was no escape. They had then to face the fact that their cherished aspirations, their hopes that all obstacles would soon be overcome, and that they would sit on thrones in His kingdom, were dashed by this new revelation. There was, it is true, an element of consolation in His utterance, but the bare thought that their Master must suffer and die took such complete hold of them that they gave it no consideration.

And then He had a still further disclosure to make. Not only must He suffer Himself, but a similar fate was in store for them; and not for them only, but for all who wished to become members of His Church. Self-sacrifice in place of self-pleasing was to be the watchword of His disciples, and, as though to impress upon them that it was a law of universal application, He called the people within the sound of His voice before He proclaimed it. "Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."

It was not altogether a new doctrine. Philosophers had taught men that righteousness is naturally persecuted in a sinful world. Plato had come very near to our Lord when he said that "the righteous man will be scourged, tortured, and bound, will have his eyes burned out, and at last, after suffering every kind of ill, will be impaled¹ or crucified."

But Jesus advanced a step further when He declared that a man must take up the cross himself. There could be no mistake as to what it implied in its literal meaning. Crucifixion was not a Jewish punishment, but since the Romans had been in possession of Palestine² the people had become familiarised with it, and must have seen many a condemned

¹ *ἀνασχινδυλεύω*, not elsewhere used, is regarded by lexicographers as equivalent to *ἀνασκολοπίζειν* and *ἀνασταυροῦν*. Cf. Herod. ix. 78.

² Syria was made a Roman province after the conquest of Pompey, B.C. 64, and Judæa was united with it A.D. 6.

criminal bearing the instrument of his death to the place of execution. In His prevision of the early years of Christianity, our Lord knew that such a death awaited some of those to whom He was speaking. But the broad principle involved in His declaration is that sacrifice is inseparable from the Christian calling.

There is, we know, a wonderful spell in the cry, "Come after me," "Follow me." All history, profane as well as sacred, has shown us this. The great Roman general realised its force when he called to his soldiers, who shrank from the hardships of the Libyan desert, and promised to go before them and to command them nothing which he would not first do himself. Even so Christ designed to help His followers by the assurance that He should first suffer that which they would be called to bear.

In the first of the three arguments brought forward to enforce the principle, some obscurity is caused from the want of one English equivalent for the Greek word translated "life." On His lips it had a double significance—viz., that which we now live in the flesh, and that which we live in union with the life-giving Spirit,—a lower and earthly life, and a higher and heavenly. If, He argues, any man thinks only of the former, and makes everything bend to that, with all its temporal enjoyments and self-pleasing, he will forfeit all right to the latter. If, however, he learns to sit loosely to that, and is prepared to resign it whenever a strong sense of duty prompts the resignation, he carries in his hand a passport into a higher and nobler existence. "Whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it."

That is the first inducement, and the second is not unlike it. It rests upon the vast disproportion between the two lives.

He pictures to His hearers a man placed upon trial for his conduct, and condemned to forfeit¹ all claim to eternal life, because he has thought only of the present, and taken his fill of its pleasures; and then He weighs in the balance one against the other, what he has gained and what he has lost,

¹ ζῆμιω is a forensic term, to mulct, to amerce, to fine. The Authorised Version, by rendering it here "lose," and in the parallel passage in S. Luke, "be cast away," has missed all that the word implies.

and the former flies up at once and kicks the beam, for it is "altogether lighter than vanity itself." The same truth is enforced under another figure. There are many things which may be recovered by ransom or won back by exchange, but eternal life, once forfeited, is past recovery; at least no corruptible things, such as silver and gold, neither "thousands of rams nor ten thousands of rivers of oil," can effect a redemption or offer the least compensation, for "it costs more to redeem their souls, so that he must let that alone for ever."

His last argument is an appeal to the recompence and requital at the Final Judgment. S. Mark records His reference to the latter alone. It is a call to those who heard Him to break with the spirit of that sinful and adulterous generation, branded with unfaithfulness to their rightful Lord, and not to be ashamed to confess Him openly; for if every man is to be rewarded according to his works, then to be ashamed of Christ before men entailed the fearful requital of being put to shame by Him in the presence of the angels.

It was all perhaps a gloomy outlook, but it was broken by gleams of bright anticipation if only they would have seen them. True, He was destined to die; suffering, humiliation, and shame awaited Him; but this was not the end, for He spoke also of the resurrection and of His return "in the glory of His Father."

And yet once more He promised that some of them would live to see in this life a foretaste of the glory that should follow. Yet forty years and Jerusalem would be destroyed. All the present opposition would be crushed, and men should see in the judgment about to fall upon the Jews a type and assurance of that which would be consummated at the end of the world; and not only so, but it would be followed by the establishment of His visible and spiritual kingdom upon earth. The Church was destined to rise out of the ashes of the Temple. Their eyes were to be delighted with a yet nearer vision and manifestation of Divine glory, so soon to be vouchsafed to the inner circle of the Twelve, and it could hardly have been absent from His thoughts while He spake; but the intimation that all would not survive to witness the coming of His kingdom with power is the clearest proof that He looked beyond the Transfiguration.

The Scene of the Transfiguration

S. MARK IX. 1-4

1. And He said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.

2. And after six days Jesus taketh with *Him* Peter, and James, and John,

and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and He was transfigured before them. 3. And His raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white *them*. 4. And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses; and they were talking with Jesus.

THE Transfiguration places us on "the summit-level" of our Lord's earthly life. Its teaching is of such momentous import for the right understanding of His true Nature, that, no less than the Resurrection, its credibility has been assailed by hostile critics. It has, however, been providentially ordered that, in addition to the triple record of the Evangelists in its proper place of history, it should have been further corroborated by independent allusions in the writings of those who were eye-witnesses of the scene. The three selected by our Lord to be with Him were "the chosen out of the chosen," to whom was vouchsafed the honour of the closest companionship in the greatest crises of His life. They were destined, He knew, to be present at the Agony, and in His tender forethought He prepared them for the trial, strengthening their faith by a vision of preternatural glory first, that its remembrance might bear them up when they should see "His face marred more than the sons of men." It made such an indelible impression upon their memories that two of them

spoke of it long afterwards—one, in the sublime prologue of his Gospel: "We beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father;" the other, in the Epistle that he wrote just preceding his death, "He received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount." What the mountain was we would gladly know for certain; but its name has not been preserved in the Sacred History, and careful consideration shows that tradition is wholly untrustworthy, notwithstanding its age and unanimity. Even as early as the fourth century it was assumed to be Mount Tabor. Pious Christians made pilgrimages thither; the devout Helena built a church upon its summit; monasteries were dedicated to Moses and Elias; and all through the Crusades it was fought for with the same devotion as Calvary or Olivet.

There is nothing but the beauty and isolation of the mountain that could have given birth to such a belief. It rises "in isolated grandeur" out of the lovely Plain of Esdraelon, "the most graceful of all the mountains of Palestine," and the mind, in the absence of other considerations, would be disposed to associate such a scene as this with so beautiful a height.

But there are circumstances which lead us to look elsewhere for the actual locality; for although the position of Tabor might appear to offer a suitable place for retirement "apart by themselves," its summit at this time was really occupied by a considerable fortress.¹

And further, only a few days before, Jesus, in company with His disciples, was "in the towns of Cæsarea Philippi." No mention whatever is made of a journey into Galilee, which must have been chronicled by S. Mark if it had ever been taken, for he is always careful to note every change of place in our Lord's wanderings.

Nowhere else than in the more distant north, on the ridge

¹ Josephus, *Life*, 37; *Wars*, ii. 20, 6. Hos. v. 1, LXX. *Ἰραβύριον*. Polybius mentions the capture of Atabyrium, the name of the fortified city on the summit, by Antiochus the Great. Josephus also speaks of its being strengthened in his time. It was eventually destroyed in 1263 A.D. by a brother of the famous Saladin. Cf. Morison, *S. Matt.* xvii. 1.

of Hermon, could He find a place so well fitted to be the scene of such a grand event;¹ and if the reading which describes His raiment as "shining exceeding white *as snow*" be genuine,² we might well conclude that the simile was suggested by the surrounding circumstances. On Mount Tabor no snow would have been found so late in the year; but on some parts of the range of Libanus it was almost perpetual.

We conclude, then, that this was the mountain which our Lord ascended to pray, and it may be inferred that it was at eventide; for we know that He was wont to set apart the night for prayer, and it is said that the Apostles were weighed down with sleep. It is, moreover, incidentally noticed that the descent took place in the morning. And how much more glorious the scene would be if the splendour, which, no doubt, would have outshone even the noonday sun, burst upon the spectators out of surrounding darkness! "And as He prayed" He was transfigured before them. The veil of flesh which had concealed the glory of the Godhead was, as it were, withdrawn, and the full blaze of ineffable light broke forth from within, while even His garments caught the wondrous rays, and shimmered with the dazzling brightness of sun-smitten snow. As the disciples wondered, "there appeared unto them Moses with Elias." Reasons are not far to find why these two should be brought back together from the other world to take part in the scene. They were the representatives of the quick and dead. Moses had died; Elijah had ascended alive into heaven. They were types of the two great divisions which shall appear before the same Lord, when He comes in the glory of which that was a glimpse and foretaste, the dead and the living both standing before the judgment-seat of Christ.³

Again, it may have been because both had passed from

¹ "It is impossible to look up to its towering peaks, and not to be struck with its appropriateness to the scene. High up on its southern slopes there must be many a point where the disciples could be taken 'apart by themselves.' Even the transient comparison of the celestial splendour with the snow, where alone it could be seen in Palestine, should not perhaps be wholly overlooked."—Stanley, *Sin. and Palest.* 399-400. Cf. Porter, *Handbook*, 423.

² ὡς χιὼν is omitted in the Sinaitic, Vatican, and Ephraem MSS.

³ It has been observed that the Transfiguration is linked on by the three Evangelists to a striking conversation, part of which is, as it were, carried on

earth in mystery: the first buried by the hand of God in some unfrequented valley apart from his countrymen, "cast away by the breath of the Lord," and "no man knoweth of his sepulchre until this day;" the other not dying, but vanishing instantaneously in the midst of life, "lost in the flame of steeds and the car that swept him from the earth," and his resting-place also no man knew. Both had disappeared, no more to be seen by mortal eye till, in far-distant times, the same Hand that had carried them away should bring them back on the Mount of Transfiguration. It suggests the mighty truth, that however we are taken, whether lost to men in the depth of the sea, or consumed by the devouring fire, it matters nothing to the Great Keeper of His people, Who will bring all back again at the last day.

But the chief motive, no doubt, was to unite together the representatives of the three great dispensations of Divine Government,—the Law, the Prophets, and the Gospel. The force of this meeting, and of the disappearance of the two former, while the Third was left, will appear when we consider S. Peter's proposal to "build three tabernacles."

Now the Transfiguration gives us a pledge and earnest of our personal identity in the risen state. The disciples knew that it was Jesus, although His Body was glorified, and "when He shall appear we shall be like Him." And doubtless one reason for the preservation of our identity is for mutual recognition—that we may know hereafter those whom we have known in the flesh. It puts before us a powerful incentive to make friends on earth with whom we may spend not only the life here, but the eternal life in heaven.

Again, the scene opens up a further field of thought, when we recall the fact that S. Peter was able to recognise Moses and Elijah, though he had never seen them in the flesh. Shall we then recognise the great saints in the world to come, whom we have learnt by the study of their lives and works to know as though we had seen them face to face? There was clearly something—it may have been some lingerings of the splendour which illumined his face after communing with God, in act in the Transfiguration, *e.g.* Christ had asked, "Whom do men say that I am?" The Apostles answered, "Some say, Elias; and others, one of the prophets." Moses and Elias are presented to them on the mount, and a voice from heaven declares Christ to be God's "Beloved Son."

which painters have tried to express by the familiar "horns of light,"—we cannot tell what it was, but it satisfied the Apostle that the form was none other than that of Moses. Will there be nothing by which, in like manner, we shall recognise the Baptist, or the beloved disciple, or the Blessed Virgin, or Mary of Magdala? Will the student of Theology, who has read the mind of S. Augustine, or pictured the fiery Athanase, with his feeble frame but lion heart, confronting the world for the great Mystery of the Blessed Trinity, find no means of identifying them when they meet hereafter? Will there be nothing to mark painters like Fra Angelico or Raphael, or poets such as Dante, or Tasso, or Milton? It must surely be that marks of recognition, in all who have witnessed for God, and moulded the minds of men by their words or works, will not be wanting. Let us then look forward with prayerful hope to being of the number of those to whom our Lord made such a promise when He said, "Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven."

The Lessons of the Transfiguration

S. MARK IX. 5-13

5. And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here : and let us make three tabernacles ; one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. 6. For he wist not what to say ; for they were sore afraid. 7. And there was a cloud that overshadowed them : and a Voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is My beloved Son : hear Him. 8. And suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves.

9. And as they came down from the mountain, He charged them that they should tell no man what things

they had seen, till the Son of Man were risen from the dead. 10. And they kept *that* saying with themselves, questioning *one* with *another* what the rising from the dead should mean.

11. And they asked Him, saying, Why say the scribes that Elias must first come? 12. And He answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things ; and how it is written of the Son of Man, that He must suffer many things, and be set at nought. 13. But I say unto you, That Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him.

S. PETER was bewildered by the wonderful vision, and seeing that Moses and Elias were on the point of departing, he was seized with a sudden desire to detain them. He proposed to our Lord that they should "make three tabernacles;"¹ but, not knowing what to say, and yet eager, as ever, to give expression to his feelings of awe and delight, "he spake unadvisedly with his lips." Nothing could have been more ill-judged than the proposal he made. It showed an entire misconception of the object of that wonderful epiphany. He was ready to place Moses and Elijah on a level with Christ ;

¹ In the corresponding passage in S. Matthew there is an ancient reading *ποιήσω*, which brings out very strikingly the characteristic of impulse which belongs to S. Peter. He ignores his brother Apostles, and will do what has to be done himself.

to re-establish, that is, the old Dispensations, instead of realising that they were only preparatory, and in their very nature transient. Two things which immediately occurred must have convinced him of his error. A voice came out of the overshadowing cloud, testifying that Jesus was the Beloved Son of God, and the Legislator and Prophet vanished out of sight.

The words, "This is My beloved Son,"¹ had been spoken before, when "the heavens were opened," and the Spirit of God descended upon Him at His Baptism, but now they were followed by an express command: "Hear ye Him." Moses and Elijah, each in their time, had claimed the attention of mankind, but now there was Another to Whom it behoved all to take heed, because He was "the Son," the express Image of the Father, by Whom, as never before, His eternal counsels should be revealed.

"And suddenly looking round about, they saw no one any more, save Jesus only with themselves." It was a symbolical intimation that when He that is perfect and eternal had come, all that was imperfect and preparatory should vanish away. And that this latter was the character both of the Law and the Prophets is obvious. Moses had Christ constantly in view, and the entire scheme of Levitical worship which he was inspired to draw up—the Tabernacle, the Passover, the scape-goat, the burnt-offerings, and sin-offerings and trespass-offerings—all were types, all looked forward to, and all were fulfilled in Him, for "Christ is the end of the Law." And it was the same with the Prophets. In various ways, either clearly or obscurely, they predicted an age of surpassing glory which should culminate at the Messiah's coming; and to Him gave "all the prophets witness that through His Name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins."

But yet further, not only was all prophecy fulfilled in Christ, but the prophetic character also received its perfect development in Him. The Jewish prophet spoke not only of God, but for God; yea, he was as it were the very mouthpiece² of God, delivering His message, and uttering His curse, and

¹ The voice from heaven says, "This is My beloved Son," and it was intended to place Him in contrast, says S. Jerome, with Moses and Elias, who were God's servants.

² This is the primary idea of the prophetic office. Aaron was the prophet, the mouthpiece of Moses.

striking home the arrow of conviction even into the hearts of kings, careless of heathen threatenings, of bonds and imprisonments and death, because he felt that it was not he that spoke, but God Who spoke through his lips.

Then look on to the perfect embodiment, the complete antitype in the Person of Jesus Christ, Who was the very Word itself, "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Consider all this, and the folly of the Apostle's proposal becomes patent at once. Moses and Elias and Christ were three no longer, no more separated, but made one by God. Legislator and prophet both were summoned to the scene of the Transfiguration, and both symbolically consigned their finished work into Christ's hands, knowing that henceforth there was but one Dispensation, one Tabernacle, one Gospel,—Christ the power of God, Christ the wisdom of God, Christ the way, the truth, and the life, by Whom alone we have access to the Father, God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself.

Such was the lesson that this mysterious scene was designed to convey, but our Lord saw that it was beyond the spiritual ken even of the inner circle of His disciples; and so, as they descended from the mountain, He laid the injunction upon them that they should not attempt to describe what they had seen, till He should have risen from the dead. Not till that, of which this was in a measure typical, had come to pass would they be able to grasp its significance. And they obeyed His command, and, like the Blessed Virgin, pondered these things in their hearts, wondering how the Resurrection of which He spake could take place while they were yet alive. That for which they, with all pious Jews, were looking was the General Resurrection¹ at the last day, when all that are in their graves shall awake, "some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

There was yet another question which perplexed them as

¹ This doctrine, revealed at the first only to the few, and held even by David not always with uniform consistency, was little doubted after the clearer language of Isaiah and Ezekiel and Daniel. For various shades of belief in this, cf. Geikie's *Life and Words*, ii. 254.

they came down. What bearing had this appearance of Elijah upon the arguments of the Scribes? Their great objection to the claims of Jesus to the Messiahship was that He had not fulfilled the prophet's conditions. No reappearance of Elijah¹ had preceded His coming. When they saw that vision on the mount they thought that he was come as the forerunner of His kingdom, and that His Messianic claims would be recognised. But the prophet's disappearance had dashed all their hopes. It was in answer to their bewildered inquiry, that Christ opened their eyes to understand the spirit of prophecy, and showed that Elijah had indeed come, as Malachi foretold, yet not in that transient and glorious vision which they had just witnessed, but in the person of the Baptist, who by his preaching and moral purification had prepared the way of the Lord and made His paths straight. He it was of whom Elijah was a type, and that not only in his work of preparation, but in the sufferings he endured; for all the persecutions of Ahab and Jezebel, and even worse, had been repeated by the wicked Herod and his shameless queen, who had "done unto him whatsoever they listed."

Now what is the most practical lesson to be drawn from this sublime scene? We must turn to the account which another Evangelist gives, and we shall find that it was during prayer that our Lord was transfigured: "As He prayed the fashion of His countenance was altered."

In one respect the Transfiguration of our Blessed Lord can have no earthly counterpart, because it was with His Own glory that He was transfigured; whereas that with which the souls of the saints are illumined is not from within, but it is thrown upon their lives from Him Who is the Source of all true light and glory.

But here there is a point in which the two cases may be brought into comparison. It was through the act of prayer, when His human soul was holding close communion with God, that "His face did shine as the sun."

It has been repeated in a lesser degree with the saints.

¹ Many of the Fathers think this was only partially fulfilled in the person of John the Baptist, and expect that Elijah will really appear to "restore" the Jews before the Second Advent. Cf. Chrysos., Hom. lvii. on S. Matt.; Aug., Tract. iv. on S. John.

Even so we remember it was after Moses had been communing with God in the mount, speaking with Him face to face, that his very skin seemed to catch the rays of Divine glory, and the people were dazzled by the reflection. Again it was of one who, with everything to divert his thoughts from higher things, "looked steadfastly up to heaven," and became so absorbed in the vision that was vouchsafed in answer to his prayer, that we are told that "all that sat in the council looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel."

And yet nearer home it has been vouchsafed to not a few to watch by the side of a dying saint, and in moments of intense prayer to see the inward joy of a growing nearness to God kindle into an expression of almost unearthly brightness.

When, then, we read this wonderful story, be it ours to realise that it has a message to us, not only of what we may be in the resurrection, but that it gives us an assurance that we may catch even in this life some ray of the Transfiguration glory.

The Demoniac Boy

S. MARK IX. 14-29

14. And when He came to *His* disciples, He saw a great multitude about them, and *the* scribes questioning with them. 15. And straightway all the people, when they beheld Him, were greatly amazed, and running to *Him* saluted Him. 16. And He asked the scribes, What question ye with them? 17. And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto Thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit: 18. and wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to Thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not. 19. He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto Me. 20. And they brought him unto Him: and when he saw Him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming. 21. And He asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him?

And he said, Of a child. 22. And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if Thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us. 23. Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things *are* possible to him that believeth. 24. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief. 25. When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, *Thou* dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. 26. And *the spirit* cried, and rent him sore, and came out of *him*: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead. 27. But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose. 28. And when He was come into *the* house, His disciples asked Him privately, Why could not we cast him out? 29. And He said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.

It recalls almost to the letter a scene in Patriarchal history.

The leader of Israel was absent, communing with God on the Mount. He to whom the people had turned in every danger and difficulty for guidance was withdrawn from their

sight, and God was writing on tables of stone those laws which were to be the great bulwark of right, and a restraint upon sin in time to come. It was a crisis with the powers of evil of momentous import. And see what they did. They seized the opportunity to revive in the heart of the people the old spirit of Egyptian idolatry, and sent them to Aaron with the petition on their lips, "Make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him."

What a contrast it is! On the mountain height their head is holding converse with Almighty God in perfect peace. On the plain at its feet, the people have relapsed into all the tumult and confusion of heathen worship.

Now turn to the counterpart in the scene before us. Christ had gone up with His chosen disciples into the Mount of Transfiguration, and in His absence the spirits of evil were so active that for a time the rest of the Twelve were shaken in their faith, and the enemies of Christ had gained a manifest victory. A poor father, hearing with joy of what the disciples had been doing elsewhere, had brought his boy to be cured by them. It is perhaps the most distressing case we meet with in the Gospels. Some of us know what a terrible anxiety it is to have dependent on our care and love, a person who is subject to epilepsy. Now add to this all the aggravations which the different Evangelists bring out,—to epilepsy lunacy—to lunacy a suicidal mania—and crown all this with that dread mystery of evil which is called "demoniacal possession," and then, if we are parents, think of this having happened to our only son. We can imagine in some degree the eagerness with which that anxious father betook himself to the disciples, and the misery of disappointment which awaited him!

Christ had given the disciples power to heal diseases, and to cast out devils, and they had done it again and again; and the man knew that they had. Once they waged war so successfully upon the kingdom of Satan that they hurried back into the presence of their Lord, and boasted with pride that "even the devils are subject unto us through Thy Name."

In the midst of all the confusion that followed upon their present attempt and its failure, Christ descended from the mountain, and "straightway all the people, when they beheld

Him, were greatly amazed, and running to Him saluted Him."

We know how often it happens in common life. People are quarrelling and wrangling together, some saying one thing, some another, when suddenly a man who is an authority upon the subject in dispute passes by, and is instantly appealed to. Just in the same way, we are told, the people ran to meet Jesus, Who at once inquired into the details of the case. He discerned without difficulty, that there had been a general failure of faith, without which no cure could be expected. It was not merely the unbelieving Scribes and the helpless father, but the disciples themselves, who were included in the stern denunciation: "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto Me."

And here we would notice especially two points. First, that the child was seized by an attack of unwonted violence directly he was brought into Christ's presence. "For straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming." It is difficult to say with any confidence how far the evil spirits were able to aggravate the diseases¹ of the bodies they possessed, but we can hardly read of what happened here, without feeling that there was a special manifestation of their power at this critical moment. And is it not in exact accord with all we know of Satanic influence? Is it not invariably excited most vigorously, just when it is in most danger of being counteracted?

Look at it in its commonest mode of operation, in the suggestion of unhallowed thoughts. Which of us is not all too painfully aware that these are often forced upon the mind, especially in our most sacred engagements? Is it not even the sad experience of some as they kneel in prayer, or draw near to the Blessed Sacrament?

Look at it again in its uncommon manifestation, in what we meet here under the name of "demoniacal possession."² It

¹ The power of Satan as the author of physical as well as moral evil is indicated frequently in Holy Scripture: *e.g.* Job ii. 7—Satan smote Job with boils; S. Luke xiii. 16—Satan bound the daughter of Abraham with a spirit of infirmity; 1 Cor. v. 5—The incestuous sinner is delivered over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh.

² Cf. p. 100, n. 3.

has often been asked by those who doubt the reality of this mysterious phenomenon, why, if it ever existed, is it altogether unknown now? We believe the answer is, that it was a special exhibition of Satan's power, called forth at a special time, and under special conditions,—his last desperate struggle, in short, with Him Who came into the world at that crisis for the express purpose of trampling him under foot.

And this is the reason why, when the father brought his child to be healed, he was seized in the presence of his Healer with that paroxysm of incontrollable frenzy. It was the expiring rage, if we may so say, of the demon that possessed him.

And the second point to notice, is the conduct of our Lord in the presence of this grievous calamity. How unlike what ours would have been! We should have been impatient to vindicate our authority and recover the ground that had been lost. We should have thought every moment of importance, and commanded the unclean spirit to come out at once; but Christ never acts in haste. He is always calm and composed, whatever others may be. Much as He must have sympathised with the poor suffering boy before Him, there are others to be thought of,—the bystanders, whose excitement must be calmed by delay, and the unbelieving Scribes, the half-despairing father, and His Own weak and faltering disciples.

The first requisite for the exercise of a miracle was faith; and see how He seeks for some latent germ which He may awake in the parent's breast. There is no sudden inspiration, but He draws him on step by step, from his doubting appeal, "If Thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us." "If Thou canst," says our Lord, giving him back his words. No; not if I can do anything, but if thou canst believe;¹ there is no other bar to the exercise of Omnipotent love but unbelief. And hear the father's delighted cry. How natural it all is! He has been told that it depends on something in himself, and in the passion of his joy, without staying to reflect, he cries, Lord, "I do believe;" and then, as the recollection of all his doubts crosses his mind, he adds the

¹ If *πιστεῖσαι* be omitted, as in the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS., then, though the sense remains the same, it must be differently interpreted, viz., Jesus said to him, "Do you use the expression 'If Thou canst'?"—why, all things are possible to the man who believes."

prayer, "Help Thou mine unbelief;" and his end was gained: his boy was cured. But turn to the disciples. What shame they must have felt! What it was that had shaken their faith, we can only conjecture. Perhaps they had suffered from their Master's absence, or opposition was too strong for them without the impetuous Peter and the "Sons of Thunder;" or it may be the depressing effect of Christ's prediction of His death had been too great a strain on their confidence. But whatever the reason, they had experienced a defeat; the cause of Christ had been imperilled, and but for His timely intervention, the triumph of Satan and his allies would have been complete. And then He told them, in answer to their inquiry as to the reason of their failure—and they were remembered words for years,—“This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.” There is nothing too hard for the man who asks in faith;¹ even the very mountains, as the Rabbis say, may be uprooted, and cast into the midst of the sea, if the word be spoken by him who never doubts the Omnipotence of God.²

But let our closing thoughts revert to the contrast which we dwelt upon at the beginning; and let us learn from the Christian painter the simplest but the most instructive lesson that this page of sacred history or any other can ever teach. In Raphael's great picture of the Transfiguration we may see at a glance all that we wish to impress upon the mind. The upper part—the mountain top—is a scene of transcendent peace; in the lower, divided from it by a simple belt of clouds, the demoniac boy is the representative of the sin and confusion that is turning the world upside down. And what is it that makes the contrast? Surely it is nothing else than that which makes it in our own heart and life, whether it be sunshine or gloom—unfailing happiness or constant discontent—it is the presence, or the absence, of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

¹ *καὶ νηστεία* are omitted in Sin. and Vat. MSS.

² S. Matt. xvii. 20; Bava Bathra, 3 b.

The Jealousy of the Apostles

S. MARK IX. 30-41

30. And they departed thence, and passed through Galilee; and He would not that any man should know *it*. 31. For He taught His disciples, and said unto them, The Son of Man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill Him; and after that He is killed, He shall rise the third day. 32. But they understood not *that* saying, and were afraid to ask Him.

33. And He came to Capernaum: and being in the house He asked them, What *was it that* ye disputed among yourselves by the way? 34. But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who *should be* the greatest. 35. And He sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, *the same* shall be last of all, and servant of all. 36.

And He took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when He had taken him in His arms, He said unto them, 37. Whosoever shall receive one of such children in My Name, receiveth Me: and whosoever shall receive Me, receiveth not Me, but Him that sent Me.

38. And John answered Him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy Name, and he followeth not us: and we forbad him, because he followeth not us. 39. But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in My Name, that can lightly speak evil of Me. 40. For he that is not against us is on our part. 41. For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in My Name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.

AFTER leaving the scene of the Transfiguration, our Lord turned southwards, and went to and fro¹ through the northern parts of Galilee. He desired to avoid publicity, so would probably leave the main roads, and turn aside to bypaths through woods and fields. "He would not that any should know it, for He taught His disciples;" rather it should be,

¹ The A.V. in S. Matt. xvii. 22 renders ἀναστρεφομένων "while they abode."—The expression rather implies constant moving about.

“He was teaching” them. He had a lesson to impress upon their minds which required both time and freedom from distraction; He had to prepare them for His Death, and the failure of their earthly hopes and aspirations. From time to time He had given hints of what was coming. On the eve of the Transfiguration He had spoken with such clearness that the chief of their number had been offended at His words, and now He emphasises it by repetition. But their minds were so set upon earthly things, and their hopes so circumscribed, that the announcement of coming shame was entirely eclipsed by the predictions of glory, and they could think only of the latter, and that, according to their own carnal conceptions. So it was that, forgetting what He had said about suffering and death, or allowing it only as a passing cloud to overshadow their spirits for a moment, they thought that the kingdom was near at hand. It was associated in their minds with places of honour and distinction, and they began to speculate on their respective claims. The promise to S. Peter had no doubt excited the jealousy of some of them; and it may be the selection of “the Inner Circle” to be eye-witnesses of His glory had given rise to heart-burnings, possibly had tempted the chosen three to exalt themselves over their brethren, for as yet even these were far from perfect. At all events feelings of jealous rivalry had been aroused among them, and they had disputed with each other on their journeys who should be greatest in the Messianic kingdom.

When they came to Capernaum, Jesus, Who had been conscious of their unworthy wranglings, determined to rebuke them; and He did it not by word only, but by a symbolical act of striking significance. He began by telling them that self-seeking brings no real gain, and to desire distinction is certain to end in disappointment. Humility, not ambition, is the road to honour. Suiting the action to the word, He took a little child, and folding him tenderly in His arms, pointed to him as the model for them to copy, if they wished to attain to true greatness. Who the child was, it would be interesting to know. If S. Peter had children, which we are not told in Scripture, it would in all probability have been one of his, for the scene took place in his house, where our Lord usually abode in Capernaum. Two traditions have come down,

though neither of them from an early age, or resting upon any substantial authority,—one, that it was Martial,¹ a disciple of S. Peter, and in later times a missionary Bishop in Gaul; the other, that it was S. Ignatius,² the Martyr.

Now it must not be supposed that Jesus intended by that act to withhold from the Apostles any supremacy in His kingdom, or to imply that there would be no subordination in order of dignity and honour. He cannot contradict Himself, and we know that He promised shortly after that they should “sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” The very figure of a kingdom, too, involved different degrees of power and authority. But what He desired was to strike a blow at their idea that there was any real resemblance between a kingdom of this world and that which He was about to set up. The principles of honour and advancement which held in the two were essentially unlike. In the one, the self-seeking and ambitious gain the pre-eminence; in the other, renunciation is the only certain pathway to distinction. In the former, honour and power are sought by rivals, who are always “struggling upwards to overtop and rule each other;” in the latter, men “stoop down in lowliness and humility in order to draw each other up.”

Our Lord then having taught a lesson from the child as a pattern of humility, now sets it forth as a type of the lowly in station; and shows how any “one of such children” deserves kindness and consideration in His Name, and for His sake.

The reference to the duty of receiving others in Christ’s Name pricked the conscience of one of the disciples, and recalled a scene which had lately occurred. They had fallen in with a man, who was casting out evil spirits in the Name of Jesus, having no connection with the Apostolic company, and refusing to join it; and S. John makes known to the Master what course they had pursued. “We forbid him,

¹ This rests upon the authority of Jansenius, but is contradicted by the statement of Gregory of Tours that he was sent to Gaul in the time of Decius. The *Acta* of S. Martial, now held to be spurious, gave him a place among the seventy disciples. Cf. Cornel. à Lap. in Matt. xvii.

² This is found in Nicephorus and Symeon Metaphrastes. It originated probably in the name of Ignatius, *Θέοφορος*, being interpreted in a passive sense, “borne or carried by God,” rather than, as Ignatius explains it, “bearing God in his heart.”

because he followeth not us." But Jesus rebuked him for what they had done ; and His words have been often claimed as affording direct justification for those who elect to work in separation from the Church. An examination of the circumstances of the case will show that the claim cannot be maintained.

It is not told us in so many words, but there is sufficient evidence that the man was working, not by his own independent will, but under Divine authority. Possibly he was one of John's disciples, or perhaps one of the Seventy ; but in any case he carried with him his credentials, for it is not said merely that he was attempting to cast out evil spirits, but that he was doing it. He was no pretender, such as we meet with at a later period in the sons of Sceva, who used the Name for the same purpose, but were unsupported by the Divine co-operation. He was, by the Apostles' own confession, exercising miraculous powers ; and the sole reason which prompted them to stay his hand was an unworthy spirit of envy and jealousy that anything should be done in their Master's cause outside their own company. Jesus discerned their motive at once, and not only reproved them, but went on to extend the principle to other acts besides that of casting out evil spirits. The least beneficent deed done simply for Christ's sake—even "a cup of water" given in His Name—should not lose its reward.

Now separatists from the Church often claim Divine sanction on the ground that their credentials may be seen in the success of their work, just as his was ; but there is a broad distinction between the two cases. It may be quite true that God's work is sometimes done by them, as it was by him ; but what He approved under certain conditions, He has only permitted under others. For instance, the man of whom we are speaking contravened no law whatever, and so Christ could sanction both the act and the way in which it was done. Dissenters from the discipline of the Church, on the other hand, transgress the law of unity, which He laid down ; and though the work they do may be done for His sake, and accepted on that account, their mode of effecting it is contrary to His original purpose, and cannot as such merit His approval.

It was no breach of Church order or discipline at that time not to follow the Apostles, because the Church was not yet founded, and nothing had taken place to lead the Apostles to suppose that separation from them was a violation of Christ's law. The commission, "As My Father hath sent Me, so send I you," had not yet been received. Had this event happened after the Ascension or Pentecost, when the Church organisation on Apostolic authority was definitely inaugurated, the prohibition, "Forbid him not," would have worn an altogether different aspect. It is an excellent illustration of the dangerous mistake of isolating a passage from its context, and treating a special direction as though it established a general principle for all time, and under every condition. We must interpret Scripture by Scripture. The true mind of Christ on the subject of Dissent may be gathered with unmistakable clearness, both from His Own prayer for unity, and from the utterances of those who were empowered to be its exponents after the Church was founded. If it be suggested, as it so often is, that it was spiritual unity for which He prayed, S. Paul steps in and shows that he not only longed for men to be of one heart, holding the unity of the Faith, but that he deprecated most sorely separation from the visible Body as the clearest proof of a carnal mind. "Whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?" And S. Jude indorses the verdict when he says of those "who separate themselves," that they are "sensual,"¹ and have not the Spirit of God.

¹ *Ψυχικοί*, translated "natural" and "sensual" in the New Testament, is used in a different sense from that in which it was used in classical Greek. Scripture taught the tripartite division of man's nature, 1 Thess. v. 23. The "natural" man is henceforward one in whom the *ψυχή*, not the *πνεῦμα*, is the ruling principle. Cf. Trench, *Synon. of the New Testament*.

XLIV

Avoiding Offences

S. MARK IX. 42-50

42. And whosoever shall offend one of *these* little ones that believe in Me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea. 43. And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: 44. where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 45. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire

that never shall be quenched: 46. where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 47. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: 48. where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 49. For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt. 50. Salt *is* good: but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.

JESUS had spoken of the blessedness of receiving children and childlike men in His Name, and He now places over-against it the fearful punishment in store for those who put a stumbling-block in their path to impede their spiritual progress. Better, infinitely better, to die a violent death, even the most dreaded kind of death, than risk the salvation of the soul by committing such an offence as this. "It is better for him that a millstone¹ were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea." It was a mode of punishment reserved only for great criminals, and its terrors were aggravated by the thought that the body could never be recovered for burial, the deprivation of which was the sorest trial.

¹ "Millstone." In the original it is "a stone turned by an ass"—not, *i.e.* the ordinary one which women used in grinding, but a huge heavy stone which would sink one "like lead in the mighty waters."

Then from offences against others, our Lord proceeds to warn men not to place stumbling-stones in their own way. He selects the chief instruments of sin,—the hand, the foot, the eye,—and counsels their immediate destruction, if need be, rather than allow them to work the threatened mischief.

It is the hand which men lift up to do violence, as Cain did to his brother, or to appropriate what does not belong to them, like Achan.

It is the feet which hurry us into forbidden paths, as they hurried Gehazi, or the old man of God whom the lion slew for his transgression.

It is the eye which excites the lust to desire in the spirit of Eve something which God has seen fit to withhold. To hurt, to trespass, and to covet: what a common triple cord of sin it is! There is no important distinction to be drawn between them, and any one of them by itself would have sufficed, but the threefold repetition, as so often in Scripture, appears to lend force to the warning. It is a recognised principle in surgery to cut off a limb to save a life; for the wellbeing of the soul it must be applied, and with an unsparing hand, to the instruments of moral temptation. The alternative is presented to us under the ghastly imagery drawn from the familiar terrors of Gehenna. In the Valley of Hinnom, on the south of Jerusalem, besides the fires of Molech which blazed in the great furnace, through which the idolaters made their children to pass, there was a constant burning of the heaps of refuse, and the worm of corruption fed perpetually upon the carcasses of animals, and the offal of the city, which was thrown there. It formed not unnaturally a lively emblem of the terrible torments of the lost; and Milton, who moulded so largely the Christian idea of the pangs of hell, stereotyped the old Jewish conception when he wrote—

“And black Gehenna called, the type of hell.”

But there are many passages in Holy Scripture which show that in the place of retribution there will be no need of any external apparatus of torture such as this, but that the sinner will be his own tormentor.

It is more in accordance with Divine revelation to conclude that there will be a close correspondence between the

sin and its punishment. "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." "They have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind." "They shall eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices." "They that plough iniquity and sow wickedness reap the same." Lusts and passions unchecked in this life may last on to the next, and be there the instruments of an unending and intensified torment, because the gratification of them will be forever denied. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still."

The same truth is indirectly taught by our Lord when He tells us to cut off the special instrument of sin while we have opportunity, rather than carry it with us in all its unimpaired strength and vigour into the place of punishment. "It is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell."

Jesus then points to the necessity of sacrifice, intimating that the surrender of hand or foot or eye is part of that discipline which all must pass through. The salt and the fire of which He speaks are, in relation to this, allied forces: the one preserving from corruption, the other purifying and cleansing. It was for this reason that God enjoined that all oblations should be seasoned with salt,¹ and that "the fire should try every man's work of what sort it is."

"Salt," He says, "is good;" good in the natural world, and good in the spiritual; but as in the one, if it lose its virtue, it is fit only "to be trodden under foot;"² so in the other, the inward grace, of which it is the symbol, if it cease to purify the life, becomes hopelessly useless. Christianity which is no longer Christian, a "name to live" while one is "dead," what profit is it?

Remember, Christ seems to say, that you were made, at your call to the Apostleship, "the salt of the earth." You were destined to be in the New Society that element which should purify the world and preserve it from corruption. Be jealous of the office unto which you were called; let nothing

¹ The clause, "and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt," is omitted by the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS., and finds no place in the Revised Version.

² This expression was suggested from the custom of strewing salt which had become worthless on the steps and pavement of the Temple in wet weather to prevent the feet from slipping.

rob you of those gifts and properties, which should be a savour of salvation to all around you. Do away at once with those unworthy disputes about honours and distinctions, purge out all selfish aims and ambition, "have salt in yourselves, and have peace¹ one with another."

¹ It is quite possible that the connection was suggested by His recollection of the old "covenant of salt," the symbol of peace and concord.

The Law of Divorce

MARK X. 1-12

1. And He rose from thence, and cometh into the coasts of Judæa by the farther side of Jordan: and the people resort unto Him again; and, as He was wont, He taught them again. 2. And the Pharisees came to *Him*, and asked Him, Is it lawful for a man to put away *his* wife? tempting Him. 3. And He answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? 4. And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put *her* away. 5. And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. 6. But from the beginning of the creation

God made them male and female. 7. For this cause shall a man; leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; 8. and they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. 9. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. 10. And in the house His disciples asked Him again of the same *matter*. 11. And He saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. 12. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.

MANY things happened between our Lord's departure from Capernaum and the interview with the Pharisees with which this chapter opens. S. Luke and S. John fill up the gap which S. Mark has left. At this time He was in Peræa, and His enemies seized the opportunity as a favourable one to embarrass Him on the subject of divorce. The Governor of that country had put away the daughter of Aretas,¹ and was living with the wife of his half-brother Philip. They expected, no doubt, that Jesus would take the same view of the case as the Baptist had done, and thus kindle the Tetrarch's animosity against Him. If, however, they did not succeed in this aim,

¹ Cf. p. 130.

they were certain to embroil Him with one of the rival parties into which Jewish society was then divided. S. Mark says that they put the question on the legality of divorce, "tempting Him." His answer must alienate one party or the other. The controversy between them had arisen out of the interpretation of a passage in Deuteronomy: "When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness¹ in her; then let him write her a bill of divorcement."

The stricter and more orthodox school of Shammai laid stress upon the words which spoke of "uncleanness," and only permitted the dissolution of marriage on the ground of deliberate immorality. The laxer Hillelites² dwelt rather upon the preceding words, and pronounced divorce legitimate "for every cause" in which the wife proved distasteful to her husband. "If she go not as thou wouldst have her, cut her off from thy flesh, and give her a bill of divorce, and let her go."

In the general laxity of morals and prevailing profligacy of the times, this latter view had been accepted by the people at large; and it is clear that the Pharisees who tempted our Lord with this question belonged to the party of Hillel.

Jesus referred them to the instructions of their Lawgiver, and when they sheltered themselves under the letter of his directions, He took the opportunity of pointing out the true character of the Mosaic legislation on the subject. It was only intended to be permissive and provisional, enacted to meet the special exigency of the times. Moses found himself confronted by evils which he saw that it was impossible to extirpate, for dissolution of marriage had become common

¹ Lit. "the nakedness or shame of the thing." It can hardly be understood of adultery, because that was a capital offence. Cf. xxii. 20-22. From verse 3 personal hatred was sufficient cause for divorce, but clearly the spirit of the legislation made it unjustifiable save for some "immodest conduct or grave physical defect."

² Josephus, who was by no means a man of lax morals, spoke of divorcing his wives as though it were a thing of most ordinary occurrence, needing no apology. Cf. *Life*, c. 75, 76. Such grounds as these were regarded as sufficient: "if she spin in public;" "if she go with her head uncovered;" "if she become dumb or sottish;" "if she cook her husband's food amiss;" "if any man sees a woman handsomer than his own wife." But R. Akiba, from whom the last is taken, explains that by "handsomer" he meant "of nobler deeds."

among the Jews, who had freely adopted the manners and customs of surrounding nations. Owing to the hardness of men's hearts the indissolubility of the marriage-tie could not be maintained; but Moses determined to check divorce at the arbitrary will and caprice of the husband. That such was the spirit and tendency of his enactment is clear from the fact that separation could only be effected by a duly prepared and attested document.¹ It would at least interpose delay and difficulty, and possibly lead in many cases to reconsideration. But our Lord showed that such legislation could not be final. It was a departure from the law originally laid down, and though it may have been, and doubtless was, expedient for the time, it could lay no claim to be permanently observed. It was not the only instance in which retrogressive legislation had been permitted: the principle was illustrated in the allowance of slavery or polygamy, both of which, equally with divorce, were only temporary relaxations of God's original purpose. The ideal relation of the sexes was established at the beginning, when "God made them male and female," one wife for one husband, to be united so closely that they should become not only one in heart and soul, but actually "one flesh." It was an union designed for perpetuity, and this our Lord clearly taught when He said, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

The Pharisees went away discomfited, but when He was alone with His disciples in the house, the question was reopened, and, in answer to their inquiries, He enforced still more strongly the indivisible unity of them that are married. It is so close, He says, that if outward separation should take place, for either husband or wife to contract a second marriage, in the lifetime of the other, would be a distinct breach of the seventh commandment. Those who wish to separate and live apart must remain as they are after separation.

S. Mark has preserved a saying of our Lord's which is of no little importance: "And if a woman shall put away her husband." It struck another blow at the Jewish legislation of the time by establishing an equality of rights between husbands and wives, which the Jews denied by allowing the initiative to be taken by the husband alone.

¹ For specimen cf. Lightfoot's *Exercit.* on S. Matthew v. 31.

Now it will be interesting to see what effect the reversion by our Lord to first principles on the true teaching of marriage has had upon Christianity. The Primitive Church speaks here with a less certain sound than is usual upon matters of momentous interest.¹ The early Fathers were certainly divided among themselves; most of them, however, agreed in allowing separation on the ground of "fornication," though they differed not a little in their interpretation of the original word, rendered in the Authorised Version "adultery" in the two passages where our Lord had used it, in dealing with the subject of divorce. Again, they were divided upon the lawfulness of contracting a second marriage during the lifetime of the divorced husband or wife; but there can be no doubt that the prevailing opinion during the first three centuries was decidedly against it. The only known synodical decisions that bear directly upon the question were given at the Synod of Elvira in 305 and the Council of Arles in 314. The former deals with a wife who leaves an adulterous husband, the latter with a husband who puts away an adulterous wife. In both cases the right of re-marriage is denied, but there is this noteworthy difference: if the woman disregarded the prohibition, she was to be permanently excommunicated, but in case the man did so, no provision was made for imposing ecclesiastical penance upon him. The Council was satisfied to decree that the men should be warned in the strongest manner, "so long as their adulterous wives are alive, not to take others." The civil laws at the time were more considerate to the man, and the Church accepted the principle; but in the middle of the fifth century the position of man and wife was put on the same footing in this respect.

The Roman Church² upholds the inherent perpetuity of the marriage-tie, and forbids either party, under any circumstances, to marry again during the other's lifetime.

The Anglican Church has never officially recognised any other than judicial separation,³ and, by consequence, altogether

¹ Clem. Alex. Strom. ii. 23; Tertull. contr. Marc. iv. 34; S. Hierom. Ep. 30; Epitaph. Fabiolæ; S. Chrys. Hom. xvii. in Matt.; Origen, Hom. in Matth. *in loc.*; Epiphani. Hæc. 59.

² Conc. Trid. Sess. xxiv. Can. 7.

³ Can. 107, A.D. 1604. It was decided in the Star-Chamber, Elizabeth 44, in the case of Foljambe, that adultery was a ground for judicial separation, *i.e. a mensa et toro*, but not *a vinculo*.

disallows re-marriage. The Commissioners¹ appointed by Henry VIII. aimed at relaxing the law, and were willing to constitute adultery, cruelty, and desertion sufficient grounds for an absolute dissolution, but these provisions never received legislative authority. From this time forward, however, the secular and ecclesiastical branches of the Legislature have been in conflict:² the former striving to relax, the latter to restrict, the rules of separation. The passing of the Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Act in this generation (A.D. 1867) extinguished the ancient jurisdiction of the Church, and allowed a marriage to be nullified through direct appeal to a Secular Court.

The following considerations may help to the formation of a sound judgment upon this and kindred questions connected with the Marriage Laws.

If the directions of the New Testament are at all obscure, as they confessedly are, to judge by the differing views of commentators, instead of exercising the right of private judgment, it is the safer course to accept the general interpretation put upon them by the Church, which is the witness and keeper of Holy Writ. Again, we may well hesitate before doing anything which will tend to destroy the Sacramental character of Holy Matrimony. That which was chosen as a fitting type to represent Christ's union with His Church was far more likely to have been regarded in the Mind of the Spirit as indissoluble than otherwise.

Further, the experience of the last seventeen years proves that the relaxation has encouraged immorality, and is striking at the root of the sanctity of family life.

And lastly, it behoves us to remember that dissolution of marriage was only allowed in the Mosaic economy as a concession to human weakness, owing to the hardness of men's hearts; and to sanction it now is to admit that the times are so degenerate that we have reached no higher standard. We can conceive of no severer satire upon the boasted progress and civilisation of the nineteenth century.

¹ Cf. *Reformatio legum Anglicanarum de Adult. et Divor.*

² The House of Lords again and again granted decrees for dissolution in opposition to the Ecclesiastical Courts. In 1798 it was enacted that the Upper House could dissolve a *vinculo* in any case where the Church had sanctioned divorce *a mensa et toro*. This intervention of the Spiritual Courts was made unnecessary by the Act of 1867.

The Authority for Infant Baptism

S. MARK X. 13-16

13. And they brought young children to Him, that He should touch them: and *His* disciples rebuked those that brought *them*. 14. But when Jesus saw *it*, He was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. 15. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. 16. And He took them up in His arms, put *His* hands upon them, and blessed them.

IN the old English Office for the Baptism of Infants the corresponding passage from S. Matthew's Gospel was the portion of Scripture appointed to be read. It was wisely changed at the first Revision under Edward VI. for this, which, by certain additions, brings into still greater prominence our Lord's care and love for little children. It records, for instance, the indignation which He felt on realising that His disciples would have hindered the mothers who were bringing their babes,¹ or the little children whom an instinctive impulse was drawing to His side. "He was much displeased," S. Mark says; it is an expression nowhere else applied to Jesus, and its application here not only reminds us of the characteristic feature² of this Gospel, in which the lights and shadows that passed over His face are so often noticed, but serves also to emphasise His abhorrence of the bare thought that children were not as dear to Him, or had not as much claim on His attention, as grown-up people.

¹ S. Luke writes *βρέφη*, which implies that they were new-born babes.

² Cf. p. 5.

Again, S. Mark records the fact that "He took them up," or folded them, "in His arms," which both points to the hand of an eye-witness in the description, and at the same time enables us to "perceive how by His outward gesture and deed He declared His good-will towards them."

And lastly, we are assured of the fact, which, however, could hardly be denied even if S. Matthew's version alone remained, that His blessing accompanied the imposition of hands. He "put His hands upon them, and blessed them."

It is very difficult, with such a passage as this confronting them, to understand with what reason the so-called Baptists can withhold from infants the sacred rite of admission into Christ's kingdom. Our Lord says, "Of such is the kingdom of God;" and in another place He assures Nicodemus that there is no entrance there save through "the washing of regeneration and the renewal of the Holy Ghost;" for "except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Read these two declarations together, and it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that He "favourably alloweth the charitable work of ours in bringing infants to Holy Baptism."

It will be well, however, in this place to confirm this opinion by corroborative arguments, both from analogy and from the interpretation of Christ's purpose handed down from the beginning.

Going back to the Jewish Dispensation, we find that infants were admitted into covenant with God. Almost as soon as a male child was born, certainly as soon as he had strength to submit to the ordinance, he was circumcised. It was God's appointed means by which He chose to admit the Jew into covenant with Himself, to become one of His peculiar people, or, as He so tenderly explains the relationship, to be numbered among His children. Now we must bear in mind two cardinal facts, borne witness to by God Himself,—first, that He is always the same, that He is the Lord, and changeth not; secondly, that Christ came into the world to fill up and develop the Divine institutions which He found in force: "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." Whatever principle, then, God has once taught He will always teach. The exact

method of inculcating it may vary with circumstances, but the principle remains unaltered and the same.

Now, when God said to Abraham, "This is My covenant with you, . . . Every man-child shall be circumcised at eight days old," He established the principle that infants were eligible for the privileges which belonged to His people. When Circumcision was superseded by Baptism the principle remained untouched; nothing was changed but the outward form and manner of administration.

Again, Christ came to impart its fulness to the Law and its ordinances. We naturally therefore expect that any change will be at least by way of advance and improvement rather than of retrogression and deterioration. And so it is found to be on comparing the respective initiatory rites of the two Covenants. When the Jewish child was admitted into the family of God he became at once an heir of all the privileges belonging to the chosen people, but there is no indication that he received any inward gift or indwelling grace to enable him to live up to his profession. The Christian, on the contrary, is not only made in Baptism "an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven," but also a partaker of the grace of regeneration and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, in the power of which he may fulfil the duties of his high calling in Christ Jesus.

Such has always been the belief of the Catholic Church. Now, seeing that unconsciousness was no bar to admission into covenant with God in the Old Testament, unless children under the New are to be placed in a wholly inferior position, it is no impediment now. Indeed, if Christ had given the least sanction to the idea that little children were ineligible for the kingdom, His enemies, who were always seeking for grounds of accusation against Him, would have eagerly seized upon and pressed this point very strongly, to show the inferiority of Christianity to Judaism. And it is worthy of notice that not only were infants admitted by Circumcision into covenant privileges, but, in the case of proselytes from other religions, infants were actually baptized by the Jews. It is testified to by Maimonides, one of the most learned of their Rabbis, "An Israelite who takes a heathen child, or finds a little heathen babe, and baptizes him, he becomes a proselyte."

When, then, our Lord commanded the Apostles to make disciples of all nations by baptizing them, unless an exception had been expressly made, the same laws would be observed as had previously been in force. And history affords ample testimony that the Primitive Christians so interpreted His directions. Speaking of persons who must have been born while S. John was living,¹ one of the earliest Fathers says that they had been "made disciples in their childhood." Irenæus, too, asserts that Christ "came to save all by Himself; all I mean who are regenerated to God by Him: infants and little ones, boys and youths, and older persons." Origen also writes, "Infants by the usage of the Church are baptized;" and again, "The Church received a custom handed down from the Apostles to give Baptism even to infants."

Many more passages of Scripture² and testimonies from Patristic writings might easily be pressed into the service, but enough has been adduced to afford strong grounds for the assumption that He, Who knew the end from the beginning, rebuked the disciples for keeping little children from coming to Him for His blessing, that He might confirm at the outset their claim to the privileges of the New Kingdom. That laying on of Christ's hands upon the little ones in the coasts of Judæa was a type of the blessings in store for those of every nation who should be gathered into the fold of His Church; and that single act established the principle "that infants are proper subjects for sacramental influences, and though they may be incapable of understanding God's mercy, they are not incapable of receiving it."

¹ The first Apology has been held by some authorities to have been written as early as 141 A.D., but the most probable date was 147-8. The persons of whom he speaks were, he said, sixty and seventy years old, which take back their birth to time considerably antecedent to the Apostle's death.

² The argument usually drawn from the fact of "whole households" being baptized—Acts xvi. 15, 33; 1 Cor. i. 14, 16—is necessarily weak. The most that can be urged is a probability that they included children, which is perhaps somewhat strengthened by the suddenness of their admission. It is hardly likely that whole families of adults would embrace a despised religion in haste; the difficulty is diminished if a portion of them were unconscious children, for whose baptism a conviction was not requisite.

Perhaps the strongest evidence is to be found in the relationship of Baptismal Regeneration to Original Sin. If evil may be received unconsciously, *a fortiori* good, otherwise the work of the Second Adam is less extensive in its operation than that of the first. Cf. 1 Cor. xv. 22,

The Rich Young Ruler

S. MARK X. 17-31

17. And when He was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to Him, and asked Him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? 18. And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou Me good? *there is* none good but One, *that is*, God. 19. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother. 20. And he answered and said unto Him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. 21. Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow Me. 22. And he was sad at *that* saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.

23. And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto His disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! 24. And the disciples were astonished at

His words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! 25. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. 26. And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved? 27. And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men *it is* impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.

28. Then Peter began to say unto Him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed Thee. 29. And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, 30. but he shall receive an hundred-fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. 31. But many *that are* first shall be last; and the last first.

THE name of the young ruler has not been preserved. It was suppressed by the Evangelist, probably out of a tender consideration for his feelings. It is thought by some that there

are sufficient coincidences¹ between his history and that of Lazarus of Bethany to warrant a conjecture as to their identity. They are not, however, strong enough to justify any confident conclusion. All that is certain is that he was a man of wealth and social position, either president of some local synagogue, or a member of the Great Council of the Nation.

As our Lord left the house he ran to meet Him in a state of great excitement, and put to Him a question which he was eager to have solved: "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"

It is said that it was an altogether novel mode of addressing a Rabbi; if so, he could hardly have been surprised that it called forth some observation. He had used the title "good" on the impulse of the moment, and Jesus tried to awaken some serious reflection upon what it really involved. It was not a term to be tossed about as a mere courteous compliment, but one belonging to Him alone Who is absolutely perfect.

It has been strangely supposed that in His reply, "Why callest thou Me good? there is none good but One, that is, God," He repudiated the title, and that it furnishes an argument against His Divinity. Christ cannot contradict Himself. Did He not say that He was One with the Father, and did not that unity imply that He shared His goodness as all His other attributes? Is it not a fact that the Jews even threatened to stone Him because He made Himself equal with God? The sole reason then for His appearing to disclaim the application of the title to Himself was an unwillingness to accept it when erroneously applied.

Then for the answer to his question the ruler was referred at once to the Commandments.

It was no doubt a great disappointment to him. He expected to be told of something new, of some grand heroic deed by which he might win the prize. The common duties of life he had fulfilled, according to the conventional standard;

¹ Dean Plumptre says that they "are such as to carry the evidence to a very high point of probability." He refers to indication of riches in the precious spikenard which his sister lavished upon Jesus: to the fact that S. Mark leaves her unnamed, as he has left the ruler: and to the correspondence between the "one thing is needful," and the "one thing thou lackest." Cf. Com. on S. Matt. xix. 16.

and he answered, not perhaps in a wholly self-righteous spirit, "All these have I observed from my youth."

It was the custom of Rabbis to kiss their pupils in token of their approbation of their conduct, and it is possible that the same mark was given on this occasion, and led to the observation that Jesus "loved him." At all events, it sets aside the idea that the above assertion was simply that of a self-righteous man. There was something deep down in his heart which attracted the Master, and made Him yearn to enlist him for ever in His personal service.

But such a step involved a total surrender of all earthly goods. He must leave everything if he would follow Him. The other disciples had made the sacrifice, and there was no reason why his case should be an exceptional one. True, it was harder for the rich than the poor, and so he felt it. "He was sad at that saying, and went away grieved." He was not angry, and he offered no remonstrance, but a shadow fell upon his face, as when a thick and lowering cloud casts a sudden gloom over a sunny landscape. He did not dispute our Lord's authority, for he was conscience-smitten, and found himself weak when he thought he was strong. He felt as a man feels when the physician makes an examination of his constitution, and reveals some concealed and unexpected mischief. The terrible awakening was followed by a momentary struggle, for it was hard to disobey, but harder still to yield to the advice; and he who had come to Jesus so full of eager hope and expectation went away with a heavy heart.

We are apt to judge him harshly,¹ but many allowances ought to be made. He had been trained to look upon poverty as an evil to be deprecated above all human miseries, so dire in its consequences that a man was absolutely forbidden by the Oral Law to part with all his possessions; and to have embraced beggary, such as was put before him, involved a sacrifice far beyond our imagination.

When he was gone, the Master turned to His disciples to draw a warning from what they had witnessed. We lose

¹ Sadler quotes from the Commentary of a Bishop of the Church: "We must place this young man in our memories by the side of Judas, Ananias, and Sapphira."

something of the true teaching by the familiar translation, "How *hardly* shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" It is not the equivalent of "scarcely," but betrays the difficulty, the distress, the harassing, the irritations, which the rich man will experience on the journey. When His disciples were perplexed by what they heard, He reiterated the verdict almost in the same words, but prefaced it by a term of endearment to remind them that He could not be unduly harsh; and He drove it home by a proverbial saying that must have made His meaning unmistakable. It matters little whether He drew His illustration from a familiar object, some well-known wicket-gate¹ called the "needle's eye," through which no beast of burden could possibly pass till it had laid down its load; or whether the expression was to be interpreted naturally as indicative of something superlatively difficult. It only added force to what had gone before, for it called forth the astonished exclamation from the bystanders: "Who then can be saved?"

The disciples had listened with eager attention to the conversation, and no doubt Peter spoke the thoughts of most of them when, with characteristic impulsiveness, he asked the Lord how far it applied to them. Had not they done just that which He counselled the young ruler to do? True, they had no "great possessions," but such as they had they had willingly surrendered. They had "left all, and followed Him." And Jesus, knowing out of the depths of His Own experience how great is the joy of self-sacrifice, how transcendently superior to everything else, assures them that they will have their reward both here and hereafter. Here in a vastly intensified² appreciation of earthly enjoyments, finding new

¹ Modern travellers have noticed that there are not infrequently two gateways in Oriental cities, one for beasts of burden, and one for foot-passengers, and that the name given to the latter is *Es Summ el Kayût*, The eye of the needle. Cf. Kitto, *Pict. Bible*. The figure of an elephant passing through a needle's eye is sometimes used in the Talmud. Cf. Lightfoot *in loco*. A "cable" has been conjectured for "camel," but the reading rests on no MS. authority, and would destroy the whole Oriental spirit of hyperbole, which belongs to the proverbial saying in its generally accepted form.

² In the catalogue, "or wife" is omitted in some of the oldest MSS. and versions, and "wives" are not mentioned in the list of those blessings which will be multiplied, so that there was no ground for the sneering jest of Julian about the multiplicity of wives which the Christian was taught to look for.

homes and new friends wherever they go, and seeing new beauty in the commonest things—in earth and air, and sky and sea. It was true they would meet “with persecutions,” but these would not mar their happiness, for by a mysterious law, understood by those alone who experienced them, they were accompanied by a “joy unspeakable and full of glory.”

And hereafter they would receive the fullest compensation, “an eternal weight of glory” in the life everlasting.

One further word of no less vital import before the conversation closed. It would humble them in the hour of earthly triumph and success: it would console them in trouble and depression, when the world turned its back upon them, and they should find themselves lightly esteemed of men. It was the assurance that hereafter human judgments would often be reversed by the Divine, “the first should be last, and the last first.”

It lends a sad significance to the utterance to remember that it was made in the hearing of Judas, and by One Who “knew from the beginning who should betray Him.”

XLVIII

The Ambitious Request of SS. James
and John

S. MARK X. 32-45

32. And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid. And He took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto Him, 33. *saying*, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles: 34. and they shall mock Him, and shall scourge Him, and shall spit upon Him, and shall kill Him: and the third day He shall rise again.

35. And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto Him, saying, Master, we would that Thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire. 36. And He said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you? 37. They said unto Him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on Thy right hand, and the other on Thy left hand, in Thy glory. 38. But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask:

can ye drink *of* the cup that I drink *of*? and be baptized *with* the baptism that I am baptized *with*? 39. And they said unto Him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink *of* the cup that I drink *of*; and *with* the baptism that I am baptized *withal* shall ye be baptized: 40. but to sit on My right hand and on My left hand is not Mine to give; but *it shall be given to them* for whom it is prepared. 41. And when the ten heard *it*, they began to be much displeased with James and John. 42. But Jesus called them *to Him*, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. 43. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: 44. and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. 45. For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.

OUR Lord had just before spoken the parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard. It must have been while He was still beyond Jordan, for such an illustration would be naturally

suggested by the features of a Peræan landscape. The note that they were going up to Jerusalem indicates that they had crossed the ford. It was an eventful epoch in their journey. The road to the scene of the Crucifixion was no longer interrupted, and thither "He set His face steadfastly to go up." Whether it was an impatient eagerness to reach the goal, such as He expressed in the outburst, "How am I straitened till it be accomplished!" or whether, in the anticipation of what awaited Him, He felt that He must gather strength from undisturbed communion with the Father, we cannot tell. All we know is, that, contrary to His general habit, He was walking¹ in advance of the rest by Himself alone. It was so unlike what they had been used to, that it led to anxious questionings among His followers.

They saw perhaps an intense earnestness in His look that bespoke grave forebodings, and their wonder grew into a weird feeling of awe, and "they were afraid." And He, knowing their thoughts, called the Twelve, who would naturally be nearest in the crowd, and for the third time told them of His coming Death, only now with a greater distinctness, as befitted its nearer approach. He predicted even the mocking and spitting, the scourging and crucifixion,² who would be the chief instigators, and who the agents by which it should be accomplished.

Strange as it may seem, what He told them of the coming shame and dishonour laid no hold upon their minds; they thought only of the glory that was to follow. Two of the favoured three came, and either with their own mouth, or through the intervention of their mother, preferred a request for the two prominent places of distinction in the kingdom which they supposed was about to be revealed.

There is no real discrepancy, such as has been alleged, between the narratives of S. Matthew and S. Mark. One puts the request into the mouth of the mother, the other into that of the sons. James and John had laid the plan, and

¹ ἦν προάγων αὐτούς. He was going before them, and "leading them to the conflict as an intrepid general leads his soldiers to the battle;" but it is used of a shepherd also before his sheep.

² The Cross had been mentioned before, ch. viii. 34, but only indirectly. Here it is spoken of as the instrument of His death.

Salome fell in with it. All no doubt were present, and it matters little by whom the petition was actually made. The answer, according to both narratives, was addressed to the sons, from whom it really emanated, directly or indirectly.

Jesus asked them if they were ready to share His lot, to drink the same cup of shame, and to be baptized in the same sea of affliction and blood. He Himself would not enter into glory till He had suffered pain, and those who would reign with Him hereafter must suffer with Him here. In the confident hope of strength to bear whatever might befall, inspired by His Presence, they assured Him that they could do what He asked.

He set His seal to their promise, seeing, it may be, their future history, when the one should lay down his life as the first martyr in the Apostolic company, and the other live on to advanced age in persecution, and cruelty, and exile, cheerfully borne for the Master's sake. But they had misconceived how the honour which they sought was to be won. It was not as an arbitrary gift from His sovereign will, but to be assigned on recognised principles of labour and reward. It must be earned before it can be received. It is "not Mine to give, but *it shall be given to them* for whom it is prepared."

This rendering of the Authorised Version is somewhat misleading, and seems to contradict what is elsewhere taught, that it will be the prerogative of Christ to award us our places in His future kingdom. The contradiction has been avoided by the Revised Translation: it "is not Mine to give, but ¹ *it is for them* for whom it is prepared." No doubt stress is laid upon the word "to give," for, though it is in one sense a free gift of God, it is in another and most true sense wages for labour done. Men are predestined to receive it, but only after a life which fits them for the reception.

Now as soon as the design of the two disciples had become known, the rest were filled with indignation. It was not that they had any truer appreciation of the coming kingdom, for

¹ ἀλλ' οἷς ἡτοίμασαι. ἀλλὰ is regarded by some as equivalent here to εἰμή, which simplifies the construction, but the Revisionists have hesitated to accept this interpretation.

the old Jewish ideas were deeply rooted in them all ; and the teaching of our Blessed Lord from the little child, whom He had set before them as a pattern of all that is opposed to self-seeking and pride of position, had left them unchanged. What kindled their anger was the discovery that James and John had been intriguing to forestall them, to steal, as it were, a march upon them, and insure by anticipation the posts of greatest honour.

When Jesus heard them wrangling, He called them all—the two as well as the ten,—and pointed out how grievously they had misconceived the nature of the kingdom He was about to set up. It was wholly unlike those earthly empires from which they had formed their ideas. In these, men in authority, whether sovereigns or princes, chiefs or subordinates, wield their power for their own ends. They too often tyrannise and lord it over their subjects, exercising the brief authority with which they are clothed in a total disregard of the interests and wellbeing of the people under them ; but in the Messianic kingdom there will be no ambitious striving after power, no imperious exercise of supremacy, but all authority will rest upon the might of meekness and the sovereignty of service. “If,” He seems to say, “you need to be convinced, you have only to read the lessons of My life. Do you not recognise Me, have you not all along recognised Me, as your Head? And yet is it not true that from the beginning I have been ministering to others, exalted because I have humbled Myself, ruling because I serve? If you require still further proof, you have only to wait a while ; for the principle will receive its very highest exemplification when I become obedient to the death of the Cross and give My ‘life a ransom for many.’”

One would have thought that such a sharp reproof could not fail to leave a lasting mark upon His hearers, but it needed even plainer teaching than this to eradicate views so deeply ingrained in their lives. The same strife broke out afresh at the close, in disputes for precedence¹ at the Table of the Last Supper ; and He rebuked them again by a lesson of humility never equalled ; and this time we would fain believe

¹ Edersheim, vol. ii. x., has drawn this out very fully, and concludes that Judas claimed, and was allowed, the seat of honour next to our Lord.

that the impression was never effaced. It was surely a picture not forgotten in after days,—that in which they had seen the Lord make Himself their slave, when He rose from supper, and laid aside His garments, and took a towel and girded Himself, and washed the disciples' feet.

XLIX

Blind Bartimæus at Jericho

S. MARK X. 46-52

46. And they came to Jericho : and as He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimæus, the son of Timæus, sat by the highway side begging. 47. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, *Thou* Son of David, have mercy on me. 48. And many charged him that he should hold his peace : but he cried the more a great deal, *Thou* Son of David, have mercy on me. 49. And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise ; He calleth thee. 50. And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus. 51. And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou *that* I should do unto thee ? The blind man said unto Him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. 52. And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way ; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.

THREE of the Evangelists have recorded this miracle, but with such variety of detail that they have been accused of inaccuracy. The divergence lies in the number of the blind men and the exact scene of the event. S. Matthew mentions two blind men, S. Mark and S. Luke one only. Again, S. Matthew and S. Mark connect the miracle with our Lord's departure from Jericho ; S. Luke with His approach to it. There is an exact parallel in the difference of numbers, in the case of the Gadarene demoniacs.¹ One of the two was well known, fallen perhaps from a position of social distinction, and the preservation of his name Timæus, Bartimæus by S. Mark, points to this.

The difficulty in accounting for the discrepancy touching

¹ Cf. p. 100, n. 2 and 3.

the scene is greater. We notice one or two of the solutions which have been proposed. The Jericho¹ of our Lord's time was more than a mile distant from the site of the ancient city; and it is possible that one Evangelist was speaking of the existing town, another of the ruins; and if the miracle was performed between the two it was naturally after our Lord left the one, and whilst He was drawing near to the other. Again, it is possible that the whole scene was not continuous; that the attention of Jesus was called to Bartimæus as He drew nigh to the city, and, entering into conversation with him, He heard his wants, but postponed the cure from some cause unknown to us, but which seemed to Him sufficient. Then on the morrow, as He left the city, finding him awaiting His departure at the outskirts, He completed the cure. S. Luke, who connects it with His approach to Jericho, anticipates the end, and finishes off the narrative as though the whole scene had been uninterrupted. Precisely the same method is adopted by S. Matthew in his description of the withering of the barren fig-tree.

If this be the right explanation, it helps to clear up the discrepancy of the numbers. Bartimæus, whom our Lord found at the entrance of the city, encouraged by his interview, followed Him into the crowd, and hearing that He was only staying for the night on His way to Jerusalem, told to some companion in affliction what had occurred, and they agreed together to waylay Jesus as He departed, and both were healed.

And now, confining ourselves to S. Mark's narrative, we meet with many details of special interest. Jesus had spent the night at the house of Zacchæus,² much to the annoyance, no doubt, of His followers, who found it difficult to reconcile their belief in Him with such a signal mark of favour to a declared enemy of Jewish hopes. Their spirits, however, were revived by His entrance on the last stage of the journey which was to end in the manifestation of His glory. But as they

¹ Riha, or Eriha, is the modern name. It is a miserable village, consisting of a few hovels. But in our Lord's time it was a city of considerable size, being a priestly station.

² He was an ἀρχιερέωνης. It is uncertain what this signifies. Perhaps he was one of the *sub-magistri* more directly connected with the officials at Rome.

were departing, full of eagerness and impatience, they were suddenly checked. A blind beggar had heard from the crowd that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by, and with a flash of faith recognising in Him the Messiah, Whose predicted characteristic it was to take compassion on the miserable and give sight to the blind, he cried aloud above the noise and confusion of the tumultuous multitude, "Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me." They dreaded at such a time the least interruption, and endeavoured to silence him, but it may be he had heard of cases like his own relieved by Jesus, and he would not lightly submit to having his only hope thus rudely crushed. He redoubled his energies, and his voice reached the ears that were never deaf to the cry of the afflicted; and the order was given to those who were nearest, "Call him"¹ to Me. And, as so often happens in excited crowds, which are easily swayed, they changed instantaneously; rudeness was turned into courtesy, and those who a moment before would have driven him away, now give him every encouragement: "Be of good comfort, rise; He calleth thee."

Flinging off at once the long cumbrous cloak, the Oriental abba that covered his tunic, he sprang to his feet² with impatient joy, and, perhaps led by the hand, or guided by the sound of His call, he "came to Jesus." We are surprised that He Who knew all, and Who could see his sad condition, even if He did not know it before, should ask him to explain his special need. It was a mark of tenderness, and bespoke His desire to create a closer sympathy by listening to his tale of misery, and to quicken his faith to be healed. Bartimæus, with exceeding reverence, addressed Him by a title not often used, *Rabboni*,³ and pleaded for the restoration of his sight. His prayer was immediately answered, and the assurance given that his faith had "saved" him. It is not easy to say with

¹ *φωνήσατε αὐτόν*. This is the reading of the majority of ancient MSS., **N B C L**.

² *ἀναπηδήσας*, according to MSS. **N B D** and some old Versions.

³ It is more deferential than the ordinary Rabbi, at least *Ribboni* (of which in Hellenistic Greek *Rabboni* is the equivalent) was applied in a higher sense. It was used by Mary on the morning of the Resurrection. It shows the caprice of the Old Translators that the same word should be rendered in this one place "Lord," and in the other literally reproduced,—"*Rabboni*," *i.e.* my Master.

confidence, in what sense Christ assured him that he was "saved." The word is used in the original as well of a bodily cure as of spiritual restoration. It may be that on the lips of Him Who saw "the correspondencies of things outward and inward," it was employed here "with a two-edged reference," and predicted that the deliverance from that physical infirmity would be accompanied by the cure of his soul's sickness. And so it came to pass, for he became an attached follower of the Lord; and if an old tradition be true, he braved the obloquy of his countrymen, and stood by Him when all His disciples forsook Him and fled. The Apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus records how, in defiance of the attempt to silence our Lord's supporters, and to suborn false witnesses against Him, Bartimæus gave evidence in favour of the Accused.

Now, the circumstances of the miracle are especially suggestive from a practical point of view.

How often, for example, are our first efforts thwarted, when we begin to reach forth to better things, by those from whom we might most reasonably expect assistance! Have we not known parents discourage their children from claiming the full privileges of their spiritual birthright, ostensibly from fear lest they should fall away and increase their condemnation, but too often really from a conviction of the obvious inconsistency of their living up to a higher standard of religion than themselves? Many a prodigal son might have been brought back, and many an awakened sinner finally reclaimed, if his first good resolutions and cries for mercy had not been rebuked, as was the blind man's passionate appeal—O strangest of paradoxes!—even by those who were with Jesus.

Again, when our Saviour draws near to us in any of those countless ways through which He woos back the wanderer, it is the "sin which so easily besets us," the evil habit from which we cannot tear ourselves, the companionship that is so hard to scorn: it is this which impedes our progress, and makes the return so difficult. Our only chance lies in flinging aside by a single stroke all that endangers our obedience, and in the joy of a sudden emancipation springing to our feet as Bartimæus did.

Once more, he is an example in following Christ. He "followed Jesus in the way." The original implies a continu-

ance in so doing.¹ It was no mere impulsive clinging to his Benefactor in the outburst of gratitude for a new-found joy, but in a constant walking in His footsteps Who has promised to be a never-failing Guide to those who seek Him; for "He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

¹ ἠκολουθεῖ, the imperfect tense.

L

The Triumphal Entry

S. MARK XI. 1-11

1. And when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, He sendeth forth two of His disciples, 2. and saith unto them, Go your way into the village over against you : and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat ; loose him, and bring *him*. 3. And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye that the Lord hath need of him ; and straightway he will send him hither. 4. And they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door without in a place where two ways met ; and they loose him. 5. And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt? 6. And they said unto them even as Jesus

had commanded : and they let them go. 7. And they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him ; and He sat upon him. 8. And many spread their garments in the way : and others cut down branches off the trees, and strawed *them* in the way. 9. And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna ; Blessed *is* He that cometh in the Name of the Lord : 10. Blessed *be* the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the Name of the Lord : Hosanna in the highest. 11. And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple : and when He had looked round about upon all things, and now the eventide was come, He went out unto Bethany with the twelve.

OUR Lord arrived at Bethany on the eve of the Sabbath. That day He desired to spend in retirement, to prepare Himself for the great events of the coming week. He could have found nowhere else such a fitting place, for it has been well called "the picture of seclusion and holy peace." It was the home of the family He loved most on earth,—of Martha and Mary and the risen Lazarus. How the day was passed, whether He visited the synagogue or remained apart in secret communing with His Father, we are not told ; but as soon almost as the morrow dawned the little village was astir

with excitement. Some of those who had travelled in His company from Jericho had gone on to Jerusalem, and spread the news of His approach far and wide. It was little more than a month¹ since He had restored Lazarus to life. Such a miracle as that must have raised His fame to the highest pitch, and being still fresh in their memories, would quicken the curiosity of the people to see Him. And now it was rumoured that the Great Wonder-worker was amongst them again. As soon then as the Sabbath rest was over, crowds flocked out from the city, and these, together with the pilgrims² who had halted at Bethany on their way to the Feast, gathered round Him as He started for His solemn entry into the city.

It marks the greatest epoch in our Lord's life. From this moment an entire change passed over His conduct. Hitherto He had deliberately rejected every act of homage from His subjects. It is true that the consciousness of His authority had frequently asserted itself, but there had been no open claim for its public recognition. When they desired to take Him by force and make Him a king, He had withdrawn into privacy to defeat their purpose. When for the encouragement of the favoured Apostles He had given a momentary revelation of His Divine glory, it was followed by a solemn injunction that they should "tell the vision to no man." But now all is changed; and it is no mere acceptance of proffered homage, no concurrence in a popular demonstration, but the initiation proceeds from Himself.

They had barely started on their journey, when He sent forward two of His disciples to the village³ over-against them, in search of an ass's colt, on which He might ride in triumph into His city. The ancient prophecy had foretold that the King of Jerusalem should come to Zion, not driving in

¹ This had taken place about midway between the Feast of Dedication in the month Kislev (December) and the Passover. After that, Jesus retired to Ephraim, where He continued till His last journey to Jerusalem.—S. John xiii. 54.

² In the crowded state of Jerusalem it was a common practice for those who came up to the Feasts to lodge in the neighbouring villages, and to camp out on the Mount of Olives.

³ In all probability it was Bethphage, which, according to general belief, was about three-quarters of a mile nearer Jerusalem than Bethany. But Lightfoot supposes that it was the name of a district.

chariots like other kings, neither mounted upon a horse, the symbol of war, but as befitted the Prince of Peace, "meek and lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass."

The messengers found exactly as He had said. The ass was "standing without in a place where two ways met,"¹ or as it might be more properly interpreted, at the road which led round to the back of the house. It is one of those vivid touches which betray the hand of an eye-witness,² and it suggests the probability that S. Peter, from whom the Evangelist received his information, was himself one of the unnamed messengers on our Lord's errand.

We are surprised that the owners should have so readily acquiesced in their demand. There is however a reading³ in some of the oldest MSS. which certainly lessens the difficulty, for it puts into the mouth of the disciples an assurance that their Master would return the ass to its owners, when it had served the purpose for which He needed it. "If any man say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye that the Lord hath need of him, and will send him back again." However it was, their request was complied with, and they started to meet Jesus with "the colt whereon never man had sat." At once a new enthusiasm seized the wayfaring throng. It may have been that the prophecy which had prompted Jesus to send for the ass was not unknown to them; for in an instant they seemed to recognise Him as their King. They could not turn that narrow mountain path into a royal road, but they unwrapped their loose cloaks, and stretched them on the ground for their King to pass over. It was the very homage that Israel of old had paid when "they hasted, and took every man his garment, and put it under him on the top of the stairs, and blew with trumpets, saying, Jehu is king."

Those who had come up from Jerusalem brought palms in their hands, branches which they had plucked from the gardens of Olivet on the way; and they cast them down at

¹ The common translation is from the Vulg. *bivium*.

² Cf. p. 2.

³ *καὶ εὐθέως αὐτὸν ἀποστέλλει* (N A B C D) *πάλιν ᾧδε* (N B C D). It makes it part of the message which they were charged to deliver. So Origen understood it in his Commentary.

His feet to do honour to their King, and then turned and went before Him. Suddenly at a bend of the road, the first glimpse of the city—one small portion only—met their eyes as they wound round the hill. It was but a momentary and a partial glimpse, but it was Mount Zion, on which David's palaces had been built, and which was called emphatically "the city of David."

That was enough; for the incident struck the excited multitude, as it could hardly fail to do, and shouts of triumph broke forth from every lip. "Hosanna."¹ It was the cry of the people, the holy "hurrah" at the great feast of joy—the loud acclaim with which the heavens were made to ring again, when the pilgrims flocked through the streets with their branches² or torches at the Tabernacle Festival.

"Hosanna to the Son of David." It was the prayer for safety, the sacred "viva" for the heir to the Messianic throne about to be established. "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." "The coming age" had dawned, and "He that should come" had now appeared in His kingdom, and this was their recognition that prophecy had been fulfilled. "Hosanna in the highest." It expressed the belief of the enthusiastic crowds that heaven would join with earth in the recognition of His claims. And amidst such loud acclamations the King of the Jews entered Jerusalem. The protests of the Pharisees fell on ears that heard not, or were ignored with a righteous disdain, for nothing could stay the stream of popular enthusiasm. And He Who came as King into His capital, in fulfilment of what had been written, would show Himself also as Priest, and, as Malachi had foretold, "come suddenly to His temple." He was unrecognised by those who should have been the first to welcome Him, but when priests and Levites held their peace, His praise was perfected "out of the mouth of babes and sucklings," for the children, hardly knowing perhaps what they were doing, took up the cry which they had heard in the streets, and shouted aloud, "Hosanna to the Son of David."

¹ It is found in the closing Psalm of the Hallel, cxviii., which was sung at the Feast of Tabernacles. It means "Save now," or "Save, we pray:" LXX. σωσον δη.

² To add to the festive character of the gathering every one wore the *lulav*—a spray of palm or willow or myrtle by day, and carried a torch by night.

S. Mark, contrary to expectation, has passed over unnoticed an incident which must have left an ineffaceable mark upon the memory of an eye-witness. We should have expected that it would occupy a prominent place in the narrative wherever the story of the Triumphal Entry would be told; but neither he nor S. Matthew have given us the picture of the most touching scene in sacred history,—the Saviour of the world weeping over the city in which He was going to suffer and to die. We are indebted for this to S. Luke alone, but it is noticed here, if only to point the moral of the strange and wonderful scene we have been witnessing. “And when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it.”

How was it that in the midst of all that homage, that worship and honour to the King of kings, He had thoughts of trouble and sadness? It was because He could see into futurity. That enthusiasm was all hollow and evanescent. Their King in glory to-day—their Victim in shame to-morrow! But five days more, and all would be changed. The palm-branches of Sunday would be turned into thorns on Good Friday. Now they were eager to spread their garments before Him, then they would strip Him even of His Own. Now it is “Hosanna to the Son of David,”—when four more suns have set it will be “Crucify Him, crucify Him;” “not this man, but Barabbas.”

And He saw the vengeance that would overtake them. He saw them outcast from their home, wanderers upon the face of the earth, a byword in every land, an undying monument of the punishment that will come upon those who neglect the warnings of God and refuse to receive His Only Begotten Son.

The Withered Fig-tree

S. MARK XI. 12-14, 20-26

12. And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, He was hungry: 13. and seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, He came, if haply He might find any *thing* thereon: and when He came to it, He found nothing but leaves: for the time of figs was not *yet*. 14. And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And His disciples heard it.

20. And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. 21. And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto Him, Master, behold, the fig tree which Thou cursedst is withered away. 22. And Jesus answering saith

unto them, Have faith in God. 23. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that *those things* which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. 24. Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive *them*, and ye shall have *them*. 25. And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also Which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. 26. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father Which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.

AFTER our Lord had gone into the Temple at the close of His Triumphant Entry, the crowds must have dispersed, for He returned with the Twelve alone when the evening drew on. The night, we may well believe, was spent in prayer and fasting,¹ perhaps as was His wont on the mountain-side in the open air. When the day broke His first thought was to visit the Temple, and cleanse it from the terrible iniquities which had filled Him with horror on the previous day. So it was,

¹ ἡλιόσθη. He passed the night in the open air. The fact that He was hungry points to His not being in the house, where Martha would certainly have provided for His bodily needs.

that, absorbed in the work which lay before Him, He neglected the morning meal, and set out at once for the city. As they were on the way He caught sight of a fig-tree,¹ standing alone in some conspicuous place, covered with leaves. It was an unusual thing so early in the year, and as the fruit of the fig in Palestine appears before the foliage, it created an expectation that haply He might find something to satisfy His hunger. Perhaps "the hasty fruit before the summer"—the first ripe fig—might be sufficiently advanced;² at all events it was worth while to turn aside and see what there was. But there was "nothing but leaves." It was two months to the ordinary season³ for figs, and, as far as fruit was concerned, that tree was no exception to the general rule. The precocity of its foliage had certainly held out a reasonable hope that it would be so, but it was not fulfilled.

It is, however, made to serve another and a higher purpose; and Jesus, with a deep insight into the spiritual teaching of Nature, at once seized the opportunity of enforcing a momentous truth. He "answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever." There was no immediate visible effect, no lightning-flash descending to strip it of its leaves, and lay bare its branches, but an unseen shuddering thrilled through every fibre and stem, as it was "struck to the heart by the malediction of its Creator." And Jesus and His disciples turned aside and went on their way, and thought no more of what had happened, but on the morrow, as they drew near to the place, a strange sight arrested their attention; and "Peter calling to remembrance saith unto Him, Master, behold, the fig-tree which Thou cursedst is withered away."

¹ *συκῆν μίαν*—S. Matt. xxi. 19. It was a single tree. Stanley says that "Mount Olivet, besides its abundance of olives, is still sprinkled with fig-trees."—Sin. and Palest. 422.

² Thomson says that he had plucked them in May in the district of Lebanon, which would be at least a month later than the south of Palestine.

³ Many interpretations have been given of the saying, "for the time of figs was not yet," e.g. "for where (*οὐ*) He was, it was fig season," or "it was not a favourable season for figs." These are only ingenious evasions of a difficulty. The fact is plain. Figs were ripe ordinarily, according to circumstances, between June and August. This event occurred about the 22d of April. The appearance of this tree invited the passer-by to seek fruit on it, but it was only to mock his expectations. It was exceptional in having leaves so early; it was not exceptional as regards fruit. So it was said it was not the time for figs, and, it might have been added, nor for leaves.

The incident is full of instruction. It reminds us of the inseparable union between His Humanity and His Divinity. He was hungry, and came looking for something which did not exist; it bespeaks His liability to that which was common to man.

He cursed the tree by the fiat of an irresistible Will, and Nature was arrested, and the fountain of life dried up. It marks the possession of a power which is shared by no mortal creature, but is the sole prerogative of Almighty God. Again, it may be asked why He should curse a tree, an unoffending tree. We know it has excited the scorn and ridicule both of former and later generations, alike also of Pagan and so-called Christian writers. They have seen in it nothing but an indication of childish displeasure, or of an impatient and vindictive spirit. But this is to measure His acts and words by a merely human standard, whereas He not only "spake as never man spake," but also did everything "according to the counsel of His will." There was danger of the people forgetting that God is just as well as merciful. He had worked countless miracles of love, healing the sick, giving sight to the blind, restoring the dead to life again. Here is one of judgment, one that foretells "the wrath to come;" but even in this, justice is tempered with mercy, for whereas His deeds of beneficence were performed on the bodies of men, when He would display the severity¹ of His future judgment, it is the tree of the field—not man—that is cursed.

Now there was something in this withering, of unusual significance. Jesus had often taught by word. It was an opportunity to make a new thing, and arrest attention by a parable in action. It was the sequel of the parable of the Barren Fig-tree, "a rehearsal, as it were, of the execution of the judgment then denounced" upon the Jewish nation if they continued to bear no fruit. The tree had been refreshed by the dews of heaven; the sunshine had warmed it with genial rays; the sheltering hill perhaps had warded off the chilling blasts, and all the seasonable influences of Providence had ministered to its growth, but only to bring forth an ostentatious show of unproductive leaves. And as with that hapless tree,

¹ The only other case of destruction is of the lowest of the animals, the swine. Cf. p. 107.

so with the nation. All the care and culture of the Great Vine-dresser had been bestowed in vain; there was nothing but a deceptive and pretentious display; they were for ever giving promise of fruit, but yielding none; there was no return for unremitting attention; they cumbered the soil, their end was to be burned, they were "nigh to cursing."

Such was the cause for which the fig-tree was destroyed. All that follows in the narrative seems at first sight difficult to connect with what has gone before. The key to its interpretation is found in that characteristic of love which prompted Jesus to soften His judgments of wrath with words of promise.¹ "Let nothing," He seems to say, "rob you of your faith in God. There is much about to happen by which you may be staggered. You will see the nation, whose cursing I have foreshadowed in the blasting of this tree, even yet more flourishing; but be not dismayed: all will be made clear in God's good time. And as in this, so in all else, place implicit confidence and trust in God, and nothing will be impossible. There is no difficulty which may not be surmounted in the power of faith: the very mountain on which we are standing may be lifted up and cast into yonder sea. I do not mean, I need hardly tell you, the actual removal, but I desire to emphasise with My authority the assurance, which such a figure so well illustrates, that no act or deed, however arduous, is beyond the reach of him whose faith is stayed upon God."

And it is precisely the same in every prayer that goes forth from an undoubting heart. You shall have your petition granted before you ask, for the wish will prevent your words, and God can hear the one as well as the other, for He has promised elsewhere, "It shall come to pass that before they call I will answer; and while they are yet speaking I will hear."

There is however one precaution which may not be forgotten. Forgiveness of injuries is a virtue little recognised by the Jew, and yet it is the very condition upon which we must ask to be forgiven ourselves. For "if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

¹ Westcott, Gospel Miracles, 25.

The Cleansing of the Temple

S. MARK XI. 15-19

15. And they come to Jerusalem : and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves ; 16. and would not suffer that any man should carry *any* vessel through the temple. 17. And He taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves. 18. And the scribes and chief priests heard *it*, and sought how they might destroy Him : for they feared Him, because all the people was astonished at His doctrine. 19. And when even was come, He went out of the city.

S. JOHN has described a purification of the Temple at the first Passover after the commencement of our Lord's Ministry. The other three Evangelists record a similar act at His last visit to Jerusalem. There are sufficient variations in the narratives to overthrow the theory of those who think it improbable that such an act would have been repeated, and conclude that the sacred writers, either S. John or the Three, have been misled as to the time of its occurrence.

In the fourth Gospel we find, when the language is rightly interpreted, that Jesus drove out with His scourge only the sheep and oxen, but in the other narratives the buyers and sellers also were forcibly expelled.¹ Again, in the former the desecrators of the Temple are remonstrated with for turning God's house into a "house of merchandise," but in the latter

¹ πάντας, τὰ τε πρόβατα καὶ τοὺς βόας, is not as in the A.V. "them all . . . and the sheep and the oxen," but as in the R.V. πάντας is in the masculine gender, agreeing with βόας, the masculine being more worthy than the neuter, according to the grammatical scale.

into "a den of thieves." The differences are not unimportant, for they well illustrate a principle of our Lord's dealing with sinners, by which He treats them tenderly at first, but is unsparing and severe, if the remonstrance is unheeded and the sin repeated.

The circumstances which led to the profanation were these. The Jews who came up to the Feasts from a distance would obviously find it more convenient to purchase their sacrificial victims on the spot, and cattle-markets were held in the city; but in lapse of time, when the authorities of the Temple began to grow mercenary, they determined to have such a large source of profit in their own hands. The Court of the Gentiles was always held in little respect by the Jews,¹ and it seemed to them quite justifiable to utilise it for their purpose. There is some uncertainty about the first introduction of the traffic into the Temple; but it was probably before the occasion when Bava Ben Buta "sent for three thousand of the sheep of Kedar, and having examined whether they were without spot, brought them into the Mountain of the House, that is, into the Court of the Gentiles." There is no doubt, however, that after this time, for about twenty days before the Feast the corridors and arcades and outer walls of the sacred enclosure² were commonly occupied by cattle-pens; and the solemn stillness of the precincts was broken by the unseemly confusion of the lowing of herds and the wranglings of drovers and pilgrims bargaining for their price.

Besides these there were the money-changers. After the Captivity the Jews of the Dispersion, when they came up to the Feasts, in common with those who dwelt in Palestine, made each their offering for the Temple service. It was enjoined in the Law that they should "give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord . . . half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary." There was only one coin in which it might be paid into the treasury. It was intended as a safeguard to prevent the Korban being desecrated by the

¹ It was separated from the Holy Place by the "Song" or *ἔρκιον δρυφάκτου λιθίνου*, a low wall, on which, Josephus says, was the inscription, *μὴ δεῖν ἀλλόφυλον ἐντὸς τοῦ ἁγίου παρῆναι*. The court was actually called the "Chol" or "profane" place.

² "The Booths" are frequently mentioned in Rabbinic writings. For their connection with the extortion of the chief priests, cf. Edersheim, i. 371.

introduction of pieces of money upon which heathen emblems were stamped. Those pilgrims therefore who came from countries where non-Jewish money was current, as Babylon, Alexandria, Greece, or Rome, were compelled to procure the half-shekel by exchange. It was not only a fruitful source of gain to the bankers, who demanded an exorbitant discount; their extortion kindled the indignation of our Lord, and His ears were pained by the clinking of money and weights and balances, and the strife of words and angry recriminations, mingling with the prayers and praises of the sanctuary.

But this was not all. Even the offerings of poor women, and others, whose very poverty might have exempted them from fraudulent imposition, were included in the market.¹

The whole scene was such as would raise the righteous anger of any one who was jealous for the honour of God's House. It was almost a worse profanation than that which made our cathedrals and churches scenes of riot and desecration in the times of Edward VI., when S. Paul's was turned into a stock-exchange for merchants, and its aisles were used as common thoroughfares for both man and beast.

What may have suggested to our Lord the cleansing of the Temple on both occasions in immediate connection with the Passover, was most probably the Divine command to the Jews to purge all leaven out of their houses on the eve of the Feast. It was a highly symbolical act, for "leaven is born of corruption, and corrupts the mass with which it is mixed."² Well then may our Lord have been eager, alike at the beginning and the close of His earthly Mission, to strike home by a forcible illustration their need of real purification. It may have been also that He remembered the ancient prediction of the seer who foretold His last visit to Jerusalem: "In that day there shall be no more the trader in the house of the Lord of hosts;" or that which closed the scroll of prophecy, describing how the Messiah should "come suddenly to His Temple" and "purify the sons of Levi." So it was

¹ Lightfoot mentions the extravagant prices which doves reached at one time, and the efforts of Rabban Simeon to stay the injustice, by which the cost was reduced from a piece of gold to two farthings.

² For an interesting account of the "B'dikath Hachamez," cf. Pieritz, Gospels from a Rabbinical Point of View, 33.

that He drove the base traffickers from the sacred precincts,¹ and with all their unseemly strife and overreaching before His eyes, appealed to them, in a voice of awe-inspiring terror, to stay the evils which had changed a house of prayer into a cave of brigands,² wrangling over their ill-gotten gains.

That they dared not resist, but submitted to be driven out at the bidding of a Man, Whose authority was backed by no external force, may well have excited the sneer of the incredulous, who forget Who He was. It will create no surprise in the mind, if we realise that it was He "out of Whose mouth went a sharp two-edged sword," and Whose "eyes were as a flame of fire;" or even if we only recall the many instances in which guilty, conscience-stricken men have quailed in abject terror before the majesty of innocence and offended purity.

Now this cleansing of the Temple has for all time a double application in its practical teaching.

It is intended primarily to inculcate reverence for holy places. It was the repetition in a more striking form of the original command, "Ye shall reverence My sanctuary." And that our Lord designed not only to condemn open and flagrant desecration, but also to discountenance the slightest neglect or carelessness, is clear from the very significant record, He "would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the Temple." He was so consumed with zeal for His Father's House that He would exclude from its courts all trace of worldly occupations. And we only catch His spirit of reverent awe when we enter a consecrated church with the Patriarch's thought uppermost in our mind, "Surely the Lord is in this place; this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

Again, it bids us look on to that great Purification of which this was but a faint foreshadowing, when He shall come in the final judgment to separate for ever the good from the bad, and to banish from His Presence everything that offends. It has pleased God that for a time the sinner and the righteous

¹ "Canaanite" as in the A.V. is often a synonym for merchant, because the Phœnicians were the principal commercial nation. Cf. Prov. xxxi. 24; Isa. xxiii. 8-11; Hos. xii. 7; Zeph. i. 11.

² *σπηλαῖον ληστῶν*. It is far stronger than in the A.V. *κλεπτῆς* is a thief, but *ληστῆς* is a highway robber or brigand.

should live together, and that His rain of mercy should descend upon the just and the unjust. He no longer drives out with indignation and anger those who defile His Church by their impurity and hypocrisy, but suffers them, even as He suffered the traitor Judas, to go on their way with their sins undiscovered. But it is only for a time. One day He will come, as He came from Jerusalem, on that first Palm Sunday, eighteen centuries and a half ago, and repeat the act of cleansing, only with infinitely graver consequence to those who shall be cast out.

How we shall escape that terrible expulsion will depend upon our endeavour to keep through life another temple undefiled, that is, the temple of our body. That form was hallowed for ever by the Incarnation of our Blessed Lord, and it is made to each one of us in Holy Baptism a dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost. Let us learn then to reverence it as God's sanctuary, and we shall have nothing to fear from the Advent of the Judge at the last day.

Our Lord's Authority

S. MARK XI. 27-33

27. And they come again to Jerusalem : and as He was walking in the temple, there come to Him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders, 28. and say unto Him, By what authority doest Thou these things? and who gave Thee this authority to do these things? 29. And Jesus answered and said unto them, I will also ask of you one question, and answer Me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. 30. The baptism of John, was *it* from

heaven, or of men? answer Me. 31. And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; He will say, Why then did ye not believe him? 32. But if we shall say, Of men; they feared the people: for all *men* counted John, that he was a prophet indeed. 33. And they answered and said unto Jesus, We cannot tell. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.

It was on the Tuesday in Holy Week, whilst Jesus was walking in the Temple teaching the people as they gathered about Him, that He was suddenly called upon to answer a question of the gravest import. The circumstances under which it was put were such, and the directness of the inquiry was so unmistakably clear, that unless it could be answered satisfactorily He would gain no further hearing.

After the cleansing of the Temple on the previous day, the Sanhedrim held a hasty sitting, and determined upon the adoption of some more urgent measures to compass His overthrow. Their jealousy of His influence had been stirred almost as soon as He began His Ministry, and it had culminated after the raising of Lazarus. S. John tells us that on hearing of this they met at the house of Caiaphas (on the Hill of Evil Counsel), and officially decreed His death. But their

attempts at carrying out their decree had hitherto been defeated. Accordingly, when He reappeared on the scene which had witnessed their discomfiture, they reopened their plan of attack. They sent a formal deputation of their members to confront Him. It seems to have been carefully chosen with a view to overawe Him, for it contained representatives from each of its component parts,¹ chief priests and scribes and elders. They would be well known in the Temple, and if they could succeed in shaking the belief in His claims, His popularity would receive a shock, and the great obstacle in their way be removed.

Jesus had taken upon Himself two offices, both of which, at least since the prophets had disappeared, had been assigned by general recognition to their body alone. He had usurped the control and management of the Temple,² and placed Himself in the Teacher's Chair. Show us, they say, your authority for such an unprecedented proceeding. If you say that you are a Priest, as we are, the office by God's appointment is hereditary. Prove your Aaronic descent. Or if you claim the right to teach, show your commission. Name the Rabbi from whom you received it, or the Scribe who ordained and invested you with the symbols³ of your office. "By what authority doest Thou these things? and who gave Thee this authority to do these things?"

He Who could read the hearts of men saw through their design. He knew that their object was not really to learn the nature of His credentials, but to entangle Him, to force Him to put forth claims which they could seize upon as grounds for an indictment. And He foiled their attempt completely,

¹ The hereditary spiritual office was represented by the heads of the twenty-four Courses of the Priests. The Elders were the real Senators of the Council, selected for age and dignity. The Scribes embodied the knowledge of the nation.

² He had called the Temple "His" House, and had swept aside by a single stroke all the rules and regulations which the Chief Priests had sanctioned; and as a Teacher He had taught the people with such an air of authority that they regarded Him as superior to the Scribes.

³ It has been said that every Scribe received at his ordination a key, as the symbol of his office, showing that it was given to him to unlock the treasures of knowledge.—S. Luke xi. 52; Plumptre on S. Matt. xvi. 19, and Lightfoot's *Exercit. in loco*. For some account of an ordination of a Scribe, cf. Edersheim, ii. 382, where, however, he denies the "tradition" of the key.

as He always did when He discovered the least trace of dishonesty, by replying to the inquiry in a manner wholly unexpected. His answer appeared to be only a clever evasion of the question, but if they understood all that it involved it was its direct solution. "The baptism of John, whence was it?" He meant, of course, his ministry in general; but because its chief characteristic was the washing away of sin, the purification of the hearts of men in preparation for the Advent, He used the term Baptism as synonymous with Mission. And He asked them whether John received his commission to baptize and preach from God or from man. The question placed them on the horns of a dilemma from which there was no escape. Supposing they admitted that he had been sent by God, there was only one conclusion to be drawn. Christ would have told them at once that they had themselves answered their own question as to His authority. The aim and end of John's mission was to bear testimony to Him. One great reason why the people flocked in such crowds to his Baptism was that they might be prepared to welcome Him Whose forerunner the Baptist professed to be. The burden of his message was, "There cometh One mightier than I after me, Whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose."

And could there be any manner of doubt that John had recognised Him as his successor? Had he not said of Him, "Behold the Lamb of God, Which taketh away the sin of the world"? To admit, therefore, the Divine authority of the Baptist's mission, was tantamount to the admission of His; and this the Sanhedrists saw clearly enough. And not only so, but such a recognition would leave them self-condemned, for though in the first outburst of excitement some of them were carried along in the stream of popular enthusiasm, when they found how diametrically opposite His teaching was to theirs, they had set their faces against Him, and denounced His austerities in unmeasured terms. Not unnaturally then the thought arose in their minds, "If we shall say, From heaven; He will say, Why then did ye not believe him?" But supposing, on the other hand, they said that John had no Divine commission, they would be no better off. That would be to run counter to popular feeling, for "all men counted

John, that he was a prophet indeed." His coming had been hailed with delight by the nation. For four centuries they had been waiting and watching for one of those accredited messengers of God to come again amongst them. In all the difficulties in which they found themselves placed, their common lament shaped itself into a cry that the Urim and Thummim might be revived, or that some one might come who should be authorised to speak to them direct from God. And so when the Baptist came in the spirit and power of Elias the whole population poured out to welcome him.

The Sanhedrists knew well what a hold he had gained upon the people, and to assert that his authority was only based upon human appointment would involve them in consequences which they were by no means prepared to face.

What then was to be done? Only one course was open to them. They would evade the difficulty by a pretence of ignorance. It was a question, they said, on which they could pronounce no opinion. "We cannot tell." We can measure the humiliation it cost them to make such a confession in the hearing of the people, when we remember the claims which they had arrogated to themselves to be the sole depositaries of all legal and ecclesiastical knowledge. There was not a question ever propounded in their schools, not a difficulty, either of interpretation or history, which they would ever acknowledge their inability to solve in some way. And if only they had not shrunk from speaking the conviction of their hearts at this moment, there was no reason why they should do it even here. But anything was better than the least sanction to the pretensions of their open and avowed Antagonist; and so, with a lie on their lips, they went away, smarting under the humiliation and the blow which their pride had received, and determined to redouble their efforts to bring about His death.

The interview abruptly ended with our Lord's refusal to give any other answer to their inquiry than what they had received. He then turned to the people and resumed His teaching, to be interrupted again, if not by the same disputants, yet doubtless by men urged on at their instigation, to try to

bring Him into collision with the civil power,¹ but with the same result. No weapon of argument forged against Him could stand, for He had truth on His side, and it always prevailed. It was only when they enlisted treachery and force on their side that their end was gained.

¹ Cf. p. 260.

The Parable of the Vineyard

S. MARK XII. 1-11

1. And He began to speak unto them by parables. A *certain* man planted a vineyard, and set an hedge about *it*, and digged *a place for* the winefat, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country. 2. And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard. 3. And they caught him, and beat *him*, and sent *him* away empty. 4. And again he sent unto them another servant ; and at him they cast stones, and wounded *him* in the head, and sent *him* away shamefully handled. 5. And again he sent another ; and him they killed, and many others ; beating some, and killing some. 6. Having yet therefore one son, his wellbeloved, he sent him also last

unto them, saying, They will reverence my son. 7. But those husbandmen said amongst themselves, This is the heir ; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours. 8. And they took him, and killed *him*, and cast *him* out of the vineyard. 9. What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do ? he will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others. 10. And have ye not read this scripture ; The Stone which the builders rejected is become the Head of the corner : 11. this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes ? 12. And they sought to lay hold on Him, but feared the people ; for they knew that He had spoken the parable against them : and they left Him, and went their way.

ONE Who was wont to illustrate His teaching by imagery drawn from the objects which surrounded Him, could hardly fail in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem to speak of vineyards. The hills and table-lands of Judah were the home of the vine. Five times our Lord availed Himself of this figure for His parables, and though it is doubtful in what locality He spoke that of the Labourers in the Vineyard,¹ it is almost certain

¹ Probably He was then in Peræa ; if so, the same principle applies, as Moab, no less than Judæa, was famous for its vines. There is no instance of His referring to the vine in Galilee, where it grew most rarely, if at all.

that the remaining four are intimately associated with Jerusalem.

In many places in Southern Palestine the features of this parable may still be traced. The loose stone fences, like the walls so familiar to the eye in Wales or Derbyshire; the remains of the old watch-towers,¹ generally in one corner of the enclosure; and the cisterns hewn in the solid rock in which the grapes were pressed—all remain to the present day. It was the custom in our Lord's time for the owner in leasing a vineyard to tenants, to arrange for the rent to be paid not in money but in kind, a certain portion of the produce being set apart as "a first charge" for the landlord. The system prevails in modern times in some parts of France,² and more widely under the name of "ryot-rent" in India. The inner meaning of the parable is quite obvious. It had become perfectly familiar to the Jews from the frequent comparison of Israel to a vine in the Old Testament. Isaiah had said, "The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel," and had spoken of God as a Vine-dresser, bestowing the utmost care upon the nation, only to receive in return a worthless vintage. "He looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes."

The Psalmist had sung of the vine brought out of Egypt, transplanted into a carefully-prepared soil, and growing over the whole land, only to be devastated by "the boar out of the wood, and the wild beasts of the field."

Ezekiel had warned the nation that if they bore no fruit they would be useless, just as the barren vine was good for nothing but to be "cast into the fire for fuel."

Indeed, the figure seemed to the Jews so peculiarly applicable that they appropriated it as their emblem, and it was perpetuated "on the coins of the Maccabees, and in the colossal cluster of golden grapes which overhung the porch of the second Temple; and the grapes of Judah still mark the tombstones of the Hebrew race in the oldest of their European cemeteries at Prague."

¹ The object of these was chiefly to protect the vines from robbers and wild beasts, which would root them up. They presented a very isolated appearance, rising out of the vineyards. "The lodge in the garden of cucumbers," in Isa. i. 8, no doubt such a tower of observation.

² It is called the *métayer* system. It is known also in Italy and Persia.

Whether in the parable the hedge and winefat and tower had each a special application in the system of God's Providential care for His ancient people, we cannot say; but at least in one particular we may trace a peculiar fitness in the figure of "the hedge."

What was it that protected the land of Israel year by year during the three Great Festivals, when by the Divine Law the country was denuded of its male population—when every man, from north, south, east, and west, from the most unguarded districts, leaving their flocks and herds, their wives and little ones, totally unprotected from their bitterest enemies, went up to Jerusalem, the centre of religious worship?

What was it that held in check the Moabite and Ammonite, and the robber tribes of Arabia?¹ It was the fence of Divine protection, which, like "a wall of fire," God in His Providence had built up, so that no one dared to pass it. The husbandmen were the leaders and chief rulers of the people; the servants were the prophets. The successive missions point perhaps to the earlier and later,—Elijah and Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Baptist. All were received with persecution and death. One was threatened wherever he went, another sawn asunder, a third beaten and thrown into the dungeon, a fourth denounced the people in the Temple, and perished between the altar and the sanctuary. Indeed, with such unbroken cruelty were the messengers of God treated, that, looking back over the history of wellnigh a thousand years, S. Stephen broke out into the indignant question, "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?" And when God sent to them His Son, trusting that the hereditary reverence for the chief of the family would revive their respect and allegiance, they waxed bolder and bolder, till they crucified Him like a common malefactor, and cast His Body out of the city.

And what was the fate of the wicked husbandmen? It adds not a little to the interest that, as S. Matthew records, its justice was acknowledged by the very men who both earned and endured it. It seems strange that, knowing, as they must have done, that the parable was aimed against

¹ I feel that I am indebted to some one for this illustration, but cannot recall where I have seen it.

them, they should by their own lips have condemned themselves, for, in answer to the question, "What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do?" they¹ answered at once, "He will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others." We can hardly doubt, however, that it was intended as a blind, to hide from the people the conviction they must have felt. But it was fulfilled to the letter. Nothing could have exceeded the misery which overtook those miserable men at the destruction of their city. Their threatened wretchedness is intensified by the peculiar alliteration² which the first Evangelist has preserved: "He will miserably destroy these miserable men." And not only did they perish for their wickedness, but the vineyard was given to others, and all the spiritual privileges which they had forfeited were transferred to the Gentiles, and are now the heritage of Catholic Christendom.

Such was the predicted punishment for the wicked husbandmen; but what was in store for the rejected messengers? The "Hosannahs"³ with which He, the Heir, the Well-beloved Son, had been received, were still ringing in His ears, and the Psalm, so familiar to every Jew, from which the people had drawn their shouts of triumph, answered His thoughts. It had been written⁴ to commemorate the completion of the Second Temple after their Return from Captivity, and it was sung at their favourite Feast. The Psalmist wished to contrast their present happiness with their former misery; the joy of independence and restoration to ancient rights with the contempt and rejection they had endured at the hands of the heathen. And he drew his imagery from an episode in the building which had been noted by him for remembrance. Among the stones and slabs from the marble quarries was one which the builders set aside from some foolish caprice as

¹ The answer is put into their mouth by S. Matthew. Probably it was taken up and repeated by Himself, as SS. Mark and Luke indicate.

² *κακούς κακῶς ἀπολέσει.* It is not easy to transfer the force into another language, which is further increased by the juxtaposition of the adjective and adverb.

³ Cf. p. 238, n. 1.

⁴ It is the last of the collection forming the Hallel, cxiii.-cxviii. The Psalm has been assigned to David or Hezekiah, but there is a strong consensus of opinion in placing it after the Return from Captivity, though the occasion of its composition is disputed.

unfitted for use, and there perhaps it lay neglected and moss-grown, till suddenly it was found to be exactly what was wanted; not, however, for some common occasion, but to be raised to a position of the highest honour.

The circumstance was seized by the poet to depict the change which the nation had experienced. The Rabbis, passing by the predicted rejection, and thinking only of the glory of the coming King as the Corner-stone of the nation, had interpreted it in its secondary sense as of Messianic application; and Jesus knew that they had done so. It is no matter of surprise, then, that His appeal to a well-known scripture to describe their conduct should have stung the Rulers and Scribes with resentment. That He should dare to tell the people that One Whom they were plotting to destroy would be set by God upon His holy hill, kindled to the highest degree their hatred against Him. Gladly would they have seized Him and silenced His voice for ever, but the people were on His side, and they dreaded another public demonstration—a repetition of Palm Sunday—if they attempted to lay hands upon Him. And so they went away in a rage, baffled for a time, but determined to redouble their efforts, and lay deeper designs to bring Him into their net.

The Tribute-Money

S. MARK XII. 13-17

13. And they send unto Him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch Him in *His* words. 14. And when they were come, they say unto Him, Master, we know that Thou art true, and carest for no man: for Thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth: Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or not? 15. Shall we give, or shall we not give? But He, knowing their hypo-

crisy, said unto them, Why tempt ye Me? bring Me a penny, that I may see *it*. 16. And they brought *it*. And He saith unto them, Whose *is* this image and superscription? And they said unto Him, Cæsar's. 17. And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at Him.

NOTHING could express more clearly the determination of the chief men of Jerusalem to destroy Jesus, than to be told that for the second time the Pharisees and Herodians had entered into a compact together against Him. It would be difficult in the annals of history to find a more striking example of what is meant by "an unholy alliance." The ecclesiastic and rigidly orthodox Religionist makes common cause with the political and freethinking Secularist—the one bound hand and foot to the Theocracy, the other the time-serving adherent of the Herodian Court.¹

It is not easy to discover the motives which prompted the Herodians to accept such a position, for they evidently played only a secondary part in the transaction. It is the Pharisaic character that is stamped alike on the design and the mode adopted for carrying it out. Their aim was to "catch Him in

¹ Cf. pp. 58, 59 for further characteristics of the two parties.

His words." S. Matthew says to "entangle" Him. Both expressions¹ in the original suggest the craft and wily cunning of the hunter, who sets his traps warily, that the prey may fall into them without any suspicion. They approach Him with a courteous address,² which reminds us of the traitor's kiss, calculated as they believed to throw Him off His guard; and they praise Him for the well-known impartiality³ and fearless independence of His conduct; and they made as though they were in a difficulty which they had no hope of solving for themselves. If He could help them to unravel it, a favour would be conferred upon them. Such manifestly is the tone which they assumed. The question was an oft-debated one, but it may have been revived at this time through the presence in Jerusalem⁴ of Pontius Pilate, the representative of Rome, and also of Herod, its vassal king. At all events, under the circumstances, none more calculated to "entangle" our Lord could be imagined. "Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or not?" Supposing He should admit the Roman supremacy, and uphold the payment, they would take care that the people should hear of it, and His growing popularity would receive a severe check. The nation's hopes of finding in Him the promised Messiah Who should sweep the alien invader out of the land, would be dashed to the ground by such a confession. If, on the other hand, He should take the opposite course, as they doubtless expected, and counsel resistance, their most eager wishes would be realised, because it would place Jesus completely at their mercy. They had only to turn to the Herodians and bid them to delate Him to the Roman Governor, promising at the same time to appear in court as witnesses of His seditious counsels. The revolt of Judas of Gamala a few years before, and the wide sympathy of the

¹ *παγιδεύω*, to ensnare, or entrap. *ἀγρένω*, to take in hunting.

² *Διδάσκαλε*, Rabbi, a deferential acknowledgment that they were prepared to "sit at His feet."

³ "To regard the person" of any one hardly conveys the meaning of the original *βλέπειν εἰς πρόσωπον*. It is to look at the external circumstances of any one: the position, wealth, influence, etc. *πρόσωπον* was the *persona*, the mask an actor wore, the character he assumed.

⁴ Pontius Pilate was so unpopular that he usually resided at Cæsarea, and only came occasionally to Jerusalem, as at the Passover, when his presence would be required in case of disturbances. The same motives, to a less degree perhaps, influenced the Herods.

people with the course he had taken, would show Pilate the necessity of dealing with such a case in the most summary manner. Such was their deep-laid plot for placing Jesus in a position from which, as they thought, there was no escape.

We can see them as they stood round Him, waiting after the question was put, almost in breathless expectation, hardly able to conceal their satisfaction that their Victim was snared at last. But what a rude shock their hopes must have received by the very first words of His reply! "Ye hypocrites! why do you tempt Me?" It swept away at a stroke the whole web of their craft and cunning, and must have prepared them for another of those withering denunciations with which their ears were so familiar. But "before the people," and doubtless for their sakes, He chose rather to answer the question deliberately; and He did it, so to speak, out of the very mouth of His questioners. As by a sudden flash of inspiration, and with a presence of mind that made them marvel, He called for the coin in which the tax was paid, not "the shekel of the sanctuary," but the Roman denarius, and pointing to the Emperor's head, and the familiar "legend"¹ that was inscribed on the rim, asked what it meant.

One of the most learned of their Rabbis has told us what the full force of that question was, and thereby enabled us to understand the bewilderment with which they must have heard it.

It was a common proverb among the Jews, "Wherever a king's coin is current, in that country his authority is accounted supreme;" and it is illustrated by a curious dialogue between David and Abigail. She begins by asking what evil she has done to him. David replies that her husband has vilified his kingdom. Abigail rejoins that it can hardly be David's kingdom, seeing that Saul's coinage is still in circulation; and she concludes by the very pertinent question, "Is it not true that Saul is to be regarded as king so long as the people use his money?" In further support of the acceptance of this principle, at a date not very remote from that of which we are writing, it is said that when the famous Barchochba raised the

¹ It was accidental that this particular coin bore the Emperor's head, for out of deference to Jewish prejudice this was usually omitted, and only the name and title engraved on it.

standard of revolt in the reign of Hædrian, giving himself out to be the promised Messiah, he issued "a new coinage dating from the liberation of Jerusalem." This, then, is the whole gist of our Lord's reply: "You must recognise the fact. You use Cæsar's money, and by your own admission, without the need of consulting Me, you are bound to acknowledge him as your lord, and pay him his due." It is no matter of surprise, then, that "when they heard these words they marvelled," and were put to silence.

That command to "render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's" involved a great deal. It taught them first the fact that their cherished expectation of a promised freedom from alien subjection was without foundation. It was nowhere taught in Scripture, as they falsely boasted, that they should be exempted from such a condition. "Thou mayest not set a stranger over thee" was a prohibition against adopting such a king of their own choice; it had no reference to what should be imposed by God as a punishment for national apostasy. Christ's words awoke them to the realisation of the unwelcome truth that they had forfeited their ancient privilege. Cæsar's government, therefore, demanded their recognition; for it was their bounden duty to make a proper return¹ for the advantages of protection for life and property enjoyed through it. And such an acknowledgment was in no way incompatible with their allegiance to God. There need be no clashing between the two spheres of obligation. Cæsar might claim their tribute as their emperor, but there was One to Whom, as their God, something higher was due, even their faith and reverence and love. The two sentences joined together by Christ may never be dissevered, and they teach men in every age, and under whatever government, that "they may never do anything contrary to the rights of God in obeying princes; and never violate the rights of princes under pretence of serving God."

In this world there are many Cæsars. Our Queen, our country, our family ties, our business occupations, all are involved in the command to "render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's." No faith however sublime, no prayers however devout, can set a man free from the obligation imposed upon

¹ Not *δότε*, but *ἀπόδοτε*, "pay back."

him, to do his duty in that state of life unto which it has pleased God to call him. "If any man provide not for his own, he is worse than an infidel."

But while we are zealous for all these public and private considerations, as viewed from the side of temporal interests, let us never forget to acknowledge Him by Whom kings reign and prosperity is secured.

We ourselves are His every bit as much as the coin was Cæsar's. Our bodies are stamped with His Image, our souls redeemed by Christ's Blood, our lives sanctified by His Holy Spirit ; and for all these several blessings we are called not merely to give, but to give back—to make a return for—what we have received : as creatures, to Him Who created us ; as redeemed, to the Redeemer ; as regenerated and sanctified, to Him Who hath washed us in the laver of regeneration, and renews us day by day with the spirit of holiness.

Sadducean Difficulties

S. MARK XII. 18-27

18. Then come unto Him *the* Sadducees, which say there is no resurrection; and they asked Him, saying, 19. Master, Moses wrote unto us, If a man's brother die, and leave *his* wife *behind* him, and leave no children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. 20. Now there were seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and dying left no seed. 21. And the second took her, and died, neither left he *any* seed: and the third likewise. 22. And the seven had her, and left no seed: last of all the woman died also. 23. In the resurrection therefore, when they shall rise,

whose wife shall she be of them? for the seven had her to wife. 24. And Jesus answering said unto them, Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God? 25. For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as *the* angels which are in heaven. 26. And as touching the dead, that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I *am* the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? 27. He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err.

THE chief actors in the last scene were Pharisees; in this they are Sadducees. It has been a common practice to condemn both in the same breath and in unmeasured terms; but such a course is hardly justifiable. The Pharisee, whichever way we look at him, has something reprehensible in his character. The Sadducee, on the contrary, though holding doctrines from which the Christian instinct naturally recoils, has in him much that may enlist our sympathy. Modern writers speak of him commonly as a freethinker, or sceptic, or infidel; he met with a more generous reception at the hands of our Lord. It is quite true that Christ condemned Sadducean tenets, and

warned people against them, but there is none of the scathing denunciations with which He repelled the hypocritical Pharisee. He read their hearts, and saw that many of them were honest men with honest doubts, to whom the common arguments appealed to by their brethren carried no conviction.

In illustration of this contrast of treatment we need refer only to the controversy about the Tribute-money, and to this on the Resurrection. Of the Pharisees in the former He asks indignantly, "Why tempt ye Me, ye hypocrites?" To the Sadducees in the latter He offers the firm but gentle remonstrance, "Do ye not therefore err?"

Now, the Sadducean tenets were, for the most part, negative. They are well summed up by S. Paul in the words, "The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit." It was on the first of these questions that they engaged in dispute with our Lord in the Temple. They disbelieved in the immortality of the soul, but the point on which they raised the present controversy was the resurrection of the body. It was provoked, no doubt, in a measure by the strong materialistic views held by the Pharisees, who even disputed whether a man would rise in the very clothes in which he had been buried; and we cannot but think that they wished to expose their rivals by the somewhat coarse and grotesque form in which they shaped their inquiry. They appealed to a law¹ which had received the sanction of Moses, and been generally recognised as Divine.

Seven brethren in succession, they imagined,² had married the same woman. If, as common Pharisaic teaching implied, even physical human relationships would be reproduced in the risen life, "whose wife shall she be of the seven?" They thought that if they could show that a restoration of these earthly conditions in another world was simply impossible, the whole theory of the resurrection would fall to the ground. Jesus might have replied that by the Jewish law she was the

¹ This was called the Levirate Law, from *Levir*, a brother-in-law.

² It has been suggested that it was a "stock question" for discussion in the Rabbinical schools. Chrysostom, Theophylact, and others, suggest that it was a purely imaginative case; others interpret it as historically true. The Sadducees lay stress upon the woman's childlessness throughout, lest it should be answered that she was the real wife of the one to whom she bore a child.

real¹ wife of the first, and if marriage ties were to be preserved hereafter she would continue so ; but He chose rather to give a full and complete answer to the whole question. He told them that they erred in their general denial of the resurrection through ignorance of Scripture.² There were many passages in which it was taught with unmistakable clearness ; it may be He had in His mind such a confession as Job had made : " I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth : and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God ; " or the words of the Psalmist : " Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell ; neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption ; " or of Isaiah : " Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise ; " or of Daniel : " Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. " Why He did not actually quote any of these, but referred to another, in which the doctrine is only taught inferentially, we shall see presently.

Then, having charged them with going astray through ignorance of what was revealed on the fact of the future life, He went on to show that they were in no less error from an inability to recognise the power of God, Who might reproduce the old relationships in the other world, but under new and altered conditions. Marriage had been instituted to provide for the continuance of the human race : it was " the counterpoise of death ; " but just as there was no death among the angels, so would it be with risen men and women hereafter ; " neither can they die any more. "

" Marriages, " says S. Augustine, " are on account of children ; children on account of succession ; succession on account of death ; where therefore there is no death, neither is there any marriage. "

Our Lord did not teach, as has been hastily assumed, that there would be no reunion in the future world. He does not say that husbands and wives will be no more to each other

¹ This is clear from the fact that to whichever of the successive husbands a child was born, it was accounted legally the child of the first.

² He may also have intended to point to those passages which showed that there would not only be a resurrection but a transformation. Cf. Phil. iii, 21 ; 1 Cor. xv, 44.

than those who have been bound merely by common friendship. That tie, which was held so sacred, so transcendently superior to every other, that it was selected to typify Christ's union with His Church, must have some recognition in the perfect state; but Christ leaves no doubt that all that is "of the earth earthy" will have passed out of it when we meet in heaven. Where love is purified from all carnal alloy, where envy and jealousy have been wholly cast out, there will be nothing even to make such a reunion as the Sadducees sneered at, only under conditions of which they took no cognisance, incompatible with perfect happiness.

Our Lord, then, having exposed Sadducean misconceptions as to the mode of the future life suggested by this inquiry, gives a direct proof of man's immortality. He takes it from the books of Moses. The reason commonly assigned for the selection is a belief that the Sadducees rejected all Scripture except the Pentateuch. But it is pure supposition. Josephus,¹ who is very explicit upon their doctrines, does not even allude to it. Another reason may be easily found. The ground upon which the Sadducees denied the resurrection was that Moses had not taught it. It is quite impossible for us to understand the intense reverence which a Jew, and a Sadducean Jew in particular, felt for Moses. Upon Divine things he was the one authoritative teacher, the one man whose word was indisputable, whose interpretation of the Mind and Will of God claimed an unquestioned acceptance. Prophets may have had dreams, and seers seen visions, but Moses alone had talked with God "face to face."

Now, the Sadducees argued, Moses said nothing about the resurrection of the body or a future life. The Pharisees answered that though there might be nothing in the Written Word, yet there was abundance in the Oral Law which Moses had received, and wherever the Pentateuch failed, Tradition stepped in to clear up the difficulty.

But this the Sadducee steadily refused to admit. He asked for the evidence² of its Divine origin, and he was dissatisfied with that which was produced, as he well might be. The reason why our Lord confined Himself in His reply

¹ Josephus says they denied that unwritten Tradition was binding on the conscience.

² Cf. p. 147.

to Mosaic teaching, even at the risk of being misunderstood,¹ when He had really so many other proofs ready to hand, was that He recognised the Sadducee's position. In that paragraph² of the Second Book which told how God had revealed Himself to the great Lawgiver in the Burning Bush, a declaration of the Almighty had been preserved which taught the truth of man's immortality. "I," said Jehovah, "am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."

Now when He said this nearly two hundred years had elapsed since the last of these had been laid in the grave, and their bodies had long ago crumbled to dust; but if God was when He spoke still their God, they could not have ceased to be, and there must be a sense in which they were alive unto Him—for He is not "the God of the dead, but the God of the living."

It was an entirely new revelation to them, for though they had read the words again and again, the profound truth which underlaid them had never been brought to light till then. Whether the Sadducees were convinced or not, we are not told; all we know is that their mouth was stopped, that they were completely "gagged,"³ as the Evangelists say. There is no doubt of the impression produced upon the bystanders. The difficulty had often been a subject of dispute in the schools, but no Rabbi, not even Hillel or Shammai, had been able to meet it as the Sadducees demanded that it should be met. But here was another proof that Jesus taught man "not as the Scribes," and that "He spake as never man spake;" for "when the multitude heard this," we are told that "they were astonished at His teaching," and the Scribes were unable to conceal their admiration for what He had said.

¹ To some the argument might appear weak if it rested on a passage which required careful explanation to bring out its meaning. If its bearing on the resurrection had been at all obvious, it would not have been passed over uniformly, as it was, before our Lord drew attention to it.

² "In the Bush" means in the section of Scripture so called, as in Rom. xi. 2, "Of Elias," A. V., ἐν Ἡλίᾳ, *i.e.* probably in the section about him. So 2 Sam. i. was "The Bow." Gen. i. "In the beginning" was the title given to the paragraph on Creation.

³ ἐφίμωσε, *i.e.* put a muzzle upon them. Cf. p. 96, n. 1.

The Great Commandment

S. MARK XII. 28-34

28. And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, Which is the first commandment of all? 29. And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments *is*, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: 30. and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this *is* the first commandment. 31. And the second *is* like, *namely* this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none

other commandment greater than these. 32. And the scribe said unto Him, Well, Master, Thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but He: 33. and to love Him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love *his* neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. 34. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, He said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask Him *any question*.

THE Pharisees who had previously encountered our Lord and experienced a signal defeat, so far from being discouraged by hearing that the Sadducees had fared no better at His hands, returned to the engagement in the hopes of retrieving their disaster. But they did not come in a body as before. They selected one of their number to be their spokesman and representative. He is here called a scribe, but by S. Matthew a "lawyer," indicating that his particular functions¹ were legal rather than educational. The choice was not a fortunate

¹ The office of the Scribe was fourfold. He was the schoolmaster, the interpreter of Scripture, a consulting lawyer, and a keeper of the public records. The expression used here, *νομικός*, and in S. Luke xi. 45, differs slightly from that found elsewhere, *νομοδιδάσκαλος*.

one for the Pharisees; for though they were animated by malevolent and sinister feelings towards Jesus, the man himself was clearly actuated by other motives, and, while acquiescing in the letter of his commission, disregarded its spirit. He would hardly have earned the commendation of our Lord, had he shared their intentions. It is true, S. Matthew says, that he came "tempting" Him, but in the original the word does not necessarily imply a hostile purpose any more than it does when it is applied to God's "temptation" of Abraham. However much, therefore, the Pharisees generally may have hoped to ensnare Jesus, it is merely stated that the individual lawyer wished to "test" His knowledge by what would be called a "crucial" question.

The relative importance of different kinds of laws was an oft-debated subject in the rival schools. Shammai, who was the impersonation of a rigid formalism, defended the details, even the most minute trivialities, of the Ceremonial Law, while the more large-hearted Hillel, the advocate of love and charity, upheld the supremacy of the Moral Code.

It will give us some idea of the perplexity in which the whole matter was involved, to find that the Scribes had divided and subdivided the Law, till they made as many enactments as there were letters in the Decalogue. The injunctions were 248, the prohibitions 365; 613 in all. Some of these again were "hard and weighty," others "easy and light."

We can readily understand then how eagerly an inquirer after truth, whose belief in the Great Teacher's knowledge had been stirred by what he had witnessed in the disputes just closed, would come to Him for a solution of the difficulty. Which, or rather "what kind¹ of" commandment is to have the first claim on our obedience? Now, if it be correctly asserted that a Jew, who had been careful to observe the rules and regulations for the phylacteries,² and tassels and fringes, of their dress, was "regarded as having kept the whole Law," the lawyer could hardly have been prepared for our Lord's

¹ *ποία, qualis.*

² The most minute directions were drawn up for these matters in the Mishnah. The passages of Scripture written on parchment and enclosed in the Tephillin were Exod. xiii. 1-10, 11-16; Deut. vi. 4-9, xi. 13-21.

answer. It is true He referred to the phylacteries, but not to notice their shape or colour or materials. Pointing to that which his questioner had upon his forehead or arm recalled the wearer to the meaning of the words that were written therein, and so often recited by him. Every pious Israelite repeated them twice daily in his Shema,¹ "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord;" and Jesus told him that the demand which followed for a devoted love to Him as the supreme object alike of the heart and soul and mind of man, contained that which he was in search of—the commandment of paramount obligation. There was however a second, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," not differing in kind, for it was the natural outcome of the first; but though He had not been asked for it, He could not pass it by unnoticed, because upon the two combined hung all the obligations comprehended under the revelation of God's Will "in the Law and the Prophets." It was, in short, a summary of the two Tables, embodying in few words man's duty to God and his duty to his neighbour. Jesus pointed out that the true test of love to God is love to man; and this He would desire especially to enforce in the hearing of the Pharisees. They were, as their name implied, "Separatists." Their motto was, "Come not near to me, for I am better than thou."

If then Christ had stopped at the first commandment, if He had been content merely to answer the one question, "Which is the first?" the Pharisees would have gone away unrebuked. But He would not spare them, and so went on to tell them that there was a second; and lest they should think it less binding, or of a secondary importance, He added that it was "like" the other, the only difference being, that while love to God is the root of the principle, love to our neighbour is its manifested fruit.

The grand simplicity of the answer won the lawyer's admiration and reverence, and giving Him in sincerity the designation which his fellows had used before in irony, he expressed his approval in the words, "Rabbi, Thou hast spoken the truth." He had doubtless himself, if we may

¹ It means "hear," and was given to the "office" from its being the opening word.

judge from his answer,¹ given the supremacy, as many others did, to the Levitical law of sacrifices; but, as it were by a sudden inspiration, he seemed to realise the utter worthlessness of these, where the spirit of which they were designed to be symbolical was wanting, as he felt it had been with the Pharisees; and he acknowledged that all the blood of bulls and goats, all sacrifices and offerings, and whole burnt offerings, on which they bestowed the most punctilious care, could have no real weight in the balance against a genuine love for God and man. Sacrifice was nothing in itself; it was only acceptable to God in proportion to the self-surrender of him who offered it.

It gives us a terrible insight into the state of feeling so widely prevalent at the time, to be told that the Scribe followed up this expression of admiration for our Lord's judgment by the further confession, "I have often desired to hear of these words, and had none to tell me."

It was followed by a comforting assurance that reason² had triumphed over prejudice, and that such an appreciation of Divine truth had brought him to the very threshold of that inheritance which God has prepared for those that love Him. If, as we can hardly doubt, he went away to act upon his convictions, he was not long left standing without, but entered wholly in.

The result of the interview was that no one was any longer found bold enough to engage in controversy with Jesus.

All the great parties in Jerusalem, ecclesiastical and political, had pitted themselves successively in argument against Him, and all had found Him more than a match for them. They had tried to involve Him with the upholders of the Theocracy, or to extract from His lips some expression of sympathy with their hatred of Roman supremacy, which they might turn against Him. But He had shown them "that the powers that be are ordained of God."

They had ventured again to attack Him where they believed themselves to be invincible, viz., in the interpretation of

¹ His special reference to sacrifice—"more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices"—shows that he had this especially in his mind at the time.

² *νουνεχῶς*. It is an unusual word, hardly represented by "discreetly." It implies an exercise of the *νοῦς*, "intelligently."

Scripture, but His answers had proved that He "of Whom Moses and the Prophets" did write, Who was in fact the great subject of the Revelation, knew far better than the most learned Scribe the meaning of what was written.

And this was the end of their fruitless attempts. All the weapons forged against Him had been repelled; "and no man after that durst ask Him any question."

David's Son and Lord, and the Widow's Mite

S. MARK XII. 35-44

35. And Jesus answered and said, while He taught in the temple, How say the scribes that Christ is the son of David? 36. For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The LORD said to my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool. 37. David therefore himself calleth Him Lord; and whence is He *then* his son? And the common people heard Him gladly.

38. And He said unto them in His doctrine, Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and *love* salutations in the market-places, 39. and the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts: 40. which devour widows' houses,

and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation.

41. And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many *that were* rich cast in much. 42. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. 43. And He called unto *Him* His disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: 44. for all *they* did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, *even* all her living.

At this juncture our Lord, having replied to the inquiries of all His adversaries, and silenced them by unanswerable arguments, lays aside His defensive attitude and proceeds to interrogate them upon a question of momentous import. All their learned Scribes were agreed that the Messiah would be the Son and Heir of the great king David.¹ They had allowed this one idea of His lineage to take such a complete

¹ The belief in a Galilean Messiah of the house of Joseph is said by some to be late. The idea was that there would be two Messiahs; the one of Joseph's house would engage in battle with the one of David's, and that the latter would then reunite the scattered tribes, and all would be restored together.

hold upon them that they had lost sight of another fact, hardly less prominent in the Messianic predictions. Isaiah had foretold in more places than one, that He would be not human merely, but also Divine—not only born of a pure virgin, but at the same time, “The Mighty God,” “Immanuel, God with us.” And yet they had never understood his language aright; its deep inner meaning was a “sealed book” to them; and such passages as these they either treated as Oriental exaggeration, or deliberately declined to notice.

There was a prediction in the Psalter which offered the best possible illustration of their one-sided views. The hundred and tenth Psalm¹ had been universally accepted as Messianic; but the Jews at large, under the teaching of the Scribes, had seized only upon that portion of it which represented the coming King as a triumphant conqueror. After their country had fallen under the dominion of Rome, their Messianic hopes all took the shape of an intense longing for some Great One who should “restore again the kingdom to Israel.”

It was to that part of this prophecy which they had overlooked, that our Lord now called their attention. They were quite right in receiving it as spoken by David, and inspired by the Spirit of God; but it opened with two expressions which, on the reading of the Pharisees, called for further explanation. One of these sufficed for our Lord's argument. “The Lord said unto my Lord.” David called the Messiah his Lord. How was that reconcilable with their belief that He was David's Son? It only admitted of one solution. He of Whom the Psalmist spoke was both his Son and his Lord: his son, as born of a human mother “of the house and lineage of David:” his Lord, as “God, of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds.” There was no escape from this conclusion consistent with the veracity of the Scriptures, which they never dared to doubt, however far short they fell of their real teaching. Our Lord leaves them with-

¹ Many later writers and commentators have denied the Davidic authorship. Some have read the title as though it were “concerning David,” others have supposed the Psalm to be a very late composition. Unless we accept the opinion of those who say that our Lord spoke merely according to the views prevalent among His countrymen, there can be no question on the matter.

out further observation in the dilemma, and they do not appear to have made any attempt to extricate themselves. He might, had it been necessary, have followed it up by showing how the words that came after involved the Divinity of the Messiah. "Sit Thou on My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." It was the seat of the Assessor, of One Who shared the Imperial power of the Divine Kingdom, and of none other. David in the Spirit had seen a prevision of the Ascension, when Christ should sit down on the right hand of the Majesty on High till all enemies should be subdued unto Him; till, like a Mighty Conqueror, He should plant His foot upon the neck¹ of every one who had rebelled against Him. But the simple question was enough; the Pharisees were completely discomfited, and the great crowd² which had gathered round our Lord were delighted by what they heard.

What followed this incident we learn more fully from the first Gospel, which records the withering woes with which Jesus denounced in most scathing terms the hypocritical Scribes and Pharisees. S. Mark has preserved the briefest possible summary of them, noticing merely His warnings against their ostentation, their pride, their oppression of the poor and helpless, and their religious hypocrisy.

His last words to them were meant to be deeply symbolical, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate;" and, as though to suit the action to the word, He turned away to leave the Temple.

It is another of many proofs of His desire to save His adversaries, that He lingered in its courts after He had ceased to speak. It might be that in the calm which succeeded the storm they would reflect upon what had happened, and come to Him even at the eleventh hour; and one more chance was given them. He passed into the great quadrangle known as the Women's Court, and sitting down, perhaps upon one of the fifteen steps that led up to the Sanctuary, found Himself in full view of the Treasury. It was a corridor in which were

¹ The imagery is taken from a rude and barbarous age, in which this was often literally done, as is testified to by not a few Assyrian monuments.

² "The common people" is misleading. It is simply *ὁ πῶλος ὄχλος*, the large crowd.

fixed thirteen trumpet-shaped chests (neither the number nor shape has ever been explained), for the reception of gifts and offerings, each "trumpet" bearing a separate label to indicate the purpose or object to which its contents would be appropriated. Now, while He was observing the varied demeanour of the crowd of offerers, many of whom, no doubt with much parade, cast in "many coins,"¹ His attention was arrested by the approach of a poor lone² widow, who came with the smallest contribution legally admissible. Reading all her condition at a glance, and seeing the strength of faith which led her to throw herself entirely upon the Providence of God, He pronounced her offering more acceptable than all the riches of those who had given to God that which had cost them nothing.

Now there are several thoughts suggested by the circumstance that are worthy of notice.

The first touches the juxtaposition of His censure of the Scribes and the commendation of the widow. The rapacious unfeeling "devourers of widows' houses," and the self-forgetting self-sacrificing victim of their extortion, meet together in the Temple, outwardly to engage in the same religious act; but the former, through their ostentation and pride, to incur Divine displeasure, the latter, to win for herself an undying fame by that "self-denial which is the essence of charity."

Another thought arises out of an expression preserved only in the narrative as given by S. Luke: "All these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God." Every one of those gifts was by Christ's verdict dedicated to God. How often do men withhold their support from institutions on the plea that they are dissatisfied with the administration of their funds! There never was a time when the people could, humanly speaking, have more reasonably declined to support the House of God. Religion was never more hollow, nor the priests more rapacious and self-seeking, and yet Christ deliberately says that all that was put into the Treasury was an "offering of God."

Again, when was it that Christ's attention was drawn to this poor widow? It was in the brief interval between the

¹ πολλά, not πολύ; probably κέρματα is understood.

² μίαν, single, by herself.

most awful denunciations He ever uttered, and the prediction of calamities which reached onward from the overthrow of Jerusalem to the dissolution of the world. Who but Christ, in the midst of thoughts so big with the destinies of the Universe, could have recalled Himself to take notice of a poor woman, and express satisfaction at what He saw her doing? Truly, indeed, was it said of Him, "Who is like unto the Lord our God, that hath His dwelling so high: and yet humbleth Himself to behold the things that are in heaven and earth?"

The Fall of Jerusalem foretold

S. MARK XIII. 1-13

1. And as He went out of the temple, one of His disciples saith unto Him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings *are here*. 2. And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. 3. And as He sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked Him privately, 4. Tell us, when shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled? 5. And Jesus answering them began to say, Take heed lest any *man* deceive you: 6. for many shall come in My Name, saying, I am *Christ*; and shall deceive many. 7. And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled: for *such things* must needs be; but the end *shall not be* yet. 8. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be

earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles: these *are* the beginnings of sorrows.

9. But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony against them. 10. And the gospel must first be published among all nations. 11. But when they shall lead *you*, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost. 12. Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against *their* parents, and shall cause them to be put to death. 13. And ye shall be hated of all *men* for My Name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

OUR Lord's last words of threatening to the rulers of the people, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate," seem to have taken the disciples by surprise, and made a deep impression upon their minds. Built as the Temple was, it is hardly to be wondered at that they should have been staggered

by the bare thought of its overthrow. As they were passing out of its courts with the sentence ringing in their ears, all its splendour and magnificence kindled their admiration afresh; and as it were to remind Him of the hard thing of which He had just spoken, they begged Him to look at the building whose impending ruin He had just foretold. There were the porches and corridors and columns of unrivalled magnificence, its different parts vying with each other in beauty and splendour. Indeed, such was the grandeur of the whole that the Rabbis used to say that a man did not know what a fine building was till he had seen the Temple of Herod. There were the huge blocks of marble, quarried on a scale of magnitude never equalled in the history of architecture,¹ and placed in position by a skill that puts to shame even the boasted mechanics of the nineteenth century; and besides all these, there lay around them fresh materials for use, for the work of building was still in progress.² Could it be that the fruit of all that labour was about to be destroyed, that the vast preparations with which they were still busied would be thus prematurely stopped?

There was no hesitation in our Lord's reply. It mattered nothing that all the skill and labour of the world had been concentrated on its building; its purpose had been contravened, its use abused, and nothing could stay the avenging hand. "There shall not be left," He said, "one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down." How that prediction was fulfilled, history tells us. When Jerusalem was destroyed, the walls were razed to the ground, and even the foundations rooted up. The Jews themselves have recorded how Turnus Rufus, the General whom Titus left to complete his work, "ploughed up the Temple and places about it." And Gentile writers also testify how three centuries later, in the reign of the Apostate Julian, a great effort was made to defy the ancient prediction and rebuild the Temple. Whether it be only a rhetoric figure to express the unsurmountable diffi-

¹ It seems almost incredible as we read the descriptions in Josephus: "The Temple was built of stones that were white and strong, and each of their length was 25 cubits, their height was 8, and their breadth 12." He tells us that as many as 18,000 workmen were employed in the building.—Antiq. xx.

9, 7.

² It was begun about 20 B.C., and finished about 65 A.D.—*Ibid.*

culties the builders experienced, or a fact of actual occurrence, must always appear somewhat uncertain, but it is said that the attempts to lay those gigantic stones upon their base again, were defeated by an earthquake and lightning, and globes of fire issuing from the foundations, which killed many of the workmen.¹ And though here and there some portions of the walls still remain, many modern writers have narrated how our Lord's words have literally come to pass, and every trace of building, in the area on which the prophecy was delivered, has entirely disappeared.

The answer of their Master silenced the Apostles. Leaving the Temple by the Golden Gate, they descended together into the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and turned up the slopes of Olivet on their way to Bethany. It is said that there is a bend in the road where the view of the Temple is exceptionally grand. It was doubtless at that spot that they sat down to rest. With their minds full of the dark forebodings, the four who were with Him—and we notice that Andrew is for once admitted to the inner circle of companionship—broke the silence that must have followed upon that terrible prediction, and asked, "When shall these things be?" The question was not directly answered, but Jesus gave them certain premonitory signs to prepare them for the event.

They had asked Him to tell them, not only when the Temple would be destroyed, but when the end of the world would come; and we can only understand what follows aright, by remembering the twofold object which was before His eyes. The language of His answer has for the most part both a primary and a secondary application; but at the same time some things of which He speaks can be appropriated literally only to one of the two events in view, either the destruction of Jerusalem or the dissolution of the world.

He begins by foretelling a succession of troubles and disasters—agitations caused by religious fanatics, widespread wars, clashing of nationalities, earthquakes and famine. All of these happened as never before within the next generation.

¹ Many things are added by Gregory Nazianzen in his *Invective against Julian* to heighten the effect. Cyril, however, who was Bishop of Jerusalem at the time, makes no mention of it. The miraculous nature of the interruption is defended by Warburton. For further particulars cf. Milman, *Hist. of the Jews*, *in loco*.

And such convulsions and revolutions as they were to witness He told them they must regard as "the beginnings of sorrows." We lose a great deal in our translation by not characterising, as the original does, the nature of the "sorrows." They were the pains as of a woman in travail; the birth-pangs which should issue in the regeneration of the world;¹ and as such they were in a still higher sense the commencement of that labour, out of which, at the consummation of the ages, the new heavens and the new earth will be born.

From these premonitory warnings of a general character, our Lord proceeds to enumerate those which were more strictly personal. For almost² all that follows refers immediately to the Twelve. Before the destruction of Jerusalem all the Apostles except S. John had died. On every one hardship and cruelty, injustice and persecution, had done their worst, and ten of them had crowned a life of suffering with martyrdom; for "Apostle and Martyr" is the title claimed by all in the Calendar of the Church.

The predictions began to be fulfilled when Herod Agrippa, thirteen years later, laid hands upon James, the son of Zabdai, and killed him with the sword. The full tale was told when his namesake James, whom they called the Just, was thrown from the gable of the Temple, and beaten to death by the people.³ "Immediately after this," the historian adds, "Vespasian invaded and took Judæa." We know what supernatural strength they had given to them to bear their trials; and they were led to expect it when Jesus told them not to provide for these terrible contingencies in the ordinary way. He gave them no promise that by the Divine help they should convince the gainsayers, or obtain release for themselves, but that they should be able firmly and fearlessly to bear witness against them.

Read the marvellous defence of S. Stephen when arraigned

¹ The destruction of Jerusalem was the removal of a great hindrance in the progress of Christianity. For this reason it is characterised as the coming of Christ's kingdom.—S. Matt. xvi. 28; cf. p. 186.

² There is no trace in the history of the Apostles of that strife of creeds which leads "brother to betray brother to death" (v. 12).

³ Josephus, *Antiq.* xx. 9, 1, gives a somewhat different account of his death, attributing it to the action of Ananus, by stoning before the Sanhedrim; but that of Hegesippus is confirmed by Epiphanius.

before the Sanhedrim. His testimony awoke such displeasure and resentment that they rose in a body and cast him out of the city. Can we doubt that it was in fulfilment of this prediction that the Holy Spirit put into his mouth those daring words as "a testimony against them," "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?"

Or listen to S. Paul's vindication of the faith before Felix, and that piercing argument for "righteousness and temperance and judgment to come," which the Governor positively trembled to hear, and the conviction is forced upon us that he spoke under the same promised inspiration.

In the midst of all these grave predictions our Lord assured them that nevertheless before the end "the gospel must first be published among all nations." Doubtless this will only receive its complete accomplishment in the secondary application of the prophecy, but we hardly realise how near it was to fulfilment before the destruction of Jerusalem. "The Acts of the Apostles" fill us with amazement at the rapid progress of Christianity in Europe and Asia under the teaching of two of them. What should we not learn if the whole Twelve had found chroniclers to record their labours? Scattered traditions, with more or less of certainty, show at least this, that missionary work was carried on throughout the then known world. There is little doubt that S. Thomas established the Church in Parthia and on the shores of India, that S. Andrew penetrated far into Russia, that Bartholomew preached in Arabia and among the fire-worshippers of Persia, and it has been said that even Central Africa, which the present generation burns to win back to Christ, was the scene of S. Matthew's labours eighteen centuries ago. S. Paul's appeal to "the hope of the gospel which was preached to every creature which is under heaven," though doubtless written with Oriental exaggeration,¹ testifies to a widespread diffusion of the truth.

The paragraph closes with the assurance, "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." It was not of temporary deliverance from the impending calamities at Jerusalem that Christ spoke; for the Apostles had perished before that catastrophe came. It was eternal salvation, to be

¹ Such hyperbolical expressions are common in the Old Testament, and by no means rare in the New; cf. S. John xxi. 25; S. Matt. iv. 8; Acts ii. 5.

won by all who remained firm to their profession for Christ's sake. It was the promise that "by their endurance they should gain¹ their lives," in the highest sense, that they should survive these earthly shocks and live on through the ages of eternity; for "if we suffer we shall also reign with Him;" and as He said to the Church of Smyrna, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

¹ The A.V. "In your patience possess ye your souls" is now abandoned. There is some doubt whether the right reading be *κτήσασθε*, acquire ye, or *κτήσεσθε*, ye shall acquire.

Further Predictions

S. MARK XIII. 14-23

14. But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judæa flee to the mountains: 15. and let him that is on the housetop not go down into the house, neither enter *therein*, to take any thing out of his house: 16. and let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment. 17. But woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days. 18. And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter. 19. For *in* those

days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be. 20. And except that the Lord had shortened *those* days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom He hath chosen, He hath shortened the days. 21. And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here *is* Christ; or lo, *He is* there; believe *him* not: 22. for false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if *it were* possible, even the elect. 23. But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things.

THE prophet Daniel had aroused the fears of the people by a prediction, thrice repeated, of the cessation of sacrifice in the Temple, and the setting up of an "abomination that maketh desolate." It seemed to have received its fulfilment when Antiochus, after putting to the sword 40,000 Jews, desecrated the sanctuary by offering swine upon the altar of burnt-offering, erected a statue of Jupiter Olympius within the sacred precincts, and forbade the performance of all Jewish rites. Indeed, the desolation was so complete that nothing but the heroic valour of the Maccabean patriots saved the people from total extinction.

Our Lord showed that the full meaning of the prophecy was by no means exhausted, but the history of that terrible

desecration was about to be repeated. There was destined to be, however, one distinguishing feature that would vastly intensify the calamity. It is not recorded either here or in Daniel, but the Jews believed that the "sanctuary would be burnt, when a sedition should invade the Jews, and their own hands pollute the Temple." It may have been through some traditionary prediction, such as that of Hosea, only clothed in more definite form, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself." Bearing this expectation in mind, we have little difficulty in discovering what "the abomination of desolation" really was. It was not the presence of heathen troops stacking their arms on the consecrated pavement; neither was it the standards pitched by Titus amidst the smoking ruins, though from the Pagan devices which they bore every Jew held them in "abomination."¹ However in other respects they may have answered the description, they fell short in this, that they could serve no such purpose as our Lord designed, as a signal to the Christians to flee from the city. Escape would be difficult, even after the final investment, but wholly impossible when once Jerusalem was in the hands of the enemy. We find the most exact fulfilment in the pollution of the Holy Place caused by the Zealots. Three years before the close of the siege they occupied the Temple, stopped the daily sacrifice, and made the Sacred Enclosure their headquarters for rapine and murder. The people were completely paralysed by their reckless ferocity; but at last the noble Ananus, the one man who might have saved the city, had not God willed it otherwise, roused his countrymen to a sense of the frightful sacrilege. The attempt, however, to expel them only aggravated the desecration, for the courts were deluged with blood, and 8000 bodies lay slain within the consecrated walls. This was "the abomination of desolation" which our Lord foresaw; and it is worthy of notice that it was interpreted by the Christians as the predicted signal for their departure, for their flight to Pella among the mountain fastnesses of Gilead coincides, in point of time, with the seizure of the Temple by this band of marauders.²

¹ In addition to this it is generally believed that the Roman eagles were actually regarded as objects of worship.

² This was not possible after the Zealots had fully established themselves, as they refused to allow any one to leave the city.

The necessity of escaping to avoid the horrors of the siege was so urgent that Jesus saw fit to enforce it under a variety of figures. In the East the flat roofs¹ of the houses often form a thoroughfare from one end of the street to another. If it should happen that any one should be on the house-top when the tidings reached him that the predicted signal had been given, delay was so dangerous, that, leaving all thought of his worldly goods behind, he must use all possible expedition in reaching the gates of the city. If again he should be working in the field, having gone forth from his home in his coat or tunic, let him not think of going back to fetch his cloak,² but escape for his life without a moment's delay. Happy the woman who found herself free from impediment when the signal should be given, with no child at her breast to retard her flight! Unhappy their fate, S. Matthew adds, if the trumpet should sound on the Sabbath-day! He Who said that the Sabbath was made for man could hardly mean that the two thousand cubits of a Sabbath journey might not be exceeded under such a pressure as this; but He knew the strength of their scruples, and how reluctantly others would assist them in their escape, even if they themselves could overcome their objections.

The afflictions with which the city was threatened were destined to exceed all that had ever been experienced in the memory of man. And here, as in all else, history records the exact fulfilment of the prophecy.

War, tyranny, sedition, famine, and disease combined in an unparalleled manner to aggravate the miseries of the siege. The assassins, by their desperate daring and reckless disregard for human life, inspired all alike with fear. The rival factions vied with each other for the mastery, and there was no recognised centre of control or government. Incredible horrors were perpetrated by the starving masses congregated within the walls. The most loathsome food was sold at an enormous price. Mothers even slew the children at their breasts, and devoured them in their madness; so that the

¹ Cf. p. 38.

² Cf., for distinctive Jewish dress, Edersheim, *Life and Times*, i. 621-3. The short under-coat only was worn at work; the outer cloak would be an impediment, so was left at home.

threatened curse for disobedience was literally fulfilled: "The tender and delicate woman among you . . . her eye shall be evil toward her children which she shall bear: for she shall eat them for want of all things secretly in the siege and straitness, wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates." As many as a million¹ of human beings perished by the sword and disease. Those who attempted to escape from these frightful calamities, and throw themselves on the mercy of the besiegers, were instantly crucified. As many as five hundred at a time of these miserable fugitives might be seen writhing before the walls; and this went on till, as the historian says, "room was wanting for the crosses, and crosses for the victims;" and he sums up all in the pregnant sentence, echoing so exactly the prophecy of our Lord, "Neither did any other city ever suffer such miseries, nor did any age ever breed a generation more fruitful in wickedness than this was from the beginning of the world."

"Except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved." A multitude of causes contributed to hasten on the end. The chief² were these. The population of Jerusalem was swelled far beyond its normal extent by the investment having taken place when the Passover was being celebrated. Further, a great fire broke out at the commencement of the siege, and destroyed large magazines of corn and food which would have sufficed for many years. Yet again the defence was weakened by internal factions, which wholly prevented the besieged from presenting an united front to their assailants. It was the conviction of Divine interposition that drew forth from Titus, as he entered the city and realised the strength of the position, the confession that without doubt God had fought on their side, and expelled the Jews from fortifications which no men or machines could have ever overthrown. This cutting short of the days was designed in the counsels of Almighty God to save the nation from utter extermination, and "for the elect's sake." Whether these

¹ Josephus is not considered wholly reliable in his record of numbers. The total killed in Jerusalem he puts at 1,100,000.

² Other causes of minor significance were the desire of Titus to get back to Rome with all possible speed, his friendship for Josephus, and his love for the Jewess Bernice. The first led him to prosecute the siege with the utmost expedition; the two latter to show mercy and consideration to the prisoners.

latter were the Christians¹ besieged in the doomed city, or Jews whom the dissolution of their polity would attract to the New Faith, or in some mysterious way the remnant of the chosen race according to the election of grace, we can only conjecture. Enough for us to know that in the midst of judgment God remembered mercy.

Eighteen centuries have passed away, and the monuments of this awful catastrophe still survive for our admonition. On the Via Sacra at Rome, amidst the mouldering sculpture of the Arch of Titus, records of the Fall of Jerusalem may still be traced. City after city has arisen on the ruins of that which was once "the joy of the whole earth," but only to succeed to the inalienable heritage of siege and desolation. It is a standing witness to the consequence of neglected warning. Christ closed His threatenings with the caution, "Take ye heed, behold, I have foretold you all things." Prophet after prophet had called to them to repent, but the people turned a deaf or disobedient ear to every invitation. Then God sent His Son to arrest their attention, and for three years He went in and out among them, healing their sick, giving sight to the blind, and restoring the dead to life again,—doing everything to win them back and lead them to repentance; but at last, when they despised and rejected Him, and crowned the great pile of their iniquities by an unparalleled crime, they were left, for the vindication of Divine justice, to perish in a corresponding ruin.

¹ The recorded fact of the escape of Christians seems to point to one of the latter as the right interpretation.

The Prediction of the End

S. MARK XIII. 24-37

24. But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, 25. and the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. 26. And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in *the* clouds with great power and glory. 27. And then shall He send His angels, and shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven. 28. Now learn a parable of the fig tree ; When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near : 29. so ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, *even* at the doors. 30. Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these

things be done. 31. Heaven and earth shall pass away : but My words shall not pass away.

32. But of that day and *that* hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. 33. Take ye heed, watch and pray : for ye know not when the time is. 34. *For the Son of Man is* as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. 35. Watch ye therefore : for ye know not when the Master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning : 36. lest coming suddenly He find you sleeping. 37. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.

WE pass now into a region where clouds and darkness are round about us. Perhaps nowhere else are we so vividly reminded of the mysteries in which the Divine Incarnation is shrouded, or so forcibly constrained to confess that "there are secret things which are the Lord's."

This deep and solemn utterance of our Blessed Lord to His Apostles, touching the coming of the Son of Man to judge the world, brings together two facts which the finite mind is incapable of reconciling, viz., that as God He knew all things,

but as man His knowledge was limited by the conditions of His Humanity. The co-existence in the One Person of omniscience and ignorance can only be apprehended through faith. It is revealed in Holy Scripture, and on that account demands our acceptance; and we have no more right to cavil at the assertion, than we have to doubt that, by virtue of His Deity, He was supremely blessed, while through the infirmities of humanity He experienced sorrow and pain.

How often do we find that He exercised a perfect and superhuman insight into the hearts and feelings of others, reading their unspoken thoughts, and telling them what they had carefully concealed, and showing that, as S. Paul said, in Him were all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, although S. Luke writes with equal plainness that His powers of perception were limited by laws of progression, for "He grew in wisdom" as He did "in stature."

It is in exact harmony with what we read of Him at the grave at Bethany, that "His holy cheeks were wet with human tears, while the loud voice of Omnipotence was crying, 'Lazarus, come forth!'"

The Incarnation of Deity carries with it of necessity difficult contrasts and paradoxes; and for the solution and reconciliation we must wait till we no longer see "through a glass darkly, but face to face."

Turn now to the prediction before us. It is one wholly beyond the range of human reason to conceive. It is not a vision of the near future, of which there were premonitory signs, such as a far-seeing mind, accustomed to discern times and seasons, might be able to interpret. He passes wholly beyond the horizon of things visible, beyond the destruction of Jerusalem immediately preceding, and fixes the attention on the coming of the Son of Man at the end of the world. He speaks of certain days that were to follow the tribulation, the beginning of which He had linked with the overthrow of the Jewish capital. Its consummation was to be expected only perhaps after centuries of persecution and affliction, during which, as Luke implies, Jerusalem would "be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." History is the best comment upon the meaning of the term. Has there ever been a time since the Fall of Jerusalem in

which the "dispersions" have not suffered tribulation? The record of inhuman cruelty and massacre in our own generation shows that "the end is not yet," and that our Lord's words still await their fulfilment.

He told His disciples that strange phenomena would be witnessed before the final accomplishment: "the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven."

The imagery is such as befitted so grand a theme. To interpret it literally is to divest it of its sublimity and grandeur, and to cavil at its inconsistency with scientific possibilities is to apply to the language of the New Testament rules that we should never think of in the interpretation of the Old. Isaiah had employed precisely similar figures to foreshadow the Fall of Babylon, and Ezekiel also in predicting the overthrow of Egypt.

It may have been that the sun and moon and stars were used as symbols for the centres of government, round which ecclesiastical, political, and social systems revolved; or possibly He pointed to the destruction of heathen religions, and foretold especially the cessation of the worship of "the heavenly host," because it had been the earliest and most widespread form of idolatry.¹ Enough to know that preceding the Advent there will be vast changes, it may be physical and cosmical, as well as social and spiritual, and out of the chaos to which the world shall be again reduced, Christ will come in power and glory, and gather in the elect whom He has sealed for His Own.

At this point, with a transition as swift as that which transferred His thoughts from the type to the antitype, He reverts to the dissolution of the Jewish Polity. A fig-tree, beneath which in all probability He was sitting to rest with His disciples on the slopes of Olivet,² furnished Him with an illustration

¹ Sabæism has only one rival among the ancient systems of idolatrous worship in its claim to be both the earliest and most largely adopted, viz., Ophiolatry.

² Figs and olives were so often found together in this neighbourhood that they seem "to justify the Mussulman's belief, that in the oath in the Koran, 'By the olive and the fig,' the Almighty swears by His favoured city of Jerusalem with this adjacent mountain" of Olivet.—Stanley, Sinai and Palestine, 179.

for His teaching. Its fresh green leaves were the heralds of the approaching summer. The generation then living¹ might, if these were observant, see signs which would bespeak with equal clearness the near fulfilment of the predicted destruction. It was an echo of the previous declaration before His Transfiguration: "Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."²

All this our Lord foresaw through that Divine knowledge which He had from being One with the Father. But there were times when He chose to empty Himself, and to hold in abeyance, as it were, the attributes of Deity, in order that His Humanity might be fully expressed. Hooker, in dwelling on the conjunction of natures in the Person of Christ, shows that the properties of His Manhood may be seen in that nature "which felt hunger after long fasting, was desirous of rest after travail, testified compassion and love by tears, groaned in heaviness, and with extremity of grief even melted away itself into bloody sweats;" and that these are not abolished by association with the properties of His Deity. "We may not imagine that the properties of the weaker nature have vanished with the presence of the more glorious, and have been therein swallowed up as in a gulf." It is only by realising the truth of this that we can understand what He meant when He said in reference to the end of the world: "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son,³ but the Father."

Nothing could have impressed their minds more deeply

¹ From not being able to realise that our Lord passes in thought from the Destruction of Jerusalem to the End of the World, and *vice versa*, and for the time may be dwelling on each one singly, men have found difficulty in understanding this expression, and have been driven to strange interpretations of the word. Strauss and De Wette both referred this prediction to the Final Coming, and used this promise as a sign of our Lord's fallibility. Some have interpreted it as "the race of the Jews" (Stier, Dorner, Alford); others of "believers" (Origen and Chrysostom); others again of "the human race."

² Cf. p. 186.

³ οὐδὲ ὁ Υἱός, "not even" the Son. In the parallel passage in S. Matt. xxiv. 36 they have fallen out of the Received Text. They have however considerable authority, and are inserted in the Revised Version from MSS. B D.

S. Ambrose, de Fid. v. 193, indicated that they were wanting also in S. Mark in the MSS. of his time: "Veteres non habent codices Græci, quia nec Filius scit." Not improbably they were purposely omitted at a time when the

with the absolute uncertainty of the time of the event than this confession, that even He Himself could not tell them when it would be. The necessity of being prepared for it He enforced under a variety of figures, only one of which has been preserved by S. Mark. When He had departed they must bear ever in mind that they were left "to occupy" till He should return, each with his appointed work to do in the household of His Church. The attitude of mind that best befitted men so situated was that of constant watchfulness, not only that they might be awake¹ when² their Master should return, but that He should find them at their posts fulfilling their daily task. The two duties have been sometimes separated. Carried away by the expectation that the Day of the Lord was immediately pending, men have detached themselves wholly from the present, and have drifted, like the Thessalonians, from the anchorage of a settled mind, or been so agitated by fear that they had no spirit or energy for the duties of life. Others again, because the anticipations of men had been so often mocked, have resolved to put out of view the promise of His coming, and be satisfied to do their present work without reference to the future. Both these tempers of mind are rebuked by the warning to the Apostles. He alone obeys the Master's command to watch, who is awake to the call of his worldly occupation, in whatever station of life his duty lies, and who at the same time looks out for Him in all that happens, "who would not be surprised, or over-agitated, or overwhelmed, if he found that He was coming at once."

orthodox did not scruple to defend the Faith by improper means. Cf. the insertion in 1 S. John v. 7.

¹ "Watch" of the Authorised Version in vv. 33 and 35 is represented by different Greek words—*ἀγρυπνεῖτε* and *γρηγορεῖτε*.

² In olden times the Jewish night had been divided into three watches—cf. Judges vii. 19,—but Lightfoot has disputed this (Exercit. in Matt. xiv. 25). The Rabbis, however, testify to the triple division. The fourfold watch was adopted between the time of the Judges and David, not, as is commonly said, when Judæa became a Roman province. Cf. p. 141, n. 3.

The Gift of Mary of Bethany

S. MARK XIV. 1-11

1. After two days was *the feast of the passover*, and *of unleavened bread*: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take Him by craft, and put *Him* to death. 2. But they said, Not on the feast *day*, lest there be an uproar of the people.

3. And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as He sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spike-nard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured *it* on His head. 4. And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made? 5. For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against

her. 6. And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on Me. 7. For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but Me ye have not always. 8. She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint My body to the burying. 9. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, *this* also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.

10. And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray Him unto them. 11. And when they heard *it*, they were glad, and promised to give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently betray Him.

THIS record of the anointing of our Lord in connection with His coming Passion¹ is preserved by three of the Evangelists. S. Luke, who passes it over, has however noticed another which took place at a much earlier stage in His Galilean ministry. On both occasions it was in the house of a man named

¹ S. John says that it was "six days before the Passover," which would fix it on the Sabbath before His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. If his date be correct, the Synoptists have introduced it later, possibly in order to bring it into immediate connection with the betrayal by Judas, implying that his resolution to sell our Lord for money arose out of his disappointment at missing the three hundred pence.

Simon, who is designated in one narrative "the Pharisee," in the other "the leper." In the former the woman who anointed Him is unnamed, but described as "a sinner." In the latter it was Mary of Bethany. It is no doubt possible that the persons, though differently described, are to be identified. If so, the case affords an interesting illustration of unremitting gratitude for mercy and pardon. A woman whose sins had made her an outcast from society found a Friend in Jesus, and became henceforth a devoted follower. Unable to tear herself from His company, she sat at His feet till her sister complained; and she repeated with most lavish prodigality the anointing which was associated with her forgiveness.

If S. Augustine was right in his conjecture (for he is responsible for this view) we have here a striking example of the principle, "to whom much is forgiven the same loveth much." But there are grave reasons that would make us hesitate, even upon such weighty authority, where it stands almost alone, to accept the supposition. Suffice it to mention that there is not the slightest trace of evidence discoverable, historical or traditional, direct or indirect, that Mary of Bethany had ever lived a life of sin and shame.

It is with hardly less injustice supposed that "the sinner," of whom S. Luke speaks, was Mary Magdalene. The theory rests upon no more substantial basis than the juxtaposition in the third Gospel of the two events of the anointing by an unknown woman, and the casting out of seven devils from Mary of Magdala. And yet the belief in the identity of persons, fostered so largely by Christian art, has taken such a firm and lasting hold upon the popular mind, that "a penitent" and "a Magdalene" are regarded as synonymous terms.

The only safe course is to leave the earlier anointing vague as the Evangelist left it. Had it been recorded by S. John, the uncertainty would doubtless have been removed, on the same principle which led him to disclose the name of the chief actor in the later event, though it had been passed over in silence by S. Matthew and S. Mark. When they wrote probably Mary was alive, and her name was suppressed out of consideration for her feelings; but when S. John composed

his Gospel, many years later,¹ all reason for the suppression had been removed by her death; and as she could not suffer any inconvenience from the notoriety, the whole details were made known. It was just what happened with regard to the resurrection of her brother Lazarus. It has often created some surprise that this crowning miracle of our Lord's works should have only been recorded by one Evangelist; but the rest were doubtless influenced by the same motives which guided them in concealing Mary's name. If the tradition be true that Lazarus lived in his restored life for thirty years, he must have been alive when the first three Gospels were published, and rather than make him an object of curiosity, probably even of persecution from the Jews, the writers passed over the miracle; but when S. John wrote Lazarus had died, and so the veil of reserve was removed.

If we may attempt to picture the supper which was prepared for Jesus at Bethany, we should place Him at the table between Simon and Lazarus, and, if the tradition be trustworthy which makes them father and son, and supposes the former to have been healed of his leprosy by our Lord, it is impossible to imagine a more touching scene. Both were trophies of His power and love; both had been raised to life by His hand, for while Lazarus had been actually called forth from the tomb, Simon had been raised from a condition of living death. And as they sat at meat, Mary came behind with an alabaster² vase of the costliest unguent,³ and crushing the seal upon the mouth, poured the whole contents over His head. The fragrance was such that "the house was filled with the odour of the ointment," and the expenditure so prodigal that it excited the indignant surprise of some of the guests. Judas made no scruple of expressing what others felt; he was unable to conceal his disappointment that an opportunity had been

¹ The date of this Gospel has of course been very variously given. If we accept Dr. Westcott's view, and probably we can find no one more trustworthy, we should place it, on grounds of internal evidence and historical tradition, at the close of the first century.

² It is described as "a calcareous spar resembling marble, but softer and more easily worked."

³ The meaning of *πιστικῆς* is doubtful. If from *πίνω*, probably "liquid;" if from *πίστις*, genuine, unadulterated. "Spikenard" probably originated from the untranslated form in Latin, *nardus pistica*, which was changed into *spicata nardus*.

lost of adding to his ill-gotten store ; perhaps he thought too that a manifestation of jealousy for the interests of the poor would help to divert suspicion from himself. If the precious ointment had been sold, it would have realised as much as three hundred pence ;¹ perhaps in his eagerness to rebuke the "waste" he calculated it at more than its value, but even at his valuation Jesus showed that it was no reckless extravagance, but a noble deed. It may have been that the dark background of the traitor's design made Mary's act of sacrifice and love the brighter in His eyes, for it drew forth the promise of almost unparalleled honour. To her alone of His followers did He give an assurance, that what she had done should never be effaced from men's memories in any age or time.

His words reveal a tone of sadness even in the midst of a satisfaction that seems to light up His soul. They express the never absent feeling which cast its shadow over His life, though the bystanders probably failed to notice it.

Remembering perhaps the ancient prophecy that "the poor shall never cease out of the land," He reminded them that opportunities of relieving them would recur every day of their lives, but it would not be so with Himself. "Me ye have not always," He said. It was a gentle way of alluding to the end, so rapidly approaching ; for His mind must have been full of the thought that before a few more suns had set they would know Him no more.

Then again every one imagined that the precious unguents poured with such lavish profusion over His head were intended to enhance His delight at the festive board ; but to Him it was only an anticipation of His approaching burial. Whether He had revealed to Mary's sympathetic heart the full knowledge that His disciples were unable to bear, or whether He only meant that her act might be interpreted as a preparation for His death, we cannot tell ; enough to know that the deed was one which went straight to the heart of Jesus, and gained for her who did it an undying name.

If in the spirit of those who murmured against her, we are ever tempted to object that the reward seems disproportionate to the act, or that it would have been better deserved for a service of far-reaching utility and benefit, we shall do well to

¹ About £9 : 15s.

pause and ask ourselves whether the world is really so poor that it can afford to make no offerings of pure gratitude. "Is there to be no poetry, no extravagance of sacrificing love, no grand expression of great hearts, in splendid festivals and gifts and institutions simply to the honour of God, and the glory of Jesus—to the celebration of the sublimer moments of life? Is it so poor that the common necessity of every day—that the every day of common necessity—can and must consume all our earthly possessions?" However man may rate our actions, God does not weigh them in the balance of utility alone, but far oftener by the standard of motive.

It is no doubt well at times to consider how much good we can do with what we possess, but it is better, infinitely better, to be filled with Mary's spirit of uncalculating devotion, to feel within us an irrepressible passion which wells up in overflowing love, entirely careless where else its streams may reach, provided only that they bring joy and refreshment to Him to Whom we owe all that we have and all that we are.

LXIII

The Last Supper

S. MARK XIV. 12-21

12. And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, His disciples said unto Him, Where wilt Thou *that* we go and prepare that Thou mayest eat the passover?

13. And He sendeth forth two of His disciples, and saith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him. 14. And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the goodman of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with My disciples? 15. And he will shew you a large upper room furnished *and* prepared: there make ready for us. 16. And His disciples went forth, and came

into the city, and found as He had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.

17. And in the evening He cometh with the twelve. 18. And as they sat and did eat, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, One of you which eateth with Me shall betray Me. 19. And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto Him one by one, *Is* it I? and another *said*, *Is* it I? 20. And He answered and said unto them, *It is* one of the twelve, that dippeth with Me in the dish. 21. The Son of Man indeed goeth, as it is written of Him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed: good were it for that man if he had never been born.

WE can hardly understand aright what is written in the Gospels touching the Last Supper, and the Death of our Blessed Lord, without a clear knowledge of the sequence of events and ceremonies of the Jewish Passover.

On the 14th of Nisan two things took place of the greatest importance. At the beginning of the day according to Jewish reckoning, *i.e.* after sunset, or as soon as it could be conveniently arranged, the ceremony of putting away leaven from the houses was gone through.¹ It began frequently with a

¹ According to the Mosaic Law, Exod. xii. 15, this was to be done on the first of the seven days of unleavened bread, *i.e.* 15th of Nisan, but the Jews

fictitious sale to a Gentile of everything liable to fermentation, together with the domestic vessels which had been used in connection with it. Then followed a search by candle-light, conducted by the head of the family and some attendants, through the different rooms, after they had been previously cleared with most scrupulous care. In order, however, to give significance to the act, it was usual to leave a small portion of leavened bread at a spot where it could not possibly escape observation. This, as soon as it was discovered in the ceremonial search, was swept up with considerable formality and carried away.¹

The second event, of even greater consequence, was the slaying of the Paschal lamb. The limits of time within which this might be done is expressed by the phrase "between the two evenings," that is, from three o'clock to five, or from the first decline to the setting of the sun. The father or representative of the house repaired to the Temple with a lamb or kid, having a knife attached to its fleece or horns. Exactly at the appointed hour the doors were thrown open, and the priests stood in two lines, the one holding golden bowls, the other silver. The victim was slain by the person who brought it. The front row of priests caught the blood, and gave the bowls to the priests in the row behind, by whom they were passed up in succession, till at last their contents were poured out at the foot of the altar. When this was over the preparation of the lamb immediately followed. The fat was carefully preserved for burning; and two wooden spits were thrust through the body crosswise by the priests. It was then taken away to be roasted, and was eaten after sunset, or as soon as it was dark, on the beginning of the 15th of Nisan.

After the sun had gone down on Thursday in Holy Week, *i.e.* when the 14th day began, called by S. Mark "the first day of unleavened bread," according to later usage,² Jesus

had made a point of doing it on the day previously. Lightfoot, *Exercit.* in Mark xiv. 12.

¹ Cf. Pieritz, *Gospels from a Rabbinic Point of View.*

² The Feast of Unleavened Bread properly began on the 15th and lasted till the 21st. Probably owing to the importance of "the search for leaven," the day on which it took place came to be reckoned as the first day, and the Feast was said to last eight days instead of seven. If, however, it could be shown that S. Mark wrote in Aramaic, all would be perfectly clear. "On

sent forth two of the Apostles to prepare a room, where they might eat the Passover. They were preternaturally guided to the house of a man, of whom nothing more is known for certain than that he was a disciple.¹ If he had not sat at our Lord's feet they would hardly have said that they brought him a message from "the Master." The room was already furnished with couches and carpets; and thither at a later hour Jesus gathered the Twelve for His last Paschal meal.

Now it is only natural that the deepest interest should have been felt in the site of the guestchamber. It was there, it is believed, that the Apostles assembled together during "Expectation Week" to await the descent of the Comforter, and there that He came to them in the likeness of fiery tongues.² It was there also that Jesus appeared to them on two successive Sundays after the Resurrection. This same upper room was set apart as an oratory, in which, while they attended the Temple for public services, the first Christians celebrated the Eucharist; "continuing daily with one accord in the Temple, and breaking bread³ at home." Upon this site was afterwards erected a splendid building which became the Mother Church of Jerusalem.

What the meal was, of which our Lord partook on the eve of His Passion, has been a subject of controversy almost from the beginning. The first three Evangelists appear at first sight at variance with the fourth, and those who refuse to see a direct contradiction between them have been accused of a disregard for the simple truth. SS. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all speak of it as a Passover; but S. John says that it was "before the Feast of the Passover;" and he tells us that when Judas left the table some of his brother Apostles thought that he was gone to buy what was necessary "against the Feast." Yet further, as indicating that the time for the

the first day of unleavened bread" means, according to Jewish usage, "on the day preceding" it. Cf. Exod. xii. 15, where Rashi explains "the first day" as "the day before."

¹ Many names have been suggested,—Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathæa, Mark,—but there is no authority for any of them.

² The belief that it was a chamber in the Temple is almost impossible. After all that had occurred the Jews could not have granted the followers of Jesus a place of meeting there.

³ That this refers to the great Christian Feast is shown by the rendering of the Syriac Version, "Breaking the Eucharist."

Paschal Feast had not arrived when Jesus sat down with the Twelve, he records that the Jews refused to enter the Prætorium on the following morning, lest they should be debarred by ceremonial uncleanness from eating the Passover; and, once more, the day of the Trial and Crucifixion is called by him "the preparation of the Passover."

If we are right in saying that Thursday evening was the commencement of the 14th of Nisan, there can be no doubt that the Paschal lamb could not possibly have been eaten at the Last Supper. Under no circumstances might it be killed till the close of that day, "between the two evenings." Therefore S. John is strictly correct in all that he says.

But are we to conclude that the other Evangelists are wrong? Certainly not. If our Blessed Lord was to be the Antitype of the Paschal lamb, it was absolutely necessary that He should die at the time appointed for the slaying of this; and it is expressly told us that He did expire just at the moment when the lambs were brought into the Temple to be slain. It follows, therefore, of necessity that He could not at one and the same Feast both Himself be, and also partake of, the Paschal lamb. He desired, He has told us, to eat "the Passover" with His disciples, but He has nowhere said, neither have the Evangelists suggested, that He ate "the lamb." All that was possible was done. All other elements (except perhaps the unleavened cakes¹)—the wine, the herbs, "the charoseth" of figs and almonds and vinegar and spice—were probably partaken of; and the song of praise, the second part of the Hallel, closed the meal, as it always closed the Paschal Feast. There was no inconsistency in calling it "the Pass-

¹ We do not feel justified, after a careful examination of the circumstances, in saying that the bread was unleavened. We have set forth at length in "The Divine Liturgy," ch. xlvi., upon what grounds we conclude that ordinary bread was used at the Last Supper. Suffice it here to repeat that it is the opinion of Jews well versed in the usages of the Passover, and that it seems to us to be the only possible explanation of the fact that the whole Church for nearly a thousand years (and the Eastern Branch all through its history) used none other in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. The Church adhered rigidly to our Lord's example in using mingled wine; it seems most unreasonable to suppose that she could have entirely disregarded His example, had He used unleavened bread. We should certainly have expected that He would introduce into the Paschal Supper one of its most characteristic elements, but it would seem that for some unexplained cause He did not do so.

over," as being eaten at the Paschal season,¹ even though the lamb was wanting, just as there was none in giving the name to the Feast which Jews of "the dispersion" kept out of Palestine, or even out of Jerusalem, where that which could only be slain in the Temple was perforce excluded from the table.

When the Twelve assembled in the upper room a dispute arose, probably for the order of precedence in taking their seats. It is supposed that Judas claimed, and it explains some difficulties to conclude that he was allowed, the first place, viz., that on the left hand of the Host; and we know for certainty that S. John took that on His right.

The proximity of the traitor at such a time troubled His spirit, so that He could no longer repress the awful secret, which for Judas's sake He had kept close to the last. "One of you shall betray Me." All had been guilty of shortcomings, and it was well that they should have some searchings of heart. But such a prediction as that, prefaced too with a solemn assurance, "Verily I say unto you," filled them with sorrow, and they asked, each in bewilderment, "Is it I?" Nothing but tenderness even now; Jesus still withholds the traitor's name, and answers, possibly so that only the nearest could hear, that it is one who had just dipped² with Him in the dish. Then, perhaps raising His voice, He pronounced the most awful words that have ever been spoken: "The Son of Man indeed goeth, as it is written of Him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed: good were it for that man if he had never been born." We may search in vain through the pages of history for a more terrible sentence. In every age there have been open and determined sinners, who have perished, like Judas, almost in the very act of sinning—men like Belteshazzar, or the Apostate Julian—and we can hardly bring ourselves to think of them as otherwise than lost, but we cannot tell what unknown and unseen ways of converting the heart, even at the last, God may have, and we dare not set limits to the Divine mercy. In the case of Judas,

¹ It is, in fact, referred in Deut. xvi. 1, 2, 3 to other parts than the Paschal lamb.

² There are two accounts, one implying that the act was over, *ἐμβάψας*, the other that it was going on, *ἐμβαπτόμενος*.

however, every ray of hope is excluded. He alone of all mankind has received his doom before the Day of Judgment, and as S. Luke tells us, has gone "to his own place"—his own, not because he was predestined to it, but because by a life of constant, sustained deceit, in spite of the drawings of a more than human love, and at last by an act of unparalleled treachery and baseness, he earned it, appropriated it, and made it "his own."

The Sacrificial Aspect of the Holy Eucharist

S. MARK XIV. 22-25

22. And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake *it*, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat : this is My body. 23. And He took the cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave *it* to them : and they all drank of it. 24. And He said unto them, This is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many. 25. Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.

IF we follow SS. Mark and Matthew we can have no doubt that Judas had left the Supper-room before our Lord instituted the Holy Eucharist, and gave to His Apostles the precious Food of His Body and Blood. S. Luke's Gospel, however, suggests that his departure followed the institution ; but there are sufficient grounds for concluding that the order of time is not preserved in this part of his narrative. An instinctive feeling of reverence makes us shrink from the idea that Christ could have tolerated the traitor at the first celebration of a Feast which, throughout all time, was to be a symbol of love and union. Further, it would seem morally impossible that Judas should be able to remain after realising that his guilty secret was divulged. And yet again S. John furnishes direct evidence that after the sop, which revealed to the disciples who it was that should betray Him, Jesus told him to do the fatal deed "quickly ;" and accordingly "he went immediately out."

It is difficult to understand how, in the face of this testimony, not a few of the early Fathers,¹ the Schoolmen,

¹ S. Hilary was very decided the other way. Cf. Comm. in Matth. c. xxx.

and the Reformers, should have thought that he was present. Even Bishop Wren,¹ at the last revision of the Prayer-Book, was unable to persuade his colleagues to alter the words of the Exhortation which appeared to favour this view, "lest, after the taking of that Holy Sacrament, the devil enter into you, as he entered into Judas."

It was then, we believe, in the course of the Last Supper, after the interruption caused by the terrible revelation of Judas's design, that Jesus took one of the Paschal cakes—probably the last that was usually eaten—and invoking upon it a blessing, that it might fulfil the end for which He was setting it apart, proceeded to deliver it to the Eleven, with the declaration, "This is My Body." There was no Paschal lamb on the table for them to partake of, and it was wholly unnecessary, for as the true Antitype He was about to supersede the type for ever. It was in view of this that He gave them, by anticipation, His Own Body, the sacrificial offering of which was already begun by the surrender of Himself at that moment, though it would not be consummated till the appointed time when the lamb was slain.

So also the cup of mingled² wine—the third at the Passover, which was passed round for all to drink before they rose from the table—He declared to be His Blood of the New Covenant, then being shed, just as His Body was being broken, for the remission of sins. As the blood of the Paschal lamb, sprinkled on the posts of their houses, was intended to remind God of His old Covenant with His people, so Christ ordained that henceforth they should have the pledge of a new Covenant with Him through His Own Sacrificial Blood.

To the Apostles, familiar as they were with all the ritual of the Passover, such acts could hardly fail to be interpreted sacrificially. The Holy Eucharist was instituted "in sacrificial terms, at a sacrificial time, and for a sacrificial end."

¹ He proposed to add "after the sop," to show that the entrance of Satan into him was not because of his receiving the Sacrament. Cf. Scudamore, Not. Euch. c. xv. s. ii.

² The Gemarists say, "The wise men agree with R. Eliezer, that no one ought to bless the cup of blessing, till water be mingled with it." The Rabbis used a different blessing over unmingled wine, viz., "Blessed be He that created the fruit of the tree," instead of "the fruit of the vine," which is the expression here used by our Lord. Cf. Tal. Bab. Berach. 50 b.

The brief narrative of S. Mark suggests at once that it was "a Feast upon a Sacrifice;" and it is echoed by S. Paul when he writes, "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast." Jesus gave His Body first to be sacrificially slain, and then to be eaten, "as the antitype of those offerings which, after being slain, were wholly or in part consumed by the worshippers."

If we turn to the longer account given by S. Luke, its sacrificial aspect is made still more prominent. This contains a direction to the Apostles to celebrate it after His departure as the "memorial" of His Death: "This do in remembrance of Me." S. Paul, who was so closely associated with the third Evangelist in the writing of his Gospel, adds the declaration: "For as often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do show the Lord's Death till He come."

The full force of the expressions here used, and their appropriateness to the Holy Eucharist, will be made clear by a consideration of the ritual of the typical sacrifice of the old Dispensation. It consisted of five¹ distinct actions, as follows:—

1. The surrender and presentation of the victim by the offerer.

2. The imposition of hands by the offerer, by which he symbolically transferred his sins to his substitute.

3. The slaying of the victim, also by the offerer, to indicate his acknowledgment that death was incurred by his sin.

4. The sprinkling of the blood upon the altar, or the mercy-seat, by the priest,—the presentation and pleading before God of that which "makes atonement for the soul."

5. The consumption of the body of the victim, either by fire, or by the priest, or by the priests and people, or, as in the Passover, wholly by the people.

When we turn to the Antitype we find that only the first three of these are yet completely accomplished.

¹ Sadler, in "The One Offering," has named four only, leaving out in his enumeration, though of course he mentions it incidentally, the laying the hands on the head of the victim. Cf. ch. x. Willis, in his "Worship of the Old Covenant," has named six, subdividing the "consumption" into two actions, viz., the burning and the partaking, but in either case it symbolises God's acceptance of the sacrifice. In the former He consumes it Himself; in the latter He gives it to others to consume.

Christ surrendered Himself in the eternal counsels of the Godhead, and finally in the garden of Gethsemane.

The substitution of Himself to bear the sins of the world, it would seem, began in the Agony, and was completed at the moment that He cried, "My God, My God, why didst Thou forsake Me?"

Again, He died once for all upon the Cross. It could only have been of these three acts that He said: "It is finished."

That He did not intend to indicate, as has been so often said, that the whole sacrificial system was then for ever closed, is clear from the fact that the action which alone gave efficacy to the sacrifice had not even begun. This was the sprinkling of the blood upon the altar, or the mercy-seat—the pleading of its efficacy for the remission of sins. This Presentation of Christ's Sacrificial Blood began when He entered heaven at the Ascension, and it will continue till He shall come out again. Christ will never cease to present to the Father "the memorial" of His Sacrifice, perpetually exhibiting the marks of His Passion—the wounds in His hands and feet, and His pierced side, and interceding for us by its merits, till He shall have delivered up His mediatorial kingdom at the end of the world. Unless He is doing continuously what the Jewish High Priest did momentarily during the brief period that he remained within the veil, the contrast drawn in the Epistle to the Hebrews between them completely breaks down.

Now we shall see the bearing of Christ's pleading upon the Holy Eucharist, when we compare the language He used to the Apostles with that by which "the pleading of the blood" is characterised in Holy Scripture. Its object is described as to make "a remembrance—an *anamnesis*—of sins every year." The word is restricted in its Scriptural usage to "a memorial before God." Thus the sacrifices of peace-offering were designed to be "for a memorial before God." Again, the frankincense upon the shewbread was "for a memorial, even an offering by fire unto the Lord;" and Aaron was directed to "set it in order before the Lord every Sabbath-day." It was never used of any action or thing intended merely to quicken *men's* remembrance. For this the Greek translators always employed another word, "*mnemosunon*," though in the

Authorised Version this, too, is rendered "memorial." Thus the brazen censers of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram were made "a covering of the altar to be a memorial to the children of Israel." So also the twelve stones set up after the crossing of the Jordan were intended as "a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever."

When, then, our Blessed Lord, at such a time, and amidst such surroundings, used of the ordinance that He was instituting a term which had been appropriated to sacrificial memorials, "Do this in remembrance of Me," literally, "As My memorial," or *anamnesis*, those who received His command would naturally conclude that it was to be sacrificial in its character. And there can be little question, to judge from the terms commonly applied both to the Holy Eucharist and to that whereon it was offered, that it was so interpreted by the Primitive Church.¹

It was doubtless from a belief in some mysterious union of the earthly oblation with the heavenly that this became the great office of Intercession, that prayers for all estates of men, as well the faithful dead as the living, curtailed in later times with harm and loss to the Church, formed such an important element in the service. It was that one, they felt, in which they could rely upon the closest co-operation of Him "Who ever liveth to make intercession." And what more inspiring thought can we feel than that, when the Sacred Mysteries are celebrated, we mortal creatures, not only the priests who celebrate, but men and women, by virtue of a priesthood which Scripture assigns to the laity, and which the Anglican Church is so careful to recognise, are able to blend our intercessory act, in all its weakness and imperfection, with the all-sufficient mediation of the Great High Priest in heaven?

It is when we realise this that we understand how the fourth of the ritual actions in Christ's Sacrifice is not yet complete; and how, whilst it is perpetually going on in

¹ The following are a few illustrations from English Divines of recognised orthodoxy. "Here is a commemorative, impetrative, applicative sacrifice."—Bramhall, *Ep. de la Millitiere*: Works, i. 54. "The Eucharist was instituted, . . . if we may so speak, for a commemorative sacrifice."—Andrewes, *Resp. ad Apolog.* "As it is . . . a representation of Christ's Death, so it is a commemorative sacrifice."—Jer. Taylor, *Life of Chr.*, Disc. xix. Cf. also his "Worthy Communicant."

heaven, it has its earthly counterpart, by His command, in the representation of the Holy Eucharist.

So in like manner, as we have already intimated, the fifth action, the participation of the Sacrifice, "once offered," is still continued in the same service.

In the peace-offerings, the body of the victim, after being accepted by God, was given back to the worshippers by Him for a twofold object. First, it was to be partaken of by them in token of their friendship with each other, and with Him Who gave it to them; secondly, it indicated that it was God's food, by which their bodies were sustained and refreshed.

Even so in the Holy Eucharist, the Church, keeping the typical feast always in view, has been careful to employ every safeguard for the exclusion of those in whom there is "malice or hatred," or who are "at variance" with each other, as well as "the open and notorious evil liver," who cannot possibly be at peace with God.

Again, Christ Himself gives us back, from what, regarded on the side of the Giver, is His Table, or, as it was happily called in the first Prayer-Book, "God's Board," His Body, which has been laid upon the altar by "the Commemorative Oblation," to be eaten "after a spiritual and heavenly manner."¹

And herein the transcendent superiority of the Christian over the Jewish Sacrificial Feast is apparent. There is not the faintest intimation that that of which the Jewish worshippers partook had any direct influence upon their spiritual lives; but with us it is placed beyond the possibility of doubt. Under the forms of bread and wine we receive that which "is meat indeed and drink indeed," not merely for "the strengthening and refreshing" of our bodies, but as the immortal Food of the undying soul; for Christ has assured us, with all the solemnity of a twofold asseveration, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of

¹ Cf. Art. xxviii. "The Body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the Supper, only after a heavenly," etc. Bishop Guest, who re-wrote this article in 1563, finding that his language was interpreted as derogating from the doctrine of the Real Presence, explained that what he meant by heavenly was "no earthly manner of eating," and by spiritual, "not perceptible to the senses."

Man, and drink His Blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." And again He has said, "As the Living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me."

S. Peter warned

S. MARK XIV. 26-31

26. And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives. 27. And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of Me this night : for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. 28. But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee. 29. But Peter said unto

Him, Although all shall be offended, yet *will* not I. 30. And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this day, *even* in this night, before *the* cock crow twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice. 31. But he spake the more vehemently, If I should die with Thee, I will not deny Thee in any wise. Likewise also said they all.

It was the custom of the Jews before breaking up from the Paschal Supper to sing the latter portion of the Hallel¹ while the fourth or last cup was being filled. The Psalms which composed it were full of Messianic prophecy, and words like these must have come home to the Lord and His disciples with the deepest meaning : "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me." "Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar." "The stone which the builders rejected is become the head stone of the corner." It was after this hymn of praise was finished that they left the upper chamber and went down to the brook Kidron on the road to Olivet. The Paschal moon was shining,

¹ The Hallel sung at the three great festivals consisted of Psalms cxiii. to cxviii. At the Passover the first two were sung at an early part of the Feast. The part sung by our Lord contained, the Rabbis said, these five things : The Exodus, the Dividing of the Red Sea, the Delivering of the Law, the Resurrection of the Dead, the Sorrows of the Messiah. In Talm. Bab. Pesachim 18 a. there is a dispute among Rabbis Jehudah, Jochanan, and Yaakob as to the limits of "the Great Hallel." All agreed that it ended with the close of Ps. cxxxv., but they varied as to its commencement.

and they sat down from time to time to listen to the last words of their Master. The first note He struck must have filled them with the saddest forebodings. When the aged Simeon took Him as a Babe in his arms at the Presentation in the Temple, he had predicted that He would be "set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel"—to some a rock of offence, to others a stepping-stone to higher things. Recurring in thought to this prophecy, Jesus reminds the disciples that it is in part about to receive its fulfilment in them: "All ye shall be offended because of Me this night." Then as His eye runs back over the scroll of more ancient prediction concerning Himself, He remembers how Zechariah had foretold that the Shepherd should be smitten and the sheep be scattered abroad. But just as the seer had lit up the gloom of his woful message by the assurance that God would turn again His hands in favour and kindness upon "the little ones" of the flock, even so the Master promises that as the shepherd "goes before" the sheep, and they follow him whithersoever he goes, He will unite them again in their old Galilean¹ home. It is a voice of sadness just touched with joy. "I look on," He seems to say, "into the perils that await you; I see the wolves that are waiting to rush in the moment the Shepherd is removed; I see you scattered in every direction, but not for ever. I shall return to My charge over you, My voice will be heard where you have so often listened to it in the past, and you will know it again, and come back to My fold."

But Peter thinks only of the predicted scattering, and asks himself, "Why should I be scattered? it is cowardice to flee;" and his brave Galilean heart resents the imputation. I cannot answer for the rest, he says, but your words shall never be true of me. "Although all shall be offended, yet will not I."

But He Who foresaw the end from the beginning, and knew what such self-reliance would lead to, instantly checked him with an assurance that he would not only fail in the hour of trial, but that his failure would be one of an inexcusable kind. "Verily I say unto thee, that this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice."

¹ This was fulfilled, as we read in S. Matt. xxviii. 16, when Jesus gave His first solemn charge to the whole body of disciples. This was, it is thought, the first occasion after the Resurrection when they were all gathered together.

Long afterwards he remembered the warning, and though the other Evangelists have spoken only of one cock-crowing, S. Peter himself wished the aggravation of his fall to be emphasised, and told S. Mark of the double hindrance that the two cock-crowings had put in his way.¹ But even though our Lord prefaced the warning with an asseveration that should have made him tremble, he only replied with more abundant presumption: "If I should die with Thee, I will not deny Thee in any wise;" and encouraged by his boldness all the disciples repeated his declaration.

Now we know how grievously this bold impulsive Apostle fell when the crisis came. It will magnify the greatness of his guilt if we try to bring out from the other records the additional warnings by which in His forethought Jesus tried to arm him against the coming temptation.

In what order they were given it is impossible to decide, but in all probability it was before they left the upper room that our Lord said to him, "Simon, Simon"—repeating his name to attract closer attention,—“behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.” The words must have struck the Apostle with peculiar force. Satan had wished, and the original word² implies that God had not thwarted his wish, to sift the whole³ Apostolic company. The accuser of the brethren hoped that in the final crisis all might prove to be chaff; but Jesus assures S. Peter that he individually had been a subject for His special intercession, that such a result might be averted

¹ Cf. p. 3. The first cock-crowing was about midnight; the second three hours later. It is probable that S. Peter would record the actual words used by our Lord, and the other Evangelists the substance. By "cock-crowing" they meant the same as "the second cock-crowing," because the first was not often mentioned, whereas the second was that which every one was familiar with. Possibly the full expression used was, "Before the cock crow thou shalt deny Me; before the cock crow twice thou shalt deny Me thrice." The objection that cocks were forbidden at Jerusalem is invalid; for whatever the old rule had been, it has been proved that there was no law against them at this time; cf. Lightfoot *in loc.*

² ἐξήγησάτο, *i.e.* "obtained by asking." It is to be noticed, however, that it was only granted that he might "sift" them, not that he might have his full wish.

³ The change from the plural ὑμᾶς to the singular σέ is carefully to be noticed.

at least from him when the sifting should take place. Why, the Apostle must have argued with himself, should I be singled out? It can only be because in His foresight the Master sees that I shall be most in need of His help.

Again he must have asked in wonder, "What can the Lord mean by speaking of my being 'converted'?" At least it implies that I shall fall into sin. I cannot turn back till I have first turned away." But if these significant hints failed to awaken him to a sense of his peril, he would surely be aroused by his Master's parting words, the repetition of which would redouble their force: "Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest Me."

Then there was a third voice of warning. After they had all gone out, the Master told them that in a little time He was about to leave them and go whither they could none of them follow. It was doubtless a grievous blow to one and all, but the announcement was received in silence save by S. Peter. True to his impetuous, hasty nature, he altogether refused to accept the position. Where can He be going? he seems to ask himself in astonishment. There must be some danger before Him which He thinks we are unable to face, and He would gladly spare us; but I can face it; I will not be spared. At the worst I can but lose my life, and that I am quite prepared for; yes, "I will lay down my life for Thy sake." But what a rebuff his courageous devotion must have received! What an awakening it should have been to the hollowness of his professions to have been met for the third time with the same unvarying presage, "The cock shall not crow till thou hast denied Me thrice."

Here then we have seen with what patience and persevering kindness our Lord endeavoured to prepare S. Peter for the trial that awaited him. That it was not rewarded was due to several causes. It will suffice in this place to consider one only, viz., his hesitation to believe the warning voice of his Master, arising from an imperfect realisation of the true Nature of Him Who spoke. Had he been possessed by an undoubting conviction of His Godhead he could hardly have ignored such plain and repeated admonitions; but here, as generally throughout his discipleship, he failed to grasp the reality of

His Being. He seems to have been for ever dwelling upon His Humanity. We see it so plainly throughout this Gospel, written under his guidance and supervision. It is a record of repeated reference to all those characteristics which He shared with mankind.¹ Once or twice there was an outburst of something better, ventures of faith which carried him beyond what was merely human, but it was only momentary ; there was no abiding sense of His Divinity, such as would have made him feel that whatever He said was absolutely true, and must come to pass. If we learn nothing else from the history of S. Peter's fall, let us carry away an undoubting assurance of the truth which he failed to grasp, or forgot to his cost, that we are disciples of One Who knows and sees everything, and means whatever He says without qualification or reserve. "Hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?"

¹ Cf. pp. 4, 5.

LXVI

Gethsemane

S. MARK XIV. 32-42

32. And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane : and He saith to His disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray. 33. And He taketh with Him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy ; 34. and saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death : tarry ye here, and watch. 35. And He went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. 36. And He said, Abba, Father, all things *are* possible unto Thee ; take away this cup from Me : nevertheless not what I will, but what Thou *wilt*. 37. And He cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou ? couldest not thou watch one hour ? 38. Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly *is* ready, but the flesh *is* weak. 39. And again He went away, and prayed, and spake the same words. 40. And when He returned, He found them asleep again, (for their eyes were heavy,) neither wist they what to answer Him. 41. And He cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take *your* rest : it is enough, the hour is come ; behold, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 42. Rise up, let us go : lo, he that betrayeth Me is at hand.

ONE of the greatest disappointments a traveller meets with in Palestine arises out of the difficulty of identifying the scenes and places which were hallowed by the footsteps of our Blessed Lord. Even the site of the Holy Sepulchre is a subject of dispute. It is no little relief then to be told that the traditional Gethsemane,¹ at the foot of Mount Olivet, almost unquestionably marks the locality of His final Agony. Even the most careless have confessed to a feeling of awe and

¹ Gethsemane, from *gath*, a press, and *shemen*, oil. It is situated about half a mile from the walls of Jerusalem, on the north-west side of Mount Olivet.

mystery as they entered "the garden." It is not so much the Grotto, which is supposed to indicate the very spot where the Saviour knelt to offer His thrice-repeated prayer. Neither is it the bare ground—the *terra damnata*—on which the pious monks assert that the grass has never grown since Judas stood there to betray the Son of Man with a kiss; but it is more especially a cluster of aged olive-trees, with their great gnarled trunks, and most venerable appearance, wholly unlike any others upon the mountain—it is these which have always quickened the thoughts and emotions of even indifferent observers. "They will remain," it has been said, "so long as their already protracted life is spared, the most affecting of the sacred memorials in or about Jerusalem; the most nearly approaching to the everlasting hills themselves in the force with which they carry us back to the events of the Gospel History."

We can imagine the intense reality of the Passion coming vividly before the mind, as one stood and looked up to those time-hallowed monuments, and thought that probably they were the very trees,¹ or at least the immediate successors of those which threw the shadow of the great Paschal moon down upon the Redeemer; and that beneath their branches the sufferings of every age and people had culminated in the awful Agony they witnessed.

It was to this place that our Lord withdrew after the Last Supper was ended. Man craves for sympathy and nearness of friends in times of trouble and distress, and we feel strength and confidence from the presence of those who know most of our inner life. Our Lord was true, then, to human nature when He gathered to His side His chosen disciples, the eye-witnesses of the Transfiguration, Peter and James and John; and in their ears spoke of the terrible burden of grief that oppressed His soul. "He began to be sore-amazed;" the original word implies a sense of overpowering surprise, something which made Him "astonied," and almost start

¹ The scientific investigations of the French botanist Bové led him to the conclusion that they are at least 2000 years old.—*Récit in Bullet. de la Soc. Géogr.*, Paris, 1835, iii. 382. It is said, however, that in the siege of Jerusalem, Titus had all the trees cut down round Jerusalem,—*Joseph. Wars*, vi. 1, 1, and the 10th Legion encamped on Olivet, *id.* v. 2, 3. If so, the eight olive-trees now living may have sprung from the roots.

back from its presence; "and to be very heavy:" the most trustworthy etymology¹ indicates a loss of consciousness, the condition of one who is quite dazed, and at his wits' end.

And He was equally true to human nature when, in the midst of this unutterable anguish, He removed from His companions, and "went forward a little," "about a stone's cast," seeking for solitude, and undisturbed communion with God. We shrink from too close an analysis of His prayer, but at least we can see its intensity in its very repetition. They are lower forms of sorrow that are found to vary their mode of expression; the deepest and sharpest agony is ever content to fall back upon the selfsame words again and again repeated. Those who see in Jesus Christ only the greatest of martyrs maintain that the distress and anguish that He felt in the Garden were nothing more than was natural in the immediate anticipation of death. They say that it was the dread of crucifixion which wrung from Him the eager supplication that "the hour might pass from Him," and that His Father would take away the cup that He had given Him to drink.

But if it be so, how are we to explain the fact that Christ was less brave than His followers? There was nothing to correspond to this intense shrinking in the stoning of S. Stephen; nothing in S. Paul's bright anticipation of a death which he knew must be that of martyrdom: nor in the unflinching courage of S. Polycarp: nor in the last hours of a thousand others who have laid down their lives for the Master's cause. No, to hint even that it was physical pain which drew from His lips that exceeding bitter cry, is to degrade Him below the level of the Christian martyr. If it had been only that, He would have been nerved to bear it by the prospect of the future, by the prevision of the Resurrection and Ascension, of the exaltation and triumph, which He knew would be the sequel of that degradation and defeat.

The Agony in the Garden finds its explanation alone in the one great cardinal truth of the Christian Faith; that He made His soul an offering for sin, that God laid upon Him

¹ ἀδημονεῖν is taken by Buttmann, Grimm, and others, from ἀδημος, "away from home," "all abroad," but it is more likely to be derived from α and δαήμων, not knowing, unskilled.

the iniquity of us all : that He gathered up as it were the sins of the whole world, and then, as though He were Himself the sinner, by an inexplicable mystery which we shall never fathom, but before which we must bow the head in awe, "was made a curse for us," "was wounded for our transgressions, was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed."

It seems difficult to fix our thoughts in Gethsemane on any other than the figure of our Adorable Lord, but the Holy Spirit has placed before us in this awful crisis men of like passions with ourselves, subject to all the weakness and infirmities of a sinful nature, that, taking warning from them, we may learn how to bear ourselves in the hour of peril and temptation.

It must have added another drop to the cup of sorrow, already so full, to find Himself in the hour of His direst need robbed of the sympathy for the sake of which He had kept His best beloved disciples within His reach. It was part of His predicted sufferings that He should be so bereft : "I looked for some to have pity on Me, but there was no man, neither found I any to comfort Me." They were there, it is true, but only to increase—not to relieve—His anxiety ; and turning to them with all the yearning of the tenderest affection, He forewarns them of approaching danger. "Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak."

He had told them before to "watch," and it may be they had endeavoured to do it in their own strength, and nature had asserted its mastery. Since the terrible revelation of the traitor at the Last Supper, the anticipation of the Passion had become intensely real to them, and grief had laid such hold upon them, that they were quite overpowered. Poor human nature gave way under the strain, and they slept "for sorrow." We know in our own experience what that expression means. We have watched, it may be, by the bedside of the sick or dying, hoping against hope, dreading the future when the present is over, till at last the spirit becomes so crushed and prostrate, that it yields to the claims of our lower being, and we too sleep "for sorrow." They were all asleep, but S. Peter is especially singled out for remonstrance. His re-

peated protestations had given promise of better things, and there is a world of sadness wrapt up in the expression of disappointment, "Simon, sleepest thou? Couldst thou not watch one hour?" Is this the fulfilment of thy boast, "I will lay down my life for Thy sake"?

Well may our Lord have bidden them add prayer to watchfulness; but even then they failed, for again, and yet again, He returned to find them weighed down with sleep.

We may not gather from this that the means within their reach were insufficient, but we are forced to the conclusion that they did not use them to the utmost. The same temptation is certain to be ours. There are times in the lives of most men when they are called upon to pass through a prolonged conflict with the powers of evil. For a season, it may be, they watch and pray; and then the suggestion comes to them that they have watched long enough, and prayed long enough; or that God never expects more than men are able to bear, and that the limit has been reached; and so their efforts are relaxed; and then when the crisis comes, as it came to S. Peter and the rest, they find that they have not strength enough to meet it, and they deny their Lord, or forsake Him and flee. We have been forewarned by this record of the Apostles' failure: may we be forearmed, and not found sleeping when nothing but continued watchfulness and prayer can save us from falling!

LXVII

The Betrayal and Arrest

S. MARK XIV. 43-52

43. And immediately, while He yet spake, cometh Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. 44. And he that betrayed Him had given them a token, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, *that* same is He; take Him, and lead *Him* away safely. 45. And as soon as he was come, he goeth straightway to Him, and saith, Master, Master; and kissed Him. 46. And they laid their hands on *Him*, and took Him. 47. And one of them that stood by drew a sword, and smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. 48. And Jesus answered and said unto them, Are ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and *with* staves to take Me? 49. I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took Me not: but the scriptures must be fulfilled. 50. And they all forsook Him, and fled. 51. And there followed Him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about *his* naked *body*; and the young men laid hold on him: 52. and he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked.

IN our bewilderment at the enormity of Judas's crime, we try to discover some trace of extenuating circumstances. There are so many instances in which men, who have not trained themselves to resist in lesser matters, have been caught in a whirlpool of sudden temptation, and carried away almost before they knew where they were, that it is just possible something of this kind happened to Judas. He had an innate love of money, and instead of checking it in the beginning, put himself in harm's way; and it may be, by frequent little pilferings from the common purse, which his too trustful companions confided to his care,¹ he lost the power of resistance altogether. Then at last, when some overmastering impulse

¹ ἐβάσταζεν. A.V. "He bare," more probably "used to take away." Vulg. "exportabat," cf. S. John xx. 15.

to gratify his ruling passion by a supreme act of treachery seized hold upon him, he yielded a ready obedience.

But even if we could satisfy ourselves that he was surprised in this way into that base covenant with the chief priests, there is no excuse, no palliation whatever, admissible after the bargain was struck.

A moment's reflection must have opened his eyes and shown him that the paltry sum which they had offered (it was but the price of a slave—the blood-money for a slave who had been accidentally killed) was wholly inadequate to yield any compensation for the shame it entailed. No, if we may judge of the whole transaction from what is told of his conduct after the compact was made, it was a cold-blooded, deep-laid design, conceived and executed under no excitement of passionate impulse, nor any imperious temptation, but marked throughout by premeditated duplicity.

Let us follow his steps from the moment that he leaves the Upper Chamber after discovering that his design is no longer a secret. His first object is to preclude, by the most careful precautions, all possibility of its miscarrying. He hurries first to the chief priests and reports to them that the convenient opportunity has arrived when their Victim may be secured "in the absence of the multitude;" for He was gone to pray in a retired spot, at some distance from the bustle of the city, in the Garden of Gethsemane.

He could hardly expect them to take part in the arrest themselves (though in their eagerness they actually did so); he therefore enlists the sympathy of their servants. He had no doubt that they would enter cordially into the plot, for they could not have failed to conceive an hatred of One Who had spoken such bitter things against their masters.

Then, having secured a goodly number of these, he seeks reinforcements from the officers of the Temple, and the company of Levites, whose duty it was to keep watch and ward at its gates and courts. This was amply sufficient for his purpose, if all went well; but if any unforeseen delay should arise, and the capture not be made till the morning, when the populace was astir again, it was quite possible that a rescue might be attempted. The inhabitants were in an excited mood, as the

Triumphal Entry a few days before had clearly shown, and they were as likely as not to create a tumult, which military force alone would be able to suppress. Nothing remains then but to appeal to the Roman governor. No doubt he supported his application by telling him that Jesus was a dangerous character, who aimed at the overthrow of the existing authority. His request was granted, and a detachment from the garrison stationed in the fortress of Antonia was told off for the traitor's purpose. The whole company must be armed. The soldiers of course had their swords; the officers of the Temple took their batons, and the rest such sticks or staves as they could procure; but even these precautions were not enough. It was night, and although the great Paschal moon was shining overhead, in that rugged Valley of Jehoshaphat there were clefts of rock, and there were deep shadows thrown from many objects, by which Jesus might conceal Himself and escape. A supply of lanterns and torches was provided for such an emergency; and then, just when this weird and motley crowd were prepared to start on their unhallowed search, one last caution was given by the traitor. Jesus was well known no doubt to many of them, for "He was daily in the Temple;" but to the soldiers He was probably a total stranger; let there be no mistake then on their part, no arrest of another in the excitement of capture. "Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is He, take Him, and lead Him away safely." This preconcerted signal proved to be wholly unnecessary, but it was employed for another object, which gives still further proof of the traitor's resolute determination to carry out his wicked purpose.

We cannot be sure of the sequence of events, but a comparison of S. John's narrative leads us to place a very important circumstance before the kiss of betrayal. Jesus hearing footsteps approaching goes forth of His Own accord to meet the crowd, and before anything has been said asks the question, "Whom seek ye?" They answer, "Jesus the Nazarene;" to which He replies at once, "I am He," and all were panic-struck; there was something so wholly unlike what they expected. Whether, as some have thought, it was a second flash of the Transfiguration glory, a "ray of Divinity" streaming forth from His face in that hour of darkness, or whether it was

merely an intensified form of a mysterious power, which in moments of apparent helplessness has so often disarmed an assailant¹—the calmness of innocence making the guilty tremble—whatever the cause, the multitude staggered backwards and fell to the ground before Him.

Now, if it was after this that the kiss of betrayal was given, we find in it a deeper purpose than the mere indication of his Victim. The sign was no longer needed for that. When the armed multitude rose to their feet, for a moment they must have stood irresolute. Judas was in dread lest through their fear all might miscarry even at the last. The vivid imagination of a thoughtful writer has put the scene dramatically before us, by imagining that some one whispered in his ear at this crisis, "Judas, if thou approachest Him, thou art a dead man." "Be not afraid," says the traitor, "He never injured any one. I will show you there is nothing to fear." He knew by experience that he might do it with perfect safety. "Rabbi, Rabbi,"² he cries, and then with an hypocrisy that finds no parallel in history, kisses Him, not once only, but, as the original language³ implies, again and again.

What an exhibition it is of the Divine perfection of Christ's character! How completely was the spirit of revenge, which is so sweet to the heart of man, held in check, just when we should have thought ourselves more than justified in punishing such baseness. Well indeed has it been said, "Wouldest thou know what Satan can do, and God can bear; what the basest of mankind can do, and the best of manhood can bear: behold the lips of Judas who kisses, and the cheek of Jesus which receives the kiss."

And so the traitor's end was gained; the crowd, emboldened by his impunity, closed around our Lord, bound Him, and led Him away.

¹ Stier (Reden Jesu) adduces numerous examples besides those mentioned above; Probus, Pertinax, Stanislaus, and Coligny. Farrar adds to these Avidius Cassius and a band of Egyptians falling prostrate before Simeon, the brother of Joseph, recorded in the Talmud.

² The Apostles used to call Jesus by the title of *Κύριος*. Rabbi was a colder form of address; cf. S. John xiii. 6-37, and S. Matt. xxvi. 25.

³ *κατεφίλησεν*. *κατα* in compounds often expresses intensity. When he gives the signal to the company it is simply the uncompounded form. One kiss would suffice for this. Its repetition was needed to re-establish the courage of his followers.

But not alone for the meekness of His submission are we filled with admiring wonder, but as well for the self-forgetfulness which fixed His thoughts on those He loved—"If therefore ye seek Me, let these go their way." Whatever awaits Him, He will "tread the winepress alone," and, poor human beings that they were, they yielded to the instinct of self-preservation; "they all forsook Him, and fled."

As they were fleeing from the spot a strange incident occurred, which has been recorded by S. Mark alone. Some unknown youth—it may have been the owner of Gethsemane, or Lazarus,¹ or S. Mark himself—almost certainly a man of property² and position, hearing the tumult hard by, started out of his sleep, and wrapped only in the fine sheet on which he had been lying, ran out to see the cause of the disturbance. The crowd were diverted for the moment by the sudden apparition, and tried to seize him, but he fled away naked. We can only conjecture why such an apparently trifling circumstance should have been deemed worthy of a place in the sacred narrative. It may have been merely one of those vivid details which imprinted themselves on S. Peter's memory; or possibly, if S. Mark was himself the young man, it attained in his eyes a degree of importance out of proportion to its general interest.

Now, what are the prominent thoughts which this story has fixed in our minds? Betrayal and desertion.

We shrink from the idea that we can betray our Lord as Judas did. And yet, at least in some degree, perhaps we may. Our conscience when probed may compel us to say, we do; never, it is true, with the same heartless cruelty or premeditated craft, but whenever we have received special privileges and have misused them: whenever to hide our wickedness we pretend to be religious, and wear the mask of hypocrisy, we are guilty of the traitor's duplicity, and like him betray our Master with a kiss.

¹ Plumptre in his article on "Lazarus" in Smith's Bib. Dict., and also in his Commentary, brings forward numerous arguments in favour of this view. They are full of interest, and well worthy of consideration. Epiphanius, Adv. Hær. lxxviii. 13, suggests that it was James the Just, our Lord's brother.

² "The linen cloth" (in S. Mark xv. 46, "fine linen") was a costly material. It was used for winding-sheets for the dead.

And do we ever desert Him? Can we recall no times when His Cause demanded our support, when His Word was assailed, His Name blasphemed, it may be even the morality of His Teaching called in question? And did worldly considerations, the love of ease or indifference, or the fear of being worsted or derided, seal our lips, and leave the Christian Faith, like Christ, defenceless in the presence of its foes? If this be so, then we are of the number of those of whom those humiliating words were written, "they all forsook Him, and fled;" and it was our desertion, as well as theirs, which the prophet foretold, when he said, "I looked for some to have pity upon Me, but there was no man : neither found I any to comfort Me."

LXVIII

The Examination before Annas

S. JOHN XVIII. 12-13, 19-24

12. Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound Him, 13. and led Him away to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that *same* year.

19. The high priest then asked Jesus of His disciples, and of His doctrine. 20. Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said

nothing. 21. Why askest thou Me? ask them which heard *Me*, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said. 22. And when He had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest Thou the high priest so? 23. Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou Me? 24. Now Annas had sent Him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.

It is necessary at this point to turn aside from S. Mark's Gospel, for the stage of our Lord's life upon which we now enter is so complicated that it requires a careful consideration of the fourfold record to make it intelligible. Critics have approached it too often in a hostile spirit, exaggerating trifles and widening discrepancies, till they have been compelled to pronounce the different accounts wholly irreconcilable. A reverent investigation has satisfied us that, after legitimate allowance has been made for circumstances, it is possible to weave the details of the terrible story into a fairly explicit and consistent whole. Feeling that hypercriticism is rebuked by the solemnity of the subject, we "take the shoes from off our feet" in the presence of the awe-inspiring fact, that we are about to witness a trial in which the Prisoner at the bar is

none other than He before Whose tribunal we shall all be judged at the last day.

It may very fitly be divided into six separate stages or acts. Before Annas, before Caiaphas in his own palace, before the Sanhedrim in lawful assembly, before Pilate the first time, before Herod, and again before Pilate for the final sentence. Only four of these are recorded by S. Mark. Two preliminary difficulties call for notice. Two persons, Annas and Caiaphas, are spoken of as High Priests, whereas we know that there could not be more than one holding the office at any given time. Again, the palace where S. Peter denied our Lord seems in one place to belong to Annas, in another to Caiaphas. Both admit of explanation. We find that Annas had been High Priest some time before, but for political reasons had been deposed by the Roman Governor. The history of the times shows that he was a man of commanding influence,¹ and his hold upon the Jews was such that they refused, as far as they dared, to recognise the deposition, but continued to regard him as their chief-pontiff, and to designate him in familiar language by the high-priestly title. The man actually in legal possession of the office at this time—"the High Priest of the year," as he is significantly spoken of—was Caiaphas; and when the Jews designate him "High Priest," it is only, as we should say, under protest, because the State, which they were afraid openly to disobey, compelled them to do so. Thus we see in the eyes of the Jews, by whose laws the office was inalienable and for life, Annas was regarded as their rightful High Priest, while Caiaphas was legally in possession of the dignity and title.

The question of locality is even more easily explained. Annas, we are told, was father-in-law to Caiaphas. What more natural than that they should occupy the same official residence, each with his separate suite of rooms and offices, but all within the same area, round the same courtyard? What more natural than that the first thought of Caiaphas,²

¹ He was sufficiently powerful to secure the High Priest's office for no less than five of his sons besides his son-in-law. Lightfoot holds that he was deputy High Priest, or "Sagan;" Selden that he was President of the Council, or "Nasi."

² Possibly Eleazar, Annas's son, who had preceded Caiaphas, may have reinstated his father. But there was an interval of a year between the

on his elevation to the office, should be to see his dethroned father-in-law reinstated in his rightful home? What more expedient, again, than that in those most troublous times, the youthful and inexperienced Caiaphas should be able to consult, without inconvenience, and as occasion might arise, one who was accounted by the general verdict the most influential man in Jerusalem? Whether then it is the palace of Annas or of Caiaphas that is spoken of, it is one and the same building.

Now it was past midnight when Judas, and the Temple guard, and the military escort from Pilate, started to arrest Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. It would seem that they succeeded sooner than they expected, for the Court was not ready to try Him when they reached the palace. They at once decided that He should be taken before Annas. We have no difficulty in suggesting motives which may have led them to such a decision. The Jews would like to give their favourite the satisfaction of seeing the common Enemy of their nation a prisoner, or it was a mark of deference to his position, which they would gladly pay, that he should be the first to examine Him; or perhaps—and it may have weighed with greater force than either of the above—they felt that the astute, far-seeing Annas was likely in such a preliminary examination to hit upon the best grounds of accusation for Caiaphas to urge in the legal court.

But whatever their object, they brought Him before Annas. He¹ questioned Him, we are told, about His disciples and His doctrine, and it is plain enough what his design was in so doing. He wished to make out that He belonged to some secret Society, and was connected with a deep-laid plot for promoting revolution. It would have been an excellent charge to press before the Roman Governor, for the executive power is generally alive to informations about suspected conspiracy. But our Lord repudiated the charge, or rather

high priesthood of Eleazar and Caiaphas. The four other sons followed Caiaphas.

¹ There is great division of opinion as to whether the questioner was Annas or Caiaphas. For the former there are among others SS. Chrysostom and Augustine, Olshausen, Lange, Neander, Ellicott, and Luthardt. For the latter Luther, Grotius, Bengel, and De Wette. Westcott suggests that the examination took place in the chamber of Annas in the presence of Caiaphas who took part in it.

refused to be interrogated, appealing to the publicity of His whole conduct, to the crowds which had flocked to His preaching, and the multitudes He had healed. Let him summon the worshippers from the synagogue at Capernaum, or from yonder Temple, where He had spoken so openly. Let him call up the blind and the lame, the halt and the maimed, the lepers and the possessed of devils, to whom He had ministered almost more than to any others. Let these bear witness what He had taught; whether He was the secret intriguer, the seditious revolutionist that Annas suggested. And He reminded him that by the laws of justice witnesses must be called to establish every charge. "Why askest thou Me? ask them which heard Me what I said unto them. They know what I said."

And then some brutal attendant of Annas—tradition has aggravated the injury by saying that it was Malchus whose wound Jesus had just healed—knowing that He was defenceless, without a human friend of any kind to protect Him, smote Him cruelly on the face. To the lasting shame of Annas he suffered the cowardly blow to pass unrebuked.¹ The injured Prisoner, instead of scathing His assailant with indignant scorn, checked every expression, every sign of resentment. How unlike what we should have done! How unlike even S. Paul himself when he was placed in similar circumstances, and answered with righteous anger and indignation, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall, for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?" But why this mighty contrast? this unparalleled meekness? It was the perfect illustration of His teaching, "Whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also." It had been predicted two ages before by Isaiah that He should "give His back to the smiters and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair;" and by Micah, that they should "smite the judge of Israel with a rod² upon the cheek;" and even the Sibyl had added the

¹ Such conduct was strictly forbidden by Jewish law. Bynæus, ii. 320, enters into particulars of the penalties incurred thereby: if with the open hand 200 drachmas, with the fist 400. Cf. Lange, iii. 234, etc.

² Cf. marg. S. John xviii. 2, "with a rod" for "with the palm of his hand."

prediction that "the hands of the unclean should smite their God."

And here was the beginning of the fulfilment. It was only the beginning, for again and again we shall see it repeated with increasing severity, till the very dregs of ill-treatment shall be wrung out, and the tale of derision completely exhausted.

"Annas then sent¹ Him bound unto Caiaphas the High Priest." Such are the words with which the first act of this terrible drama closes. Jesus is bound. He Who came "to preach deliverance to the captive," and "to set at liberty them that are bruised," is Himself in bonds. He might, we know, have "burst those bands asunder," and rent them like withes with more than Samson's strength, but prophecy must be fulfilled. And in like manner, as it was by His stripes that we should be healed, by His abasement that we have been exalted, by His Death that we might live, even so it was ordained that by His captivity He should open the prison doors, and purchase for us the liberty with which He would set all men free—the perfect freedom—"the glorious liberty of the children of God."

¹ "Now Annas had sent Him bound unto Caiaphas," A.V., but it is ungrammatical to render the aorist ἀπέστειλεν as a pluperfect.

LXIX

Before an Informal Court

S. MARK XIV. 53-65

53. And they led Jesus away to the high priest : and with Him were assembled all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes. 54. And Peter followed Him afar off, even into the palace of the high priest : and he sat with the servants, and warmed himself at the fire. 55. And the chief priests and all the council sought for witness against Jesus to put Him to death ; and found none. 56. For many bare false witness against Him, but *their* witness agreed not together. 57. And there arose certain, and bare false witness against Him, saying, 58. We heard Him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands. 59. But neither so did their witness agree together. 60. And the high priest stood up in the

midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest Thou nothing? what *is it which* these witness against Thee? 61. But He held His peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked Him, and said; unto Him, Art Thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? 62. And Jesus said, I am : and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. 63. Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses? 64. Ye have heard the blasphemy : what think ye? And they all condemned Him to be guilty of death. 65. And some began to spit on Him, and to cover His face, and to buffet Him, and to say unto Him, Prophecy : and the servants did strike Him with the palms of their hands.

WE left our Lord as He was being taken from a preliminary examination in the palace of Annas to Caiaphas the legal High Priest. Now we shall find that He appears before Caiaphas twice, the first time to be tried by members of the Sanhedrim, sitting informally ; the second time by the same body legally summoned to ratify the previous decision, Caiaphas being president on both occasions.

We speak of the Council before which Jesus was first

brought as an informal one. It has, however, been conjectured that it was the Lesser Sanhedrim, which consisted of twenty-three members, and sometimes sat as it were in committee to recommend to the larger Assembly. As two of the Evangelists, however, speak of it in wider terms, we may fairly conclude that it was at least intended not to represent an inferior court, but the whole Sanhedrim.

As soon as he was informed of the arrest, and while the examination before Annas was proceeding, Caiaphas would probably summon such Sanhedrists as he knew to be within easy reach. There would be, of course, the chief priests who had their quarters in his own residence, and others—no inconsiderable number, we may be sure—who were sufficiently excited about the arrangements and compact with Judas, to hold themselves in readiness for any emergency.

Caiaphas was especially anxious to get the trial through as quickly as possible; but seeing that under no circumstances might the Sanhedrim sit to try a capital cause before day-break, he thought the best thing that he could do would be, by the production of evidence and in other ways, to advance the proceedings so far, that, when the formal assembly met, there would be little for them to do but ratify the verdict at which most of the members had previously arrived.

Now, the very first thing that we read is that all the Council exerted themselves to procure false witnesses against Him; and they found plenty ready enough to take their bribe and invent an accusation, for though the narrative says that they "found none," it clearly means, none who answered their purpose. Their evidence was nothing but a tissue of obvious falsehoods and contradictions. At last, just when they were despairing of success, two came forward with apparently a consistent story; they said they had heard Him speak disparagingly of the Temple. But again there was a failure. Their statements were inconsistent.¹ One said His words were, "I am able to destroy this Temple," another said they were, "I will destroy" it. It is more than a verbal discrepancy; probably neither of them spoke the truth. What He really did say is told us by S. John: "Destroy this

¹ The Jewish Law required the concordant testimony of at least two witnesses before condemning a man to be guilty of death. Cf. Deut. xvii. 6.

Temple ;" "destroy ye this Temple, as I know very well that ye will, and then in three days I will raise it up."

Jesus was silent through all this Babel of accusation. He knew that the whole evidence was false from beginning to end, and it was the judges' business, not His, to expose its utter worthlessness. Till some charge should be adduced more substantial than any that had been spoken to as yet, no defence was needed.

Caiaphas might have interpreted this silence as acquiescence, and closed the proceedings, but this would have opened a door for delay when the Sanhedrim proper should meet. Moreover, he chafed at our Lord's calmness and dignity, and could ill brook to have his authority thus openly set at defiance. Still more, perhaps he felt that the charge was a most unsatisfactory one, even if properly supported, to lay before the Roman Governor, who had shown by his conduct that he cared little enough for the Temple.¹ At any cost a better case must be made out ; so, springing up from his seat and confronting the Prisoner, he commanded Him to break silence. "Answerest Thou nothing? What is it which these witness against Thee?" but it was all in vain. At last he made a final appeal. "I adjure Thee by the Living God ;" "I put you on your oath before Him, Whose curse falls on those who swear falsely ;" "tell me whether Thou be the Christ?" and then he followed it up by a question of even greater moment still, "Art Thou the Son of the Blessed?" The crisis had come. The title must be claimed before He died, so with a dignity and composure that must have filled them with awe, at least for the moment, He answered, "I am ;" "I am the Messiah. I am the Son of God."

In pretended horror at the confession the enraged Caiaphas rent his priestly cloak,² crying "Blasphemy." "Every one

¹ Pilate appropriated the sacred treasure, *Korban*, which was set apart for the service of the Temple, to the construction of certain aqueducts. It led to disturbance and bloodshed.

² In S. Mark it is "the under-garments" *χιτῶνας*, in S. Matthew "the outer," *ἱμάτια*. In the Talmud directions are given as to the length and direction of the rent. It was to be a palm's breadth, and from the neck downwards. Cf. Buxtorf, *Talm. Lex.* p. 2148. If we follow S. Mark we must suppose he had on his unofficial dress at the time.

must be agreed;" and amidst an unanimous¹ shout of "guilty," the informal Council broke up in confusion, and Jesus was left at the mercy of the attendants and bailiffs of the Court, while the judges hurried off and prepared for their re-assembling, to pass sentence in accordance with the legal formalities.

Now, we can hardly close the consideration of this, the second stage in the trial, better than by noting carefully for what He was condemned. On the oath of "The Faithful and True Witness," in the Name of God, and in the face of death, knowing in what sense the High Priest had used the title "Son of God," He hastened to accept it. He broke silence which no expostulation, no threat whatever could provoke Him to break, because, as He said, He "came to bear witness to the truth," and now, for the first time in the trial, the truth is at stake. And so, without a moment's hesitation, in no lower sense, but in all its fulness, in the very language in which the challenge was given, He accepts it. "Thou hast said." "I am."

What further evidence do we need of His Divinity? Is it worthy of no weight with those who find difficulty in recognising it, that He claimed it Himself, He Whose truthfulness they would never dream of doubting? We can conceive of nothing more convincing than the fact, that in the supreme moment of His earthly life, surrounded by all the solemnity which an adjuration of the Most High could impart to the scene, He claimed that Sonship which, in the language of the Jews, implied nothing less than equality with God. It was not because He confessed that He was the Christ that they charged Him with blasphemy, but for the word that He spake—"I am," "I am the Son of the Blessed."

Take we heed, then, lest we too accuse Him of blasphemy; lest by withholding that which He claims we be found consenting to their verdict; for unless He deceived Caiaphas—and God forbid the thought!—it is indeed true as S. Paul said, "That in Him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

¹ It is clear from this, compared with S. Luke xxiii. 51, that it was not the formal court, but a gathering of fanatical opponents of Christ. There was at least one at the legal court who voted differently.

S. Peter's Fall

S. MARK XIV. 66-72

66. And as Peter was beneath in the palace, there cometh one of the maids of the high priest : 67. and when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked upon him, and said, *And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth.* 68. But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest. And he went out into the porch ; and *the* cock crew. 69. And a maid saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by, *This is one of them.* 70. And he denied *it*

again. And a little after, they that stood by said again to Peter, *Surely thou art one of them : for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth thereto.* 71. But he began to curse and to swear, *saying,* I know not this Man of Whom ye speak. 72. And the second time *the* cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, *Before the* cock crow twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept.

AN Oriental palace was frequently built in the form of a quadrangle. A porch or gateway in the front led to a large inner courtyard,¹ open to the sky, round which were the servants' offices and public reception-rooms, sometimes raised by steps above the level of the ground.² The living-quarters of the occupants were on the second story.³ At the time of which we are reading, Jesus was being examined by the informal Court gathered under the Presidency of Caiaphas in one of the lower chambers. After He had been brought in by the party who arrested Him, the gateway of the palace was closed to avoid the possibility of a rescue, for the High Priest was in fear of a

¹ This is mistranslated "palace" in the A.V.

² "Beneath in the palace," or "below in the courtyard," as it should be rendered, need imply no more than this ; not that the Council-chamber was on the upper story.

³ Cf. pp. 38, 39.

reaction in favour of the Prisoner. The attendants and other servants of the judges remained within call in the inner yard. It was past midnight, and as the air was cold at that season, they lit a fire in their midst, and began to talk over the exciting events of the last few hours. Meanwhile two of the Apostles, S. John and S. Peter, having recovered from the panic which had seized them in the Garden, found themselves at the porch of the palace. S. John, perhaps as being a friend of Caiaphas, was known to the portress, and had no difficulty in gaining admission; but his companion was shut out. We often read of apparently trivial incidents preventing a great catastrophe or saving lives which must otherwise have been lost, and they are regarded as Providential interpositions by those who have met with them. Was it not some such merciful Providence that literally closed the door in the very face of the Apostle on that fatal night? Was it not an echo of the forgotten warning, "Thou canst not follow Me now"? Knowing as we do the terrible consequences of his admission, we may well regret that he was not superstitious enough, as men say, to hurry away from the scene.

There is a marked change in his conduct at this stage. The courage and daring which made him draw his sword at once in defence of his Master has forsaken him. There is no longer any hope or thought of defending Him, and curiosity has succeeded to devotion. He could actually bring himself to play the part of a common spectator, and as S. Matthew says, "he went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end." It was certain to bring him into trouble, for he had at once to disguise himself, to wear a mask, and play a character that was not his own. And so it came to pass that as he stood in the crowd, pretending to no greater interest in the proceedings than the rest, he was surprised by the observation of a maid who belonged to the palace. She had recognised S. John as he entered, and now, when she joined the other servants who were in the courtyard, a sudden blaze of the fire lit up S. Peter's face, and she recollected his features as well, and made the observation, "Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth." Perhaps the Apostle thought within himself that she would be satisfied if he evaded the question, so he said that he did not know Him, nor quite understand what it was that she meant.

His purpose was gained, and suspicion averted for a time ; but prudence suggested that he should withdraw as soon as he conveniently could, and he exchanged the bright glare of the fireside for the shade and retirement of the porch. While he was standing there the¹ maid, who had been silenced by his ready denial, seeing him again, became more than ever convinced that she was right in her opinion, and she told the people about her that she was sure he was "one of them." They at once took the matter up and asked him, as S. John tells us, "Art not thou also one of this Man's disciples?" "and he denied it again." "About the space of one hour after" the accusation was renewed. He had regained confidence, and ventured to take part in the conversation that was going on. Under the influence of his excitement, some peculiarity of speech, generally thought to have been "a confused thick utterance of the guttural letters,"² betrayed his "provincial" origin. The bystanders at once detected it, and said to him, "Surely thou art one of them, for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth thereto." Others took up the charge, and one especially who had good cause to remember him—for he had cut off his kinsman's ear—came forward and confronted him with a most emphatic question, "Did not *I*³ see thee in the Garden with Him?" "But he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this Man of Whom ye speak."

Now it is well known that there are varieties of detail in the four records of S. Peter's threefold denial. The discrepancies have been spoken of as irreconcilable, and attempts to shake the credibility and trustworthiness of Holy Scripture have been based upon this supposition. Careful examination will show that "the incidents given by the different Evangelists are completely in harmony with the belief that there were three denials, that is, three acts of denial, of which the several writers have taken such features as seemed to be most significant for their purpose."⁴ The multiplicity of charges

¹ The definite article is in the original, and points to the identity of this maid with the one who had charged him before.

² It is supposed that their pronunciation of Hebrew had become affected by their intercourse with Gentiles. It was so thick and unintelligible that they were not allowed to read in the synagogues. Cf. Lange, iii. 247.

³ It is emphasised by the insertion of ἐγώ.

⁴ Dr. Westcott in his commentary on S. John has given a carefully pre-

again may well be illustrated out of our own experience. We have witnessed, no doubt, a scene in which a crowd of people in a state of excitement are setting upon an individual whom they believe to have done something of which they disapprove. No sooner has one begun to accuse him of it than another comes up and adds to the charge, another insists upon it with gestures of violence, another can prove it if they will only let him speak, and then perhaps several cry out at once. The bewildered man tries to exculpate himself from the Babel of charges. He says anything and everything in the excitement of the moment, and at last, when matters become desperate, loses all control over his words.

This is almost exactly what happened in the last "act of denial," in the courtyard of the High Priest's palace. S. Peter was driven to bay by a multitude of excited assailants, and perhaps hardly knowing, certainly not realising, what he said, he appealed to heaven and called down Divine vengeance upon his head if his denial were untrue. And at that moment, in the lull which such an awful adjuration must have produced, "the second time the cock crew." Simultaneously with the sound, which, coming when it did, must have brought a rush of tumultuous thoughts into his mind, the eyes of the Master, Whom he had so basely denied, were fixed upon him. He was being led out by an armed escort from the private Council-chamber towards the porch,¹ and "the Lord turned and looked upon Peter," and that look, "sharper than any two-edged sword," pierced him to the very heart, for "when he thought thereon"² he went out and was overwhelmed with grief. There is a very touching tradition which, whether true

pared table of the three denials and helped to clear away some of the difficulties. In the first, all the Evangelists are practically agreed that the charge was brought by the portress; in the second the charge is made indirectly by the same and another maid, directly by "another man" and some undefined people spoken of as "they;" in the third indirectly by "another," and directly by the kinsman of Malchus, and in a different form by the bystanders.

¹ This was on His way to the Lischath Haggazith, if the Sanhedrim still held its sittings there. If not, perhaps they were going to one of the "Booths." In either case they must have left the palace.

² ἐπιβαλῶν has received a variety of interpretations. "Throwing his mantle over his head," "throwing himself into it," "thinking it over." ἐκλαιεν, the imperfect tense, shows that it was not a mere outburst of grief, but long continued.

or not, is at least in perfect accord with the depth and reality of his penitence. It is said that for nearly forty years, till a martyr's death sealed his repentance, the remembrance of that scene never left him, and that "morning by morning he rose at the hour when the look of his Master entered into his soul, to pray once more for pardon."

Two practical reflections arise out of this fateful episode of the Apostle's fall. It teaches us the peril of trusting too much to our feelings. There was no one in the Apostolic company who could compare for an instant for zeal and enthusiasm with the warm-hearted and impulsive Peter. It led him to cast himself into the sea when he saw the Master coming: it betrayed him into rebuking Jesus for even hinting at His Passion: it impelled him also to draw his sword and attack the very foremost in the fray, when they came to arrest the Lord in Gethsemane. And yet he has proved for our admonition that the most fervent zeal may evaporate and be wasted, unless it be chastened and safeguarded by constant watchfulness and prayer.

Again, we may learn from his example that warnings of danger are only disregarded at our peril. "Thou canst not follow Me now." That word, spoken by One Who had never deceived him, should have made him more wary. "Put up thy sword into the sheath;" it was meant to tell him that something over and above physical courage was needed in that hour. "The door of the palace closed in his face;" it ought to have kept him from treading on forbidden ground. Let the consequences of his self-confidence bring home the value of the Apostolic precept, "Be not high-minded, but fear."

Before the Sanhedrim

S. MARK XV. I

I. And straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried *Him* away, and delivered *Him* to Pilate.

WHEN the irregular assembly in the house of Caiaphas broke up, our Lord was left to the tender mercies of the attendants and servants of the chief priests. We know well how contagious cruelty is, especially amongst men of a coarse nature, and we are not surprised that the unjust treatment which the Prisoner had received at the hands of Caiaphas and the priests should have been followed up by worse indignities from the menials of the Court. They knew that they had nothing to fear, and began at once to give rein to their cruel passions, and subjected their unbefriended Victim to the most shameless violence. They spat upon His face, to mark the extremity of contempt. They blindfolded His eyes, and because He refused to guess who it was that struck Him, they taunted Him with His claims to the prophetic office. But He had set His face like flint, and nothing could divert Him. The Scriptures should all be fulfilled. "I hid not My face from shame and spitting." "He is despised and rejected of men." "His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men." And so no utterance escaped His lips; no hand was raised against them; although a single word or the slightest movement would have sufficed to paralyse the arm of His oppressors, or throw them, like Judas and his company, prostrate on the ground.

But while all this barbarity, this work of darkness, was going on, the day dawned; and with daylight the legal Sanhedrim might open its formal session.

Where the Court was held at this time is a matter of doubt. The regular place of meeting was the "Lischath Haggazith"—or chamber of hewn stone, at the south-east corner of the Temple Mount; or perhaps at this time in "the Booths of the sons of Annas." An expression which S. Luke uses, "they led Him up¹ to their council" appears to point to the former. But wherever it was, we may feel sure that no time would be lost. They had everything to fear from delay. A reaction might set in at any moment, and the turbulent Galileans were as likely as not to rise up in support of their Countryman. The citations to the commissioners had doubtless been issued immediately on the arrest, and the Court was constituted at once.

The rules which regulated the proceedings of the Sanhedrim in the ordinary exercise of its judicial functions have a special interest for us, if it be only to see how they were disregarded in connection with our Blessed Lord.

The judges were ranged in the form of a semicircle. The High Priest, or in his absence, the "Nasi" or prince,² occupied the Presidential seat in the centre. A distinguished dignitary, selected for his age, and called "the Father of the council," sat on his right hand; another, probably the most learned, entitled "the wise man," on his left. The rest of the judges took their seats in order of precedence, an equal number on either side, while at the two extremities of the crescent sat two scribes,—one to record the verdict of acquittal, the other the sentence of condemnation, as the case might be. The prisoner, with bailiffs and officers of the Court behind him, stood immediately confronting the President.

Now, nothing could have been contrived more in the interests of the prisoner than the rules of the Court. The motto, if not written on the walls, was known and recognised

¹ The reading ἀπήγαγον however is adopted for ἀνήγαγον in the Revised Version. The fact that Judas, on hearing that the sentence was pronounced, flung the money down in the Temple, seems to favour the view that the Chamber was "Haggazith," not the "Booths."

² In later times his Presidency was confined to legal and ritual cases only.

by every member: "The Sanhedrim aims at saving, not destroying life." The judges were chosen for learning, blamelessness of character, and moderation of temper; and there was one most touching and noteworthy provision—those only were qualified to adjudicate who were fathers of children. It was supposed to afford some guarantee that they would be influenced in their verdict by feelings of love and tenderness. The prisoner was held to be innocent till his guilt was proved; and each witness as he came forward to give his evidence was enjoined to speak the strict truth, lest a life should be unjustly sacrificed.¹ Counsel was directed to watch the proceedings in behalf of the accused; and lastly, to avoid the possibility of a decision, involving fatal consequences, being given under the impulse of excitement, though a sentence of acquittal might be passed at once, no condemnation could be pronounced till a whole day had elapsed from the close of the sitting. All this shows what a parody of justice the trial of our Lord really was.

It is probable that as soon as the Court was formally opened, Caiaphas tried to get the previous verdict indorsed without any further examination of the Prisoner; but objections were raised. We know who one at least of the objectors was, viz., Joseph of Arimathæa, for we are told that he had "not consented unto their counsel and deed;" and we can well imagine that he was supported in his protest by Nicodemus.

It is quite clear that other members of the council were not satisfied with the High Priest's assertion as to what he had elicited from the Prisoner, for they put the question themselves, saying to Him, "Art Thou the Christ? tell us."

In a moment their reception of His doctrine from the beginning, and His recollection of the manner in which His answer to Caiaphas had been denounced, came up before Him, and with a calmness and dignity which is surprising on the lips of One Who was being tried for His life, He replied,

¹ There is a tradition that heralds were sent forth for forty days before our Lord's execution, inviting witnesses to speak in His favour; and finding none, they hanged Him on the eve of the Passover. This is absent from the ordinary editions of the Talmud, but is found in the unmutated edition published at Amsterdam, 1645. Cf. Talm. Bab. Synhed. 43 a. Such a supposition, however, is contradicted by the whole proceedings at the trial.

“If I tell you, ye will not believe: and if I also ask you, ye will not answer Me, nor let Me go.” “If,” that is, “My works and My life have not taught you; if My solemn vindication of the title to which your High Priest testifies has not convinced you, what need to repeat it?” or again, “If I put a question to you to prove My claim, your lips will be closed lest your enforced admission compel you to acquit Me, which you know you are resolved under no circumstances to do.”

And then as the consciousness of His greatness came pouring in upon Him,—some sudden inspiration perhaps to strengthen Him for the approaching crisis,—He realised the whole iniquity of the trial; the priests and elders and scribes sitting before Him to administer justice as the delegates of God, and yet violating every principle of it by word and deed: and the vision of another assize flashed before His sight. He saw that which Daniel had seen by anticipation, the Ancient of Days coming to judgment, and Himself the Assessor of the Judge, and He declared to the astonished Court, “Hereafter shall the Son of Man sit on the right hand of the power of God.”

It was a direct claim to Divine honour, and though they knew what answer He would give, though some of them had seen the High Priest rend his sacerdotal robe in pious horror at the confession, they courted a repetition of the dreaded blasphemy, and with one voice, “then said they all, Art Thou then the Son of God?” Again He claimed to be One with the Father, and out of His Own mouth they condemned Him to be worthy of death.

But the Sanhedrim could give no effect to its verdict. By their own confession the Jews had lost the power of life and death:¹ “It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.” If, however, they had resolved to take the matter into their own hands they would probably have done it with impunity, but there was one grave reason to prevent their doing so. They had condemned Jesus on a charge of blasphemy, the

¹ Some have thought they merely meant that it was illegal to do so at the Passover; but it is an unnatural explanation of the words. Pilate assumes that the power resides with himself. S. John xix. 10; cf. note in Westcott on S. John xviii. 31.

penalty for which was stoning. This in their eyes was too honourable a death for Him to die. Nothing would satisfy them short of crucifixion¹—the Roman punishment reserved for slaves or their worst criminals. Their only course thereupon was to deliver Him up to the civil power. Its chief representative, Pontius Pilate, was then at Jerusalem.² It was Passover-time, and his presence was indispensable for the good order of the populace.

The Sanhedrists went in a body with the Prisoner, hoping no doubt to overawe the Governor by their number and the weight of their office.

It was most probably as Jesus was being conducted from the council-chamber to Pilate's residence, that Judas realised that He was sentenced to death.

Before then the next stage of the trial begins, we shall do well to see what effect it produced upon him. When once the excitement of the arrest was over, and his part had been played, he was left to his own reflections. And in the darkness of the night the awful truth of his deed of shame must have forced itself upon his conscience, and many visions have come up before him—visions of the past, so full of unspeakable love and tenderness—visions of the future, so big with doom and retribution. No doubt the Evil One buoyed him up with hopes—hopes that were only destined to mock and increase his misery. Perhaps he persuaded him that his remorse was wasted, for even at the last the Divine power might be exercised, and Jesus be saved from the hands of His enemies, and so the traitor's act would ultimately redound to His greatness.

But now, to his unutterable dismay, he realised that Jesus was condemned, and on the point of being delivered up to

¹ Crucifixion was common among Romans, Greeks, Egyptians, Persians, Assyrians, and many other nations. Among the Jews there was a *kind of* crucifixion, in which the body was tied to a stake after death—Deut. xxi. 22, 23,—and this was held in great horror because of the saying, "He that is hanged is accursed of God."

² His usual residence was at Cæsarea. He had made himself so unpopular in Jerusalem by his disregard of Jewish customs and prejudices that he generally kept away from the Holy City.

It is doubtful whether he resided, when at Jerusalem, in the Fortress of Antonia, or in the Herodian Palace, on the north-western corner of the Upper City. Josephus, Wars, i. 21, 1, and v. 4, 4.

the Roman Governor, and he was seized with horror. Instead however of taking the only step that could possibly have helped him,—instead of hurrying at once to his Lord, and flinging himself upon His mercy for pardon and forgiveness,—he fled to the chief priests, who had shared with him the guilt of the betrayal, and implored them to undo the awful crime. “I have sinned,” he cries, “in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.”

But he might as well have cried to the stones of the Temple, for they had no word of comfort to give him : he had accomplished their purpose, and had been paid for his work, and might take the consequences.

“Whichever way he looked was hell :
Himself was hell.”

In a wild moment of distracting frenzy his life was closed by a suicidal hand—that life of which alone it may ever be said without fear of contradiction that there is no hope. “It were good for that man if he had never been born.”

LXXII

Before Pilate the first time ; and before Herod

S. MARK XV. 2-5

2. And Pilate asked Him, Art Thou the King of the Jews? And He answering said unto him, Thou sayest *it*. 3. And the chief priests accused Him of many things: but He answered nothing. 4. And Pilate asked Him again, saying, Answerest Thou nothing? behold how many things they witness against Thee. 5. But Jesus yet answered nothing; so that Pilate marvelled.

[SUPPLEMENTARY]

S. LUKE XXIII. 8-12

8. And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see Him of a long *season*, because *he* had heard many things of Him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by Him. 9. Then he questioned *with* Him in many words; but He answered him nothing. 10. And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Him. 11. And Herod with his men of war set Him at nought, and mocked *Him*, and arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him again to Pilate. 12. And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves.

“It was early,” probably not yet seven o’clock,¹ when the members of the Sanhedrim arrived at the gate of the Prætorium. Pilate was already astir, for he could hardly be indifferent to the result of the proceedings in which his own soldiers had been taking part. He must have been surprised by the sight of such a deputation, and he gave orders at once for their admission into the hall; but as they were Jews, and

¹ It will be remembered that since sunrise, when the Sanhedrim met, time must have elapsed for the trial, and for taking the Prisoner to the Prætorium.

intended to eat the Passover that evening,¹ they were precluded from entering a heathen dwelling. There was certain to be something there that would make them ceremonially unclean.

The Governor, with some political tact, deferred to their religious scruples, and went out himself to meet them in the courtyard. They hoped to settle the matter with little delay; so pointing, no doubt, to the Prisoner, Who stood in their midst with His hands bound, and, if tradition be true, with a cord fastened round His neck, they told him that He had been tried and condemned to suffer the extreme penalty of the law. It may be they thought the presence of such an august body would overawe Pilate, and with an air of importance claimed that it was the duty of the Roman authority to execute their judgment when once it had been pronounced. But he had no idea of accepting such a position as that, and submitting to be a mere tool in the hands of the Sanhedrim. His instincts, too, as a Roman judge rose up in protest against such a course, and he demanded that the nature of their charge should be formally stated: "What accusation bring ye against this Man?" But they were most anxious to avoid another examination, and they replied that he might rely upon it that He was a criminal of a dangerous character, otherwise they would hardly have brought Him for execution. With no little irony he advised them to carry out their own sentence, and drew from them the humiliating confession that they had been deprived of the power to do it.

Finding that there was no chance of getting Him executed off-hand, they brought forward an accusation. Pilate's question, which S. Mark introduces so abruptly, leaves no doubt what it was. They changed their ground completely. Jesus had been condemned for an ecclesiastical offence; but their indictment was purely political. They accused Him of setting up a rival kingdom to that of Cæsar. It must have excited Pilate's suspicions at once, for "he knew too much

¹ The expression, eat 'the Passover,' implies, as was maintained above, that it was not limited to "the Paschal lamb," for the latter would not be eaten till after 6 P.M., when the day on which their uncleanness had been contracted would close.

about Jewish expectations to suppose that the Sanhedrim would hate and persecute one who would free them from the Roman authority." He determined, however, to examine¹ the Prisoner, and took Him into the judgment-hall. Probably a certain number of the Jews sacrificed themselves, and, disregarding their scruples about ceremonial impurity, went in also, for Pilate speaks afterwards of the examination having taken place in their presence.

"And Pilate asked Him, Art Thou the King of the Jews?" There is much more implied by the order of the words in the original. "Thou, — is it possible that Thou," this poor defenceless Prisoner I see before me, "art a king?" Before He could answer, it must be clearly understood in what sense the title was used. He was no king in rivalry with Cæsar; but He was the King Messiah, the Head of the spiritual empire; and in this sense He accepted the title, and said unto him, "Thou sayest it."

Pilate, probably not understanding such subtle distinctions, put to Him a practical question touching His conduct: "What hast Thou done?" and he was so fully satisfied by the answer, that he went out, and not without some show of displeasure at their attempt to entrap him into the execution of an innocent Man, told them that their charge² had completely broken down upon examination.

The announcement was received with a storm of charges: "The chief priests accused Him of many things." But to the Governor's amazement they drew forth not a word of defence. Not even a direct appeal from himself could induce Jesus to break silence; and again the charges were reiterated: "He stirs up the nation; He rebels against Cæsar; He tells us that we ought not to pay the Imperial taxes; there is not a town or village from Dan to Beersheba, from Galilee to Jerusalem, where He has not preached His seditious doctrines."

¹ Pilate being only a Procurator, would have no Quæstor to examine prisoners, but must conduct the inquiry in person. It marks the accuracy of the Gospel narrative.

² οὐδὲν αἰτίον (S. Luke), οὐδεμίαν αἰτίαν (S. John), clearly refer to a judicial charge or indictment, which is hardly implied in "no fault at all." A. V.

BEFORE HEROD

Pilate was in the greatest perplexity. He was satisfied of the Prisoner's innocence, but he lacked the moral courage to act upon his convictions. He knew that he himself was in disgrace at Rome; for complaints had been made at headquarters of his disregard for the customs and feelings of the native population, and he was not prepared to face another reprimand, especially as his enemies would be sure to make capital out of the alleged claims to royal authority, and put the matter before the Emperor in the worst possible light. It was a great relief therefore to him when he discovered a way of escape from his embarrassing situation. The Jews, in the multitude of accusations, had spoken of Galilee as the scene of Christ's revolutionary teaching. It was a common practice to try a prisoner, not where he was arrested, but where his crime had been committed.¹ By a fortunate coincidence the Tetrarch of Galilee was then in Jerusalem for the Passover; he would at once shift the responsibility from himself, and send the chief priests to make good their charges before Herod's tribunal.

Now, if Pilate was delighted to be rid of the Prisoner, Herod was overjoyed to receive Him. Long before this, he had been hoping and wishing to see Him. Tales of His miracles were in every one's mouth in Galilee. It so happened that his steward's wife was one of a number of women who had been healed by His touch or word; and, like Susanna and Mary Magdalene, she could not tear herself from His side. Doubtless she sent home to her husband reports of the wonderful works which Jesus did, and being repeated at Herod's court, they wrought his curiosity to the highest pitch.

And now at last the Wonder-worker was before him, and, as he probably congratulated himself, under the most favourable circumstances, for, coming as a Prisoner on trial for His life, He would naturally be anxious to conciliate His judge. But how little did he understand with Whom he had to deal!

Herod began the examination by asking about His miracles,

¹ It was to take him, as it was said, from the "forum apprehensionis ad forum originis vel domicilii."

—scoffing questions perhaps connected with His followers. It may be that he reminded Him of the death of the Baptist, and hinted that if He kindled his displeasure He might share his fate;¹ but it was all in vain. Not a word, not a syllable, could he extract from Him! And why this silence? He had replied to Caiaphas, and to Pilate; why not to Herod? It must have been because He knew all his shameful history, and if He had spoken then it could only be to brand him as a murderer and adulterer,² and to ask by what right one who had so outraged morality, and transgressed the laws of God, dared to sit in the seat of judgment for the administration of justice. But “there is a time to speak, and a time to keep silence,” and so He held His peace; for it was part of His predestined sufferings that He should be oppressed and persecuted by His enemies, and yet not open His mouth.

The proud prince of Galilee found himself treated with disdain by a Prisoner in chains. Had Herodias been with him, no doubt she would have urged His immediate execution, but he had suffered too many pangs of remorse through the Baptist's death to wish himself to risk a repetition.

The chief priests and scribes were in despair. Driven from one tribunal to another, they could get no judge to speak the fatal word. They must have almost wished that they had taken the matter into their own hands, and stoned Him for blasphemy. Anything would have been better than this prolonged suspense. “They stood and vehemently accused Him;” but no vehemence, no remonstrance, could move Herod to deal with the case seriously. He was quite ready to make Jesus suffer for His contemptuous behaviour, but the charge of aspiring to the throne of the Cæsars was too ridiculous to be entertained for a single moment. They might, if they chose, treat Him with the ridicule He seemed to deserve. Let them give Him in mockery the Royalty He claimed, and see how He would bear His royal honours. And so the King of kings submitted to be made a laughing-stock of the soldiers, and to be set at nought by a profligate prince, who should have covered his face with shame in His

¹ It was Herod Antipas, the same who had John beheaded.

² Cf. xxviii., pp. 129 ff.

Presence. They dressed Him "in a gorgeous robe,¹ and sent Him again to Pilate," and with this the fifth act in the trial ends.

"And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together; for before they were at enmity² between themselves." It is an echo of the alliance between Pharisees and Herodians; another illustration of the acknowledged principle that there is something so hateful to the carnal mind in truth and innocence that men are ready to forget all their differences and oppositions in creeds, and in politics, in habits of life and thought, provided only they can compass its overthrow.

Everything that Christ said was out of harmony with His generation. Hypocrisy and falsehood had impregnated society everywhere, and when He came to bear witness to the truth, there were none to welcome His coming; but all wicked men and sinners of every kind became confederate against Him.

"The servant is not above his lord;" and though none of His followers will ever be called to bear the same isolation from the world, every one who loves truth and righteousness above all else, may have to suffer loss of friendship and sympathy, for He Who foresaw the end from the beginning, declared: "If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you." Every faithful disciple, however, can feel assured of that which was His support: "And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me."

¹ If, as has been supposed, *λαμπρὸς* means white, it may have been chosen in mockery to indicate that He was *candidatus*, seeking the kingly office. Cf. Polybius, x. 15. Plumptre on S. Luke xxiii. 11 traces in this a vindictive retaliation for His denunciation of those Herodian courtiers who were "gorgeously apparelled." S. Mark xi. 8; S. Luke vii. 25.

² Possibly it arose through the slaughter of certain of his Galilean subjects mentioned in S. Luke xiii. 1. At all events this may have been one cause of the quarrel.

The Final Trial and the Condemnation

S. MARK XV. 6-15

6. Now at *that* feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired. 7. And there was *one* named Barabbas, *which lay* bound with them that had made insurrection with *him*, who had committed murder in the insurrection. 8. And the multitude crying aloud began to desire *him to do* as he had ever done unto them. 9. But Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye *that* I release unto you the King of the Jews? 10. For he knew that the chief priests had delivered Him for envy. 11. But the

chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them. 12. And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye then *that* I shall do unto *Him* Whom ye call the King of the Jews? 13. And they cried out again, Crucify Him. 14. Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath He done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify Him. 15. And *so* Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged *Him*, to be crucified.

To the bitter disappointment of Pilate, who hoped that he had escaped from the responsibility of giving judgment, the Prisoner was again brought before him. The Tetrarch of Galilee saw, as clearly as he had done, that the charge of menacing the Roman authority by treasonable claims was wholly without foundation; but unlike himself, having nothing to fear from the Jews, he gave his decision at once against an unjust execution. It is true that he subjected Jesus to the cruelty and ridicule of his soldiery and court, but this was only to hide his mortification at not witnessing the performance of a miracle. Declining to be any party to a judicial murder, he ordered Jesus to be taken back to Pilate's jurisdiction.

During the interval, in his moments of calmer reflection,

Pilate could have only become more and more convinced of the Prisoner's innocence ; and now the conduct of the Tetrarch corroborated his convictions. "I have found no fault in this Man : no, nor yet Herod : for I sent you to him ; and lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto Him."

But the chief priests and rulers were more clamorous than ever for judgment to be given. Again the Governor thought that he saw a way of escape. He determined to appeal from the Sanhedrim to the people, to the crowds that by this time had gathered before the judgment-hall. He knew that the chief priests had delivered Him "for envy," because they feared the effect of His growing popularity. The reports, too, of Christ's enthusiastic reception a few days before must have reached him, if he had not actually witnessed it himself. He had everything, therefore, to hope from the course he proposed.

It was an old Paschal¹ custom—a touching memorial of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage—to grant an amnesty to any prisoner the people asked for ; and Pilate took this opportunity of reminding them of their privilege. There happened at this time to be a prisoner of note in confinement at Jerusalem. He was in all probability a man of birth, alike if his patronymic indicates that he was the son of Abba, or, as is more likely, the son of a Rabbi ; but whether he was a robber-outlaw, who lived by plunder, and did not scruple to sacrifice the lives of his victims ; or whether he was a Jewish patriot, who had risen in rebellion against the hated Roman, and in the heat of conflict had shed blood, we have no means of judging. If the former, Pilate might have selected him as one whom the people would fear to let loose ; if the latter,² it accounts at once for his popularity with the mob, "Not this Man, but Barabbas."

It is quite possible that his release had been suggested as an alternative to that of Jesus, from the similarity of their names. There is an old tradition, dating back from the close of the

¹ *κατ' ἑορτήν*, at feast-time, seems to leave it more general, but S. John xviii. 39 confines it to the Passover.

² Had he been merely an insurrectionary leader it is difficult to understand how Pilate would risk proposing a name which was sure to be popular. S. Luke, however, distinctly mentions that he was imprisoned for "sedition."

second century,¹ that Barabbas was called Jesus, and that the exact form of the question which Pilate put to the people was this: "Whom will ye that I release unto you, Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus Which is called Christ?"

It matters little, however, what it was that prompted Pilate to propose him to the people, the result is the same: the robber, the revolutionist, the murderer was chosen—the Holy One, the Harmless, the Saviour was rejected.

It was another disappointment to Pilate, and wholly unexpected. He had every reason for believing that the populace would be on his side, and if he could only be satisfied that they would support him, he would have been prepared to brave all the threats of the hierarchy. But the priests were more than a match for him. Directly they recognised the danger, they ran in among the crowd, and moved the people—"Ask for Barabbas," "Cry for Barabbas;" and their eagerness made itself felt. A mob is easily swayed by a few powerful enthusiasts; and it was so at this critical moment, for when Pilate asked what he should do with Him Whom they called "the King of the Jews," urged on again no doubt by the priests, who stirred the worst passions of their nature, they cried, "Crucify Him," "Crucify Him." It was a death wholly repellent to Jewish feelings, and one that would never have suggested itself to the people, who had no bitter animosity against Him; but crucifixion alone would satisfy the revengeful rulers, whom He had denounced with such withering scorn; and it was their cry really, not the people's, which Pilate heard: "Let Him be crucified."

Again the judge's conviction of His innocence becomes manifest. "Why should I crucify Him?" he asks, "What evil hath He done?"

We know not exactly at what stage in these tumultuous proceedings it was, but after "he was set down on the judgment-seat," he received a message, which must have made him

¹ Origen spoke of it as a common reading, but approved of the omission on dogmatic grounds. He says, "Several MSS. also had not the name 'Ἰησοῦς.'" This implies that the majority had it. Its omission is certainly easier to account for than its interpolation. Olshausen, Meyer, De Wette, Ewald, Klein, and Wordsworth, and others, accept it. It is rejected by Alford, Tischendorf, Westcott, and Hort. It is found now only in five cursive MSS., and in the Armenian and Jerusalem Syriac Versions.

more reluctant than ever to assent to the execution. The dream of Procla¹ was the last effort of a Merciful God to save him from violating his conscience to the end.² That God "Who would not answer Saul by prophets or by dreams, Who for centuries had ceased to speak by Urim and Thummim," broke the silence of eternity to deliver a weak and wavering judge from eternal ruin. We cannot tell what visions stirred the spirit of the heathen's wife; we know not, save by tradition, who she was; but she came forth from her obscurity to utter a last warning to the conscience of her husband, to save him from incurring everlasting shame. If we may hazard a conjecture as to the time when the message reached him, we would suggest that it was after he had delivered Jesus to be scourged.³ Was it this which prompted his last appeal to save the Prisoner? Seeing the awful plight in which the frightful lash had left Him, clothed with the mock symbols of royalty, all smeared with blood and shameful spitting, he determined to make a final effort to move the sympathies of the people. Repeating his reiterated attestation to Christ's innocence, Pilate led Him out to the multitude, and with no irony or bitterness such as when he said, "Behold your King!" he pointed simply to a human Being in abject misery; and the words he used have echoed on through all the ages; painters have striven in a thousand ways to express their meaning, and preachers have caught them up at every Passion-tide—*Ecce Homo!* "Behold the Man!"

It was a sight to draw tears even from the flinty rock, but it roused no sense of shame, and stirred no chord of compassion. It made the obdurate Jews even more clamorous for the execution of their wicked will, and awoke a still fiercer

¹ Her name is given in Ecclesiastical tradition both as Procla and Claudia Procla. She is said to have become a Christian afterwards, and has been canonised by the Greek Church.

² It was regarded as a Divine interposition by many of the Fathers,—Origen, Athanasius, Chrysostom, Hilary, Augustine, etc. For the influence such a dream was likely to have upon a Roman at this time, cf. Suetonius, August. 91, and Julius Cæsar, 81.

³ The probable site of the scourging has been discovered by Captain Warren among the ruins of the Prætorium. It is "a truncated column, no part of the construction, for the chamber is vaulted above the pillar, but just such a pillar as criminals would be tied to to be scourged." Fergusson fixes the date at not later than the Herodian period. Cf. Westcott on S. John xix. 1.

outbreak than before: "Crucify Him," "Crucify Him." But Pilate would not relent; we are even told that he took steps to release Him, and then their last device was tried—the desperate effort¹ reserved till all else had failed: "If thou let this Man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend." And he yielded at once. That name of Cæsar acted like a potent spell, and made a slave of one "to whom political success was as the breath of life." The craven fear of imperial displeasure compelled him to bow to the will he had so long resisted. "Already in imagination the wretched man saw himself in the presence of his gloomy and suspicious master, informed against, condemned, degraded, banished."² His sense of justice and his strongest convictions all were swept away in an instant as by a whirlwind; and for the pride of worldly station and the favour of an earthly king he has gained the execration of Christendom, and eternal shame before God and man.

¹ It is the first time they say anything calculated to irritate him and set him against them. It was a threat he might or might not resent—they knew not which.

² Traditions vary as to the scene of his banishment. Either Vienne on the Rhone, or the neighbourhood of Mons Pilatus, near Lucerne. Cf. Scott, in *Anne of Geierstein*.

The Mock Investiture, and bearing the Cross

S. MARK XV. 16-22

16. And the soldiers led Him away into the hall, called Prætorium; and they call together the whole band.

17. And they clothed Him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put *it* about His *head*, 18. and began to salute Him, Hail, King of the Jews. 19. And they smote Him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon Him, and bowing *their* knees worshipped Him. 20.

And when they had mocked Him, they took off the purple from Him, and put His own clothes on Him, and led Him out to crucify Him. 21. And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear His cross.

22. And they bring Him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull.

IF we were reading the narrative for the first time, when we had reached this point, we should experience a great sense of relief; we should feel that now Jesus is taken out of the hands of His countrymen, with all their intense spite and animosity, at least He will be subjected to no unnecessary suffering. He had provoked no retaliation from the Romans: He had spoken no bitter things against them. No "Woe unto you, ye heathen!" had ever made them quail beneath His righteous anger. But prophecy must be fulfilled. It was ordained that He should drain the cup of suffering to the dregs; and so just when no cruelty was expected, there it was exercised upon Him in its most brutal form. All the agents of evil were let loose in that "hour and power of darkness," and all alike, young and old, Jew and Gentile, became confederate against Him.

"The soldiers led Him away into the hall, called Prætorium, and they call together the whole band." The headquarters

of the Roman army of occupation were at Cæsarea, but a detachment was kept in Jerusalem to overawe the populace, who chafed at foreign rule, and were always ready to rise in rebellion.¹ This cohort had their barracks round the quadrangle of the palace. As soon then as Pilate's body-guard had conceived the idea of ill-treating the Prisoner, they called out all their comrades to take part in their cruel sport. They had heard Jesus charged with claiming the imperial dignity, and they resolved to give it to Him in mockery, and see how He would bear His royal honours. They fetched from the guard-room some cast-off scarlet cloak of one of their generals,² or perhaps from the Prætorian wardrobe a purple robe, such as Cæsar wore when he took the field ; whichever it was, it was intended to represent a royal dress. Then they crowned Him. We usually think of it as with an Eastern diadem ; but it was far more probably in imitation of the victor's wreath, which the Emperor of the time was so fond of wearing, as the statues of Tiberius abundantly testify. One of the soldiers must have run into the garden of the palace, or down the rocky valley hard by, and gathered a handful of thorny bramble ; of what kind³ it was, has been often disputed. Those who thought most of the infliction of pain fixed on an Acanthus, with long spikes that sting as well as prick ; others who saw in the crowning more of mockery than cruelty chose the Nebk—the Spina Christi—which, with its pliant twigs and bright ivy-like leaves, best recalls the imperial wreath. Whichever it was, it is enough for us to feel, as an evidence of the restitution wrought by the Incarnation, that what sprang from the ground as a curse on Adam's transgression, was woven into a crown, and worn by Christ.

Next a tall reed was brought and thrust into His hand for a royal sceptre, and the picture was complete—the mock investiture finished. Then the derisive homage began. It was not a single act of mockery ; for S. Mark, who is so precise in

¹ The whole detachment numbered from 400 to 600 men.

² S. Mark speaks of it as "purple:" S. Matthew as "scarlet:" possibly it was scarlet with the purple "laticlave." The ancients did not distinguish colours very accurately.

³ In Christian Art it is usually represented by a wreath of leafless twigs with long thorns. S. Chrysostom favours the idea that the coronation was for mockery : "they insulted Him with the crown of thorns."

his language, uses tenses¹ throughout which imply repetition. Not improbably, therefore, the whole cohort passed by before Him, each one kneeling as he passed, and mingling some word or act of insult with his mock obeisance.

No sooner was this derisive exhibition concluded than Pilate led Jesus forth, wearing the mimic insignia of royalty, for his last appeal to the people. We have seen with what result.² He was brought back only to be stripped of the scarlet cloak, and led forth to die.

Where the *Via Dolorosa* or "Way of the Cross" began we may conjecture with confidence, for the site of the *Prætorium*, from which it led, has been fixed; but where it ended, is wrapped in obscurity. Tradition, however, has not hesitated to mark out the whole route. Particular spots connected with certain events—some recorded in Scripture, some not—are pointed out to the traveller; and many a pilgrim, believing that he was literally treading in the footsteps of our blessed Lord, has gone barefoot from the beginning to the end. But the path which those holy feet really trod on that terrible day is buried, and everything associated with it, deep beneath that which now meets the eye.

The scene of the Crucifixion was called by the Evangelists, in Aramaic, *Golgotha*, in Latin, *Calvary*, and, as interpreted, the "place of a skull." Familiar illustrations, in which skulls and bones lie whitening on the ground, have led us to look upon it as especially associated with the dead. But we would notice that it is not called the place of skulls, but of a skull. It was not the custom of the Jews to leave bodies unburied; and we may be quite sure that a wealthy man, like Joseph of *Arimathæa*, would not have fixed his garden or pleasure-ground in close proximity to any spot ceremonially unclean. *Golgotha* was simply a rounded knoll, bare perhaps of trees and grass, in shape like a skull,³ lying beyond the gate in the suburbs of the city.

But whatever the road may have been by which Jesus went

¹ The imperfect, *ἐτυπτον, ἐνέπτυνον, προσεκυνοῦν*.

² Cf. p. 358.

³ S. Luke says, "the place which is called 'a skull,'" not, as the other Evangelists, "of a skull." The Hebrew word is derived from a root signifying to roll, hence "round." There is nothing in the Gospels to indicate that it was a "mountain." This is traditional.

to the scene of His death, we know that those who led Him out compelled Him to carry the instrument of His execution on His Own shoulders. Christian Art has misled us in its representation of what it was that He carried. It was then the usual custom in cases of crucifixion to make the condemned criminal bear to the place of execution, not the whole cross—this in the majority of cases after the exhaustion produced by the scourging which preceded, would have been physically impossible—but only the two transverse beams. They were tied or lightly nailed together in the shape of the letter V, and placed like a yoke on the criminal's neck. Crucifixion was borrowed, we must remember, from the Romans, and the Roman convict certainly so carried them, as we may gather from the name which he received in consequence, *furcifer*—"forkbearer"¹—the most contemptible designation which a Roman could receive.

Now we are told that for some reason or other, the soldiers "pressed into the service" one Simon, to help to bear the burden. He who was thus honoured above all men—who alone was permitted to lend any human aid to the Great Sufferer in that awful hour—was one of the African Jews, of whom there were sufficient in Jerusalem to have a synagogue of their own. He was returning from his work in the field with his two boys, Alexander and Rufus,² when he was rudely seized and compelled to aid in bearing the Cross. In all probability he manifested some sympathy for Jesus, which drew attention to him; and there is a most touching representation of this feeling in one of a series of well-known pictures in Antwerp Cathedral. No sooner have they arrived at the place of execution than Simon, having done all that lay in his power, and seeing that they are about to nail Jesus to the Cross, unable any longer to endure the sight, takes his frightened boys by the hand and hurries them from the spot; and theirs are the only faces which, in that vast crowd on Golgotha, are turned away from the Cross.

And now we come to the point where, we think, the teach-

¹ It was used like the English "gallows-bird" or "hang-dog."

² It is a coincidence that S. Mark, writing especially for Romans, mentions the sons, who were probably well known to them, for S. Paul salutes Rufus in his Epistle to the Romans xvi. 13.

ing of Christian Art is at fault. Knowing how much sacred painting has done in bringing the Life of our Lord home to the hearts of men, remembering too out of our own experience the lasting, the ineffaceable impression which certain pictures have made upon the mind, we almost hesitate to say a word in disparagement; but it does seem that in one important point the great painters who have treated the subject have missed the truth. It all turns upon the reason why Simon was compelled to bear the Cross. Was it because our Lord was unable to bear it Himself, because, in short, He fell, as a late tradition says, three times prostrate beneath its weight? or was it only because the soldiers were impatient, and though Jesus was Himself equal to the burden they had laid upon Him, they thought it would expedite matters to call in the assistance of another! Men have learned to believe the first, but, in our judgment, erroneously.¹ Christ taught mankind by example almost more than by precept. Many of His great acts were, so to speak, typical, and the way in which He bore His Cross was to be an example and encouragement to those whom He told again and again to take up their cross and follow Him.

Now if He had succumbed to the burden and sunk helpless to the ground, the example would have lost more than half its force.

Christian Art, though probably it would have excited less compassion for the Sufferer, would have taught a truer and deeper lesson, if it had embodied the sentiment which prevailed in the earliest ages of the Church, when, under a profound sense of His all-sufficient power, men held that from the moment that the Cross was laid upon His shoulders till it was removed by other hands, He never proved unequal to the burden He was called on to bear.

But though the lesson we ought to draw from this is that the faithful Christian must never lay down his cross, too many of us need to be reminded that it is incumbent upon us all to take it up. "Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come

¹ There is an expression in S. Mark xv. 22 which may favour the idea that He was sinking beneath the burden—*φέρουσιν αὐτὸν*—which may be, but is not necessarily, "they bear Him." In the A.V. it is "they bring Him." But even on the supposition that they actually carried Him, it is no proof that He could not have struggled through, had they not been so impatient to get the execution over.

after Me, cannot be My disciple." He does not say will not, but cannot be. It is as much an impossibility that we should be recognised as Christ's servants without discipline and self-denial, as that any man shall be able without holiness to gaze upon the Beatific Vision hereafter. We are all from our very birth apt and prone to sin; and mortification of self is one of the great correctives placed within our reach by Him Who would have all men to be pure, even as He is pure. To crucify the flesh, then, with its affections and lusts, is a necessity of our being, and to take up the cross on our own shoulders is the first necessary step in the execution of our purpose. It was the realisation of this truth which gave birth to the watchword of the martyrs in an earlier age: "No cross no crown." Bear the cross, and bear it bravely, till God's Own hand shall take it away; then at the last we shall be able to say with all the confidence of S. Paul: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me in that day."

At the Place of Execution

S. MARK XV. 23-32

23. And they gave Him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but He received *it* not. 24. And when they had crucified Him, they parted His garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take. 25. And it was the third hour, and they crucified Him. 26. And the superscription of His accusation was written over, THE KING OF THE JEWS. 27. And with Him they crucify two thieves; the one on *His* right hand, and the other on His left. 28. And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And

He was numbered with the transgressors.

29. And they that passed by railed on Him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, *Thou* that destroyest the temple, and buildest *it* in three days, 30. save Thyself, and come down from the cross. 31. Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others; Himself He cannot save. 32. Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with Him reviled Him.

It was probably as soon as they arrived at the place of crucifixion that the stupefying draught¹ was offered to our Lord. The compassionate women of Jerusalem were wont to provide it at their expense, and bribe the executioners to administer it before the painful process of nailing the prisoner to the cross began. Jesus was parched with thirst, and would gladly have drunk it, as He took the proffered vinegar afterwards; but when He recognised what it was, He refused to drink. He determined to look death in the face with all its possible horrors, and submit to the full penalty of the first transgression;

¹ Lightfoot quotes from the Talmud to prove that it was in fulfilment of the Scripture, "Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish,"—Prov. xxxi. 6. The reading of S. Matt. xxvii. 34—"vinegar mingled with gall," according to the best MSS. is *οἶνον* for *δξον*, and the right interpretation of the word rendered "gall" is found to be in harmony with S. Mark's account; cf. Speaker's Com. on S. Matt. xxvii. 34.

and no anodyne or soporific potion might cloud His faculties at such a time, or dull in the smallest degree the sharpness of the pain. It is probable, though not certain, that our Lord was nailed to the Cross while it lay upon the ground, and that it was then raised into its position, as is represented in the great picture of Rubens in Antwerp Cathedral.

The shape of the Cross on which He suffered has been much debated. Some ancient Fathers, fancying they found a typical reference in the crossing of the hands over the head of the scape-goat, and in the peculiar mode in which Jacob blessed his grandsons, often assumed that it was in the form of what is commonly called a S. Andrew's Cross; others again, seeing in the mystical mark or Tau set upon the foreheads of the righteous in Ezekiel's vision a foreshadowing of the Cross, concluded that it was like that which bears the name of S. Anthony, in form like a capital T.

It is far more probable that it was what is known familiarly as the Latin Cross. It was prefigured by the transverse spits which the priest placed in the Paschal lamb. Its four arms, pointing to the four quarters of the globe, symbolised "the breadth and length and depth and height" of Christ's universal Church. It is a strong argument in favour of this form that "the inscription" was set above the head of the Crucified, which would be impossible in either of the other forms.

After condemnation the grounds upon which a criminal had been found guilty were briefly inscribed upon a tablet. This was either hung round his neck or carried before him to the place of execution.

This, in our Lord's case, was written by Pilate himself. In his desire to take his revenge for the humiliation to which the Jews had subjected him by compelling him to act in open violation of his expressed convictions, he bore an unconscious testimony to the truth—"This is the King of the Jews." And not only so, but he took steps to make it known in every quarter, when he wrote the inscription in "Hebrew and Latin"¹

¹ This is the order in S. John xix. 20, according to the best MSS. The parallel passage in S. Luke xxiii. 38, "in letters of Greek and Latin and Hebrew," is of doubtful authority.

It may be that different Evangelists have reproduced the differences of languages. The laconic "the King of the Jews," suggests at once "Rex Judæorum," and would be naturally chosen for Roman readers.

and Greek." In Hebrew, that it might be read in the vernacular of the common people; in Latin because it was the official language of the Government; in Greek, to render it intelligible to the foreigners, amongst whom that tongue was widely spoken. These were the three great languages of the world; they "gathered up," it has been beautifully said, "the results of the religious, the social, the intellectual preparation for Christ, and in each witness was given to His office."

No sooner was the Cross secured in its place than the executioners began to appropriate the clothes of the Crucified. They were their customary perquisite. The act deserves our attention, because it is one of those details which had been predicted ages before with such remarkable exactness: "They parted My garments among them, and upon My vesture did they cast lots." It is commonly supposed that the outer garments were cut up or torn into four parts, for there was a quaternion of soldiers, and the language of S. John appears to favour this view: "Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also His coat (or tunic): now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it,¹ but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the Scripture might be fulfilled."

If, however, our Lord was clothed as an ordinary Jewish Rabbi, He would wear a tunic, a cloak, a head-dress, a girdle, and sandals or shoes. The last four would be distributed, one to each executioner. What direct motives prompted them to set aside the tunic to be drawn for by lot, rather than any other part, we cannot tell; but on the authority of S. John we are compelled to believe that it was so overruled for the fulfilment of prophecy.

The time of the crucifixion is fixed by S. Mark at the "third hour," while S. John says that it was "about the sixth hour" when Pilate yielded to the clamour of the Jews, and "delivered Him unto them to be crucified."

¹ It appears as though "let us not rend it" pointed to the other garments having been rent; but had this been so, "it" would probably have been emphasised. One piece was over after the distribution, and the only alternative was to divide or cast lots for it. For reference to Jewish dress, cf. Edersheim, i. 621-6. The common tunic was made in two pieces. Our Lord wore one made like that of the High Priest; cf. Joseph. Antiq. iii. 7, 4.

In all probability S. John followed the modern Western mode of reckoning the hours from midnight, for traces of this are found in Asia Minor, where he was living when he wrote.¹ Making a legitimate allowance for the qualifying expression, "about" the sixth hour, there is little difficulty in reconciling the statement with "the third hour" of S. Mark, *i.e.* nine o'clock² by the Hebrew reckoning; especially as a considerable time would necessarily elapse between the "delivering up" and the actual crucifixion.

To increase the ignominy of our Lord's death it had been prophesied³ that He should be "numbered with the transgressors." The spirit of revenge which moved Pilate so strongly against the Jews led him unwittingly to further the eternal counsels of God. He had been forced to release Barabbas at their will, but there were others in prison for the same offence, "that had made insurrection with him." He will show what respect he has for the choice of the people, by crucifying the comrades⁴ of their favourite side by side with Him Whom they hate.

In the Apocryphal "Acts of Pilate,"⁵ which carries us back to the earliest times, their names are preserved as Dysmas and Gestas.

S. Mark, following the first Gospel, records how they both joined in the general reproach of our Lord on the Cross. The passers-by jeered Him derisively for His boasted powers, and bade Him take that opportunity to prove their existence. The chief priests, afraid perhaps that the inscription might deceive the people, let them see what they thought of it by their taunting jibes, and asked Him in irony to give some

¹ Cf. Westcott *in loco* for a full examination.

² If it be maintained that S. John and S. Mark both followed the Hebrew mode of reckoning, then possibly the explanation may be found in regarding the "third hour" merely as a division of the day, corresponding to a "night watch," and embracing the whole time from three to six. S. Jerome suggested that the numerals representing three and six had been confused.

³ The verse is absent from the best MSS. It was probably a marginal note calling attention to the fulfilment, which our Lord had anticipated in S. Luke xxii. 37.

⁴ The two thieves are designated by the same word as Barabbas, not thieves, *κλεπται*, merely, but robbers, *λησται*, which points to the identity of crime; and, taken in conjunction with S. Mark xv. 7, is almost conclusive as to the connection.

⁵ For a full account, cf. Westcott on S. John xix. add. note.

evidence of His Royalty, that they might "see and believe." The heathen soldiers too took part in the mockery and insult; but the wicked blasphemy reached its climax when those who were "in the same condemnation" reviled Him for His impotence to save.

Through all this Babel of invective the Redeemer was silent; not a single rejoinder escaped from His lips. The silence was only broken to speak pardon to a penitent soul: it was when an exhibition of unparalleled meekness touched the heart of one of the poor criminals hanging at His side. Realising, as by a sudden illumination, the awful gulf that lay between innocence and guilt, and reaching out with a faith that baffles comprehension, he begged the Crucified to remember him when He should come in His kingdom; and at once His lips were unsealed—to grant even more than he asked, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise."

“He gave up the Ghost”

S. MARK XV. 33-38

33. And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. 34. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, ELOI, ELOI, LAMA SABACHTHANI? which is, being interpreted, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? 35. And some of them that stood by, when they heard *it*, said, Behold, He calleth

Elias. 36. And one ran and filled a sponge *full* of vinegar, and put *it* on a reed, and gave Him to drink, saying, Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come to take Him down.

37. And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. 38. And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.

At this point a manifest change seems to pass over the scene of the Crucifixion. Up to this hour Jesus has borne all that was laid upon Him without a murmur or complaint of any kind; His only thoughts have been for others—for His murderers, for the penitent robber, for His desolate Mother; and so far not a word of sympathy has been uttered. But now the climax of the Agony is reached, and where the voice of man is silent, Nature speaks.

Darkness fell upon the whole land¹ of Judæa. It was doubtless limited in its area, not widely dissimilar from that which happened at the Exodus, when “there was a darkness in all the land of Egypt three days,” while all “the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.” It is true that a great

¹ The expression “the whole land” is ambiguous. If it may not be strictly limited to the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, it must be interpreted as an Orientalism common to Scriptural phraseology. Cf. S. Matt. iv. 9, S. Luke iv. 25, Acts ii. 5, S. James v. 17.

earthquake and noonday eclipse¹ did occur in this year, as we learn from the testimony of more than one ancient writer, but the extinction of light of which the Evangelists write cannot be scientifically accounted for on natural principles. And surely if a miraculous brightness had illumined the night to signalise the birth of God Incarnate, we need not wonder that the heavens should have gathered a supernatural blackness in token of His death.

Now it was out of this thick gloom, or perhaps just as the light broke out again to symbolise that His struggle with the powers of darkness was over, that He uttered that most mysterious cry, "My God, My God, why didst Thou forsake Me?" A cloud had passed between His human soul and His Father's face: He had been driven like the scapegoat bearing the people's sins into the very wilderness of desolation. It was a cry of immeasurable alienation, but in its very accents it implied that union had been restored. "Even from the remotest bound of a nature thus traversed in all the measures of its infirmity for man's salvation, the Saviour cried unto God as *His* God, yea and He 'was heard in that He feared.'"

Whether the language He used was the Hebrew "Eli" or the Aramaic "Eloi,"² there was something in the cry that recalled to the spectators the name of Elijah. If they were Jews, it may have been that in their bewilderment they caught only the first syllable, and with their superstitious fears quickened by the preternatural darkness, thought that "the great and dreadful day" was at hand.

If, on the other hand, they were Romans, they must have seen how the people regarded Elijah, the patron saint of the distressed, and lived in expectation that he would appear in every crisis of difficulty and danger. It was not unnatural then that they hastened to the conclusion that the Crucified was calling for His deliverer.

¹ This is on the evidence of Phlegon, a freedman, of Adrian. He says that "there was a greater eclipse than any yet known, and that the sixth hour of the day became night." Strauss and others bring forward numerous parallels of darkness occurring simultaneously with the deaths of great men, and conclude that the Evangelists adopted a superstitious belief.

² S. Mark usually gives the exact form of our Lord's words, so we may conclude that it was "Eloi," though of course it makes it harder to understand how it could be mistaken for Elijah.

While they were waiting another cry was heard, "I thirst;" and, moved to pity, one of the soldiers took the sponge from the neck of the earthen jar, and, dipping it in the wine, which they had provided for the sentry, held it on a reed or stalk of hyssop to His dying lips. The penalty of sin had been fully paid, its curse had been borne in all its intolerable weight, death was imminent, and He accepted the draught.

Then followed the loud voice—an unwonted precursor of death, for Jesus died as none other died, and that cry was the last proof He could give of His power—the fulfilment of His Own declaration, "no man taketh My life from Me, but I lay it down of Myself."¹

At that moment "the veil of the Temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom." The significance of this occurrence is full of interest, and worthy of the closest consideration. The whole structure of the Tabernacle, upon which the Temple was modelled, was one of a complex and profound symbolism, such as befitted a plan drawn by no human architect, but revealed by God. It was divided into three parts,—an Outer Court, the Holy Place, the Holy of Holies. The whole congregation of Israel were admitted into the first, the priests into the second, the High Priest alone into the third; and they represented in type respectively the World, the Church, and Heaven. Both the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies were entered through a veil or curtain called the outer and the inner, or sometimes the first and the second. Which of the two veils was it which was rent in twain, when Jesus gave up the ghost? The early Fathers, with the exceptions of two of the greatest, Origen and S. Jerome, and nearly every modern commentator, have concluded that it was the inner or second veil. From this view we dissent² upon the following grounds: It is commonly assumed that the rent signified that henceforward heaven was opened to all believers through the death of Christ. But is this true? Was not the effect of the Passion the unsealing of mysteries confined before to the Jewish nation? Was it not the breaking down of "the middle

¹ S. John x. 17, 18. S. Augustine says, "non eam deseruit invitus, sed quia voluit, quando voluit, quomodo voluit."

² Two modern writers agree more or less with the view here stated, viz., Douglas in "Jerusalem the Golden," and Willis in "The Worship of the Old Covenant." Hug also accepts this interpretation.

wall of partition" which excluded the Gentiles? Was it not, in short, the throwing open of the gates of the Church, so that there should no longer be any distinction between circumcision and uncircumcision, bond and free, male and female? "In Christ Jesus," says the Apostle, "ye who were sometime afar off were made nigh by the blood of Christ." The Church was henceforward to be composed not of one but of all nations; it was necessary therefore that this should be foreshadowed in type. It could only be done by destroying the curtain which concealed the chamber that represented the Church, *i.e.* the Holy Place, not the Holy of Holies.

But if the second or inner veil¹ was not rent at the Crucifixion, what change was effected in respect to the Holy of Holies, which symbolised heaven? By the death of Christ apparently none. Whatever change passed over this resulted from His Ascension; but it was not so great that it deserved to be marked by the rending of that which precluded the general admission. Now what was the change? The inner veil shrouded the Presence of God from the common gaze; and when the High Priest entered, the mystical Shekinah might only be seen through a cloud of incense.

This obscuration of the Divine Glory was provided for in a remarkable manner. We learn from the Mishnah that the curtain was a double one, with a space between about a cubit in width. When the High Priest passed into this intervening space, before he drew aside that which hung next to the inner Chamber, he poured incense over the glowing brazier in his hand, and, entering with downcast eyes, waited to look up till the smoke had completely filled the place. It was a merciful provision, Moses says, to save the High Priest from death, which he must have incurred had he looked upon the full brightness of the Divine Presence.

But the vision of God is no longer veiled to our High Priest, for He sees It in all its undimmed glory, even face to

¹ In the Hebrew, different words are used for the two veils; and generally *καταπέτασμα*, that here used, represents in the LXX. the inner, and *κάλυμμα* the outer, but by no means universally, as is too commonly asserted. Cf. Ex. xxvi. 37, xxxviii. 18, xl. 6, 8, 19; Numb. iii. 26, all cited by Willis. Further, it is *καταπέτασμα ναού*, *i.e.* that part which contained both the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. If it were the veil of the latter only, we should have expected *ἀγίωv ἀγίωv*. Cf. Heb. ix. 3.

face. This at once connects the symbolism of the Inner Veil with the Ascension, not with the Crucifixion. This veil was not rent, because the heaven which it typically concealed is not yet thrown open for all to enter. We are still waiting without—some on earth, some in Paradise. Our Forerunner has entered, and His entrance is the pledge by which we may have boldness to believe that we shall one day follow, even by that “new and living way which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh;” but as yet we may only do so by faith, for the road will be really trodden by no other feet till the Resurrection.

We can no more say that we are free to enter heaven than the Jewish nation could have claimed that they had access to the Holy of Holies. They could enter in the person of their representative High Priest, and so can we by ours, but only in Him, not with Him. We can be there in hope, not in reality. For the actual admission in our own persons we must wait till the veil is for ever rent or removed, as it will be at the general Resurrection.

It was, then, we believe, a rent in the outer veil, made as it were by the hand of God Himself, that must have terrified the Jewish worshippers as they flocked into the Temple at the hour when Christ expired upon the Cross. But, like all the other preternatural signs, it left the hardened Jews more obdurate than before.

It seems incredible to us that they could have withstood such irresistible evidence. “The heavens had rejoiced at Christ’s birth; a new star had sprung into light, and a company of angels filled the air with their song. The sea had acknowledged Him, and made itself a pathway for His footsteps; the earth trembled to its centre at His death; the sun knew Him, and withdrew its shining; but though the whole material world bowed down before Him, the unbelieving Jews refused Him His due, and, harder even than the rocks, showed no sign of repentance,” and they now reap the fruits of their unbelief.

Laid in the Grave

S. MARK XV. 39-47

39. And when the centurion, which stood over against Him, saw that He so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this Man was the Son of God. 40. There were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses, and Salome; 41. (who also, when He was in Galilee, followed Him, and ministered unto Him;) and many other *women* which came up with Him unto Jerusalem.

42. And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, 43. Joseph of Arimathæa, an honourable counsellor, which also

waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus.

44. And Pilate marvelled if He were already dead: and calling unto *him* the centurion, he asked him whether He had been any while dead. 45. And when he knew *it* of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph. 46. And he bought fine linen, and took Him down, and wrapped *Him* in the linen, and laid Him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre. 47. And Mary Magdalene and Mary *the mother* of Joses beheld where He was laid.

EVERY Roman legion was divided into twenty companies, each numbering, when the army was on a war footing, a hundred soldiers, and commanded by an officer hence called a "centurion." The one of whom we are reading doubtless belonged to the detachment stationed in Antonia; and when the quaternion of soldiers was told off to see the execution duly carried out, such was the interest and excitement aroused, he deemed it advisable to accompany them himself.

He witnessed, therefore, all that took place from the time that Jesus left the Prætorium; and there were many things¹

¹ In S. Matt. xxvii, 54 it is said that his confession was due to "the earthquake and those things that were done;" but there is a diversity of reading,

that filled him with wonder. He knew well how a Roman could set his face as flint, and meet death without a sign of fear; he had no doubt often seen it on the field of battle. But there was something in our Lord's whole demeanour, in His forgetfulness of self, in His thoughtful care for others, and especially in His prayer that those who were crucifying Him might be forgiven, which was quite beyond his experience. He was amazed, too, at the manner of His death,—at the loud expiring cry; and when, in addition to all this, he felt the very ground quake beneath his feet, he gave utterance to the conviction forced upon him by these things, in the memorable confession: "Truly this was a righteous Man; this was the Son of God."¹ We must interpret the testimony by the standard of the centurion's knowledge, not by that of Christian faith. It is quite possible that he knew something of the Messianic expectations of the Jews and of the claims of Jesus to be the Son of God (for the title was one which the priests frequently cast in His teeth as He hung upon the Cross), and it may be that he had come to the conclusion that One Who could deport Himself as He had done, whatever claims He made, could be no Pretender. But it is perhaps more probable that he looked at the whole scene simply from the heathen standpoint, and felt that he had had before him a character that approached nearer to his own ideal of righteousness than anything he had ever seen before.

Whichever interpretation we accept, it was a noble witness to the truth; and to the lasting honour of him who bore it, no less than three Evangelists have been guided by the Holy Spirit to place it on record.

From the heathen centurion we turn to the Jewish disciple, Joseph of Arimathæa. The part that he played in the last offices for the Dead has been deemed worthy of even greater honour, for it finds a place in all the Gospels.

Apart from this a special interest attaches to his name for Englishmen, from his supposed connection with this country. He is one of the few Scriptural names that are associated with

τὰ γενόμενα, i.e. all that had happened, and *τὰ γινόμενα*, the things that were happening at the time of the earthquake. The former, which has the greater authority, has been accepted in the above.

¹ S. Matt. and S. Mark give the latter, S. Luke the former half. Probably the real utterance combined both.

the early legends of British history. He shares the distinction with Pudens, Claudia, and S. Paul. Tradition says that he was sent by S. Philip as a missionary to this island, and that, settling at Glastonbury, he erected the first Christian church in Britain, made of wicker twigs, on the site where the noblest abbey was subsequently built. His pilgrim's staff, which he drove into the ground, is said to have taken root and grown into an umbrageous thorn, to protect him from the heat. We smile perhaps at the legend, but it was only the romantic dress in which an imaginative age clothed an important truth. It tells how, from a small and unpretending enterprise, the founder, whoever he may have been, was able to raise up a vast monastery, within the walls of which he took refuge himself, and offered means of shelter to others from the bustle and turmoil of the world.

But all this rests upon uncertain authority. In the Gospels we read that he was a native of Arimathæa, in all probability the later name of Ramathaim,¹ where Samuel was born.

He was a man both of birth² and position, enjoying the highest dignity coveted by a Jew as a member of the Supreme Council of the nation. He was the only councillor of whom we know for certain that in the trial before the Sanhedrim he gave his vote for our Lord's acquittal. It is extremely probable that Nicodemus did the same, though it is not recorded. They were men between whom we may trace many correspondences,³ both in social position and in natural temperament. The conduct of both in connection with the Burial of our Lord bespeaks forethought and preparation. It is not improbable that, when they realised that they could do nothing to avert the execution of the sentence, they determined that, though unable to help Him while living, they would at least honour Him in His death. So it was that Joseph prepared, or resolved to give

¹ There are no less than eight places, each of which has been claimed as its modern representative.

² This is generally implied by *εὐσχήμων*.

³ Both were Sanhedrists, both rich. If Nicodemus is identified with Nicodemus Ben Gorion, of Talmudic fame, he was proverbially wealthy. He was a timid follower of Jesus at first, coming to Him "by night" only, but afterwards braved everything for Jesus' sake. So too with Joseph,—the attention called to his becoming bold implies that he was making a venture alien to his natural temperament.

up, the newly-made tomb, which he had designed for himself; and that Nicodemus procured, by a lavish expenditure, spices for embalming far in excess of the usual requirements.

It was the custom of the Romans to leave the bodies of the crucified to waste away upon the cross, or to be devoured by birds and beasts of prey. The Jewish law, resting on the belief that crucifixion was "a reproach to God,"¹ ordered that bodies should be removed before sunset and buried. The place of burial was the polluted Valley of Hinnom, amidst all that was unclean and vile, where the worm of corruption never died. But it had been foretold ages before by David that the Holy One should "see no corruption," and Isaiah had declared that His should be no unhonoured grave, but that He should rest "with the rich in His death."

Now, as soon as Joseph learned that Jesus had given up the ghost, he waxed bold, and went in to the Prætorium, and, caring nothing for the dangers he encountered by such a venture, begged of Pilate that the Body of the Crucified might be given to him. It was a common custom for Roman governors to yield to such a request only on consideration of a bribe in money; and Philo has suggested that Joseph had recourse to the expedient, but the statement of S. Mark that Pilate "gave"—in the original it is "gave as a free favour"—the Body to him contradicts the idea. The request seems to have taken him by surprise; he could hardly believe it possible that Jesus was dead, for in crucifixion criminals usually lingered for two days or more. The answer, however, to his inquiries from the officer who was responsible for the due execution of the sentence, satisfied him that He had been dead some time,² sufficiently long to preclude the possibility of a swoon being mistaken for death.

The readiness with which the petition was granted affords additional evidence of the spirit of revenge which seems to have stirred Pilate so strongly against the Jews after their victory over him. To rescue the Body of Jesus from the

¹ The Hebrew in Deut. xxi. 23, literally rendered, is "a curse of God is he that hangeth" etc., and the Jews debated whether the ambiguous phrase implied that it was a curse pronounced by God, or, so to speak, felt by Him, *i.e.* a reproach to Him. The latter was generally accepted, because so many Jewish patriots were hanged.

² εἰ πάλαι ἀπέθανεν.

common fate of criminals, and to deliver it up for an honourable burial at the hands of a wealthy citizen like Joseph, was an act of retaliation in exact accord with his feelings towards them, and a rebuff well calculated to sting them to the quick.

The centurion gave up the Body according to the Governor's directions, and from that moment no indignity could be offered to it. Joseph and Nicodemus, with their attendants, carried it into the sepulchre. They would pass through the entrance into an open court or chamber, in the rocky sides of which the recesses were cut, and there paid the last offices that the utmost reverence and care could suggest. They laid the Sacred Form in the most honourable niche, and rolled the Gölal—the round flat mill-stone—before the entrance; then the Sabbath began, and all were at rest.

“And Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of Joses, beheld where He was laid.” It has been beautifully said that “it is the glory of woman that she seldom forsakes those she loves, even when things are darkest.” It finds its fullest illustration in the example of those who, when all the disciples, save the one who was most like them in womanly devotion and love, had forsaken Him, took their station at the foot of the Cross: who, when driven back by the soldiers, or priests and rulers, watched with anxious gaze from a distance, and, when all was over, were unable to tear themselves from His grave. Their love and devotion received its reward, for it was to them that He Whom they loved gave the first manifestation of His risen life; and it was they who were chosen to bear the glad tidings of His victory to the sorrowful disciples.

LXXVIII

The Devout Women

S. MARK XVI. 1-8

1. And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the *mother* of James, and Salome, had bought *sweet* spices, that they might come and anoint Him. 2. And very early in the morning the first *day* of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. 3. And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? 4. And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great. 5. And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the

right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. 6. And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, Which was crucified: He is risen; He is not here: behold the place where they laid Him. 7. But go your way, tell His disciples and Peter that He goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see Him, as He said unto you. 8. And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any *man*; for they were afraid.

WHEN the stone was rolled to the door of the sepulchre, and Joseph and Nicodemus went their way, two at least of the devout women remained watching. How long they kept their holy vigil we are not told; neither is the least record given, of what it would be so interesting to know, in what way the Sabbath that followed that terrible day was spent by those heart-broken mourners. Knowing as we do, how the holiest men and women have found comfort in the services of the Sanctuary, when their hearts have been burdened with grief, we can feel almost sure that they went to the Temple at the appointed hours. If so, the sight that met their gaze as they entered must have inspired them with fresh awe, for full in view before the throng of worshippers was the great curtain of the Holy Place, rent in twain from the ceiling to the pave-

ment. They would go back to their homes only to ponder in yet deeper amazement on all that had happened.

As soon as the Sabbath was over, after the sun had set, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, went out to buy spices for a further embalming of the Sacred Body.¹ In the haste of the burial, though everything no doubt was done with reverence, much was left which the tender ministries of women² could alone supply, and they hastened to fulfil their hallowed task. It would seem from a comparison of the several accounts that there were two companies; possibly those from Jerusalem in the one, those who had their home at the more distant Bethany in the other. They all set out, no doubt by pre-arrangement, in the morning watch, and the first to arrive at the sepulchre was Mary Magdalene. In her passionate impatience to see once more the Form of Him, to Whom she owed so much, she outstripped her companions. The first glimpse of the sacred spot was enough; it was still dark, but she could see "the stone taken away from the sepulchre," and without waiting to examine, she hastened to the conclusion that the Body must have been removed by violence, and ran back to Jerusalem to tell her apprehensions to S. Peter and S. John, under whose roof the Blessed Mother had found a home.

Meanwhile the women whom she had left drew near to the place. They had not thought of any obstacles to impede them in the execution of their pious errand; they had not heard that the Jews had placed a sentry over the tomb; but suddenly a difficulty occurred to one of them, and it was taken up by all, and formed a subject of anxious conversation.³ They had seen the force that was required when Joseph and his servants⁴

¹ "Had bought" in the A.V. is misleading. It is the aorist, ἡγόρασαν, not the pluperfect. If they remained till after sunset on Friday watching by the tomb, they could have had no opportunity before this of making their purchase. Some, it is said, did prepare their spices on Friday evening, but not these. S. Luke xxiii. 56.

² Though Christian Art has commonly represented the women as taking part in the Burial, there is no authority for it in Scripture. The men buried our Lord, the women sat over-against the sepulchre and beheld where He was laid.

³ The imperfect tense implies that it was a subject of continued talk and anxiety.

⁴ There is no mention of these; but as Joseph's house was close by, and it was impossible for him to do it without help, they would naturally be called.

had rolled the "great stone" to the entrance; and they were oppressed with fear, lest after all, their wishes might be frustrated. But immediately the sun rose, and they saw to their amazement that the stone had been already rolled back from its place.

The description of their perplexity, so life-like and true to nature, is given by S. Mark alone. It is another of the beautiful little touches that lend such grace to the Gospel that is fullest of human affections and feeling.

As soon as they entered the sepulchre they found that their Lord was risen. At what precise moment He burst the bands of death we cannot say; it was doubtless simultaneously with "the great earthquake" (which they must have felt as they drew near), for, as Nature had been moved when her Lord laid down His life, so would she manifest her recognition when He willed to take it again.

But the fact of the Resurrection was declared to them by a messenger from heaven. Angels had proclaimed His birth: had appeared to Mary and Joseph and the shepherds: had ministered to Him in the wilderness: had strengthened Him in Gethsemane; and they came now to assure His followers of the Resurrection, as they did forty days later, after He had ascended, to promise His reappearance at the final consummation. The stone had been rolled away, not for the Lord to come forth, for He, Who needed not that doors should be unlocked or gates thrown open for His admission, could be held back by no material barrier; but the angel had down come to give the women an entrance into His tomb, and to deliver His message.

And this was the glad tidings: "Tell His disciples and Peter that He goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see Him, as He said unto you." It was a deeply significant word that the angel used—"goeth before you." In fulfilment of prophecy, He Himself had been smitten, and His flock had been scattered, like sheep not having a shepherd. As soon as the armed multitude had closed around Him at the gates of Gethsemane, terror had seized them, as when a wolf cometh, and they "all forsook Him and fled;" but He would gather His Own together again, and they should know His voice and follow Him, and be one flock once more.

We wonder, perhaps, why this should be singled out for a special announcement from all His intended appearances, and why Galilee should have been selected for the scene of the manifestation. It was not only because it was to be in the presence of the whole company of believers, witnessed "by above five hundred brethren at once;" but far more, perhaps, in view of His intention there to commit to them in their Apostolic brotherhood His solemn charge, and assure them of His abiding Presence.

And why was Galilee¹ to be thus favoured above Judæa and Jerusalem? It was Galilee of the Gentiles; and the commission they were to receive was not for Jews only, but for Gentiles—for every nation and people and tongue. It was fitting, therefore, that the meeting-place—the very soil that they trod—should lend force to the comprehensiveness of the message: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

For what reason, again, was S. Peter chosen to be an individual recipient of the glad tidings? The selection is recorded in this Gospel alone, and its mention is due, no doubt, to the Apostle himself, to whom it was of such vital moment.

There is something exceedingly touching in the addition. Jesus knew well that the piercing look which He had cast upon S. Peter as he crossed His path in the High Priest's court had left him crushed beneath the weight of his terrible sin. He knew, too, how he would be filled with a sense of utter unworthiness, and might think himself excluded for ever from the Apostolic company. And this was an anticipation of the assurance He had in store for him of complete forgiveness, and of restitution to his forfeited office.

It was doubtless out of the same longing to deliver His disciple from this crushing despair that He was unable to wait for the promised meeting in Galilee, and, as we are told, before the sun had set on that very day He "appeared unto Simon." What passed between them has not been revealed, but it needs no prophet's skill to divine at least the import of the Redeemer's words: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

¹ Nowhere else but in Galilee could such a large body of believers be gathered together.

The account of the devout women concludes with their instantaneous departure to fulfil the behest: "They went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre." All that they had seen and heard filled them with amazement, and sealed their lips to all whom they met on their way to the city, "neither said they any thing to any man, for they were afraid;" but when they found the disciples, they told the glad tidings with exclamations of joy. But what a disappointment awaited them! Their words seemed but "as idle tales, and they believed them not."

It is a reflection full of sadness that all alike were so "slow of heart to believe" what Jesus had told them of the resurrection. The devout women seem never to have thought of it; there is not the slightest hint, not the very faintest presentiment, that they expected His words to come true, and that even without their ointment and spices His Body would see no corruption.

The Apostles received message after message to assure them that He was alive and had been seen; but it was not till they had touched Him standing in their midst, and had been assured by the manifestation of His wounds, till He had with His Own voice upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, that they were fully convinced. It is indeed sad that it should have been reserved for enemies alone to recall His forgotten promise, "After three days I will rise again."

LXXIX

Three Appearances on the Day of the Resurrection

S. MARK XVI. 9-14

9. Now when *Jesus* was risen early the first *day* of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven devils. 10. *And* she went and told them that had been with Him, as they mourned and wept. 11. And they, when they had heard that He was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not.

12. After that He appeared in

another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country. 13. And they went and told *it* unto the residue : neither believed they them.

14. Afterward He appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen Him after He was risen.

IF there is difficulty in weaving out of the fourfold record of the trial of our Blessed Lord a consistent whole, it is largely increased, when we attempt to harmonise the different narratives of His Risen Life. The hardness of this latter task arises in the main out of the evidently fragmentary character of this portion of His Sacred History. Ten¹ or more manifestations of our Lord are described, each Evangelist mentioning at least three, but no two Evangelists precisely the same

¹ The best accredited order of the appearances is as follows :—

1. To Mary Magdalene alone. S. Mark xvi. 9 ; S. John xx. 14-17.
2. To the Women, *i.e.* Mary Magdalene and the other Mary. S. Matt. xxviii. 9, 10.
3. To Simon. S. Luke xxiv. 34 ; 1 Cor. xv. 5.
4. To the Two Disciples going to Emmaus. S. Mark xvi. 12 ; S. Luke xxiv. 13-32.
5. To the Apostles, Thomas being absent. S. Mark xvi. 14 ; S. Luke xxiv. 36-49 ; S. John xx. 19, 20.

three. Each fragment has, so to speak, a virtue peculiarly its own,¹ yet altogether combine in impressing us with one truth. It is that Christ rose, not merely to prove that He had conquered death, but to teach men the possibilities of a higher life. Lazarus and the daughter of Jairus, and the widow's son, had risen to continue their former existence, and to die again. Jesus rose to live in His Risen Body a glorified life, and to die no more; and herein He has given us an earnest and pledge, not only that we shall rise again, but that we shall be "changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

S. Mark has done little more than leave the briefest allusions to four of the Appearances during the forty days. It can hardly be doubted that he was guided to make his selection for the purpose of bringing into prominence the truth upon which we spoke at the close of the last chapter. Not once only, but three times he dwells upon the reluctance of the disciples to believe the tidings of the Resurrection.

When S. Peter and S. John found that Mary's fears were realised, they "went away again to their own home;" but she remained behind, struggling with an inconsolable grief, and unable to tear herself from the spot. And to her, first of all His followers, Jesus manifested Himself in His Risen Form. S. Mark gives no details of the scene; for "S. John alone was capable of recording them in their incomparably beautiful conciseness and depth."

"She turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing Him to be the gardener, saith unto Him, Sir, if thou have borne

6. To the Apostles with Thomas. S. John xx. 26-29.

7. To Seven Disciples by the Sea of Galilee. S. John xx. 1-23.

8. To the Eleven in the presence of 500 brethren. S. Matt. xxviii. 16-20; S. Mark xvi. 15-18; Acts i. 3; 1 Cor. xv. 6.

9. To S. James, the Lord's brother. 1 Cor. xv. 7.

10. The final appearance preceding the Ascension. S. Luke xxiv. 50, 51; Acts i. 9; 1 Cor. xv. 7.

Some harmonists have divided the eighth into two separate appearances. Probably our Lord appeared at other times, of which there is no record; *e.g.* it is hard to believe that He did not show Himself unto His Mother.

¹ The reader is referred to one of Dr. Westcott's most interesting and suggestive books, in which the characteristic features of each is drawn out, "The Revelation of the Risen Lord."

Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away."

She did not recognise Him, for she was absorbed in her grief, and had no hope of the Resurrection, no thoughts but of death. "Jesus saith unto her, Mary;" and the familiar tones touched a chord of sympathy, and brought back the associations of the past. Then turning at once to satisfy herself that it was really true, she gathered the whole force of her new-found joy and conviction into the exclamation, "Rabboni," my Master!¹

"She has no loftier title for Him than that which past experience had made precious; she assumes that the return to the old life exhausts the sum of her Master's victory over death;" and when she would have clung² to Him, He pointed her to the fact that, till He had ascended, she would not be able to enjoy that uninterrupted intercourse and closeness of union for which she longed. That could only be felt through the Presence of the Comforter, which depended on His return to the Father. Meanwhile He had a message to send to His brethren, and she should be the bearer of it: "Say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and My God and your God." What a shock of disappointment she must have felt, when they gave no credence to her word!

The second manifestation of which S. Mark speaks is that to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus.³ One was Cleopas, the other is unnamed.⁴ They started that first Easter afternoon to go to a village a few miles distant; their hearts were filled with sadness, for they in common with so many of our Lord's disciples had experienced a dreadful disaster. They had been living in expectation that Jesus had come to restore the fallen glories of their nation, and make the name and place

¹ The interpretation given by the Evangelist excludes the idea that "Rabboni" expressed "my Divine Master," as has been suggested, cf. Westcott *in loco*. In the best MSS. it is, "and said unto Him, in the Hebrew tongue, Rabboni." The termination *i*, which usually signifies "my," had probably lost its significance, as the Evangelist does not notice it.

² It is more than "touch" in the original, cf. Col. i. 20, where its distinction from *θιγγάνω* is thus expressed—"don't handle ἄφῆ, don't taste, don't even touch *θιγγῆς*," cf. Lightfoot *in loco*.

³ The identification of this place is truly a *vexata questio*, cf. Smith, *Bib. Dict.*

⁴ It has been conjectured that it was S. Luke, but upon no sufficient authority.

of Jewry once more a power in the world. But the scene on Golgotha shattered all their hopes. They had seen their expected Deliverer expire on the Cross. All the promises of the past were to them now but as idle tales; the report of the women who had been early at the sepulchre; the vision of angels telling that He was alive, all failed to give them comfort. And as they walked, and talked of what had happened, lo! "Jesus Himself drew near, and went with them; but their eyes were holden that they should not know Him."

Their sadness was the power of attraction. It is the echo of His first question to Mary, "Why weepest thou?" That was the sympathetic chord which drew "the Man of Sorrows" in both cases to their side.

And how did He comfort them? Just as He comforts His sorrowful servants now; by solving all their perplexities from the promises and predictions of Holy Scripture, and then by the fullest manifestation of Himself in "the Breaking of Bread."

He began with the books of Moses and the prophets, and "expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." As He unrolled the long scroll of prophecy, and quoted passage after passage, which foreshadowed His Cross and Passion, and the after-exaltation at the right hand of God, these doubting souls were built up in the great truth, that all had happened by the determinate counsel of God, and for the salvation of the world. It is no wonder that their hearts burned within them while He talked by the way; or that, like the Patriarch wrestling until daybreak with one whom he might not know, they refused to let Him go, until they had received His blessing. And He went in to tarry with them, and "He took the bread, and blessed, and brake, and gave to them,"—it is precisely the same language in which His action at the Institution of the Blessed Sacrament is described,—"and their eyes were opened, and they knew Him."

As soon as He had vanished from their sight, they arose and returned to Jerusalem, eager to make known their glad experience; and they found "the Eleven"¹ assembled for their evening meal in the Paschal Chamber. They were

¹ S. Paul calls them "the Twelve." In both cases number is not signified so much as their official character.

received with the joyful announcement that "the Lord had risen" and that one of their own number had actually seen Him. But how imperfect as yet was their grasp of the nature of the Risen Life; for no sooner did the two disciples tell what had befallen them on the road to Emmaus, than their old incredulity¹ revived, and they refused to believe their report.

It was while they were speaking that Jesus Himself appeared in the midst, and "upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart." The doors of the chambers had been firmly barred, for they feared that the Sanhedrim might arrest them for the abduction of the Lord's Body; but no material barrier could stay His entrance, and He suddenly stood amongst them. They thought it was a spirit from the other world, and were filled with fear.

Then followed His patient resolution of all their doubts: the exhibition of His wounds; the palpable apprehension of His flesh and bones; the participation of food before their eyes; and then "the day breaks and the shadows flee away."

If, as we are taught, Christ's Risen and Glorified Body is a type of that which each one of us will put on when "this mortal shall be clothed with immortality," it enables us to look forward with assurance to the preservation of our identity, and to recognition and reunion in the future life. "When He shall appear we shall be like Him." "We shall be also in the likeness of His Resurrection." We shall be changed, but yet the same. Nothing will be left in the grave, but all will be transfigured, "that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious Body, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself."

¹ Possibly their changed feelings arose from an inability to understand the almost simultaneous appearance to the two disciples and to S. Peter, when so far distant from each other.

The Manifestation in Galilee, and the Ascension

S. MARK XVI. 15-20

15. And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. 16. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. 17. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In My Name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; 18. they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly *thing*, it

shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

19. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. 20. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

WE are drawing to the close of the Forty Days, and the time for the predicted manifestation in Galilee is at hand. In anticipation of it some of the disciples left Jerusalem, after our Lord appeared to them the second time in the Upper Chamber, and "He showed Himself to them again at the sea of Tiberias;" but the great meeting of which both He and the angels had spoken was yet to come.

Of the scene of it, all we are told is that it was a mountain. It may have been that whereon He had been transfigured, some ridge of Hermon¹ in the distant north; more probably it was "the Horns of Hattin," from which He had delivered His first sermon at the opening of His mission. Nowhere so well as in the neighbourhood of the Lake could so large a number as five hundred brethren be gathered together.²

What charge the Risen Lord had for these has not been

¹ Cf. xl., pp. 187 ff.

² It had been the chief scene of His labours, and He must have made many disciples in Capernaum and Bethsaida. In Jerusalem we are told the number was only 120.—Acts i. 15.

recorded. The special commission to preach and to baptize was given to the Eleven; it is prefaced with the same declaration of His authority as had preceded His delegation to them of the ministry of Reconciliation. Then He had said to them: "As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you;" now He says, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the Name¹ of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

It is this commission which S. Mark records, as our Lord may have repeated it, in altered words: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." It is an independent witness, but it can only be rightly understood when read by the light of the corresponding record.

There are three expressions in it which, by reason of much misunderstanding, call for consideration.

To "preach the gospel" finds its true explanation in the words which S. Matthew has preserved, "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." It involves the inculcation of faith in the Incarnation, the Resurrection, Remission of Sins, and Sacramental Union with Christ by Baptism and the Holy Eucharist. These doctrines stand out luminous in the injunctions of Christ, and can have no subordinate place in the preaching of His Apostles.

Again, "he that believeth not" has been commonly regarded as a general synonym for any one who does not hold the Catholic faith. But we know that even apart from the wide world of heathendom, there are countless multitudes, who through some of the manifold chances of life—accidents of birth or education, or an invincible ignorance—have been shut out from the influence of the faith as it is in Christ. It can hardly be supposed that our Lord taught the Apostles that such were guilty in the sight of God.

¹ In Scripture the name implies far more than the title, viz., the Essence, the Being, the Nature of God; and to be baptized into (*εις θρονον*) involves the idea of union with, and participation of, and points to a restoration of that close communion between man and God, which had been severed by the Fall.

The original expression translated "he that believeth not," implies far more than mere negative unbelief. It involves the deliberate rejection of declared truth, and should be rendered "he that disbelieveth." Yet, further, in this passage it appears to have a distinct reference to those commandments which the Apostles had just before been empowered authoritatively to offer for men's acceptance. Of such as refused them under these circumstances it may be said, though in an altered sense, "It had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them."

"He that believeth not shall be damned." In lapse of time the usage of language often undergoes change and modification, and this word "damned"¹ affords a striking illustration. When the authorised translation was made, it did not necessarily imply anything more than "condemnation;" but later generations have interpreted it as though it expressed an irreversible sentence of eternal death. Notwithstanding, then, an instinctive dread of diminishing the terrible sin of disbelief, we feel constrained to protest against the harshest interpretation, when one that is more lenient is most strictly correct. Condemnation in itself need not refer to the final judgment. While, therefore, the message which Christ bade the Apostles deliver, is to all who receive it "a savour of life unto life," by putting them in the way of salvation, we are not justified in saying that it will be "a savour of death unto death" to those who reject it, or that they will be finally lost. It may be so, but the words of our Lord, "He that disbelieveth shall be condemned," do not assert that it must be so.

One further manifestation of Himself was yet to be vouchsafed by our Lord. In anticipation of the approaching Pentecost the Apostles returned to Jerusalem; and there, on the fortieth day from the Resurrection, Jesus found them assembled together, "and led them out as far as Bethany." There, on the wild uplands overhanging the village, He finally withdrew from the eyes of His disciples. It was while in the act of benediction that He was parted from them, rising from

¹ *κατακρίνω* is used nearly twenty times in the New Testament, but is only on one other occasion rendered "damned," Rom. xiv. 23. The uncompounded form, however, is once so translated, 2 Thess. ii. 22.

the earth, higher and higher, till "a cloud received Him out of their sight."

"And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." The co-operation of Christ was in fulfilment of His promise, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." At first the credentials of their Apostolic commission were attested by the exercise of supernatural gifts. The casting out of evil spirits from the "possessed," which had been so characteristic of Christ's work, was continued in His Name. The outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost filled "devout men out of every nation under heaven" with amazement, "because that every man heard them speaking in their own language." The venomous viper was shaken from an Apostle's hand, and fell harmless to the ground; S. John, it is said, and even the disciple Barsabas, drank the cup of deadly poison and felt no hurt; while the very shadow of S. Peter, and clothes of S. Paul, seemed to be endowed with healing virtue, for the confirmation of the faith. But the co-operation of Christ was promised, not for the Apostolic age alone, but for all time. The miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost were withdrawn, and the third generation, at the latest, buried the last of "The Twelve;" but other men entered into their labours, and the office has been perpetuated by an unbroken lineage, so that those who minister in Christ's Church to-day can feel that the voice that sent them forth was but the echo of that which spake on the Galilean hill to the first in the ministerial line.

That Presence Which arrested the attention of an unbelieving age by startling manifestations has been vouchsafed to the Church through all its chequered history in the power of an unseen but undiminished co-operation. In the Church at large it is borne witness to by the influence of Christianity upon the evil spirits of oppression and cruelty, of greed and profligate living. It has shown itself in a thousand ways in the alleviation of sickness and disease, and the tenderer care for the bereft of reason; while in a later age at least the Pentecostal gift of tongues has been virtually repeated, by the translation of the Gospel of glad tidings into wellnigh every spoken language.

In the Ministry, that same Presence has been the inspiring motive-power of Christ's accredited priests. In baptizing converts or infants into His kingdom, they have felt that, though they saw it not, it was He Who opened the door to let them in. In preparing candidates for Confirmation, it was not upon their own catechetical skill that they depended, but upon the help of Him Who is "the Instructor of babes;" in absolving the penitent, it was, they knew, His voice that sealed the pardon; in presenting the Sacrifice of the Altar, they relied upon the Great High Priest in heaven to win acceptance for it from the Father by uniting it with His all-prevailing intercession.

It is true the Divine co-operation has not been visibly realised with unvarying uniformity; but this was just what He foretold in the terms of His promise, "I will be with you," not simply "alway," but "all the days"¹—days when the brightness of His Presence shone out like the sun in its noonday glory, days when the clouds that concealed It seemed only just fringed with Its light—days of victory, and days of defeat—days when the Church arose like a giant in his strength, and carried everything before her—days also when the hands of Aaron and Hur fell paralysed at their side, and victory inclined to the world. But through all the past vicissitudes of eighteen centuries of waxing and waning faith, and through all the future yet to come, Christ's promise has been, and ever will be true—"Lo, I am with you all the days unto the end of the ages."

EVIDENCE FOR THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE LAST TWELVE VERSES

Of Uncial MSS. **Σ** omits them altogether. **B** omits them, but leaves a vacant space of about sufficient length to contain them; which indicates that the copyist saw them, but for unknown reasons declined to insert them. **L**, a MS. of the eighth century, has another ending, but subjoins this also. They are inserted in all the old Uncial MSS. The Cursive MSS. all

¹ *πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας.*

contain the verses, but some state that they were of disputed authority.

Of ancient Versions, all the oldest contain them, with the exception of one MS. of the old Latin. In the evidence of the Fathers, we find Eusebius, S. Jerome, and Victor of Antioch questioning their authenticity, but not themselves deciding against it.

Irenæus, Hippolytus, James of Nisibis, and perhaps Justin Martyr, are all in favour of the insertion.

The Internal Evidence is so difficult to state briefly, that the reader is referred to the lengthy dissertations of Dr. Hort against S. Mark's authorship, and of Dean Burgon, Dr. Scrivener, Canon Cook, and Mr. M'Clellan in favour of it.

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